

# Getting Into The Hauling Business - Fast!

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## Getting Into The Hauling Business - Fast!

Because few home owners or tenants have the time, means or energy to do it themselves, there is always a need for someone with a pickup truck to transport things found or accumulated around the house and yard.

Examples are trash from private homes and businesses (most collection services will not pick up certain types of refuse), carting off things that have been cleaned out of the garage or attic, delivery of large items, picking up tree and shrub trimmings, etc. all that is needed is a truck and a strong back.

Work that others don't want always pays best. An office worker with a sore back and blisters from trimming the shrubs will gladly pay someone to finish the job and haul off the mess before his wife finds it necessary to remind him of his "unfinished business."

Also, small businesses often want unsightly things removed from their premises long before regular collection days.

The most jobs can probably be found with an ad in the paper, leaving your cards at the local lumber, hardware, furniture and catalog stores, plant nurseries and auto parts stores (especially those without a delivery service).

Even stores that deliver often have customers who "need it now," where you could provide express service. Leave your name, phone number (one that will be answered) and an idea of your rates wherever there might be need for a light hauling job.

Other possibilities are the Friday Night Auction, drug stores, fast food places and grocery stores.

It may not be necessary to get a license or permit right away if you (not the truck) are paid by the job and don't haul valuables that need insuring. In this case, you personally are being hired for an "odd job," and are using your own truck for your personal convenience. If there is any doubt, consult city hall or the county clerk.

However, if you are going to be a business, it is best in the long run to go ahead and register your business name (city or county clerk's office), get any required permits and insurance, and put signs on your truck to let people see your service in action.

The most effective advertising is when people notice you doing a job they might also want done, and note your name and phone

number.

Your (and your truck's) appearance will help make an impression on potential customers. If you and/or truck are both neat and well kept, your business will appear to be efficient.

If you and/or your truck looks more on the "sloppy" side, people will assume you do sloppy work. The idea is not to wear a suit and drive a new truck; it is simply to look clean and well kept. A clean shirt and pair of levis and even an old truck that is washed once in a while and shows that an effort has been made to keep it in good repair are "well kept."

Keep a couple pairs of gloves and some basic tools that may be required in the type of jobs you get (shovel, rake, furniture pads). Make sure that the phone number you give out is answered when people call, and that you will get the messages within a reasonable period of time.

It is better to have an answering service than an answering machine (hire one if necessary) -- but a machine is better than nothing. When out on jobs, make it a point to call in several times a day to see if there are any emergencies.

These often are the best paying and will often get you even more jobs if they are performed promptly and well. Just don't overlook or slight any customers that you have already promised.

This can be an excellent reference for you -- or it can eventually be your downfall! Although it is tempting to "forget" a \$15 job to take care of one that will pay \$150, that \$15 customer can do you \$500 worth of damage -- by telling the truth (that you didn't keep your word).

It is EASY and SMART (if not common courtesy) to give that \$15 customer a call and tell them something came up, but you will be there as soon as possible (then, BE THERE).

You will also need different types of racks for your truck -- for hauling different types of loads. With a little practice, you can make just about any kind of sideboards. Use a strong wood (oak, yellow pine) for the uprights, and trim them so they fit into slots of your pickup bed.

Then, use 1 x 4's for open type racks, 1 x 12's for outside (CD) plywood for large, lighter weight loads. Bolt the plywood or boards to the uprights, and run a cable or long "bolt" across the front and back to keep the sides from pulling away.

If in doubt, take a good look at some racks on other trucks and use some of their ideas!

You can build your own racks for a tiny fraction of what commercial ones would cost -- and much less than custom made ones would set you back. Paint or waterproof your racks (very important!), and if you really want to experiment, get some stick-on letters (see Business Sources) and install your own signs on them.

There are many possible variations in the light hauling business. Here are but a few:

a. **LIGHT MOVING.** You cannot legally be a mover, but you can be hired to **HELP OTHERS MOVE THEMSELVES**, using your own truck as your personal aid (to save carrying all that stuff on your back!). Professional movers are federally regulated, and you don't want to get into that.

b. **TREE TRIMMING.** Either trim them yourself (learn how first), or work with a trimmer to haul away the trimmings. If there is a lot of business, invest in a chopper, which will let you haul ten times as much at a time -- and probably allow you to sell the refuse to composters or nurseries.

c. **CONTRACT HAULING.** Work with a trucking company to pickup and deliver small loads from their warehouse. Some companies only have large trucks, and is quite expensive (sometimes even illegal) to use them (and their divers) to make individual city house deliveries of small items.

d. **SPECIAL PURPOSE HAULING.** By adding or modifying truck's racks, you can transport animals, loose grain, or other special purpose cargo. You might even list with veterinarians in the area to transport animals to and from the "Doc." Perhaps something as simple as waterproof cover and locking cage would enable you to do some really high priced hauling.

e. **RETAINER HAULING.** Make regular deliveries for a particular merchant -- delivering merchandise, expediting parts, picking up incoming freight. Charge by the month, plus per trip over the agreed limit. Your contract may or may not allow you to do other jobs in between.

The primary objective in light hauling is to find the person or business that needs assistance, and then provide it. A starting place is to make sure the stores in the area of your service, as well as individuals ( if you are available to both).

When working with businesses, you can either work for the store or ask them to refer you to customers who need your service. Most will prefer the latter, because they are not liable when the deal is between you and the customer.

You will need insurance for this, so be sure and check around for

the best deal; check with a least one agent that specializes in commercial insurance.

It is not easy for stores to provide delivery service; there's a lot more to it than just buying a truck. Unless they have just the right amount of business, they can be in financial trouble -- if there's not enough, the driver and truck are wasted; if there is too much, they get behind and risk alienating their customers.

Many small stores will be happy to refer your service to customers who need deliveries -- it keeps the customer happy and them "off the hook." So, call on local stores and explain your capabilities. They will tell you of their needs, and you can let them know about how much you will charge their customers for that service. They need an idea of your rates so they can advise their customers.

When you are just starting, don't be alarmed if merchants are slow to react. They will probably call the first time just to see how you perform -- how fast you react, how you treat the merchandise, and whether or not the customer was happy with your service and rates.

If the customer is dissatisfied, it will reflect on the merchant who recommended you (remember that!). The first few calls will be to "check you out" -- if they are satisfied, you will get more of their business.

## BUSINESS SOURCES

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION, Box 684, Washington, DC 10044. Federal regulatory agency concerned with transportation. Write for information.

DIE CUTS, 183 St Paul St., Rochester, NY 14604. Wholesaler (manufacturer) of die-cut self-adhesive sign letters and logos. Slower than local sources, but probably much cheaper.

DOVER PUBLICATIONS, 31 East 2nd St., Mineola, N Y 11051. Discount books, picture postcards, clip art, stencils, Excellent source for accessories; good prices.

QUILL CORPORATION, 100 Schelter Rd., Lincolnshire, IL 60917-4700, 312/634-4800. Office supplies (probably best mail order prices).

NEBS, 500 Main St., Groton, MA 04171, 800/225-6380. Office supplies. Good fast service

IVEY PRINTING, Box 761, Meridan, TX 76665. Letterhead: 400 sheets plus 200 matching envelopes - \$18.

SWEDCO, Box 29, Mooresville, NC. Three line rubber stamps - \$3;

business cards - \$13 per thousand.

ZPS, Box 581, Libertyville, IL 60048-2556. Business cards (raised print - \$11.50 per K) and letterhead stationery. Will print your copy ready logo or design, even whole card.

WALTER DRAKE, 4119 Drake Bldg., Colorado Springs, CO 80940. Short run business cards, stationery, etc. Good quality, but no choice of style or color.