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Our editorial policy encompasses informing drivers, fleet managers and carriers of the news and information about the expedited trucking community.

News and feature articles are compiled to keep owner operators and drivers apprised of industry trends and events, and other issues which impact those who move this industry.

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COVER STORY

# Q&A: Premium Transportation Logistics

By Sandy Long, Staff Writer

I recently had the opportunity to talk with David Swartz, Partner and head of business Development for PTL (Premium Transportation Logistics) about the history, benefits and future of the company.

**Q.** Tell us a little bit about yourself and the role you play at Premium Transportation Logistics (PTL, LLC).

**A.** I used to have a “real job” as a



David Swartz, Partner/Business Development

tool and die maker before starting in transportation.

Here at PTL, LLC my original function was President of Sales. Since developing a strong sales team, I've moved into the legal, banking, finance, and asset acquisition side of the business.

**Q.** Give us a little history about PTL, LLC.

**A.** PTL, LLC started in 2003 with partners Chris Morey, John Mueller, and myself, and a handful of trucks. Shortly thereafter we opened Premium Freight Management, the brokerage division, because we had way more freight than trucks.

**Q.** What industry organizations is PTL, LLC affiliated with?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8  
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**A.** TEANA, Smartway, Toledo Transportation Association, Detroit Transportation Club, soon to be a TIA member... just to name a few.

**Q.** PTL, LLC appears to offer several trucking services. Can you tell us more about that?

**A.** Mainly we focus on ground expedite. We also have a truckload division, and the brokerage division offers flatbed, reefer service, air freight and air charter options.

**Q.** With these different services that you offer, what kind of drivers are you looking for to build the fleet?

**A.** The best of the best. Top Quality. Premium pay, Premium freight, for Premium drivers.

**Q.** Driver retention is the buzz. What kind of driver retention programs does PTL, LLC have to offer?

**A.** First and foremost is the PAY. Premium offers the highest pay in the industry. Average cargo van loaded mile \$1.26, Sprinter average loaded mile all in \$1.37, Straight truck all in \$1.92, Tractor all-in loaded mile \$3.50 Also drivers can participate in the Drive For Gold Program, a rewards program that gives points for things such as not turning down loads, extra training, and timely logs, and can be redeemed for merchandise.

**Q.** Why do owner operators and drivers want to be part of PTL, LLC?

**A.** We are very driver-focused. Offering good loads for great pay.

**Q.** In expediting, freight emergencies happen every day. Can you recall any recent situations where a PTL, LLC driver "saved the day" for your customer?

**A.** David Allen was out of service about a month ago. He dead-headed 150 miles at the last minute for one of our largest customers. He saved the company from having to shut down.

**Q.** If you had a crystal ball - what kind of freight year can the industry expect for 2015?

**A.** I'm expecting freight trends consistent with 2014.

**Q.** What's next for PTL, LLC?

**A.** We are looking to acquire another carrier or open a southern operation in South Carolina, Tennessee, or Georgia.

**Q.** Anything else you'd like our reader to know?

**A.** PTL, LLC is set to grow nationally and internationally. We are also set to grow our company driver truckload fleet. We have 2014 & 2015 models open and ready to run.... Come and Grow with us! **EN**

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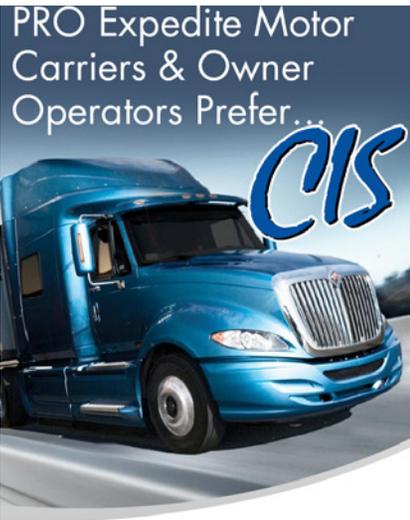


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# INSURANCE EZONE

by Shelly Benisch, C.I.C.

## The Devil is in the Details

Confusion continues regarding how and when an Owner Operator's policy "triggers" and pays when the Owner Op provides his own Primary Commercial Auto Liability and Cargo as utilized in the "Multi" insurance model.

Recent unpaid claims in our Expediting Community highlighted what happens when an Owner Operator provides the wrong type of coverage to the Motor Carrier.

Here's the problem, for the Multi coverage to "trigger" and "pay first" for an Expedite Owner Operator, his policy must have endorsements added to it.

"Unlimited" radius is the least of it... if an Owner Ops' policy does not include endorsements of "Non-Contributory" for Liability and "Care, Custody and Control" for Cargo, insurance companies are within their contractual rights to deny coverage per THEIR CONTRACT with the Owner Operator. The claim then falls back to the Motor Carrier, and this is what has occurred in the uncovered claims that are swirling around right now.

You see, when an Owner Operator hauls for the benefit of a Motor Carrier across state lines, or hauls cargo where his name is never on the Bill of Lading everything becomes about CONTRACTS.

The stricter insurance requirements everyone is seeing is because of the unpaid claims where 3PLs and Brokers were left holding the bag when the Motor Carrier thought they understood how it all works...and didn't. **EN**

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# Ship Happens: When a Good Load Goes Bad!

By Sandy Long, Staff Writer

We all have them if one drives long enough: those loads booked, loaded and scheduled by those in the Murphy family or the devil himself; everything that possibly could go wrong does. Expediting does not give one a pass on those types of loads; everyone from courier cars to semi trucks will find a hellish load at some point.

**J**im, a driver in a metropolitan area, was scheduled to pick up an important envelope full of documents to take to the airport on the other side of town to hand deliver to a person who was going to be leaving on the next flight out. Jim had just enough time to make it when he was dispatched. When he got to the pickup destination, the papers were



not quite ready. He lost five minutes. On the way to the airport, he got held up due to an accident in between exits, he lost ten minutes. By the time he got to the airport, the flight was boarding. Running to get to the boarding area, he slipped and sprained his ankle. Limping the final distance, he luckily found the recipient standing by the boarding ramp. With seconds to spare, he handed over the envelope.

Suzanne and her husband were dispatched on a hot load. They got to the shippers and checked in. They were told they would be called on their phone with a dock assignment as soon as possible. They checked back in every hour only to be told at the end of five hours that the load had been canceled earlier that day and no one had told anyone, or so they were told. Calling their dispatch, they were told to go to the truck stop and wait an hour or two. At the end of the second hour Suzanne was sent back to the same shipper to pick

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30  
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## SHIP HAPPENS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

up the same load, now seven hours later. "I asked if the delivery time was to be changed and was told no. I finally called the receiver against company policy and told them of the situation; they agreed to push back the delivery time thankfully." Suzanne said.

John, a tractor owner operator leased on with an expedite company related his hellish load. John was dispatched to go to Kansas City to pick up a new million dollar plus machine that was behind on delivery. When he got to the shipper he found that the machine had gauges sticking out along the sides of the machine. After much debate on how to get the machine into the trailer, it was decided that two forklifts would have to do it; one putting the machine in while another was on the side to slide the machine along. All the time the owner of the company was standing around wringing his hands yelling, "Be careful of those gauges!" "His face was so red and he was sweating so much I thought he was going to have a stroke!" John said.

With the gauges extra heavily wrapped, the next challenge was how to secure the machine. Creative securement came into play and John used his decades of experience to figure it all out. With little time to spare to be able to make his delivery on time, John took photos and promised to call the owner as soon as the load was delivered with photos of the delivery to assure the owner the machine arrived safely. Being very light and having to plow through some Michigan lake-effect snow, John still arrived on time and the machine was intact, to the owner's delight.

Charles tells of his cold hellish load. Charles got a load from Hamilton, OH to Cahokia, IL a few years ago. It was a light

load of some wooden panels. It should have been an easy 350 mile run. It picked up at 4:00 pm and had to deliver the next morning at 10:00 am. "I picked it up and a huge Midwest-wide snowstorm hit. It must have dumped a couple feet of snow fast and nobody was clearing the roads either. It took 12 1/2 hours to get there. Once I got to Indy, it was a solid blanket of snow on the highways and I went across I-70 plodding along at around 20-25 mph. I still made the delivery early." Charles related.

Almost everyone in expediting knows of Bob and Linda Caffee, Team Run Smart drivers and of the Trucking Solutions Group. It might surprise some of you that even they get a hellish load once in awhile. While they try to forget those types of loads quickly and focus on the positive, this one stands out in Linda's mind; Murphy struck them eight times on the same load. Linda counts them out.

"First we had snow that slowed us down. Second was the ice in Arkansas and the interstate was at a standstill. Third was having to idle as we would creep forward a inch every few minutes. Fourth was the truck then decided it needed a regen and we had never done a parked regen. Fifth: after going through several warning lights about the regen and the traffic moving about ten miles an hour finally got off of interstate to perform regen and had several trucks follow us as they thought we knew what we were doing. Sixth: truck stops in the middle of the road and says perform the regen now! Seventh: upset drivers behind us as they waited for regen to complete which took about 13 minutes. Eighth: finally get to delivery and they refuse load until next day."

Don had a couple of days of hellish

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

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## SHIP HAPPENS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

luck on one load, he relates, “I had one of these last summer, dispatched to Birmingham AL to pickup ‘Engine Parts’. When I arrive first thing in the morning as instructed, I find no one is there, and no one knows why I am there. Calls are made trying to find out what I am to be loaded with, and where it is going. Hours go by, finally an entire diesel engine comes rolling out of the engine shop. They were stalling for time because the engine wasn’t assembled or ready to ship, but someone had made sure the truck would be there 7 a.m.”

“They bring out this engine on a forklift that is huge. It is a big engine, probably weighed 10,000 lbs and it is on a metal stand that looks like some kid built for a tree house. It is rusty and dirty and I am worried it is not good enough for a road trip. They proceed to weld some extra supports onto the stand and shove the engine into the back of my straight truck. I proceed to bolt it to the floor, strap it to the walls, put double load bars in front and back and pray. They cannot find the paperwork, now it is 2 p.m. and they are calling and faxing; soon a very small Bill Of Lading is handed to me, something that resembles a packing slip. They cannot reach the Consignee but I am to go ahead and head that way, they will meet me there.”

“I arrive at a large steel mill in the Memphis TN area, down along the river. I am looking for the name on the packing slip/BOL as I look for the number on the address, but nothing matching the delivery name or street. So I call, finally I find it is the steel mill but the Consignee is a construction company, slash engine repair company.”

“Onto the lot I go. Now I keep my truck spotless. I’m following a guy on a tractor who takes me down the most filthy, muddy, wet and dirty road I’ve ever seen, three inches of slop as I traverse the mills lots towards the drop. I have finally arrived and no one is there. Finally, three guys in a pickup truck arrive to tell me I’m supposed to be there tomorrow. After convincing them to unload me since I was there, they attempt to get the huge engine out with a too small lift that nearly topples the engine; luckily it fell back into my truck, to the delight of my airbags.”

“Another larger lift is brought. Now the ground is pure slop, and as soon as this lift tries to move with the engines weight on it, it is stuck. Another tractor is attached, they pull together and out it comes. As it clears the rear of my truck, the operator tries to lower the engine and stand to the ground, boom the whole thing comes crashing to the ground behind my truck. They used chains and trucks and lifts and barely got the engine over to a shed, by the time they were done it looked like Mud Wrasslin’ had come to town. Out I tried to go, eventually being dragged by the tractor that took me in. By the time I got to the truck wash in Memphis my rig looked like I had plowed the river bottom, I had black soot and dirt all over. All In a day’s work!”

Loads from hell abound in the fast paced world of expediting, weather, construction, delays due to loading issues and a thousand other things can go wrong to make a good load go wrong. Like mother used to say, everyone has a bad day sometimes, you just hope they do not come in bunches like grapes. **EN**

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# 'Tis The Season: Winter Driving

By Lee Kurtzman, Contributing Writer

Have you ever noticed on those windy, snowy winter days on the highway, when you're keeping your speed down and driving with extra caution, that's when a Billy Bigrigger will blow by your truck at the speed limit or over, leaving a rooster tail of the white stuff in his wake?

And, have you noticed how often you see the same truck again a few miles down the road laying on its side in the median or in a ditch off to the right?

According to the Journal of Transportation and Statistics, there are about 20% more truck crashes during the winter than summer in the central United States. The number climbs to 60% in the northern third of the country.

All of the professional driver's skills come into play when the thermometer dips below the freezing mark and slippery road surfaces and reduced visibility make driving a challenge.

Staying safe on icy roads requires close attention to your driving, anticipation of unsafe situations and preparing your equipment to weather the cold.

Whether or not to run requires a judgment call. If the highway is closed, the decision has been made for you, but veteran drivers will tell you if you don't feel safe about the weather and road conditions, go with your gut instinct and park it.

As one veteran expeditor puts it, "There's no load that pays enough or is important enough for me to die over it!"

Think about your load in relation to the weather and road conditions. Is it light or heavy? This factor will determine how you will drive. If you are empty or hauling



Photo credit: Thomas R. Machnitzki

a light load, your stopping distance will be greatly increased, and your stability will be greatly decreased.

## Visibility

There are even more items to check off the list when doing your pre-trip walk around and that includes taking the time to clear all windows of snow, ice or fog before starting out. Also, clear any snow off the hood - it comes loose when driving.

Your windshield washer solution should be a winterized blend that won't freeze up on the glass. Carry an extra jug of it. New wiper blades and proper arm spring pressure help keep the windshield clear.

Stop frequently to clear snow and ice from the side windows, mirrors and lights. Being seen in a storm is just as important as seeing.

## Lights

Even though you can see, drive with low-beam headlights in snow, fog or just winter haze. Keep all lenses free of dirt by wiping them periodically. Dirty headlights can cut visibility by 50 percent or more. Don't forget the directional lights, taillights and marker lights.

## Time

Give yourself plenty of extra time for getting to your destination. Speed limits are for perfect, dry conditions. On winter's icy roadways, half the speed limit

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

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may be suicide.

Plan to drive slower and increase your following distance behind other vehicles. Take curves and hit the crest of hills at a slower pace, too.

Be prepared to steer around any problems that may be hidden from view. Gear down carefully to slow the truck, but avoid using the engine brake on icy roads because the abrupt slowing of the drive wheels can cause a skid.

## Braking

The ability to stop your truck is one of the biggest challenges of winter driving. Check the brakes before pulling out onto a roadway to make sure they aren't frozen.

Intersections and curves are generally more slippery and require slowing the vehicle well ahead of time to come to a stop. Gentle braking is always the order of the day. If at all possible, avoid hard braking or abrupt maneuvers that can cause a skid.

Starting out, avoid spinning the drive wheels. That creates heat and makes the surface even more slippery, just as icy roads become more slippery as the air temperature rises. Remember that shaded roadways might still be icy when other sections of the pavement are dry.

## Tires

Be sure your tires have adequate tread for traction in snow and to reduce the risk of hydroplaning in rain or puddles on the road.

You may hear that reducing tire pressure is another way of increasing traction. Reducing air pressure will not give you more traction and your tires could become seriously under inflated, affecting steering.

Keep in mind that every time the outside

temperature drops 10 degrees, the tire air pressure goes down about one pound per square inch. Remember too that under inflated tires is the major cause of tire failure.

## Ice/Freezing Rain

At 30 degrees ice is twice as slippery as it is at 0 degrees. It also forms first and lasts longer on bridges and in the shade. If you hit an unexpected patch, don't try to brake, accelerate or downshift. Let up on the pedal and let the vehicle coast through the slippery area.

Team drivers Bert and Barbara Dingell are tractor-trailer expeditors from Louisiana. They say, "Watch the tires in front of you, and if the road looks wet, but there's nothing wet coming off the tires, you know it's ice. Stay in the lane the other trucks are using — they've already broken up the snow and ice."

"Keep your eyes moving; constantly check what other drivers are doing. Don't bunch up with a group of trucks."

## Following Distance

Maintain at least three times the normal following distance on snow or ice. If you are being followed too closely, maintain an extra distance behind the vehicle ahead so that you can slow down or brake gradually.

Be prepared to adjust speed and/or stop to avoid colliding with the vehicle in front of you. Plan ahead when approaching intersections to that braking can be done smoothly.

## Snow on the Truck

One aspect of winter driving that doesn't get enough attention is ice and snow on the trailer and cargo box roof.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40



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It is extremely difficult to deal with this problem, but denying its existence can lead to overweight at the scales and accidents caused by flying chunks of ice.

Only your judgment can tell you whether to risk injury by finding a ladder or risk a ticket on the highway. But if snow and ice falling from a truck causes an incident, the driver will most likely be charged, says one law enforcement official.

### Stay on the Beaten Path

Stay in line when traveling to or from a snow zone. Don't blaze your own trail, especially going downhill - you'll only manage to create a worse situation. You'll even clog the only open space emergency snow vehicles can travel.

### Deer

Bad weather can cause deer to be on the move. Be particularly alert when traveling in known areas of deer migration. When you see deer or other animals ahead, slow down and be prepared to stop until you are safely past them.

A good defensive driving technique is to try to avoid animals if possible, however, do not swerve into the on-coming lane and risk a head-on collision, or run off the road and risk hitting another object.

### Stay Clear of Plows and Sanders

Watch out for these vehicles as you round corners, curbs, etc.

They do not travel at a high speed; therefore, you'll tend to come up on them quickly. Slow down. Plows and sanders will pull over periodically to let traffic pass. It's risky to pass on the left of a snowplow because of blowing snow.

### Walking on Ice or Snow

After being in a warm vehicle, the soles of shoes or boots are warm enough to melt snow or ice, creating a film of water between the sole and the snow or ice surface. Be especially cautious for the first five minutes after leaving the vehicle.

When walking on snow or ice, use short steps and keep your hands out of your pockets. These factors will help you maintain your balance.

### Fatigue

In hazardous weather, the effects of fatigue are more quickly felt. Be aware of your personal limitations and how they are stretched by the stress of winter driving.

### Winter survival gear

There may be times you'll be stuck on the highway somewhere because of a road shut down. Some basic items to have include:

- Extra warm clothes
- Extra shoes
- Extra blanket(s)
- Snacks and non-perishable food
- Bottled water
- Lighter
- Candles
- Matches
- Flashlight and batteries
- Ice scraper
- Extra pair of gloves
- First aid kit
- Tools
- Jumper cables
- Shovel
- Kitty litter (for traction)

Stay warm, stay dry and stay safe. **EN**

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