



Preventative Maintenance

Your role

As a professional driver, your involvement is key when it comes to a successful preventative maintenance program. You are often the first to notice a problem or issue with your vehicle and can have it repaired before it becomes one that can cause a breakdown or accident.

Your responsibility

You are ultimately responsible for the safe operating condition of your vehicle. As a professional driver, you can do the following to help keep your vehicle's components in good working order:

- Be proficient in detecting maintenance and repair needs as you travel and refer them to the correct place for handling,
- Be expert at doing good pre- and post-trip inspections, making sure you check all pertinent components each time you do an inspection,
- Be certain that an annual vehicle inspection has been conducted on the vehicle, and
- Stop to check out any potential problems you think may be developing with your vehicle.

Don't continue with your trip until you are satisfied that everything is in good operating condition and it's safe to do so. Federal and state regulations require that you not drive a vehicle unless you are satisfied that it is in safe operating condition.

Observation and communication

Observation and communication are important parts of a preventive maintenance program. You need to put your senses to work.

- **Listen** for unusual or abnormal equipment sounds such as rattles, squeaks and hisses.
- **Smell** for unusual odors (burning rubber, hot oil, etc.).
- **Feel** for changes in the vehicle's response, including steering, braking and shifting.
- **Observe** all vehicle components carefully during routine inspections; look for defects.

Poor maintenance pitfalls

It is important to report vehicle defects and deficiencies to your motor carrier as soon as they are discovered. Not reporting a problem when it first occurs can have serious consequences for both you and your motor carrier, including potentially a vehicle breakdown or accident.

Breakdown costs include more than the parts and labor to get the vehicle up and running once again. Every minute a truck is in the shop or placed out of service, it is not being used to bring in revenue to a motor carrier. A disabled vehicle may incur additional expense, such as:

- Towing fees,
- Driver wages, meals and lodgings when unable to drive,
- The cost of renting another vehicle,
- Late delivery charges,
- Lost customers, and/or
- Cargo transfer fees.


These costs have a bearing on a motor carrier's bottom line, its profitability. This in turn can play a role in your future pay and benefits with the company.


If a defective part causes an accident, the costs incurred can include insurance deductibles, higher insurance rates, potential litigation and a tarnished safety record for the motor carrier. For you, it could mean potential citations and fines as well as personal injury.

The regulatory requirements


Part 396 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) addresses vehicle inspection and maintenance. The regulations address systematic maintenance, daily inspections and annual or periodic inspections.

Remember to submit your quiz!

 **Call!**
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Systematic maintenance

Section 396.3 of the FMCSRs states that every motor carrier must systematically inspect, repair and maintain all vehicles in its control or make provisions for this regular, scheduled program of maintenance.

The term systematic means a regular or scheduled program to keep vehicles in safe operating condition. In other words, a motor carrier must have a preventative maintenance program.

It is up to the motor carrier to determine the time frame for conducting systematic vehicle inspections as long as they are reasonable and systematic. They may be based on mileage, time or engine hours.

Pre-trip inspection

Section 396.13 of the FMCSRs states that before driving a motor vehicle, you must:

- Be satisfied that the vehicle is in safe operating condition,
- Review the last vehicle inspection report (see post-trip inspection), and
- Sign the report, only if defects or deficiencies were noted by the driver who prepared the report, to acknowledge that the report has been reviewed and that there is certification that the repairs have been performed.

On-the-road inspection (en-route)

Section 392.9 of the FMCSRs requires that you follow certain inspection rules while on the road.

The vehicle's cargo and load-securing devices must be checked within the first 50 miles of a trip. Any necessary adjustments must be made at this time.

After the first 50 miles of the trip, the vehicle's cargo and load-securing devices must be reexamined:

- When you make a change of duty status, or
- After the vehicle has been driving for three hours, or
- After the vehicle has been driving 150 miles, whichever occurs first.

These on-the-road inspection rules do not apply if you are driving a sealed vehicle and have been ordered not to open the vehicle to inspect its

cargo. Also, the rules do not apply if the vehicle has been loaded in such a way that makes inspection of the cargo difficult or impossible.

Post-trip inspection

A post-trip inspection is conducted at the end of your day's work on the vehicle you are operating. If defects or deficiencies are discovered you will need to fill out a driver vehicle inspection report (DVIR). This report helps a motor carrier make necessary repairs before the vehicle returns to the road.

Roadside inspections

A roadside inspection is an examination of a driver and his/her motor vehicle by law enforcement to ensure compliance with the FMCSRs as well as Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMRs). The goal is to ensure that safe drivers and vehicles are on the road.

Most roadside inspections occur at weigh stations or scales along the highway. They are conducted by trained law enforcement officers who follow specific guidelines as outlined by the North American Uniform Out-of-Service Criteria developed by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA).

The Out-of-Service criteria identifies critical vehicle inspection items and provides enforcement with criteria for placing a vehicle out of service.

If placed out of service, the vehicle cannot be operated again until all defects and deficiencies have been repaired. In addition, your company must not allow, permit or require you to violate an out-of-service order.

The consequences are severe for violating an out-of-service order. Both you and your company can be fined and you can be disqualified from operating CMVs.

W2s

Please verify your mailing address to prevent any delays with your year-end W2. If any changes are needed call us at 877-815-4852.

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