

# UNIMARK NEWS

4TH  
QUARTER,  
2024



# MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT MIKE SMITH



I hope everyone is having a great day.

We are going into an interesting time frame. On one hand it is an election year and on the other there is a major emission change coming in 2027. I will start with the election. For those of us that have been here through a couple of elections we know when there is not a clear cut direction on what direction the country is going in, we see people hang onto money. This is one reason why we are seeing a downturn in some of the OEM's traffic. We also have a major emissions change coming so the dam will burst at some point. What does this mean for you? Today you may have to work outside of your normal traffic patterns to keep the revenue where you want it to be but there is plenty of work for all of you.

As I'm writing this, Unimark is also working on the budget for next year and with the data collected from the OEM's we should have a good 2025 barring any unforeseen issues. Hino has also fixed their big supply chain issue with parts and they have strong sales numbers for the rest of their year. This is why we added 10 more drivers to handle the monthly demand until the end of their year in March of 2025.

Lastly, it was a great honor that Mark recommended me to be the next President of Unimark and John appointing me to the position. Mark was a great leader and I learned a lot from him. He built a great foundation for us to move forward. Unimark has a lot still to work on and as a team we will continue to move forward. We are planning a drivers meeting towards the end of October. Please try to attend so I can meet all of you and it is a great way to present information as well as receive information from you. For those of you that do not know me, my door is always open. If you need to talk about an issue or have a great idea, reach out to me. As I tell everyone I meet, in an emergency text me 911 and I will drop what I'm doing to help you get it resolved.

Thanks!



Brad Banner  
Eric Barlow  
Alfred Blair  
Mario Botello  
Justin Bowen  
Shekial Brothers  
Johnson  
Twyla Carr  
Logan Carter  
Charles Clark  
Jaguar Cloud  
Robert Colyer  
David Conklin  
Frederick Corley  
Ronald Cox  
Mark Cunningham  
Roderick Dixon  
Samuel Easterling  
John Ellis

Gennadiy Fominov  
Kenneth Foster  
Zannie Griffin  
Thomas Higgins  
Robert Holmes, Jr.  
Kent Hunter  
Jacob Kallio  
Brandon Lyons  
Ryan MacKay  
Jacob McCalister  
Dwight McFadden  
Brian Michalishyn  
Larry Money  
Max Moreno  
Richard Morris  
Hezouwe Ngani  
Nickolas Novakovi

Luther Phifer  
David Pomeroy  
Victor Ramirez  
Fabian Ramos  
Timothy Rivers  
Malik Roberts  
Jesse Seal  
Stanley Stookey  
Aaron Stroud  
Chance Thompson  
Hollie Varner  
Michael Veras  
Raul Villegas  
Michael Williams  
James Woodruff  
Rodney Yates  
Amran Yisrael

MESSAGE FROM OUR VICE PRESIDENT  
STEPHANIE JOHNSTON



September is a very important month in the trucking industry. It is the month that we celebrate drivers with National Truck Driver Appreciation Week.

It is so important to recognize all our hardworking professional drivers and contractors. We appreciate all the long hours you are the road, the holidays and special occasions you miss, and braving the challenging weather conditions and traffic, in order to get our customers products delivered safely.

Thank you all!



# Meet Canadian Driver Barry Chilcot

Barry has been driving for Unimark Canada for 10 years now. Barry was employed at the Stirling factory before it closed. He has always been around trucks and does a great job with all his deliveries for Unimark.

When Barry's not working, he enjoys fishing and hunting. Barry is a vital and trusted employee and we are lucky to have him on board.



# Message from Unimark Director of Operations

## Alex Andrade

Hello Team,

I wanted to start off by thanking everyone for their hard work and as we get close to finishing the year, let's stay safe and be aware of upcoming weather changes so we can finish the year strong. We are entering the last quarter of the year and the holiday season is around the corner. I wanted to reach out and remind everyone of what we can expect as we enter the last quarter. Hopefully with these reminders this will help you to stay safe out there. We want to finish the year strong.

Theft is on the rise! Law enforcement across the country reports seeing an increase in theft every year as we get near the holidays. Please plan your trips as to avoid these areas. No trucks are to be left unattended in any of the hot-spot areas. Here is a list of hot-spots across the country:

**AL - ATHENS**

**AZ - KINGMAN**

**CA - BARSTOW/FONTANA/BANNING AREA**

**CA - BAKERSFIELD/LOST HILLS AREA**

**FL - JACKSONVILLE**

**FL - FT. LAUDERDALE/FT. PIERCE AREA**

**(NOTE: IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE TO AVOID STAYING ANYWHERE IN FLORIDA, IF POSSIBLE.)**

**IA - CLEAR LAKE**

**IA - WALCOTT**

**IL - GREENVILLE**

**IN - INDIANAPOLIS**

**IN - PORTAGE**

**LA - RAYNE/DUSON AREA**

**MO - CAMERON**

**MO - JOPLIN/SPRINGFIELD AREA**

**NE - SIDNEY/GOTHENBURG**

**NM - SANTA ROSA**

**OH - AUSTINBURG AREA**

**OK - BLACKWELL**

**PA - HARRISBURG/GRANTVILLE AREA**

**SD - SIOUX FALLS**

**TN - KNOXVILLE/MORRISTOWN AREA**

**TX - DALLAS/FT. WORTH AREA**

**TX - HOUSTON/BAYTOWN AREA**

**TX - SAN ANTONIO/VON ORMY**

**VA - WOODSTOCK/WINCHESTER AREA**

**WI - JANESVILLE/MAUSTON AREA**



Weather changes are coming! Please make sure to trip plan and watch for weather changes expected in your route. There are some useful Weather Apps such as, OnTheWay or AccuWeather, that can help you trip plan. If your route requires you to go through a state with an active Chain Law, please ensure that you get a set of tire chains before you depart from the terminal. Also, Unimark will require that you carry YakTraks with you. If you don't have a set, please make sure to pick one up from a terminal soon.

Thank you,

Alex

# Staying Fit and Stress-Free on the Road

Maintaining physical health while on the road is crucial for truck drivers. Here are some practical tips to help you stay fit:

1. **Get Enough Sleep:** Aim for at least 7-8 hours of sleep each night. Quality rest is essential for your body to recover and stay alert.

2. **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water and electrolytes throughout the day. Dehydration can lead to fatigue and decreased concentration.

3. **Exercise Regularly:** Incorporate simple exercises like walking, stretching, or even bodyweight exercises during breaks. This helps keep your muscles active and reduces stiffness.

4. **Eat Healthy:** There are many options for food while on the road. Choose nutritious snacks like fruits, nuts, and yogurt. Avoid fast food and sugary drinks, which can lead to energy crashes.

5. **Plan Your Meals:** Prepare healthy meals in advance and store them in a cooler. This helps you avoid unhealthy food options on the road.

## Dealing with Stress

Long hours on the road can be stressful. Here are some strategies to manage stress effectively, both on and off the road:

1. **Practice Deep Breathing:** Deep breathing exercises can help reduce stress and calm your mind. Try taking slow, deep breaths for a few minutes whenever you feel overwhelmed.

2. **Stay Connected:** Keep in touch with family and friends through calls or messages. This can help combat loneliness and provide emotional support. (While ON or OFF duty, not while driving)

3. **Listen to Audiobooks or Podcasts:** Engaging content can keep your mind engaged and reduce stress. Choose topics that interest you or help you learn something new. (Be mindful this does not distract you from being a safe driver)

4. **Take Regular Breaks:** Make sure to take breaks during your trip. Use this time to stretch, walk around, or simply relax.

5. **Practice Mindfulness:** Mindfulness or meditation apps can help you stay present and reduce anxiety. Even a few minutes of mindfulness practice can make a big difference. This is a great way to wind down after a long day on the road.

Remember, taking care of your physical and mental health is essential for a successful and enjoyable career on the road. Stay safe and healthy out there!



# WINTER DRIVING SAFETY

Whether you are fairly new to trucking or a seasoned veteran on the roads, winter weather can make operating your tractor a tricky proposition. Use these winter driving safety tips to make sound decisions and be safe out on the roads this winter.

## Prepare for the Worst

Even though the weather may not look bad when you head out, things can change in a hurry. Once cold weather hits, it's best to always be prepared for the worst. Have these items on hand just in case conditions go south:

- Extra gloves.
- Rain gear.
- An extra jacket.

Make sure you have one that's warm enough for nighttime temperatures.

- Extra food and water.

You never know when you may get stranded.

- Sand or salt.

Using sand or salt can help keep your tires from spinning if you get stuck.

- Windshield scraper.
- Windshield washer fluid.
- Plenty of gas.

The extra weight will make it easier to control your vehicle.

Try not to ride with less than a half a tank.

- Tire chains.
- Jumper cables.
- Batteries and electronic charging equipment.

If you get stranded, you don't want dead batteries to prevent you from getting help.

## Sign Up for Weather Alerts

Checking the weather forecasts before you plan your route could help you to avoid harsh weather. But sometimes conditions will change suddenly. By signing up for weather alerts on your smartphone or email, you might be able to avoid changing conditions by altering your route. This could also help you to avoid traffic delays or road closures, which can cause big setbacks.

## **CHECK YOUR EQUIPMENT**

Commercial drivers are required to complete a pre-trip inspection of their vehicle. But when conditions are bad, you might want to inspect your vehicle more frequently and take a few extra precautions, including:

- Making sure the weight of your load is properly secured and/or evenly distributed.

If your product shifts on icy roads, it'll make it more difficult to control your vehicle.

- Treating your fuel.

Freezing temperatures often cause diesel fuel to congeal.

Treat your fuel with an anti-gel once cold weather hits.

- Making sure you have chains in/on your truck.

You need to comply with all state laws

We do not chain-up to further our load, we chain-up to get out of a dangerous situation and to get to somewhere safe.

- Having on hand extra windshield washer fluid and also extra wiper blades.
- Making sure your headlights, brake lights, and hazard lights are clear of snow whenever you stop.
- Making sure you maintain as much visibility as possible by keeping your windows and mirrors clean and free of ice.

## **Control Your Speed & Avoid Skidding**

Ice and snow will decrease the traction of your tires, which will make sudden stops and turns more difficult. To stay safe, decrease your speed and increase your following distance. Apply your Smith System knowledge. This will give you more reaction time and make hydroplaning less likely. It is also a good idea to turn off your cruise control and adjust your speed frequently according to the conditions.

Similarly, sudden braking can cause them to lock and your truck to skid. This is never a good idea—and can be especially dangerous in foul weather. If you do begin to skid, remember to:

- Pump the brakes.

Locking up your brakes will make things worse.

· Control the truck by turning the wheel in the direction where you want to go.

- At the end of the skid, put the truck in the correct gear for conditions instead of coming to a stop.

Stopping can cause you to become stuck and create more problems.

Remember to accelerate slowly to keep your traction.

### **Watch Out for Trouble Spots**

When it's raining, snowing, or the temps are below freezing, the roads will be even more dangerous. In bad weather, take extra caution when you encounter:

- Exit ramps.

A turn that's too sharp or taken at too high of a speed could cause you to lose control if the road is slippery.

- Bridges.

These surfaces are the first to freeze.

- Black ice.

This transparent ice often looks like nothing more than a wet road.

Look for these spots when temperatures are near freezing.

- Intersections.

Brake early when you see stop signs or red lights.

- Windy areas.

## **Maintain Tire Traction**

Awareness of your speed, accelerations, and braking can help you keep from losing your tire traction on the road when turning and stopping. A few other tips to keep in mind:

- Stay away from the tire tracks of other vehicles. Packed snow is more likely to cause your wheels to spin.
- Make any accelerations gradually.
- Decrease your speed.

The higher the speed, the easier it will be to lose your traction.

- Don't use your Jake brake.

Since this brake controls only the tractor and not the trailer, taking your foot away from the accelerator can make the trailer slide out and cause a jack knife.

## **Don't Be Afraid to Stop**

If conditions get really bad, don't let the pressure of delivering your shipment on time get in the way of your judgment. Whenever driving conditions become unsafe, pull off the road and wait.

Pushing through on roads that haven't been plowed or a storm that's taken a turn for the worse will cause more problems in the long run than reaching your destination a little late.

## **Get Help**

If an emergency does occur, here's what you should remember:

- Don't let anxiety get the best of you.

Modern technology will make it very likely that someone will know where you are, even if you've lost cell phone or radio reception.

- Make a call, if possible.

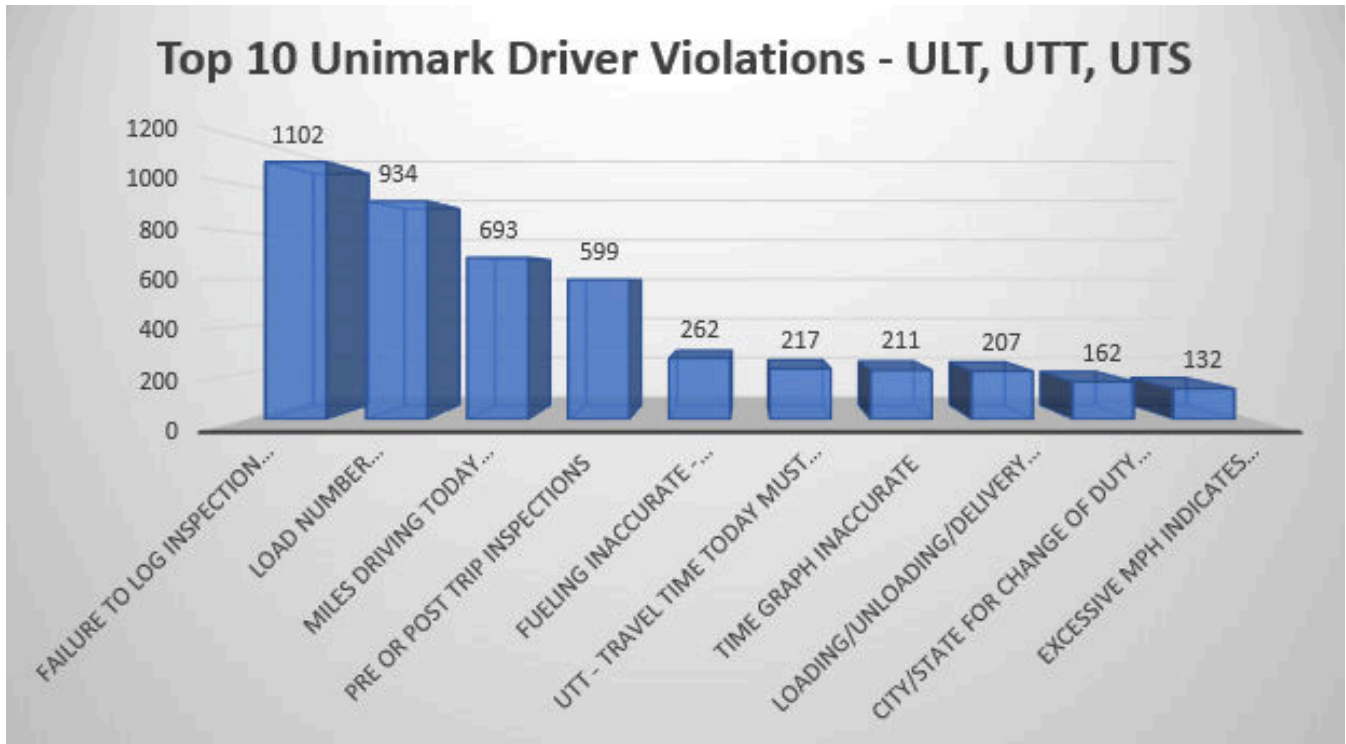
Keep your cell phone and other devices charged just in case you need to make an emergency call in bad weather.

- Stay inside.

Leaving your truck to look for help can put you in a bad situation.

Having extra food and clothing will help you to wait things out inside the truck until help arrives.

# HOS Violations



As you can see on the accompanying graph, drivers' Failure To Log Inspections/Failure To Inspect Loads is the number one logging violation the logs department is for all Unimark divisions, representing 22% of all violations. Missing Or Inaccurate Load Numbers is a close second at 19%. With this week's rollout of the Driver Walk Through in Motive, there will be reminders and requirements to verify Load Numbers when starting a new trip. We expect see a sharp downturn in the occurrence of missing or inaccurate load number violations.

The Top 10 violations shown are categorized as either Log Falsification violations or Equipment Basic violations. If involved in an accident, these violations could be used against the driver and the company in court. More and more drivers, along with their companies' executives, are being charged and fined personally when these types of violations are found as a result of accident investigations.

Keep in mind that if you are in an accident, law enforcement and opposing lawyers can and will subpoena records such as: dispatch records and times; flight, taxi, and hotel information; fuel and credit card receipts; and phone records (company as well as personal). These types of records have been used to convict drivers and company personnel, resulting in hefty fines and jail sentences. Besides the personal consequences, these items also increase the drivers' and the company's CSA scores. This directly affects things like insurance rates, insurability, and customers' decisions to contract with Unimark, as well as how often our trucks are pulled into scales for inspection. Saving a little bit of time today is not worth fines or jail time tomorrow. If you need assistance with logs or are unsure about a regulation, please call the Safety Department.

# New Lowboy Trailer Added to Fleet



**Nova Bus test load done in September**

Unimark Lowboy has added a new trailer to the mix that has a removeable gooseneck.

## **Capabilities:**

Ability to load trucks from the front end of the trailer.

1. Loading EV units in a much safe way to eliminate potential damages.
2. Load low pro trucks from the front eliminating potential damages from loading from the back.
3. Tires can fit in pocket of trailer, lowering the height of vehicles.

Removed galvanized coating and went to a paint process, reducing overall weight by 400 lbs.

Can load up to 50,000 pounds as a single unit.

In September, Larry Barnard and driver Dan Krile went to meet with Nova Bus in St. Eustache, QC to do a test load on one of their buses. It went very well and we hope to be able to help them out with future moves.

We are actively looking for further opportunities to put the new trailer to work.

# **CSA SCORES: WHAT ARE THEY AND WHY ARE THEY SO IMPORTANT?**

We use CSA scores as a valuable tool because they offer real-time, tangible data on all drivers and equipment within the organization.

This helps us effectively monitor and evaluate performance, ensuring we have up-to-date insights into our drivers and fleet.

## **Closing Thoughts First**

UTS - still maintaining a score of ZERO across the board for all 7 BASIC's. Outstanding job!

UTT - Vehicle Maintenance and Crash Indicator on the decline. Unsafe Driving had a jump recently due to reportable accidents. Hours of Service is finally starting to decline after jumping last October.

- Total inspections - 76 w/violations - 19/25% crashes - 4
  - Top three violations (all tied at 2 each)
    - o Failing to use seat belt while operating a CMV
    - o Lane Restriction violation
    - o Tire in contact with another part of the vehicle

ULT - Congratulations! We are starting to see a decline in Vehicle Maintenance. Your hard work and attention to tractor and trailer maintenance is beginning to pay off! Let's keep the trend moving in the right direction. Hours of Service also continues to decline.

- Total inspections - 196 w/violations - 115/59% crashes - 15
  - Top three violations
    - o Inoperable required lamp
    - o Lane restriction violation

o State/Local Laws - Speeding 6-10 miles per hour over the speed limit

CSA scores, or Compliance, Safety, Accountability scores, are a safety measurement system used by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to identify high-risk motor carriers and drivers. These scores are designed to ensure that best safety practices are followed within the trucking industry.

## KEY POINTS ABOUT CSA SCORES

1. **Components:** CSA scores are based on seven Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories (BASIC's), which include:

- Unsafe Driving
- Hours-of-Service Compliance
- Driver Fitness
- Controlled Substances/Alcohol
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Hazardous Materials Compliance
- Crash Indicator

2. **Data Collection:** The scores are calculated using data from roadside inspections, crash reports, and investigation results over a rolling 2-year period.

3. **Impact:** High CSA scores can lead to interventions from the FMCSA, such as warnings, fines, or even out-of-service orders. They also affect insurance rates, insurability, and business contracts.

4. **Purpose:** The primary goal of CSA scores is to improve road safety by identifying and addressing risky behaviors and practices among drivers and carriers.

Understanding and maintaining good CSA scores is crucial for the safety and success of both drivers and trucking companies. If you have any more questions or need further details, feel free to ask!



# **COMMON CSA VIOLATIONS**

## **1. Hours of Service (HOS) Violations**

- Description: Exceeding the maximum number of driving hours or not taking required rest breaks.
- Consequences: Increased risk of fatigue-related accidents, fines, and higher CSA scores.

## **2. Vehicle Maintenance Issues**

- Description: Problems such as brake system defects, inadequate tire tread depth, and faulty lighting.
- Consequences: Increased likelihood of breakdowns and accidents, fines, and higher CSA scores.

## **3. Driver Fitness Violations**

- Description: Issues related to drivers' physical and medical qualifications, such as expired medical certificates.
- Consequences: Drivers may be deemed unfit to drive, leading to fines and higher CSA scores.

## **4. Unsafe Driving Violations**

- Description: Behaviors like speeding, reckless driving, and using a cell phone while driving.
- Consequences: Higher risk of accidents, fines, and increased CSA scores.

## **5. Controlled Substances/Alcohol Violations**

- Description: Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Consequences: Severe penalties, including license suspension, fines, and significantly higher CSA scores.

## **6. Log Falsification**

- Description: Falsifying log entries or records.
- Consequences: Legal repercussions, fines, and higher CSA scores.

## CONSEQUENCES OF CSA VIOLATIONS

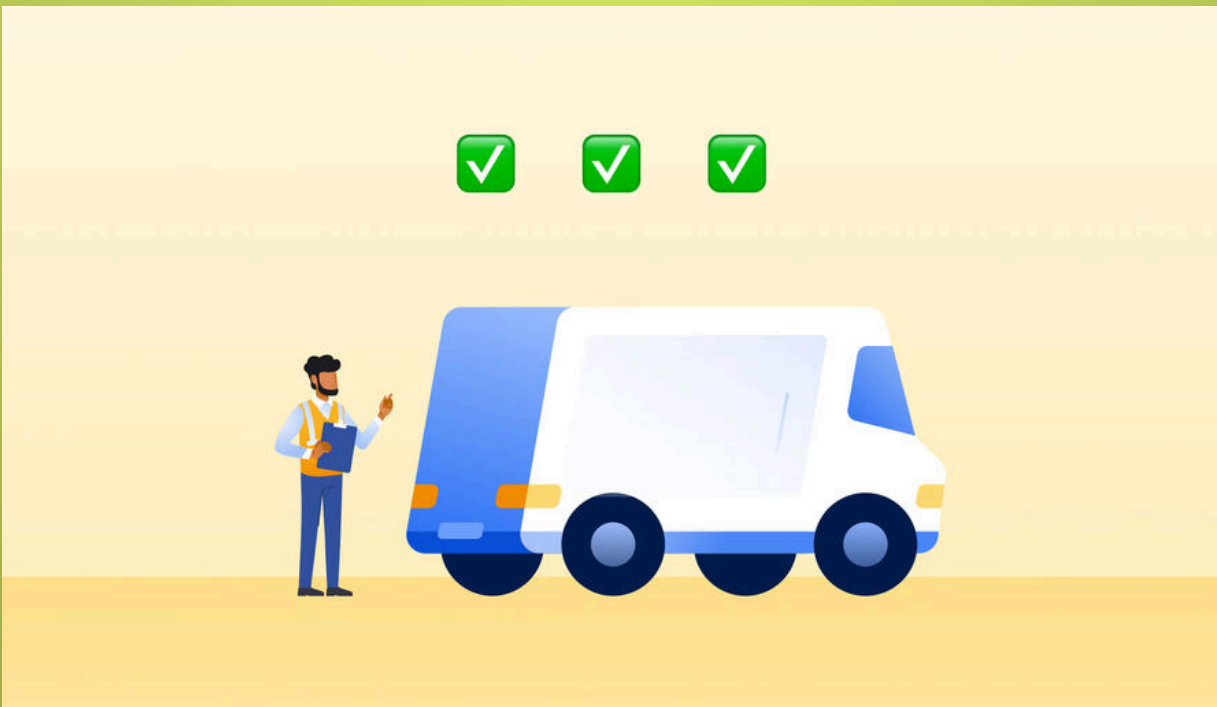
**Legal and Financial Penalties:** Violations can result in fines, legal action, and increased insurance premiums.

**Operational Impact:** High CSA scores can lead to more frequent inspections and potential out-of-service orders.

**Reputation Damage:** Poor CSA scores can affect a company's reputation, making it harder to secure contracts and retain customers.

**Driver Consequences:** Drivers with high CSA scores may face job loss, difficulty finding new employment, and personal fines.

Understanding and addressing these common violations is crucial for maintaining safety and compliance on the road. If you have any more questions or need further details, feel free to contact the Safety Department.



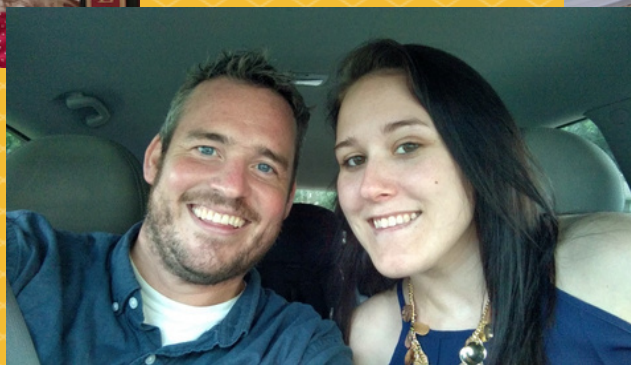
# Meet Dispatcher Thomas Autry

I have been employed with Unimark since December of 2023. I work in the Joplin, Missouri office reviewing logs and communicating with drivers to let them know how to avoid logs-related problems. Coming from a larger trucking company as a fleet manager, I have been absolutely blown away by how friendly and professional everyone is here at Unimark. I still have much to learn, but I look forward to working here for a long time and continuing to get to know everyone.

I grew up here in Joplin and left to join the Army in 1997. I was attached to 1st Armored Division in Germany and, later, 1st Cavalry Division in Ft. Hood. I returned to Joplin and began attending school while working at a hospital as a ward clerk. Later, I worked as a dispatcher and fleet manager for CFI.

In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my wife and three children. I am a casual computer enthusiast and I hold a HAM radio license that I hope to be able to actually use one day. For now, though, my time is spent taking the kids to soccer games and cheerleading practices.

I want to thank everybody for being so welcoming and friendly. This definitely made my first six months as a new employee a really enjoyable experience.





# **Holiday Office Hours**

**Closed: Thursday, November 28th and Friday, November 29th  
for Thanksgiving**

**Closed: Tuesday, December 24th and Wednesday, December  
25th for Christmas**

**Closed: Wednesday, January 1st for New Year's**