

Pre-trip, en-route and post trip inspections

The timing and importance of vehicle inspections, along with the accompanying documentation, can often lead to confusion. To enhance clarity for both owners and drivers, this document outlines the specific requirements under FMCSA regulations for [pre-trip](#), [en-route](#), and [post-trip](#) inspections. By adhering to these guidelines, you can promote safety, minimize risks, and ensure the efficient operation of your vehicles.

Pre-trip Inspections

Pre-trip inspections play a crucial role in ensuring vehicle safety before hitting the road and can help prevent delays and minimize violations during roadside inspections. While pre-trip inspections are required, documentation is optional. However, it's a good habit to note the inspection details including the actual time spent on the inspection which may help indicate thoroughness. In the event a defect is found, drivers may fill out a Driver-Vehicle Inspection Report (DVIR) or a similar form for necessary repairs.

392.7 Equipment, inspection and use

No commercial motor vehicle shall be driven unless the driver is satisfied that the following parts and accessories are in good working order, nor shall any driver fail to use or make use of such parts and accessories when and as needed:

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

396.13 Driver inspection

Before driving a motor vehicle, the driver shall:

- Be satisfied that the motor vehicle is in safe operating condition
- Review the last driver vehicle inspection report if required by [§396.11](#); and
- Sign the report to acknowledge that the driver has reviewed it and that there is a certification that the required repairs have been performed. The signature requirement does not apply to listed defects on a towed unit which is no longer part of the vehicle combination.

392.9 Inspection of cargo, cargo securement devices and systems

A driver may not operate a commercial motor vehicle and a motor carrier may not require or permit a driver to operate a commercial motor vehicle unless—

- The commercial motor vehicle's cargo is properly distributed and adequately secured as specified in [§§393.100](#) through [393.136](#) of [Subpart I-Protection Against Shifting and Falling Cargo](#)
- The commercial motor vehicle's tailgate, tailboard, doors, tarpaulins, spare tire and other equipment used in its operation, and the means of fastening the commercial motor vehicle's cargo, are secured; and
- The commercial motor vehicle's cargo or any other object does not obscure the driver's view ahead or to the right or left sides (except for drivers of self-steer dollies), interfere with the free movement of his/her arms or legs, prevent his/her free and ready access to accessories required for emergencies, or prevent the free and ready exit of any person from the commercial motor vehicle's cab or driver's compartment

En-route Inspections

En-route inspections are those required by FMCSA regulations as it relates to cargo securement or hazardous materials. These inspections, while easily done in a very short time, should be documented on the remarks section of a paper log or within the ELD remarks section to document the completion of the requirement.

49 CFR 392.9(b) Inspection of cargo, cargo securement devices and systems

- (2) Inspect the cargo and the devices used to secure the cargo within the first 50 miles after beginning a trip and cause any adjustments to be made to the cargo or load securement devices as necessary, including adding more securement devices, to ensure that cargo cannot shift on or within, or fall from the commercial motor vehicle; and
- (3) Reexamine the commercial motor vehicle's cargo and its load securement devices during the course of transportation and make any necessary adjustment to the cargo or load securement devices, including adding more securement devices, to ensure that cargo cannot shift on or within, or fall from, the commercial motor vehicle. Reexamination and any necessary adjustments must be made whenever—
 - (i) The driver makes a change of his/her duty status; or
 - (ii) The commercial motor vehicle has been driven for 3 hours; or
 - (iii) The commercial motor vehicle has been driven for 150 miles, whichever occurs first.
- (4) The rules in this [paragraph \(b\)](#) do not apply to the driver of a sealed commercial motor vehicle who has been ordered not to open it to inspect its cargo or to the driver of a commercial motor vehicle that has been loaded in a manner that makes inspection of its cargo impracticable.

397.17 Tires (hazardous material laden vehicle)

- (a) A driver must examine each tire on a motor vehicle at the beginning of each trip and each time the vehicle is parked
- (b) If, as the result of an examination pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, or otherwise, a tire is found to be flat, leaking, or improperly inflated, the driver must cause the tire to be repaired, replaced, or properly inflated before the vehicle is driven. However, the vehicle may be driven to the nearest safe place to perform the required repair, replacement, or inflation.
- (c) If, as the result of an examination pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, or otherwise, a tire is found to be overheated, the driver shall immediately cause the overheated tire to be removed and placed at a safe distance from the vehicle. The driver shall not operate the vehicle until the cause of the overheating is corrected.
- (d) Compliance with the rules in this section does not relieve a driver from the duty to comply with the rules in [§§397.5](#) and [397.7](#).

Post-trip inspections

Post trip inspection may require documentation via a Driver's Vehicle Inspection Report (DVIR). A motor carrier can require that a driver fill out a DVIR at the end of each day if they wish; however, regulations were changed to require the driver to fill out a DVIR only if the vehicle had a defect or deficiency.

396.11 Driver vehicle inspection report(s)

(a) *Equipment provided by motor carrier.*

(1) **Report required.** Every motor carrier shall require its drivers to report, and every driver shall prepare a report in writing at the completion of each day's work on each vehicle operated, except for intermodal equipment tendered by an intermodal equipment provider. The report shall cover at least the following parts and accessories:

- (i) Service brakes including trailer brake connections;
- (ii) Parking brake;
- (iii) Steering mechanism;
- (iv) Lighting devices and reflectors;
- (v) Tires;
- (vi) Horn;
- (vii) Windshield wipers;
- (viii) Rear vision mirrors;
- (ix) Coupling devices;
- (x) Wheels and rims;
- (xi) Emergency equipment.

(2) **Report content.**

- (i) The report must identify the vehicle and list any defect or deficiency discovered by or reported to the driver which would affect the safety of operation of the vehicle or result in its mechanical breakdown. If a driver operates more than one vehicle during the day, a report must be prepared for each vehicle operated. Drivers are not required to prepare a report if no defect or deficiency is discovered by or reported to the driver.

- (ii) The driver must sign the report. On two-driver operations, only one driver needs to sign the driver vehicle inspection report, provided both drivers agree as to the defects or deficiencies identified.

(3) **Corrective action.**

- (i) Prior to requiring or permitting a driver to operate a vehicle, every motor carrier or its agent shall repair any defect or deficiency listed on the driver vehicle inspection report which would be likely to affect the safety of operation of the vehicle.
- (ii) Every motor carrier or its agent shall certify on the driver vehicle inspection report which lists any defect or deficiency that the defect or deficiency has been repaired or that repair is unnecessary before the vehicle is operated again.

(4) **Retention period for reports.** Every motor carrier shall maintain the driver vehicle inspection report, the certification of repairs, and the certification of the driver's review for three months from the date the written report was prepared.

(5) **Exceptions.** The rules in this section shall not apply to a private motor carrier of passengers (nonbusiness), a driveaway-towaway operation, or any motor carrier operating only one commercial motor vehicle.

For further guidance, refer to [ecfr.gov/current/title-49/subtitle-B/chapter-III](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/subtitle-B/chapter-III).



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