



PROFILES

OWNER-OPERATOR, FLATDECK LOADS



Dave Bicheno: "So much technology is for big fleets. I'm a one-truck owner-operator. I need something that's affordable, simple, and pays back quickly. That's what I like about my TruckWeight scale. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out how it can help you be more productive."

DAB TRUCKING

TruckWeight puts the "pay" in Dave Bicheno's payload

At a time when the average highway tractor has more computing power than an Apollo-vintage lunar module, Dave Bicheno will remind you that trucking still is about moving the most payload over the road efficiently and within the bounds of local weight laws.

Bicheno, of White Swan, Wash., hauls lumber and other flatbed loads throughout the Pacific Northwest on a 40-foot and 22-foot maxi-set,

topping out at 105,500 pounds GCW across seven axles.

"I make my profit in loading those flats right up to capacity," he says. "Eighty-five percent isn't good enough. Ninety percent isn't good enough. I'm looking for a 100-percent solution."

So is the mill where Bicheno picks up his lumber. Trucks aren't allowed out of the gates unless the vehicle is close to capacity.

"If you pull up to the scale at the mill and

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KEY BENEFITS

- **Consistently reach maximum payload**
- **Load quickly and with confidence**
- **Low-powered radio signals are intrinsically safe**
- **Drivers can take a measurement in the truck cab, the loading area, or wherever it's convenient—up to 500 feet away**
- **Air-ride scale is accurate to within 0.3% of actual gross vehicle weight**
- **Reduce overweight violations and time spent redistributing loads**
- **Eliminate expense and downtime associated with a hardwired scale installation**
- **2-year warranty**
- **Separate version available for mechanical spring suspensions**

you're overweight, you have to go back, offload or shift the freight around, and get in line to re-weigh," he says. "If you're underweight, you have to go back, take on more payload, and get in line to re-weigh. Either way, you lose at least an hour."

Bicheno needed a way to eliminate the guesswork. So he installed Smart Scale, a wireless onboard scale for trucks, tractors, and trailers. Made by TruckWeight Inc., Smart Scale is available in versions for air-ride and mechanical spring suspensions.

Bicheno's air-ride scale includes a sensor with an integrated antenna, a tee-fitting for the vehicle's air line, and a handheld receiver. The sensor measures temperature and pressure changes in the air suspension and relays the data to the handheld receiver using a low-powered radio transmitter. A small computer in the receiver interprets the information and provides an axle weight and gross vehicle weight measurement that's accurate to within 0.3%. It produces readings once per minute, and every three seconds when the sensors detect the truck being loaded. The range of the wireless receiver is 500 feet.

Bicheno installed and calibrated the scale himself in less than an hour with no special skills or tools. The weatherproof, shock-resistant housing requires no regular maintenance, and the sensors are accurate in temperature extremes ranging from -40 F to 158 F. For power, the system uses common AA batteries.

A simple, affordable solution

Onboard scales are gaining in popularity for two reasons, says Peter Panagapko, president of TruckWeight. "To protect their infrastructure, jurisdictions are supplementing roadside scale houses with portable scales they can put anywhere, and the fines are steep," he explains. "The second reason is the increasing pressure to maximize payload, load more efficiently, and reduce operating costs. Productivity is critical."

But hardwired onboard scales are expensive and complex, and involve downtime. They may require the vehicle truck to be down for a day or more. "That's why we're wireless," Panagapko says. "Smart Scale's simple, do-it-yourself installation and low maintenance lowers the



Bicheno uses the Smart Scale wireless handheld unit to make sure the loader is maximizing the payload. "While other guys are repositioning freight or check-weighing again, I can throw straps on the load knowing that I'm at my rated capacity," Bicheno says.

cost of ownership and speeds up the return on investment."

Precision, efficiency, confidence

Whether you haul general freight, asphalt, aggregates, steel, farm products, or lumber, the guy running the loader knows approximately how much freight to put on the trailer. But gut feel, air gauges, and bucket scales are no assurance that your truck is leaving the loading area within a few hundred pounds of its rated capacity.

"Those extra pounds are the difference between making money or not," Bicheno says. "The hour I save because I can throw straps on the load while other guys are repositioning freight or sliders or check-weighing again is the difference between making money or not."

The TruckWeight wireless scale, he says, helps him load with precision, efficiency, and confidence that he's in compliance when he passes over a government scale.

"So much onboard technology is for big fleets, maintenance people, and computer experts," Bicheno says. "I'm a one-truck owner-operator. For me, the best part about the TruckWeight scale is that you don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out how it can help you be more productive." ■