

# Great Jobs for Women in the Shop Too!

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## Women in the Transportation Industry It's not just a man's job anymore

Last week, I took my car to the local garage to have the oil changed and to have the transmission serviced. When I walked into the office, I was greeted by a nice young lady who I assumed would be scheduling my car for the oil change with one of the mechanics in the shop. After she got some basic information from me, she entered some information into the PC on the desk, and asked for my keys. She showed me where the coffee was and told me to have a seat in the waiting area. Much to my chagrin, she hopped into my car, drove it onto the rack like a pro, and began to perform the oil change and transmission service herself!

I must admit that I was a little concerned – I mean after all – this was a young girl, not a burly mechanic with big greasy paws and a cigar sticking out of his mouth. Was she really capable of doing this kind of work? As I watched her, I began to realize she was not only capable, but actually exceptional! Donning blue latex gloves and all the required personal protective equipment, she worked with skill, speed, and finesse as she changed my oil while the transmission was draining. After checking the specs on her computer, she promptly reassembled the transmission pan, using a torque wrench to secure the fasteners in place. Finishing in less than thirty minutes, she lowered my car back to the garage floor, gave the interior a quick vacuum, and parked my car back out front.

As she came back into the office, I asked her how she got into this line of work. She told me that she had taken an auto mechanics class in high school, and eventually ended up getting a degree in transportation management at the local vo-tech. She explained that there were much better opportunities for women in the transportation industry compared to other typically “female” jobs like administrative assistant or child care. She simply felt that her chances for advancement were much better in the automotive industry than they would be in other vocations. I asked to speak to her boss because I wanted to tell him what a great job she had done. It was only then that I noticed her name tag – it said Janet Howell – Service Manager. She smiled knowingly and said thank you as I turned to leave.

## Transportation & Warehousing Jobs Women Don't Consider

According to Monster.com “While women have held support jobs in transportation and warehousing for decades, many careers in these fields have been so male-dominated that they don't occur to women. “Schools and society don't move women toward those jobs,” says Deborah Cutler-Ortiz, director of National Programs and Policy for Wider Opportunities for Women [www.wowonline.org](http://www.wowonline.org).

Nontraditional occupations for women in transportation and warehousing include road repair, mechanic, forklift operator, warehouse supervisor, logistics manager and, of course, drivers. And the pay can be good. Learn about the options and how to get moving on a career that could be right for you.” Source: Monster.com Susan Aaron- Monster Contributing Writer

## National Truck Driver Recruitment Campaign

In early 2007, ATA launched its National Truck Driver Recruiting [Gettrucking.com](http://Gettrucking.com) which is a nationwide effort to promote positive images of truck driving and to recruit long-haul truck drivers

for ATA's 50 state associations and their member motor carriers. ATA's goal is to increase the base of individuals who typically become long-haul drivers, including previously untapped labor pools. Most notably, the industry is targeting ex-military, minorities, women, workers who have lost their jobs because of downsizing or outsourcing, newcomers to the labor force and people over age 50 who may want to trade a desk job for a career on the open road.

Source: <http://www.truckline.com/priorityissues/drivershortage/recruitment>

According to ladytruckdrivers.com, to increase the nation's driver pool, the industry increasingly will need to draw upon a larger percentage of women and minorities. Women currently represent 5% of truck drivers. African Americans represent 11.7% of long-haul drivers and Hispanics total 9.7% of the long-haul driving sector.

There are several organizations which are dedicated to promoting women in the transportation industry.

### **Women's Transportation Seminar**

Founded in 1977, the Women's Transportation Seminar was created through the efforts of 40 women involved in transportation in the Washington, DC, area who recognized that a mechanism was needed to enhance professional and personal advancement and to develop industry and government recognition of the increasing involvement of women in the field of transportation.

Celebrating its 30th Anniversary this year, WTS is now an international organization of more than 4,000 transportation professionals - both women and men - with 42 chapters representing cities and states in the United States, Canada and Great Britain. Source: <http://www.wtsinternational.org/>

### **Women In Trucking**

Women In Trucking was established to encourage the employment of women in the trucking industry, promote their accomplishments and minimize obstacles faced by women in trucking. The organization is an active group that finds opportunities to promote the accomplishments of women in the industry.

This organization has been created for both men and women, who are either involved in the industry, or have a career interest in being a part of one of the largest networks of professionals in North America. Nearly one out of fourteen workers are already employed in jobs that support the transportation industry, but the need for drivers and other trucking professionals continues to increase. Source: <http://www.womenintrucking.org/>

### **It's a Man's Job, Right?**

As I drove home, I thought about young Janet Howell and how she had taken steps to shape her career in the typically male dominated world of auto mechanics. It was a gutsy move, but clearly the right move for her. The transportation industry is in dire need of skilled technicians and managers. Most kids today want to be computer programmers or business managers. But Janet saw a lucrative industry ripe for someone with her skills. She decided to ignore traditions and stereotypes. I thought about my own stereotypes and misconceptions. I thought about my own daughter. She was going to be a senior in high school next year. What were her career goals? I decided that I would have a chat with her when I got home, maybe I would even introduce her to Janet. Who knows? After all, it's her career choice, and she shouldn't be limited by stereotypes or misconceptions either.