

Safety Bulletin

Treat Your Truck Right; Conduct Thorough Pre - and Post-Trip Inspections

On the road, your truck is your best friend. Treat your vehicle right, and it won't let you down. To avoid over-the-road breakdowns, make the most of your pre- and post-trip inspections.

Before you begin driving, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) requires you to ensure your truck is in safe operating condition, to review the previous vehicle inspection report, and to sign the report if you notice defects. So don't miss a step. Follow these tips:



Pre-Trip Inspection

Follow this seven-point checklist from the FMCSA:

1. Vehicle overview – Check your truck's general condition.
2. Engine compartment – Check fluid levels (engine oil, coolant, automatic transmission fluid), hoses, belts, wires, battery and other electrical connections.
3. Inside the cab – Check all gauges and controls.
4. Lights – Check your low-beam headlights, four-way flashers and high-beam headlights.
5. Walk-around exterior inspection – Start at the front left and continue to the front, right side, rear, left rear, left side and coupling system.
6. Signal lights – Make sure they all work properly.
7. Final brake-system check – Make sure all brakes (from parking brakes to service brakes) work properly.

During Transit

You must inspect and adjust cargo and load-securing devices within the first 50 miles of transit. After 50 miles, cargo must be re-examined when a driver makes a change-of-duty status or after the vehicle has been driven for three hours or 150 miles (whichever comes first). The only exceptions: if you're driving a sealed vehicle and have been ordered not to open it, or if the load type makes inspection difficult.

Post-Trip Inspection

You should produce a written report ensuring these items are in good working order:

- Service brakes (including rear trailer brake connections)
- Parking (hand) brake
- Steering mechanism
- Lighting devices and reflectors
- Tires
- Horn
- Windshield wipers
- Rear-vision mirrors
- Coupling devices
- Wheels and rims
- Emergency equipment

You must identify all defects on the report, and you must sign the report, if you find defects. This will let your motor carrier correct any problems and ensure the truck is safe for the next trip.

