

Commercial Motor Vehicles: Annual Mechanical Inspections

Description:

An annual vehicle inspection is required by DOT on every commercial motor vehicle. A motor carrier shall not use a commercial motor vehicle unless each component identified in appendix G of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations has passed an inspection in accordance with the terms of that section during the preceding 12 months.

Regulatory Reference

49 CFR § 396.17	Periodic inspection
49 CFR § 396.19	Inspector qualifications
49 CFR § 396.21	Periodic inspection recordkeeping requirements
49 CFR § 396.23	Equivalent to periodic inspection
49 CFR § 396.25	Qualifications of brake inspectors

49 CFR Chapter III, Subchapter B, Appendix G—Minimum Periodic Inspection Standards

Applies to:

The annual vehicle inspection requirements apply to all commercial motor vehicles.

General Requirements:

- (1) 49 CFR § 396.17 states that a motor carrier shall not use a commercial motor vehicle unless each component identified in appendix G has passed an inspection at least once during the preceding 12 months and documentation of the inspection is on the vehicle. The term “commercial motor vehicle” includes each vehicle in a combination vehicle, for example, the tractor and the semi-trailer, or the towing vehicle and the trailer (such as a tank setting trailer). The documentation of the inspection carried on the vehicle may consist of a sticker or decal and must reflect information from the inspection report, including:
 - (a) Inspection date
 - (b) Name and address of motor carrier or other entity where the inspection report is maintained
 - (c) Information clearly identifying the vehicle inspected if not clearly marked on the motor vehicle
 - (d) A certification that the vehicle has passed an inspection in accordance with § 396.17

Commercial motor vehicles that are subject to a mandatory State inspection program must be inspected in accordance with the State inspection program, conducted by State personnel, at State authorized commercial facilities, or by the motor carrier under the auspices of a State authorized self-inspection program. A motor carrier may perform the required annual inspection for vehicles that are not subject to a mandatory State inspection program, or may have the inspection performed by a commercial garage, fleet leasing company, truck stop or other

commercial business. Regardless of the location used for vehicle inspections, the inspector must be qualified, as required by § 396.19 [and § 396.25].

Vehicles that pass a roadside or periodic inspection performed under the auspices of any State government or the Federal Highway Administration, including the minimum requirements of appendix G, will be considered to have met the requirements for annual inspection for a period of 12 months from the last day of the month in which the inspection was performed.

The motor carrier is responsible for immediate repair of any part or accessory that does not meet the requirements of appendix G.

- (2) Periodic inspection record keeping. The original or a copy of the annual vehicle inspection report must be retained by the motor carrier or other entity responsible for the inspection for a period of 14 months from the date of the inspection report. The original or copy must be retained where the vehicle is either housed or maintained. Where the motor carrier operating the commercial motor vehicle did not perform the vehicle's last inspection, the motor carrier is responsible for obtaining the original or a copy of the last annual inspection report upon demand of an authorized Federal, State, or local official. The qualified inspector performing the inspection must prepare a report which:
- (a) Identifies the individual performing the inspection;
 - (b) Identifies the motor carrier operating the vehicle;
 - (c) Identifies the date of inspection;
 - (d) Identifies the vehicle inspected;
 - (e) Identifies the vehicle components inspected and describes the results of the inspection, including the identification of those components not meeting the minimum requirements given in appendix G;
 - (f) Certifies the accuracy and completeness of the inspection as complying with all the requirements of the regulation.
- (3) Minimum qualifications for vehicle inspectors are set out in § 396.19. The motor carrier must retain documentation of inspector qualifications during the period that the individual performs vehicle inspections for the motor carrier, and for one (1) year thereafter. Minimum qualifications for brake inspectors are given in § 396.25; documentation of brake inspector qualifications must be retained by the motor carrier during the time the brake inspector performs vehicle inspections for the motor carrier, and for one (1) year thereafter.

Training Requirements:

Vehicle inspectors may be qualified by a combination of experience and/or training. Specific training for brake inspectors, although not required, is highly desirable. The regulations allow motor carriers to accept as proof of qualification, the individual's passing of the air brake knowledge and skills test for a Commercial Driver's License.

Maintenance and Review

Company fleet and personnel records should be periodically reviewed to ensure that inspection records and inspector qualification documents are current and retained for the required periods.