

DOT Vehicle Maintenance Requirements

A formal vehicle maintenance program is crucial to the safety of the fleet and is also necessary to maintain regulatory compliance. A quality maintenance program will help reduce operating costs and out-of-service downtime.

You must systematically inspect, repair, and maintain all commercial vehicles subject to your control.

Parts and accessories shall be in safe and proper operating condition at all times. These include those parts and accessories that may affect safe operation of a vehicle, including but not limited to, frame and frame assemblies, suspension systems, axles and attaching parts, tires, wheels and rims, steering mechanisms, brakes, lighting, horn, windshield wipers, rear view mirrors, coupling devices and emergency equipment.

Required Records:

1. Identification of the vehicle including company/entity number, make, serial number, year, and tire size.
2. A means to indicate the nature and due dates of the various inspection and maintenance to be preformed.
3. A record of inspections, repairs and maintenance indicating the date and nature of service preformed.

(The above records must be retained where the vehicle is either housed or maintained, for a period of **12 months** and for 6 months after the vehicle leaves your control – [sold])

Lubrication:

You must ensure that your commercial vehicle is (1) properly lubricated and (2) free of oil and grease leaks.

Driver's Pre-trip Inspection:

The driver must be satisfied that basic parts and accessories are "in good working order" prior to driving a vehicle. Although not required to be in writing, this pre-driving determination shall include the following parts and accessories: (a written check list is recommended)

1. Service brakes, including trailer brake connections
2. Parking (hand) brakes
3. Steering mechanism
4. Lighting devices and reflectors
5. Tires
6. Horn
7. Windshield wiper or wipers

8. Rear-vision mirror or mirrors
9. Coupling devices

The driver must also be satisfied that the required emergency equipment is in place and ready to use.

1. Fire extinguishers
2. Spare fuses
3. Warning devices

Driver's Daily Vehicle Inspection Reports:

The driver must prepare a report in writing at the completion of each day's work on each vehicle he/she operated and the report shall cover at least the following parts and accessories:

1. Service brakes including trailer brake connections
2. Parking brake
3. Steering mechanism
4. Lighting devices and reflectors
5. Tires
6. Horn
7. Windshield wipers
8. Rear vision mirrors
9. Coupling devices
10. Wheels and rims
11. Emergency equipment

Report Content: The report must identify the vehicle and list any defect or deficiency discovered by or reported to the driver, which would affect the safe operation of the vehicle or result in its mechanical breakdown. If no defect or deficiency is discovered by or reported to the driver, the report must so indicate. In all instances, the driver must sign the report. If a driver operates more than one vehicle during the day, a report must be prepared for each vehicle operated.

Corrective Action: Prior to requiring or permitting a driver to operate a vehicle you must repair any defect or deficiency listed on the Driver's Daily Vehicle Inspection Report, which would be likely to affect the safe operation of the vehicle.

You must certify on the original Driver's Daily Vehicle Inspection Report, which lists any defects or deficiency that the defect or deficiency has been repaired or that repair is unnecessary for safe operation before the vehicle is operated again.

The next day's driver (even if the same driver) must review the previous days Driver's Daily Vehicle Inspection Report. Sign the report, only if defects were noted by the previous day's driver, to acknowledge that the driver has reviewed it and that there is a certification (mechanic's signature) that the required repairs have been performed.

The original Driver's Daily Vehicle Inspection Report with certification of repair (mechanic's signature) and certification of driver review (driver reviewing repairs: signature) must be maintained for **3 months** from the date the written report was prepared.

Periodic Inspection (also known as Annual Inspection)

(See FMCSR 49 CFR part 396.17, for inspection details. Inspector qualifications see FMCSR 49 CFR part 396.19.)

You should not operate a commercial motor vehicle unless it has passed a periodic inspection during the preceding 12 months and documentation of such inspection is on the vehicle. The documentation may be:

- The inspection report.
- A sticker or decal containing the following information: date of inspection, name & address of entity where inspection report is maintained.

Roadside inspections by state government and/or DOT will be considered to have met the requirements of an annual inspection for a period of 12 months from date of inspection. Example: CVSA inspections.

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