

Transportation Safety

Training ADVISOR

April 2025

Vehicle Inspections

Get ready for Roadcheck 2025

Zero actions needed for zero-emission
truck mandate

Rising costs on the road to compliance

How to get back in service

Information and resources to help your drivers operate safely



J. J. Keller
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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Help your drivers find their inner inspector

Don't let your drivers wait for an inspection officer to issue them a violation! Encourage your staff to channel their inner inspector before, during, and after every trip to take the surprise out of roadside inspections.

Pretrip inspections: Drivers should verify that the vehicle is in safe operating condition, review the most recent driver vehicle inspection report (DVIR), and sign the DVIR to acknowledge that repairs were performed, if applicable.

Enroute and cargo securement inspections: Drivers must check cargo and load-securing devices within the first 50 miles of a trip. They must recheck cargo and load-securing devices when there is a change of duty status or after driving the vehicle for 3 hours or traveling 150 miles (whichever is first).

Post-trip inspection: Remind drivers to complete and sign the DVIR to report all defects discovered during that day.

When conducting a personal inspection, drivers should:

- **Listen for unusual or abnormal equipment sounds.** Thumps, rattles, squeaks, bumps, squeals, and hisses can all be signs of trouble. If things don't sound right, they should be reported for maintenance.
- **Take note of unusual odors that may signal trouble.** The smell of burning rubber, insulation, or oil can mean problems. Your drivers might help make an early diagnosis through a good sense of smell.
- **Feel changes in the vehicle's response.** Steering, braking, shifting, and other handling operations all have unique "feels" in a particular vehicle. If a driver notices that the vehicle doesn't seem to behave the way it should, have them report it promptly. Little problems cost much less to fix and require less downtime.
- **Observe the equipment carefully during required routine inspections.** Defects in wiring, lights, cables, tires, splash guards, locks, air lines, coupling devices, fifth wheels, tarps and fasteners, landing gear, brakes, and various accessories should all be carefully noted and reported to the maintenance department. ♦



Lucero Truszkowski

Lucero Truszkowski joined J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc. as an Associate Editor in 2022. Lucero edits, writes, and researches content on a variety of topics, including transportation, human resources, and driver training. She holds a Master of Science (MS) in Professional Writing from New York University.



TRAINING BLUEPRINT — VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

Vehicle inspections

Professional drivers should always be prepared for roadside inspections, since they can happen without warning and can come with serious consequences if the driver is unprepared. What better time to motivate your team than by prepping for Roadcheck 2025 to ensure your drivers are ready all year long?

TIP: Along with these best practices, make sure your drivers know the importance of having access to all the required paperwork and documentation.

Types of roadside inspections

The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) has eight levels of roadside inspections. Each level has a varying degree of emphasis and detail. Although Roadcheck 2025 will involve mostly Level I comprehensive driver/vehicle inspections, drivers (and their vehicles) should be prepared for inspections every day of the year.

- **Level I: Comprehensive driver/vehicle:** Examination of driver documents, plus a detailed inspection of the vehicle.
- **Level II: Cursory driver/vehicle:** Examination of driver documents, plus a simple inspection of the vehicle.
- **Level III: Driver:** Examination of documents and items related to the driver.
- **Level IV: Targeted:** A one-time examination of a specific item, such as a driver's record of duty status or a vehicle component.
- **Level V: Vehicle:** Detailed inspection of the vehicle only.
- **Level VI: Radioactive cargo:** Inspection of certain types of radioactive cargo.
- **Level VII: Jurisdictional:** An inspection mandated by a jurisdiction that doesn't meet the requirements of any other level of inspection.
- **Level VIII: Electronic:** Conducted wirelessly or remotely, not necessarily requiring interaction with an inspector.

TIP: Make sure your drivers understand the importance of roadside inspections and how the gathered data can impact the company's CSA scores.

Getting ready for Roadcheck 2025

The CVSA's International Roadcheck is an annual three-day event that takes place across Mexico, the U.S., and Canada. This is the largest commercial motor vehicle enforcement program in the world where inspectors check

about 15 trucks and motorcoaches per minute during the 72-hour window, according to the CVSA. **This year's Roadcheck event will occur from May 13-15, 2025.**

Inspectors will use the North American Standard Out-of-Service Criteria to help identify vehicle- and driver-related out-of-service (OOS) conditions. Vehicles placed OOS cannot be operated until OOS conditions have been corrected. Roadcheck 2024 focused on tractor protection systems (TPS) and resulted in **9,299** vehicles placed OOS.

Prioritize pretrip inspections

A pretrip inspection is performed before each trip to identify problems that could cause a breakdown or accident. Finding and correcting any defects or deficiencies before drivers hit the road can help lead to a successful roadside inspection.

- **Vehicle overview.** Walk around the vehicle and note the vehicle's overall condition, check for unusual wear, and review the last DVIR.
- **Engine compartment.** Check fluid levels, hoses for leaks, belts for wear or looseness, the alternator, water pump, air compressor, and the electrical wiring insulation. Also check the wheels and tires, brakes, steering system, suspension, exhaust, and frame.
- **Inside the cab.** Check all gauges, warning lights, directionals, windshield wipers/washers, steering wheel, clutch, accelerator, brakes, mirrors, windshield, and safety equipment.
- **Lights.** Check the low-beam and high-beam headlights and four-way flashers.
- **Walk-around.** Cover the entire exterior of the vehicle starting at the vehicle's left front side and continue to the front, right side, coupling system, rear, left rear, and left side.
- **Signal lights.** Make sure all signal lights are operating properly.
- **Brake system.** Test all brakes including parking, emergency, and service brakes. ♦





TRAINING HANDOUT — VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

Traveler's guide to inspection success

These general best practices will help prepare you for a successful vehicle inspection any day of the year.

Maintain the vehicle's condition. Check that the vehicle is in good operating condition by checking the fluids, cooling system, spark plugs and wires, timing belt, etc.

Keep the vehicle clean. Demonstrate some attention to detail by keeping the vehicle clean. Inspectors are human and may be impacted by their first impression of the vehicle. Make it a good one!

Be patient. Inspections take time, but trying to rush an inspector along is never helpful. Remember to be patient, professional, and polite to inspection officers.

Know what will be inspected. Make sure you know what paperwork you need and which elements will get inspected to help demonstrate competence and compliance.

Follow the inspector's instructions. This is especially important during the vehicle inspection. The officer will give you specific instructions during the inspection to let you know what to do. As an example, some officers will use a whistle to signal when they want the brakes applied or released, while other officers will simply yell "apply" and "release." ♦



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TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE — VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

1. How many inspection levels are there?
 - A. 1
 - B. 5
 - C. 8
 - D. 12

2. Roadcheck 2025 will involve mostly Level III comprehensive driver/vehicle inspections.
 - A. True
 - B. False

3. An important element of a pretrip inspection includes:
 - A. A vehicle overview
 - B. Checking inside the cab
 - C. Checking all lights
 - D. All of the above

4. All inspection officers use the same signals during roadside inspections.
 - A. True
 - B. False

5. In addition to pretrip inspections, you should also conduct:
 - A. Personal inspections
 - B. Enroute inspections
 - C. Post-trip inspections
 - D. Both B and C ♦

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

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Zero actions needed for zero-emission truck mandate (for now)

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) Advanced Clean Fleet regulation is on hold as of January 14, 2025, since CARB withdrew its waiver request with the Environmental Protection Agency.



The program's goal was to reduce emissions by requiring that fleets transition to zero-emissions vehicles over the next several years.

CARB's waiver was necessary because the Advanced Clean Fleet program exceeded the federal regulations. Without the waiver, CARB would not be able to move forward with the program.

What does it mean?

Since CARB has withdrawn the waiver, the program will not move forward at this time. This means, at least for the foreseeable future, high-priority fleets don't have to worry about complying with the registration and Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) transition requirements.

Keep in mind that the laws and regulations creating CARB's Advanced Clean Fleet program are still in place (CCR Title 13, Division 3, Chapter 1, Article 3.4, 2015.1 to 2015.6).

What about the other CARB programs?

This action has no impact on the CARB programs already in place. The Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) is the only program affected.

The CARB programs unaffected by this hold include:

- **Clean Truck Check:** This is the program that requires all trucks and buses with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 14,001 pounds or more operating in California to be registered in the Clean Truck Check-Vehicle Inspection System (CTC-VIS) database and to provide an on-board diagnostics (OBD) download twice per year.
- **Roadside Emissions Monitoring Devices (REMD) and Notices to Submit to Testing (NST):** This program uses remote air sensors to identify high emission vehicles. When an REMD detects one, the owner is sent an NST. If the required test is not done, the owner will be fined and the vehicle registration could be suspended.
- **Truck and Bus:** This is the regulation that requires all trucks and buses operating in California that have a GVWR of 14,001 pounds or more to be equipped with an engine that meets the MY 2010 emissions standards.
- **Transportation Refrigeration Unit (TRU):** This program requires TRUs operating in California to be registered in the Air Resources Board Equipment Registration (ARBER) database and to meet specific emissions and refrigerant requirements.
- **Greenhouse Gas Reduction (in-use vehicles):** This is the regulation that requires 53-foot trailers and the tractors pulling them to meet aerodynamic and low rolling resistant tire requirements when operating in California. ♦

Rising costs on the road to compliance

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has increased its maximum fines by 2.6 percent for 2025.

The increase affects all fines (known as civil penalties) levied by agencies within the DOT, including the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA).

Required annual increase

The annual increase is required by law and is pegged to inflation, which has eased in the past year. By



comparison, here are the following increases from the last three years:

- 2024 = 3.2 percent
- 2023 = 7.7 percent
- 2022 = 6.2 percent

Prior to that, increases had generally been around 1 percent each year.

What does the increase mean?

The increase means federal penalties levied on motor carriers, drivers, and others for violations of DOT regulations are going up, effective December 30, 2024.

For example, a highway safety violation that might have cost up to \$18,759 in 2024 could now result in a fine of \$19,246.

The complete list of maximum civil penalties is found in Appendices A and B to 49 CFR Part 386. Review the *Federal Register* for more details: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/12/30/2024-30608/revisions-to-civil-penalty-amounts-2025> ♦



Next Month's Topic: Defensive driving

Your drivers' skill and good judgment as professionals make all the difference in most potential accident situations. Remind your drivers that defensive driving means watching out for everybody else and themselves at all times when out on the road. ♦



Expert Help: Question of the Month

Question: One of my drivers was placed out of service for not wearing their contacts while operating a CDL vehicle. He now knows that he needs them to operate. What is the process to get the driver and the vehicle back in service?

Answer: For driver violations, there is no direct documentation required (there is no "repair record" that must be retained related to "fixing" the driver). When they return the roadside inspection report, they are certifying that all violations have been addressed.

In the case of the driver not wearing corrective lenses, they are signing/certifying that the driver was wearing corrective lenses before operating again and that the driver will wear them in the future. If they want to create some type of document to present during an audit or investigation indicating that the driver was corrected, that is voluntary.

A record of the conversation with the driver verifying the driver was wearing corrective lenses before operating again and was instructed to always wear corrective lenses when driving would be adequate. ♦



Expert Help

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EDITOR: Lucero Truszkowski

ISSN 2688-1616

GST R123-317687

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