

Scott Malozi
Trucker
Port of Baltimore

Meet Scott Malozi

My name is Scott Malozi. Almost twenty-three years [now], I've been driving a truck. I was fascinated ... I was always a little kid playing trucks in the dirt. My sister, I used to make her play with me all the time, and just growing up around it with my father and my uncle ... it was just something. Like it ... we would go somewhere, I was on a far trip, everyone would be sleeping in the car, and I would be looking for every truck I could see. I just think it's fascinating, I'm just fascinated with them, just watching them go down the highway. At night time, I'll be looking for the lights, you know the marker lights coming the other way. My grandparents use to live out in Western Maryland and we used to go up there on weekends, so all night long, I sit there and count trucks. It might be a couple hundred one night, some nights might be twenty. I used to get disappointed when I only seen twenty.

Explain what you do. Talk about an average day at work for you.

I start 6:00 in the morning. I'll take a load out, deliver it, sometimes it might be two or three loads I deliver and then, later on in the evening, we'll go into the pier and pull more containers out for the next day and then we start all over again. We always have to check out the vehicle ... make sure its safe operation.

Here at this job, I find it fortunate, I drive the same truck everyday so you get the feel for the vehicle but every morning you do a vehicle inspection, you walk around, you check all your fluids. At the end of the day, you do the same thing, check your tires.

Being a good truck driver, it's more than just holding a steering wheel. A lot of people say, "Driving a truck is not that hard", well, it is. The thing is the safety. I have about 1.5 million safe miles driving so it takes a lot of concentration. You're more driving your vehicle and then plus, you're driving, you always anticipating what the next person is going to do. Just take your time, make sure you do it right, you do it safe.

Why did you choose this career? What about it appealed to you?

(It's a) family thing. My father drove, my uncle drove, and I used to say, that's what I want to do. I guess I took after my father and I started driving for a local supermarket, got a little bit of experiences there, and then branched out in different areas of trucking. In my year book, I wrote ... what I want to do for a living, I wrote, "truck driver." So, here I am (laughing).

How did you prepare for this career? How did your career begin?

I've been driving almost twenty-three years, so back then, they really didn't have all these schools like they do now; the colleges didn't offer the courses. It's was like, if you knew someone with the truck, that's how you learned how to drive. I was working for a local supermarket, and they knew I wanted to get into driving, so what I used to do, I used to work night work stocking shelves and I'd get off during the day, and I would go jockeying trailers around their warehouse. And when they seen that I could back the truck up, then they took my out on the road (with) their Number One driver. That's how I learned how to drive a truck. Once they knew that I could back up, which is the hard thing, he took me out and taught me everything that I know. Eventually he felt comfortable enough, to say "OK, I think you can do this yourself," he took me up to Motor Vehicle, I got my license. Had to take a road test and I got my license.

What personality traits or interests can be a good match for this career?

You've got to be easy going. A lot of people, you know, you hear it all the time, road rage and stuff. You get out on the highway especially on a high populated area, like the area that we're in, you deal with it a lot. No one ever wants to be behind a truck, so you have to anticipate a little bit. You know they're going to try to do everything they can to get in front of you, so you just back off. And you know they're going to do it, just let them do it. If you come in with the attitude to where ... you have an attitude against them, like I'm going to get this guy back, you just get yourself in trouble.

What parts of your education do you use most often in this career?

(The things) I learned in school ... math skills and you need good English. You do a lot of math like calculating field mileage, you know gives miles for the day, distance from point A to point B. In ... English, you're always communicating with somebody. You want to go in communicating with the person in the warehouse or you're going into a pier or you talk to them on the phone, they have to understand what you are saying, and what you want done.

What has been the career track that's gotten you from your first job to where you are now? What special degrees or licenses did you need to get along the way?

I used to drive all 48 states and Canada. I always wanted to see the country, (and trucking is) a good way of seeing the country. When you get a little older, you get into raising a family. I find home time is the best. When you're out on the road, I used to be gone a week or two at a time. I was looking for a job, a good local job, where I was home every day to be with the family.

On my license, everyone in the business just refers to it as a CDL license. I can haul Hazmat ... hazardous materials, that takes ,, you have a book, a safety data book in the truck, plus I can pull double trailers, I can pull triple trailers, I can drive a tour bus, I can pull a tanker. For each one of those endorsements, you have to take a different test in the Motor Vehicle Administration and each one, each test for tanker, certain things you need

to know about pulling a tanker truck. Certain things you need to know about hauling hazardous materials.

What is the best part of your career?

I just love it! You get freedom, pretty much, as long as you are doing your job and doing it right. You pretty much ... you work your own pace. It's not "hurry up get here," "hurry up and get here."

How has your work changed over the years? What role has technology played in those changes?

When I first started driving, I had a Ford, I used to drive a Ford 9000. It had no power steering. It had a hole, like where you can stand up on the floor board to turn the wheel. But now, the trucks are a lot nicer, a lot safer. This is like a Cadillac. Everything has power in it. They handle a lot better. They ride smoother. Everything in them is just a lot nicer.

When I first started, they didn't have anything in them. Now they have satellites, a lot of trucks have satellites in them so the company will know where the truck is all the time. They use that for dispatching and routing. They have onboard computers for the truck driver, like if he owns his own truck, he can put one in there and keep track of his fuel mileage.

How does your work fit into the larger framework of the work at the Port?

Pulling containers off the Port, you're hauling a lot of things coming from overseas. There is containers that come in and they do go to different states. Pretty much everything we haul stays in the state of Maryland and it could be anything. It could be a load of shoes. It could be rice, canned pineapple. We load ... we go down the Eastern Shore Maryland, load canned corn that goes overseas. It's great for the local economy, especially having the Port especially right here.

What advice would you have for anyone who wants to have the kind of career you have?

Now, a lot of people go through these truck driving schools or even they offer courses in certain community colleges where, you know, you actually go through the colleges and take them. That's a good way of dealing with it, is through the college. I know some people who went that route and it really turned out good for them. Like truck driving schools, a lot of big area road companies go to these truck driving schools to recruit drivers and that's a good way to get into driving also.

Over the years, like I said, if you keep a good driving record and good work ethic where you can prove you're a good worker and a safe driver, you can drive a truck pretty much anywhere you want. You can get into any kind of trucking you want, because right now

there is a truck driver shortage. There is companies everywhere looking for truck drivers and, as long as you get your time, like I said, you start out kind of low, as you get more experience, the better job you can get.