

SEVEN-STEP INSPECTION METHOD

Below is a suggested seven point procedure that can be a useful reference for pre-trip and post-trip inspections. Your company's procedure may vary.

Point 1. Overall Vehicle Condition

As you approach your vehicle for the pre- or post-trip inspection, notice its general condition. Look for the following:

- Obvious damage or anything that could cause problems when you are on the road, including an appearance that the vehicle is leaning to one side
- Signs of fresh oil, coolant, grease, or fuel leaks underneath the vehicle
- Condition and location of placards

Before continuing the pre-trip inspection, always check the previous day's post-trip DVIR. If problems were noted on the report, make sure that all necessary repairs have been made before driving your vehicle.

Point 2. Engine Compartment

Before inspecting the engine compartment, make sure the parking brake is on and the wheels are chocked. Open the hood and check the following:

- Engine oil level
- Coolant level in radiator and condition of hoses
- Power steering fluid level and condition of hoses and pumps
- Windshield wiper fluid level
- Battery fluid level, connections, and tie downs
- Automatic transmission fluid level
- Alternator, water pump, air compressor belts, air conditioner belts
- Fuel, coolant, oil, or other fluid leaks
- Cracked or worn electrical wiring insulation
- Wet and dry air reservoirs (open petcocks; be sure to close them)
- All primary and secondary latches

Point 3. Inside the Cab

Get in the cab of your vehicle and make sure the parking brake is on. Put the gearshift in neutral or park (if automatic). Start the engine and listen for any unusual noises. Check the following:

- Gauges: Oil pressure should come up to normal within seconds after the engine is started; ammeter and/or voltmeter should be in normal range; engine temperature should begin a gradual rise to normal operating range; air pressure should build to 100-125 psi within 3-5 minutes; oil, coolant, charging circuit-warning lights should go out right away; and air flow from defroster/heater should be strong enough to feel.

- Controls: Check all of the following for looseness, sticking, damage, or improper setting: steering wheel/steering column; clutch; accelerator; foot brake; parking brake; front brake limiting valve; tractor protection valve; retarder controls; transmission controls; and interaxle differential lock.
- Safety items: Check the condition of the horn and windshield wipers and washers. Inspect mirrors and windshield for cracks, dirt, illegal stickers, and other visual obstructions.
- Emergency equipment: Check all required emergency equipment including: spare electrical fuses; three red reflective triangles; and properly charged and rated fire extinguisher. Optional emergency equipment includes: tire chains; tire changing equipment; list of emergency phone numbers; accident report kit; and first aid kit.
- Proper paperwork: If you are hauling hazardous materials, you have to inspect for the proper paperwork including emergency response information, shipping papers, hazmat certificate of registration, vehicle registration insurance card, and emergency operating procedures. See your company policy for any additional required documentation.

Point 4. Lights

Check to make sure all of your lights are clean and in good working condition. Be sure to check:

- Low-beam headlight
- High-beam headlights
- Four-way flashers
- Parking, clearance, side-marker, and license plate lights
- Brake lights

Point 5. Signal Lights

To check turn signal lights, you may need to insert the key and turn it to the on position. Then do the following:

- Get in and turn off all lights
- Turn on left signal light
- Get out and check left front and left rear turn signal lights
- Turn on right signal light
- Get out and check right front and right rear turn signal lights

Point 6. Walk-around Inspection

You are now ready to perform the walk-around inspection, which involves inspecting the outside of the entire vehicle. Starting with the sides of the vehicle, make sure that the following items work properly and are in good condition:

- Make sure the driver's and passenger's side glass is clean and free of chips or other damage.
- Make sure all latches and locks work properly.
- Check that the wheels, rims, and lug nuts are not missing, bent, or with broken spacers, studs, or clamps. Make sure the tires are properly inflated, have no excessive tread wear, and are the same size (not mixed radial and bias types).
- Check the condition of the shock absorbers, springs, spring hangers, shackles, and u-bolts.

- Check the condition of the brake drum and hoses.
- Check that the fuel tank is securely mounted, not damaged or leaking, contains enough fuel, and the caps are secure. Check that the fuel crossover line is secure.
- Observe the engine for leaks.
- Observe the transmission for leaks.
- Check that the exhaust system is secure, not leaking, and not touching wires, fuel lines, or air lines.
- Make sure the frame and cross members are not bent or cracked.
- Make sure the spare tire carrier rack is not damaged; the spare tire/wheel is securely mounted in rack; and the spare tire/wheel is the right size and properly inflated.
- Check the front axle.
- Make sure there are no loose, damaged, or missing parts on the steering system. Test the steering wheel by turning it in both directions to see if there is too much play before resistance is felt. Check the manufacturer's specifications for the amount of play that is allowed.
- Check for damage on the windshield; check windshield wiper arms for proper tension and blades for damage.
- Check for appropriate placards, markings, and labels.
- Check that the license plates are present, clean, and secure.
- Make sure mud flaps are present, not damaged, and secure.

Important! If applicable, make sure you check the leaf springs every time you perform an inspection. A broken leaf spring can lead to handling problems that could result in an accident.

Point 7. Check Brakes

During this final step, test the following:

- Parking brake: Start the vehicle, engage the vehicle's parking brake, and gently pull against it in a low gear to test that it will hold.
- Service brakes: Wait for normal air pressure, release the parking brake, move the vehicle forward (above 5 mph), and apply the brakes firmly. Note any pulls to one side, unusual feels, or delayed stopping action.