

Understanding Trade Associations and Government Organizations



Trucking Trade Association 101

A trade association is a business representing the common interests of its members. The trade association may represent its members through lobbying and influencing government to act in a manner that benefits its members. It may also serve its members through programs to improve business professionalism and set industry standards. It may have training programs for individuals and companies. A trade association may do all of the above.

First, though, the trade association is a business and must have members to support it. Though commonly non-profit in structure, a trade association requires revenue to pay its staff, conduct its operations, and provide services to its members. Trade association revenue sources usually include member dues (often based on how large the member is, measured by

company income or the number of facilities or equipment), meeting registrations, advertising income, and sales of products and subscriptions. If the trade association serves individuals in a profession rather than companies, the member dues may also be supplemented by fees for certification programs.

Trade associations represent the common interests of members.

Joining a trade association is voluntary. That means trade associations must attract and

retain members. They do so by appealing to common interests. Often the common interest is what segment of an industry a trade association represents. Many industry segments are subject to specialized regulations and work with distinct legislative committees, so specialized representation through a separate trade association may be warranted. In trucking, there are trade associations, by example, for household goods carriers, owner-operators, intermodal carriers, and so on. Similarly, trade associations also

declare a geographic focus, indicating whether they work at the national, regional or state level. For example, there is the National Tank Truck Carriers, the Mid-West Truckers Association, and the Florida Trucking Association, among many others.

While the chief benefit of belonging to a trade association may be advancing the policy interests of an industry, when it comes to trucking, individual fleets and their employees – safety and maintenance directors, drivers, technicians, tax and accounting professionals and attorneys – may find training programs at a trucking association which improve their personal capabilities and the operations of their company. At a trucking association, for example, there may be another company that uses the same equipment, runs the same computer program or faces the same tax issue and is willing to solve a

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shared problem. There may even be a group within the association organized to do that. That is especially true when it comes to safety – trucks and drivers are ultimately only as safe as the “other guy” – four-wheeler or 18-wheeler – also on the road. So, at trucking associations, safety training programs and group meetings with law enforcement are good opportunities for members and their personnel to help each other and themselves.

Understanding The Alphabet Soup of Trucking Trade Associations and Government Organizations

Alphabetically, here are acronyms of the better-known national trucking-related trade associations and federal agencies with a snapshot of what each does.

AAA – American Automobile Association

National trade association representing motorists, with affiliated state organizations. Best known for its products and services, AAA also lobbies the federal government. Why is AAA listed among trucking-related associations? Because AAA weighs in on many highway and safety issues affecting trucking, and because its research arm, the AAA Foundation, is well recognized.

AAMVA – American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators

National trade association for state-level departments of motor vehicles (DMVs). AAMVA played a key role in the development of the International Registration Plan (IRP) for the apportionment of truck registration fees. AAMVA and its member DMVs continue to be important in truck registration, titling, and collecting proof of payment for the federal Heavy Vehicle Use Tax (HVUT).

AASHTO – American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

National trade association, with regional units, representing state-level departments of transportation (DOTs). AASHTO is a primary voice on truck size and weight limits, weight enforcement, and highway design. AASHTO will lobby Congress, but its major focus is the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

ABA – American Bus Association

National trade association representing bus companies, and not to be confused with the American Bar Association, representing lawyers. Because the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) regulates buses as well as trucks, ABA comments on the same FMCSA regulatory proposals. Buses and trucks share the road, so there is frequent coordination between their associations, nationally and at the state level.

ACC – Automobile Carriers Conference

National trade association representing auto transporters. Housed within the American Trucking Associations (ATA), ACC has its own board and lobbies on issues of special interest to its members.

AFTC – Agricultural & Food Transporters Conference

National trade association representing agricultural transporters, refrigerated and food carriers. Housed within the American Trucking Associations (ATA), AFTC has its own board and lobbies on issues of special interest to its members.

AMSA – American Moving & Storage Association

National trade association representing household goods moving companies and affiliated services. FMCSA regulates aspects of household goods (HHG) transportation, so AMSA pays close attention to FMCSA regulatory proposals.

ATA – American Trucking Associations

National trade association representing all types of trucking companies. ATA has within its umbrella “conferences” representing specialized sectors of trucking (hence, the plural “Associations” for ATA),

as well as national non-lobbying professional associations (“councils”) for key trucking executives contained within this list. There are 50 state-level trucking associations, independent organizations with a formal affiliation with ATA.

ATRI – American Transportation Research Institute

A non-profit research group formally affiliated with the American Trucking Associations (ATA). As directed by its broad-based Research Advisory Committee (RAC), ATRI conducts studies on a wide range of trucking issues. ATRI is best known for its annual survey of top issues in trucking and its update on the operational costs of trucking.

CANACAR – Cámara Nacional del Autotransporte de Carga

National trade association in Mexico representing for-hire trucking companies. CANACAR is a key player in cross-border trucking issues, and like ATA and CTA, a member of the International Road Transport Union (IRU).

CTA – Canadian Trucking Alliance

National trade association in Canada representing trucking companies and suppliers. CTA is an “Alliance” due to the prominence of the provinces and provincial trucking associations in the Canadian system of government. CTA is a key player in cross-border trucking issues

CVSA – Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance

National trade association comprised of local, state, provincial, territorial and federal commercial motor vehicle safety officials and industry representatives. CVSA includes commercial motor vehicle enforcement officials from Canada and Mexico, as well as the U.S. Representing the folks who enforce regulations, CVSA is an active voice on FMCSA proposals.

CVTA – Commercial Vehicle Training Association

National trade association representing truck driver training schools. CVTA is active on driver training and curriculum proposals from FMCSA.

DMV – Department of Motor Vehicles

The state or provincial agency of the same or similar name which registers and titles vehicles and collects related fees.

DOT – Department of Transportation

The state, provincial or federal (USDOT) department of the same or similar name responsible for all aspects of transportation.

EPA – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

EPA is an independent agency of the federal government. Together with NHTSA, EPA sets fuel efficiency and emissions standards for many different kinds of vehicles, including commercial trucks.

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration

An agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), FHWA sets the standards and controls the federal share of money for the construction and maintenance of federal-aid highways, which includes the interstate highway system.

FMCSA – Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration

An agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), FMCSA regulates the safety of trucks, buses and their drivers

IANA – Intermodal Association of North America

International trade association covering ocean, rail and trucking interests in their operations with each other.

IFTA – International Fuel Tax Agreement

IFTA is the base state agreement that allocates fuel taxes according to commercial motor vehicle travel. IFTA, Inc. is the governing body, with voting members from fuel tax agencies in every U.S. state and Canadian province.

IMCC – Intermodal Motor Carriers Conference

National trade association representing trucking companies before both government and private industry in their multimodal operations with railroads and ports. Housed within the American Trucking Associations (ATA), IMCC has its own board and lobbies on issues of special interest to its members.

IRP – International Registration Plan

IRP is the base state agreement that allocates registration fees according to commercial motor vehicle travel. IRP, Inc. is the governing body, with voting members from DMVs in every U.S. state and Canadian province.

IWLA – International Warehouse Logistics Association

International (U.S. and Canada) trade association representing warehouse and distribution companies. Because of its supply chain focus, IWLA is often active in trucking issues, such as hours of service.

MTA – Mid-West Truckers Association

Regional trade association representing trucking companies and owner-operators and providing services, such as drug testing and workers compensation coverage. Not affiliated with any national trade association.

NAFC – National Accounting and Finance Council

National non-lobbying professional association for trucking executives in finance, accounting, tax, and risk management. Housed within the American Trucking Associations (ATA), NAFC (sometimes referred to as NA&FC) educates its members in those areas and provides advice to relevant policy committees within ATA.

NASTC – National Association of Small Trucking Companies

National group purchasing association providing products and services to small trucking companies and promoting competitive equality among fleets.

NATSO

National trade association representing travel plazas and truck stops

NHTSA – National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

An agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), NHTSA determines the safety standards for all motor vehicles, including heavy trucks. Where NHTSA sets standards for vehicles when manufactured, FMCSA regulates the same equipment when then put into use by motor carriers and bus companies. Together with EPA, NHTSA sets fuel efficiency and greenhouse gas emission standards for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles.

NPTC – National Private Truck Council

National trade association representing private motor carriers – trucking fleets that are a division of a manufacturer or retailer. Distinct from for-hire carriers, who are their own separate business and sell their services to shippers.

NTTC – National Tank Truck Carriers

National trade association representing carriers operating tankers. NTTC primarily focuses on legislation and regulations affecting tanker equipment or segments of tank truck operations, such as food-grade, petroleum, bulk, and hazardous materials.

NTSB – National Transportation Safety Board

Independent U.S. government investigative agency responsible for civil transportation accident investigations. NTSB looks at all types of accidents – including truck crashes – and makes recommendations to Congress and federal agencies.

OOIDA – Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association

International (U.S. and Canada) trade association representing independent truck drivers, owner-operators, small fleets and even some company drivers

PSC – Public Service Commission

State agency charged with the economic regulation of utilities, at one time including intrastate trucking. See also PUC.

PUC – Public Utilities Commission

State agency charged with the economic regulation of utilities, at one time including intrastate trucking. See also PSC.

SAMHSA – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

An agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), SAMHSA issues scientific and technical guidelines for federal drug testing programs, such as the mandatory testing of interstate truck and bus drivers.

SCRA – Specialized Carrier and Rigging Association

International trade association representing trucking companies involved in specialized transportation, machinery moving and erecting, and crane and rigging operations

SMC – Safety Management Council

National non-lobbying professional association for trucking executives in safety. Housed within the American Trucking Associations (ATA), SMC educates its members on safety practices and advises relevant ATA policy committees. SMC is best known for operating the National Truck Driving Championships.

STA – State Trucking Association

STA is a common term used for any state-level trucking association when the formal name of the association is not known or needed.

STB – Surface Transportation Board

Independent federal adjudicatory board. STB inherited many of the functions of the Interstate Commerce Commission when the ICC was abolished. STB has broad authority over railroads and pipeline carriers and limited authority over certain aspects of household goods carriers, water carriers, intercity buses, and collective actions of trucking companies.

TAT – Truckers Against Trafficking

National organization training drivers and carriers in recognizing and reporting instances of human trafficking.

TCA – Truckload Carriers Association

National trade association representing trucking companies which transport full loads, primarily without a network of terminals.

TIA – Transportation Intermediaries Association

National trade association representing freight forwarders and brokers.

TIDA - Trucking Industry Defense Association

National association of motor carriers, trucking insurers, defense attorneys and claims servicing companies working to reduce the cost of claims and lawsuits against the trucking industry.

TMC - Technology and Maintenance Council

National non-lobbying professional association for trucking maintenance executives and equipment supplier personnel. Housed within the American Trucking Associations (ATA), TMC develops Recommended Engineering and Maintenance Practices that are voluntarily adopted by fleets, original equipment manufacturers and components suppliers. TMC advises relevant ATA policy committees and operates the annual National Technician Skills Competition, known also as TMC SuperTech.

TRALA - Truck Renting and Leasing Association

National trade association for companies involved in the renting and leasing of commercial trucks and trailers and related services.

TSA - Truckers Service Association

National group purchasing association providing products and services to independent owner-operators and promoting the independent contractor business model.

TSC - Transportation Security Council

National non-lobbying professional association for trucking personnel focused on cargo, truck, facility, supply chain and information security and effective loss control. Housed within the American Trucking Associations (ATA), TSC coordinates closely with law enforcement and Homeland Security and advises relevant ATA policy committees.

TTMA - Truck Trailer Manufacturers Association

International trade association for the manufacturers of trailers. TTMA works on regulations and legislation involving trailers, including their role in fuel efficiency standards.

UMA - United Motorcoach Association

National trade association representing bus companies, with a focus on charter operations. Like ABA, UMA comments on regulatory proposals from FMCSA and works closely with national and state trucking associations on highway safety.

USDOT - U.S. Department of Transportation

Cabinet-level federal department which houses FHWA, FMCSA and NHTSA, among other agencies.

WIT - Women In Trucking

National organization encouraging the employment of women in the trucking industry, promoting their accomplishments, and minimizing obstacles faced by them.



State Trucking Associations Affiliated with American Trucking Associations (ATA)

Each of the 50 states in the U.S. has a state-level trucking association, an independent organization affiliated with the American Trucking Associations (ATA). The STAs, as they are collectively known, represent trucking companies before state legislatures and state agencies.

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They vary in membership numbers and professional staff size. Some may offer specialized representation for segments of trucking. Safety committees and training programs are common. Because federal programs and regulations are frequently carried out or enforced at the state level, close coordination between the STAs and ATA on political and policy matters is a necessity.

There are numerous other state or local trucking associations, but these are the ones that work with the leading national associations. Links to each state trucking association website are [on the ATA website](#).

ATA	Alabama Trucking Association
ATA	Alaska Trucking Association
ATA	Arizona Trucking Association
ATA	Arkansas Trucking Association
CTA	California Trucking Association
CMCA	Colorado Motor Carriers Association
MTAC	Motor Transport Association of Connecticut
DMTA	Delaware Motor Transport Association
FTA	Florida Trucking Association

GMTA	Georgia Motor Trucking Association
HTA	Hawaii Transportation Association
ITA	Idaho Trucking Association
ITA	Illinois Trucking Association
IMTA	Indiana Motor Truck Association
IMTA	Iowa Motor Truck Association
KMCA	Kansas Motor Carriers Association
KTA	Kentucky Trucking Association
LMTA	Louisiana Motor Transport Association
MMTA	Maine Motor Transport Association
MMTA	Maryland Motor Truck Association
TAM	Trucking Association of Massachusetts
MTA	Michigan Trucking Association
MTA	Minnesota Trucking Association
MTA	Mississippi Trucking Association
MoTA	Missouri Trucking Association
MCM	Motor Carriers of Montana
NTA	Nebraska Trucking Association
NTA	Nevada Trucking Association
NHMTA	New Hampshire Motor Transport Association
NJMTA	New Jersey Motor Truck Association
NMTA	New Mexico Trucking Association
TANY	Trucking Association of New York
NCTA	North Carolina Trucking Association
NDMCA	North Dakota Motor Carriers Association
OTA	Ohio Trucking Association
OTA	Oklahoma Trucking Association
OTA	Oregon Trucking Associations

PMTA	Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association
RITA	Rhode Island Trucking Association
SCTA	South Carolina Trucking Association
SDTA	South Dakota Trucking Association
TTA	Tennessee Trucking Association
TXTA	Texas Trucking Association
UTA	Utah Trucking Association
VBTA	Vermont Truck and Bus Association
VTA	Virginia Trucking Association
WTA	Washington Trucking Associations
WVTA	West Virginia Trucking Association
WMCA	Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association
WTA	Wyoming Trucking Association

Provincial Trucking Associations Affiliated with Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA)

There are seven provincial associations affiliated with the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA). Links to each provincial association can be found [on the CTA website.](#)

AMTA	Alberta Motor Transport Association
APTA	Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association
BCTA	British Columbia Trucking Association
MTA	Manitoba Trucking Association
OTA	Ontario Trucking Association
QTA	Quebec Trucking Association (l'Association du camionnage du Québec)
STA	Saskatchewan Trucking Association



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