

YOUR DAILY CHECKLIST

A Pre-trip Inspection

Although a pre-trip inspection is a federal safety regulation, it's something every professional driver would do anyway.

Prepare Yourself

- Review any federal, state, and local regulations that apply to your equipment and cargo.
- Check the expiration dates on your personal paperwork (driver's license, medical certificate or other documents).
- See that registration and permit plates are displayed as required.
- Be sure that correct shipping papers are on board.
- Approach your trip with a healthy mental attitude.
- Understand your equipment, check it out, and review the previous driver's report.
- Confirm that you have the correct cargo, and make sure the security devices are in place.
- Tune in to weather and road conditions, and prepare what you need to handle your route.
- Close your cab to unauthorized persons or objects.

Prepare Your Equipment

By being thorough, you can eliminate downtime from failing an on-the-road spot inspection, or from having an actual breakdown. Since safety laws require you to review and certify the previous driver's report, you can use the DVIR as an outline for covering the 10 required general areas:

1. Service brakes, including trailer brake connections.
2. Hand brake.
3. Steering mechanism.
4. Lighting devices and reflectors.
5. Tires (wheels and rims).
6. Horn.
7. Windshield wiper(s).
8. Rearview mirror(s).
9. Coupling equipment.
10. Fire extinguisher, spare fuses and stopped vehicle warning devices (such as flags and triangles).

Your company may have special forms and specific procedures to assure that the 10 inspection areas are examined in detail.

Making It Easier

You're required to do a pre-trip inspection at the beginning of every trip and at any stop during your trip. By following a pattern, you can make sure you cover everything, every time.

1. Outside Cab

Check engine fuel and fluid levels, belts, hoses, and wiring; leaks under power unit; tractor suspension and tires; exhaust.

2. Inside Cab

Apply parking brake, start engine and check: gauges; instruments; air pressure and vacuum build up and warning devices; horn; windshield wiper and washer; heater-defroster; mirrors; steering wheel play; lights; extinguisher and warning device.

3. Outside Van/Trailer

Turn engine off, set flashers on, then check these details:

Front lights, signals, flashers, tires and wheels.

Left Side: Fuel tank and cap, side marker lights, reflectors, tires and wheels, tie-downs or doors.

Rear: Taillights, stop lights, turn signals, flasher, clearance lights, identification lights, reflectors, tires and wheels, rear end bumper, cargo tie-downs or doors.

Right Side: Fuel tank and cap, side marker lights, reflectors, tires and wheels, cargo tires and wheels, tie-downs or doors.

4. Special Inspection

Combination Rigs:

Hoses and couplers, electrical connections, coupling equipment.

Hazardous Material Transport

Markings or signs, shipping papers.

5. Inside Cab

With engine off, release trailer emergency brakes, apply service brakes and check air loss (no more than 3 psi per minute on singles or 4 psi per minute on combinations).

Fasten Seat Belt

On the road, continue to listen, smell, feel, and watch for signs of potential trouble. Make notes and your post-trip reporting will be quicker and easier, too.