

# Pre-Trip and Post-Trip Vehicle Safety Inspections

For any driver holding a Commercial Drivers License (CDL), a pre-trip vehicle safety inspection is mandated by law. You should have a check-list so that each driver can make certain to check each safety aspect of the vehicle prior to taking it out on the road every morning (call the Transit Hotline at 800.527.8279 for sample pre-trip checklists or go to [www.ctaa.org](http://www.ctaa.org)).

Drivers should be the first to know if there is a problem with their vehicle — and are therefore responsible for making management and maintenance aware of the problem. An effective pre-trip inspection pays for itself by reducing the costs of repairs by catching problems while they remain small and, hopefully, before they become major.

An effective pre-trip vehicle safety inspection must include, at least, the seven steps on these two pages:

# 1



**Use your inspection checklist.**

Fill it out completely for each vehicle you are assigned each day. Return the checklist to your maintenance department prior to departing on your run.



# 2



**Check under the vehicle's hood prior to starting the engine.**

Check the oil, radiator and coolant levels. Also check belts and hoses for cracks, splits or worn spots. Check for loose wires or fluid leaks. Check for loose battery cables and corrosion. If appropriate, check for brake fluid level in the master cylinder.

Start the engine and look for leaking fluids.

Check the dashboard to see that it is lighting properly and that all the gauges and indicators are working properly. Try the steering for excessive play. Test the windshield wipers and washers for proper operation. Sound the horn. Check the seatbelts.

# 3





With the engine running, turn on all the lights - headlights (low and high beams), parking lights, brake lights, turn signals, emergency flashers, back-up lights, clearance lights and interior lights.

**4**



**5**  
**Don't forget the suspension.**  
 Step back and see if the vehicle is sitting lower on one side than the other - or in the back or front.



**6**  
**Check for proper tire inflation and any cuts, bubbles or other tire deformities.**  
 Check tread depth and wear on the tires. Look for loose or hanging parts from the exhaust system. Listen for unusual noises and look for scratches and dents. Check the doors and windows for proper operation, seal and for broken or cracked glass.

**8**  
 Last, prior to moving the vehicle, test the brake system. Check for sponginess in the pedal. If the brake pedal goes all the way to the floor when depressed, do not move the vehicle, and call a supervisor.



**7**

Cycle the wheelchair lift and check that all of its securements are present and working properly.

At the end of the route each day, a professional driver performs a post-trip inspection. The main reason for this check is to alert maintenance personnel of any problems that may have developed during the day before the next morning. Also, an effective post-trip inspection allows tomorrow's driver to know as much as possible about the vehicle.

With practice, a complete and thorough pre-trip can be completed in less than 10 minutes and a post-trip in five minutes. This is clearly time well spent to ensure safety.