



**JOB AID**

# **DOT Vehicle and Roadside** **Inspections**

# DOT Vehicle and Roadside Inspections

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The content in this job aid is based on the criteria included in the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) North American Standard Inspection.

## Daily Inspection

You should inspect your vehicle before each day's operation. If you do not find and correct items, be aware that your haul may be stopped until you correct out-of-service violations.

## Enforcement Inspection

Enforcement inspections commonly take place on roadsides and at weigh stations. To minimize the risk of collisions, make an effort to pull over in a level area where there is good visibility so others can see your stopped vehicle.

During an enforcement inspection, enforcement officers may ask you about your trip and your cargo and even ask questions like, "Have you been drinking alcohol?" or "Are there any weapons in the vehicle?" These are standard questions, so relax and answer honestly.

At an enforcement inspection, you may be asked to show documents such as your:

- Commercial driver's license (CDL)
- Medical card and waivers, if applicable
- Vehicle registration
- Logbook and hours of service
- Vehicle inspection records
- Trip receipts
- Shipping papers such as the bill of lading if you are carrying any hazardous material

The truck placards and contents should be consistent with the listed cargo. Endorsements on your CDL should show you are a qualified carrier of the materials you are transporting.

Obey requests during the functional portion of the enforcement inspection. You may be asked to:

- Open the trailer so that enforcement officers can inspect contents and make sure the load is secure inside
- Open the hood so that enforcement officers can inspect the engine and steering components
- Operate your lights, signals, windshield washer, windshield wipers and horn
- Run the engine to build air pressure so that enforcement officers can check air-operated components such as brakes
- Rock the trailer to check the 5th wheel connection

## Safety

Always ensure your own safety when performing inspections. Use the following general guidelines when you perform an inspection:

- Chock wheels on sloped surfaces
- Never put your body or hands between tires or in any other location where they might be pinched or crushed if the vehicle moved unexpectedly

- If you have to be under the vehicle for any reason, the engine must be off, brakes must be set and wheels must be chocked
  - Have your body parallel to the running lines of the vehicle so that if the vehicle moved, you would not be run over
- Wear the recommended **personal protective equipment**
  - A high-visibility reflective vest makes you more visible to others
  - Safety glasses protect your eyes from dislodged dirt and debris
  - Gloves protect your hands from hot, rough or sharp metal parts
  - Knee pads provide comfort

Observe tires for conditions like:

1. Exposed steel belting or cord
2. Bulges
3. Embedded debris
4. Improper inflation
5. Inadequate tread depth

Check **rims, wheels, leaf suspension, trailer and frame components** for broken welds, missing rivets, cracks, bent rail members, missing or loose nuts or bolts, and excessive corrosion or metal wear.

Check the **5th wheel** and sliding tandems to make sure they are properly connected and fully and securely latched in place.

Make sure the **rear impact guard** is intact and not excessively bent.

Make sure **fuel lines, pneumatics, hydraulics and other engine fluid lines**:

- Are secure
- Are properly connected
- Have enough slack
- Are in good condition and free from chafing and leaks

Be aware that audible air leaks are a reason for concern.

The **control cluster** in the driver compartment must have properly functioning low-pressure alarms.

Check your low- and high-beam **headlights, turn signals and running lights**. Remember to look at the front, rear and sides.

**Glass**, including side mirrors, windshield and windows, should be intact and clean.

Make sure your **brakes** are properly functioning. There should be no oil or grease on any part of the braking mechanism.

Ensure that your **cargo** is properly secured, and the tie-downs are in good condition.

Make sure **spare tires** are securely mounted under the trailer. Listen and look for evidence of **exhaust** leaks. Check for excessive play in the **steering**.