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Pre-trip Inspection: 5 most commonly overlooked

As the increasing number of trucks take the road in the next couple weeks, it is easy to forget many aspects of the pre-trip inspection. It is very important to remember these individual checkups, not only for the efficiency of the vehicle, but for overall safety of the driver and the people with whom you are sharing the road. As a driver, you are required to routinely check your vehicle and trailer before your shift to ensure the safety and operations of the vehicle. Currently, there are no guidelines to a pre-trip inspection, but thoroughly checking your truck has been estimated to take approximately 30 to 50 minutes.



In a time-critical industry, a pre-trip inspection can be viewed as wasting valuable driving time. You see many drivers consistently taking 10 to 15 minutes to inspect their truck and trailer, and overlooking multiple inspection items.

The following are the 5 most commonly overlooked inspection items:

- **Chock your wheels**
This is one of the most commonly overlooked aspects of the pre-trip inspection process. You are going to have the engine running at times and you will also be performing tests on the braking system. You don't want the vehicle to be moving while you are checking processes for the truck.
- **Cleanliness**
It's common to hear folks say to keep your truck clean, but it is very important. This is especially true when preparing for a day of driving. When you have a junk-filled cab, it not only marks you as a messy person, it can also present its own dangers.
- **Brakes**
Testing your truck's braking system comprehensively involves a lot of steps. It requires checks to be made from both inside and outside of the cab. Checking the brakes of a cab may take over 10-15 minutes in itself. Don't forget this key inspection checkup.
- **Emergency Kit**
You are required to carry an emergency kit containing spare fuses/circuit breakers, warning hazard triangles and a fire extinguisher. It is good to frequently check the emergency kit and fire extinguisher. Knowing that they are there isn't enough while going through the inspection phases.
- **Paperwork**
And finally, make sure you have the correct paperwork and documents as it is often overlooked. You already have enough paperwork to worry about as it is. Make sure your paperwork is in working form.



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CDL PRE-TRIP VEHICLE INSPECTION MEMORY AID

You may use this list of vehicle components during the test to help remember components you must inspect as described in the Oregon Commercial Driver Manual. You need only inspect those components with which your vehicle is equipped.

As much as possible, you should inspect the components on your vehicle in the order they are listed below. This will help you conduct a methodical inspection without missing required components.

When visible or accessible, you must point at or touch the component you are inspecting. If your vehicle has the component but it is not visible or accessible, describe its location. Explain to the examiner how you are or would inspect the component. Specifically describe conditions that would lead you to believe an item or component is illegal or unsafe. If your vehicle does not have listed components, skip them and go to the next component/area.

The pre-trip inspection tests your familiarity with your vehicle and your ability to identify unsafe or illegal vehicle components. It is not representative of the complete inspection that you would perform daily.

● CLASS A VEHICLES ●

<i>Engine Compartment</i>	<i>Coupling Systems (Cont)</i>	<i>Trailer Suspension</i>
Fluid Levels	<i>Pintle Hook/Ball Hitch Types</i>	Springs and/or Air Bags
Belts	Mounting Bolts/Welds	Spring/Air Mounts and U-bolts
Air Compressor	Pintle Hook/Ball	Torque Arm/Radius Rod
Alternator	Safety Latch/Locking Device	<i>Rear of Trailer</i>
Fluid Leaks and Hoses	Safety Chains/Cables	Doors or Ties
<i>Front of Tractor/Truck</i>	Eye/Coupler	Mud Flaps
Steering Box and Hoses	Drawbar/Tongue	<i>Lights and Reflectors</i>
Steering Linkage	<i>Tow Truck – Underlift Type</i>	Front Lights
<i>Front Suspension</i>	Underlift Reach	Rear Lights
Springs &/or Air Bags	Pivot Pin	Clearance and Reflectors
Spring/Air Mounts and U-Bolts	Crossbar	<i>Engine Start – In Cab</i>
Shock Absorber	Receiver Retaining & Safety Pins	Safety Belt
<i>Driver/Fuel Area</i>	Tie-Down Chains or Straps	Lighting Indicators
Driver Door and Mirror	Safety Chains/Cables	Oil Pressure Indicator
Fuel Tank and Cap	<i>Side of Trailer</i>	Air Pressure Gauge
<i>Rear of Tractor/Truck</i>	Landing Gear	Ammeter/Voltmeter
Drive Shaft	Doors or Ties	Mirrors
Exhaust System	Frame & Crossmembers	Windshield
Frame	Tandem Release	Wipers and Washers
Air Connectors and Lines	<i>Trailer Wheels</i>	Horn(s)
Electric Connectors and Lines	Rims	Heater/Defroster
Catwalk	Tires	Safety/Emergency Equipment
Headerboard	Lug Nuts	Hydraulic Brake Check
<i>Coupling Systems</i>	Hub/Axle Seal	Breakaway Module
<i>Fifth Wheel Type</i>	Spacer or Bud Spacing	Air Brake Checks
Mounting Bolts	<i>Brakes</i>	Parking Brake
Platform	Slack Adjusters and Pushrods	Service Brakes
5 th Wheel Skid Plate	Chambers	
Release Arm	Hoses/Lines	
Kingpin	Drums and Linings or Rotors and Pads	
Apron		
Sliding 5 th Wheel Locking Pins		

● CLASS B and C VEHICLES ●
(Except Passenger Vehicles)

Engine Compartment	Rear Wheels	Lights and Reflectors
Fluid Levels	Rims	Front of Vehicle
Belts	Tires	Rear of Vehicle
Air Compressor	Lug Nuts	Clearance and Reflectors
Alternator	Hub/Axle Seal	In-Cab Inspection
Fluid Leaks and Hoses	Spacer or Bud Spacing	Safety Belt
Front of Vehicle	Rear Suspension	Lighting Indicators
Steering Box and Hoses	Springs &/or Air Bags	Oil Pressure Indicator
Steering Linkage	Spring/Air Mounts and U-bolts	Air Pressure Gauge
Front Suspension	Torque Arm/Radius Rod	Ammeter/Voltmeter
Springs &/or Air Bags	Brakes	Mirrors
Spring/Air Mounts and U-Bolts	Slack Adjusters and Pushrods	Windshield
Shock Absorber	Chambers	Wipers and Washers
Driver Door/Fuel Area	Hoses/Lines	Horn(s)
Driver Door and Mirror	Drums and Linings or Rotors and Pads	Heater/Defroster
Fuel Tank and Cap	Rear of Vehicle	Safety/Emergency Equipment
Catwalk	Doors or Ties	Hydraulic Brake Check
Under Vehicle	Mud Flaps	Air Brake Checks
Drive Shaft		Parking Brake
Exhaust		Service Brakes
Frame		

● CLASS B and C PASSENGER VEHICLES ●

Engine Compartment	Rear Wheels	Lights and Reflectors
Fluid Levels	Rims	Front of Vehicle
Belts	Tires	Rear of Vehicle
Air Compressor	Lug Nuts	Clearance and Reflectors
Alternator	Hub/Axle Seal	School Bus Items
Fluid Leaks and Hoses	Spacer or Bud Spacing	Student Loading Lights
Front of Vehicle	Rear Suspension	Stop/Safety Arm
Steering Box and Hoses	Springs &/or Air Bags	Student Mirror
Steering Linkage	Spring/Air Mounts and U-bolts	First Aid Kit & Body Fluid Kit
Front Suspension	Torque Arm/Radius Rod	In-Cab Inspection
Springs &/or Air Bags	Brakes	Safety Belt
Spring/Air Mounts and U-Bolts	Slack Adjusters and Pushrods	Lighting Indicators
Shock Absorber	Chambers	Oil Pressure Indicator
Driver Door/Fuel Area	Hoses/Lines	Air Pressure Gauge
Driver Door/Mirror	Drums and Linings or Rotors and Pads	Ammeter/Voltmeter
Fuel Tank & Cap	Rear of Vehicle	Mirrors
Under Vehicle	Mud Flaps	Windshield
Drive Shaft	Passenger Items	Wipers and Washers
Exhaust	Passenger Entry	Horn(s)
Frame	Wheelchair Lift	Heater/Defroster
Baggage Compartment	Handrails and Step Light	Safety/Emergency Equipment
Doors	Emergency Exits	Hydraulic Brake Check
	Seating	Air Brake Checks
		Parking Brake
		Service Brakes