



#KnowTheDifference

REAL Women in Trucking Association
National Headquarters: 631 Lucerne Ave #27
Lake Worth Beach, Florida, 33460
Phone: 561.437.2008

General Email: realwomenintrucking@gmail.com
www.realwomenintrucking.org

June 19, 2023

Shannon L. Watson
Designated Federal Office, WOTAB
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington D.C. 20590
Submitted via email to wotab@got.gov

Re: Public Comments for Women of Trucking Advisory Board (WOTAB) Public Meeting
(Docket No. FMCSA-2022-0209)

Dear Ms. Watson,

I am writing on behalf of the [REAL Women in Trucking](http://www.realwomenintrucking.org) (RWIT) organization to submit a public comment for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) Women of Trucking Advisory Board (WOTAB) Meeting taking place June 29, 2023. I have been writing about the rape problem in truck driver training since 2008 and I am submitting our solutions to address the issue for the public record.

Sexual assault/Sexual harassment (SASH) in trucking is a very specific issue that primarily affects new entrants to the industry in the first few critical weeks they are in truck driver training, and it mostly affects individuals from non-dominant groups who are vulnerable, including LGBTQIA+ prospective truck drivers.

The 1st organization to attempt to address this issue was [Bitzy Gomez and the Coalition of Women Truckers](#) who first raised the issue of the "sleeper test" in the late 1970's. In, 2010 the REAL Women in Trucking organization was formed as a protest group when no other organization would address the issue though a growing number of women were being targeted for recruitment without any plan on how to retain them or act on widespread SASH that has caused thousands of women to abandon training before they became qualified truck drivers.



#KnowTheDifference

REAL Women in Trucking Association
National Headquarters: 631 Lucerne Ave #27
Lake Worth Beach, Florida, 33460
Phone: 561.437.2008

General Email: realwomenintrucking@gmail.com
www.realwomenintrucking.org

The International Labour Organization [first global survey](#) found that 1 in 5 workers experience violence and harassment at work. The [Department of Labor Women's Bureau hosted a "Day of Action" - To Promote Safety and Prevent Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the Trucking Industry](#). Though this was a historic event, it was poorly attended by the trucking industry. (Read [More: Driving Change - Ensuring a Safe Work Environment in the Trucking Industry](#) and [Achieving a World of Work Free from Gender-Based Violence and Harassment | U.S. Department of Labor Blog \(dol.gov\)](#)) While the trucking sector has been identified as a problem industry, the FMCSA has not taken any immediate action and therefore has set the tone that there is no sense of urgency to any trucking company to take sexual assault and sexual harassment in their workplace seriously. In this ten-year-old PowerPoint presentation I identified the specific areas of concern where sexual assault and harassment are the most prevalent in the trucking industry. It has had over 90,000 impressions since it was first made public yet training and solutions have yet to be introduced by even the companies whose business is producing training manuals and curriculums for the trucking industry.

[Sexual Misconduct Impacts Trucking Safety](#) from [Desiree Wood](#)

Since truck drivers are held to a higher standard of highway safety it makes no sense that during training they are required to live and work unsupervised for weeks at a time in close quarters with a total stranger. **This issue is not gender specific.** Distress calls and reports to our organization include women assaulting women, men assaulting men, Murder between trainer/student and co-driver/co-driver at major truck driver training fleets. **This is workplace violence.** Conduct training, Sexual Harassment training and accountability ranges from non-existent to laughable in the vast majority of truck driver training fleets.



#KnowTheDifference

REAL Women in Trucking Association
National Headquarters: 631 Lucerne Ave #27
Lake Worth Beach, Florida, 33460
Phone: 561.437.2008

General Email: realwomenintrucking@gmail.com
www.realwomenintrucking.org

The team driving student business model of training that requires dangerous and unsafe team driving between trainer/student and then student /student for up to 6 months is where the greatest frequency of sexual violence and harassment occurs. New truck driver students have an expectation they will receive one on one training but often they are used as a cheap labor source and their lives are put at risk. It is unreasonable to require co-habitation with a person you have no relationship with as a condition for employment. The FMCSA should cease allowing CLP holders to drive while the trainer is sleeping and cease team driving student business models altogether.

No trainee can focus on learning to drive a commercial motor vehicle when they are being terrorized by a trainer or co-driver. Often, it is the victim who reports the incident that is left behind in a motel while the perpetrator goes on working and making money. The victim is left stranded in a state of trauma and not making a paycheck. ([See TimesUp Foundation - Institute for Women's Policy Research: Financial Costs of Workplace Sexual Harassment attached to this email that cites our organization and the trucking industry](#))

[Video: Why same gender training alone is not the solution to this issue.](#)

We are submitting these specific actions we believe would help address this issue if implemented:

- No team driving students.
- Separate hotels must be used to allow drivers privacy during sleeper breaks, breakdowns.
- Students should be informed that they are entitled to a private shower and how to obtain one.
- Over the Road Training should be supervised, the trainer should not be sleeping especially under a CLP.
- Comprehensive sexual harassment training mandated in all CDL Schools and trucking companies.



REAL Women in Trucking Association
National Headquarters: 631 Lucerne Ave #27
Lake Worth Beach, Florida, 33460
Phone: 561.437.2008

General Email: realwomenintrucking@gmail.com
www.realwomenintrucking.org

#KnowTheDifference

- Training should be transparent and include situational videos specific to truck driver training environments.
- Annual retraining should be conducted for all staff including CEO's and high-level executives, trainers and any persons who will be working in team driving student fleets.
- We would support new legislation that would make SASH training to be a FMCSA scoring element.
- SASH training initiatives should include "bystander intervention" education programs for Recruiters, Law Enforcement, Truck Stop Operators.
- The FMCSA must implement an industry specific crisis and reporting line through the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) just like the Peace Corps and Armed Services, this must not be managed by any special interest group like ATA, or WIT due to their conflicts of interest.
- A sexual assault advisory council should be appointed in addition to a workforce DEI task force.
- Training materials should be developed through partnerships outside the trucking industry that specialize in eliminating workplace violence. ([Workplaces Respond to Domestic and Sexual Violence - Futures Without Violence Futures Without Violence](#))

"Truckers Against Trafficking" training has been implemented and in some states is a mandate. Many companies believe that by checking this box they do not have to comply with any other "women's issue". This is why legislation is the only way forward. Uber rideshare has partnered with the Rape Abuse & Incest National Network to require video training that must be completed before the driver can work on their platform. Uber has been forced to become more transparent about the number of rapes they have each year; the trucking industry must follow. A RAINN crisis and reporting line will facilitate data collection in addition to trauma assistance for victims. (See the attached overview of the RAINN crisis and reporting line at the end of this document)



REAL Women in Trucking Association
National Headquarters: 631 Lucerne Ave #27
Lake Worth Beach, Florida, 33460
Phone: 561.437.2008

General Email: realwomenintrucking@gmail.com
www.realwomenintrucking.org

#KnowTheDifference

Training fleets should have a higher level of standard. Many worst offender companies are self-insured which helps conceal their crashes. There should be more transparency on student fleet crashes, and data should be tied to the frequency of SASH incidents, wage theft, and other labor abuse.

- Truck driver training should be held to the standards of any other Title IX educational program regardless of whether they receive funding under the Department of Education or not. There is no reason the trucking industry cannot model sexual harassment training policies and procedures

using existing Title IX guidelines where there are already established “perceived authority” examples between student and instructor. In trucking this should include the lead driver and co-driver.

- Every training fleet should have a coordinator just as Title IX requires and it should not be anyone from the human resources or safety department since they have a conflict of interest in supporting a worker over the interests of the company.
- Procedures to file complaints should be known for students and trainers.
- The consequences must be swift for trainers and students who violate policies.
- The Department of Transportation – Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration must restrict and revoke **existing Commercial Driver's License Learners Permits (CLP) waivers** from truck driver training fleets that use the team business model and/or who are engaged in current and ongoing litigation for SASH, wage theft, and anti-trust litigation. **These fleets should be placed on probation, they should not be given special treatment.**
- A national database should be established to identify sexual predators who are working as truck drivers. The [FBI has linked long haul truck drivers to serial killings](#), currently, a sexual predator can simply vanish back into the population and easily get a verification of employment to work elsewhere with a



REAL Women in Trucking Association
National Headquarters: 631 Lucerne Ave #27
Lake Worth Beach, Florida, 33460
Phone: 561.437.2008

General Email: realwomenintrucking@gmail.com
www.realwomenintrucking.org

#KnowTheDifference

clean slate. Violent individuals and sexual predators should be forbidden from working as trainers or co-drivers and even be employed in training fleets where they will have access to vulnerable students.

CDL's should be revoked in cases of sexual assault of a co-worker. In some training fleets, records are wiped each year. This is problematic since it is often re-hires who are the perpetrators. They know the system works for them and facilitates 1 free rape per year at the type of carriers who are involved in ongoing allegations and litigation. Problem fleets identified by our organization for SASH complaints include but is not limited to CRST Van Expedited, New Prime, CR England, Covenant Transport, US Xpress, PAM and Western Express. The similarity of the business model in these companies is that they use team driving as a phase of training. We believe anecdotally that there is a link to the student team business model and SASH.

Problematic training fleets tend to over-recruit when they know they do not have enough safe qualified trainers available. The trucking industry consistently has about 97% turnover annually, in the training fleets the number is double. There is very little attention paid to this. This is why there should be a cap on recruiting and more focus on retention. Often, students are brought to orientation and then left to sit in a dirty motel room waiting for weeks at a time for a trainer. Often, they are not compensated at the same rate of pay as the students who go immediately with a trainer, or they are given advanced money that they must later pay back.

National legislation modeled after the Nevada state battery law NRS 200.481 that makes it an automatic felony to harm a service worker that would include truck drivers. Legislation like this would satisfy multiple issues that are currently issues for truck drivers:

- Truck drivers being attacked on the highway during civil unrest.
- Violent altercations that occur between truck drivers due to scarce truck parking capacity



REAL Women in Trucking Association
National Headquarters: 631 Lucerne Ave #27
Lake Worth Beach, Florida, 33460
Phone: 561.437.2008

General Email: realwomenintrucking@gmail.com
www.realwomenintrucking.org

#KnowTheDifference

- Immediate consequences in student fleet assaults between trainer/student, co-driver/co-driver and any other co-workers and entities where truck drivers load and unload freight.

Problem trucking companies that are involved in federal lawsuits for wage theft, blacklisting workers, discrimination, or SASH should be barred from participation in ANY state or federal subsidies or job training funding opportunities and government contracts. They should be forbidden from advertising their training program on any state unemployment website. They should not be eligible to participate in the Department of Labor Accredited Apprenticeship Program.

A same gender training choice must not create a situation where the female student must wait longer than males for training. Currently many companies have written policies contrary, and this is in violation of the civil rights act of 1964 Title VII and some have put hiring freezes on women while at the same times are corporate members of other women trucking associations.

Student fleets should be required to conduct third party exit interviews and periodic updates **throughout the 1st 6 months of training** and include reporting to an outside oversight agency to determine what is the source of the retention issue so action can be taken.

Inward facing cameras should be mandated in training tractors in the **driver cab area only**. Inward facing cameras already exist for insurance purposes for hard braking incidents so there is no reason they cannot be utilized for training safety and supervision.



REAL Women in Trucking Association
National Headquarters: 631 Lucerne Ave #27
Lake Worth Beach, Florida, 33460
Phone: 561.437.2008

General Email: realwomenintrucking@gmail.com
www.realwomenintrucking.org

#KnowTheDifference

Truck driver training trucks should be marked clearly to the public that they are student fleets.

Blue Light Emergency Call Boxes with cameras should be installed in public and private truck parking areas. This sort of security can help all drivers. These call boxes are commonly used at college campuses and large event parking lots.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a public comment on this issue.

Respectfully,

Desiree Wood
Founder/President/Truck Driver
[REAL Women in Trucking, Inc.](#)
[Truckers Emergency Assistance Responders, Inc.](#)

[RWIT joined The Nation in a Successful Motion to Unseal Documents in CRST Sex Harassment Case.](#)
[Jane Doe v CRST](#) , a sexual assault case settled for a landmark \$5 million.
([Read More: A Trucker's Killing Highlights Problems in the Industry in TIME Magazine](#))
([Read More: There is a Problem with How We Train Truckers in TIME Magazine](#))





OVERVIEW OF CRISIS AND REPORTING HOTLINE SERVICES

Real Women in Trucking

RAINN helps organizations meet the complexities of today's climate by moving beyond compliance towards values-based, sustainable solutions that promote safe and healthy communities.

Submitted by the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network
April 1, 2021

The information contained within this document is confidential and is intended solely for the use of the client to whom it is addressed. The following document was prepared exclusively for the use of Real Women in Trucking.

RAINN'S MISSION & WORK

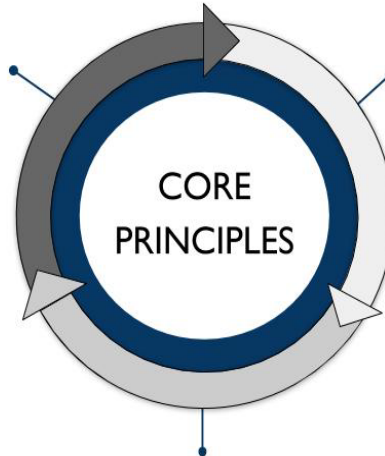
Over the past 26 years, RAINN has helped more than 3.5 million survivors and their loved ones. Leveraging our expertise and insights as the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization, we help our clients solve their toughest challenges around sexual misconduct awareness, prevention, and response.

Our consulting clients represent a diverse set of industries, stakeholders, and missions throughout the public and private sector—yet they all share the same objective: **to move beyond a reactive, check-the-box approach to sexual misconduct and to establish a new norm of safety and respect within a community.**

RAINN's approach to all our work is rooted in three core principles:

VICTIM-CENTERED:

- Systematic focus on the needs and concerns of the victim
- Prioritization of the victim's wishes, safety, and well-being
- Emphasis on creating a compassionate, sensitive, and non-judgmental delivery of services
- Minimization of re-traumatization by providing support services and empowering participation throughout the process



TRAUMA-INFORMED:

- Recognition of the signs of trauma
- Understanding of the widespread impact of trauma
- Awareness of potential pathways for recovery
- Integration of the knowledge of trauma into policies, protocols, and practices

FAIR AND EQUITABLE:

- The equal, consistent, and fair application of policies and services to create an environment where every individual knows what's acceptable, feels they are valued, and is able to access services in a just system

It is the combination and application of these core principles that will allow organizations to not only be compliant with relevant laws and regulations, but also create a culture in which sexual misconduct is not tolerated or condoned.

GOVERNMENT AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

A snapshot of RAINN's engagement with government agencies:

- Department of Defense (DOD)
 - Through a sole source contract with the DOD, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), RAINN operates the Safe HelpLine to provide 24/7 free, confidential support services for anyone affected by sexual violence within the U.S. military.
- Department of Transportation (DOT)
 - RAINN has been appointed by the DOT to serve on the National In-Flight Sexual Misconduct Task Force to represent national organizations that specialize in providing services to sexual assault victims. The Task Force is a subcommittee of the DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection Advisory Committee.
 - RAINN operates the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Helpline to provide 24/7 support services for anyone affected by sexual violence at USMMA.
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
 - RAINN is currently leading a Sexual Misconduct Awareness and Response Initiative across the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Joint Field Offices. The Initiative includes three different types of sessions aimed at providing staff with tools to better prevent and respond to sexual misconduct and to create a culture of accountability and preparedness through proactive measures to address issues. RAINN has also delivered trainings on Sexual Misconduct Awareness, Prevention, and Response across multiple other divisions of FEMA.
- Department of Commerce (DOC)
 - Through a sole source contract with the DOC, RAINN operates a hotline to provide support and reporting services for anyone affected by sexual violence at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
 - RAINN is currently developing a set of customized and actionable standards of professionalism to address sexual misconduct for the internal staff and external partners of the DOC's Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP). The standards will clarify and emphasize appropriate behaviors for members of the CLDP community and act as the foundation for a safer, healthier organizational culture.

RAINN also works with a number of other federal agencies, including the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Our proposed solution is aimed at meeting Real Women in Trucking's (RWIT) goal of providing crisis telephone hotline services and reporting hotline services, allowing community members to access consistent empathetic support, crisis intervention, information, and resources.

CLIENT-BRANDED HOTLINE SERVICES

OVERVIEW

RAINN offers both the technology infrastructure and the victim service staffing expertise to provide quality, anonymous, and confidential crisis intervention services via telephone and online chat. RAINN's client-branded hotlines offer solutions that will ensure survivors receive the help they deserve, at the moment they need it. RAINN's hotline services provide trained sexual assault hotline staff to support communities with crisis intervention, empathetic listening, and warm hand-offs to designated local service providers or vetted national partners.

Further, RAINN will assist RWIT with the creation of a specific resource dashboard customized to allow RAINN staff to access resources and standard responses for difficult and frequently asked questions specific to RWIT's procedures.

RAINN has developed a set of standard hotline schematics that reflect RAINN's core principles: a victim-centered, trauma-informed, equitable approach to service delivery. The schematics are universal across hotline services and will be shared with RWIT during the onboarding process. These schematics include, but are not limited to: how to handle mandatory reporting, imminent risk situation, and privacy policies. All RAINN hotline staff have been fully trained in these schematics, and will be additionally trained in the RWIT policies after RWIT provides them during the hotline setup phase. Once the client-branded hotline has launched, RAINN will create monthly usage reports for RWIT.

HOTLINE SERVICES

Telephone Hotline Services

In 1994, RAINN launched the National Sexual Assault Hotline (NSAH), the nation's first decentralized telephone hotline, which connected survivors of sexual assault to their closest sexual assault service provider, 24/7/365. The NSAH is now a network of nearly 1,100 local sexual assault service providers located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The NSAH is the primary provider of sexual assault victim services in the U.S.

Online Hotline Services

After operating the NSAH for more than a decade, RAINN increasingly received requests from survivors for web-based help. In response, RAINN created the National Sexual Assault Online Hotline (NSAOH), which has helped more than 475,000 online visitors affected by sexual assault since 2006. Now more than ever, victims turn to RAINN's NSAOH for emotional support, problem solving, and safety planning. The NSAOH is also designed to meet victims' time-sensitive needs for referrals to medical, legal, and mental health services. The number of NSAOH users each day has increased steadily since its inception and has more than doubled in the last three years.

CRISIS HOTLINE SERVICES

Client-branded crisis hotlines provide members of the client's community with immediate emotional support, short term support, and long-term referrals. Additionally, client-branded hotlines can provide callers with information about client-specific policies, processes, and referrals

SCOPE OF WORK

RAINN will provide crisis intervention, referrals, and emotional support to users who are affected by sexual violence in English and/or Spanish through telephone hotline support to the RWIT community. RAINN employees, who undergo background checks, extensive screening, training, and ongoing supervision, will staff the hotline. Crisis hotline services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTS

RAINN will report the following information monthly from call logs: language of session (English or Spanish), date of session, type of interaction, and length of interaction. The monthly status report will also include the number of calls, total minutes of call time, average wait time for answered calls, number of abandoned calls, and average wait time for abandoned calls.

REPORTING HOTLINE SERVICES

RAINN's hotline support specialists serve as knowledgeable and confidential resources who share the details of the client's reporting process prior to the caller making an official claim or initiating a formal process, minimizing the uncertainty that might present an obstacle to reporting. RAINN support specialists do not provide investigations or on-going case management services; however, should a hotline visitor choose to move forward with making an official report, RAINN will assist them in doing so and forward the necessary information to the client organization's appropriate point of contact who will initiate (and manage) the formal process.

SCOPE OF WORK

RAINN will provide reporting services, crisis intervention, referrals, and emotional support to users who are affected by sexual violence telephone hotline support in English to the RWIT community. RAINN's specially trained hotline management employees who undergo background checks, extensive screening, training, and ongoing supervision will staff the hotline. Reporting hotline services will be offered Monday-Friday 9am-7pm ET, excluding federal holidays and RAINN closures.

DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTS

RAINN will report the following information monthly: the number of calls, minutes of call time, average wait time for answered calls, and number of reports filed.

THREE PHASE PROCESS TO LAUNCH

PHASE I: DISCOVERY PROCESS

- RWIT data capture requirements – visitor demographic and reporting information (must be aligned with RAINN's data capture/confidentiality policies)
- Tailored resource dashboard
- Information sharing with visitors – responses for difficult and frequently asked questions specific to RWIT's policies and procedures
- On-call coordination, warm hand-offs, and visitor accommodation needs

PHASE II: HOTLINE DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF TRAINING

- *Screening:* All hotline staff are subject to extensive screening, which involves multiple interviews and the successful completion of criminal background and reference checks.
- *Training:* All RAINN hotline staff complete an extensive initial training as well as ongoing continuing education provided by internal and external subject matter experts. The training is approved and certified by the National Organization of Victim Assistance and meets requirements needed to obtain the National Advocate Credentialing Program. The training content was developed in collaboration with experts in the fields of crisis intervention, trauma, sexual violence, and special populations (e.g., youth, LGBTQ, male survivors).
- *Security:* Hotline team members work around the clock out of RAINN's secure office in Washington, DC. RAINN has established technological and personnel redundancies to account for extreme weather conditions or other circumstances that would prevent staff from accessing the office, ensuring that hotline services remain constant and are always available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year to those seeking help and resources. All hotline services are provided using RAINN's proprietary hotline software platform.
- *RWIT-Specific Training:* Once RWIT shares their policies and protocols with RAINN, RAINN staffers will be trained on these specific policies, protocols, and any caller information. This training is completed for all hotline staffers two weeks prior to the launch.

PHASE III: HOTLINE LAUNCH

Most typically, the hotline launch is completed at 10:00am ET on the designated launch day. RAINN staffers will be trained and ready to answer the hotline as per the logistics determined in the set-up phase.

RAINN'S CONSULTING SERVICES

Policy Review & Development

Engage RAINN's expertise in developing internal protocol

A strong Sexual Misconduct Policy is the backbone of a successful prevention and response program. RAINN's consultation provides:

- Specific and targeted feedback covering strengths and challenges
- Industry-specific next steps
- Policy development reflective of best and promising practices

Program Assessment

RAINN's most comprehensive service, tailored to your needs

RAINN completes a comprehensive audit resulting in concrete recommendations for best practices and next steps. Assessments include:

- Site visits and key interviews
- Evaluation using RAINN's proprietary Program Standards
- Quantitative and qualitative measures

Training & Education

Empower community members to feel prepared and informed

RAINN utilizes best and promising practices in adult and youth education to foster trauma-informed perspectives. Trainings are:

- Highly customized to your goals
- Virtual or in-person
- Relevant to participants' roles
- Hands-on and interactive

Community Listening

Guide your community through collective healing

Community listening sessions help an organization to restore trust and foster healing. Through RAINN's expert facilitation, clients develop:

- Generative dialogues
- Resiliency-focused structures
- Community safety strategies
- Open lines of communication with those most affected

Facilitated Dialogue

Engage key stakeholders to solve your most pressing issues

Facilitated dialogues engage community leaders in a solutions-focused strategic planning session. Facilitated dialogues identify:

- Gaps in policies and programs
- Opportunities for collaboration
- Current programmatic strengths
- Opportunities for growth in organizational culture

Hotline Services

Respond supportively to community members in crisis

RAINN utilizes its extensive experience, infrastructure, and resources to create a robust and expansive network of support.

In addition to therapy fund hotlines, RAINN works with clients to develop:

- 24/7/365 Crisis Hotlines
- Reporting Hotlines
- Online hotline platform licensing