

Pre-Trip Vehicle Inspection SOP

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Revision	1.0
Owner	Fleet Safety Manager
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To confirm a vehicle is safe to operate before it leaves the yard, catching mechanical defects early and creating a documented inspection record for every trip.

2. Scope

Applies to the driver's pre-trip inspection of company trucks, vans and trailers before departure. Post-trip inspection and scheduled preventive maintenance are covered by separate procedures.

Definitions

DVIR	Driver Vehicle Inspection Report, the documented record of a pre-trip or post-trip inspection, including any defects found.
Out-of-service defect	A mechanical or safety issue serious enough that the vehicle must not be driven until it is repaired.
Walkaround	The physical inspection a driver performs by walking around and under the vehicle checking tires, lights, and visible components.
ICC bar	The rear underride guard on a trailer, checked for damage since it can affect docking and rear-impact protection.

3. Responsibilities

Driver	Performs the pre-trip inspection, completes the DVIR, and reports defects before departure.
Fleet Safety Manager	Reviews DVIRs, enforces the out-of-service process, and audits inspection quality.
Maintenance Technician	Diagnoses and repairs reported defects and signs off the vehicle as roadworthy.
Dispatcher	Reassigns loads or vehicles when a unit is placed out of service before departure.

RACI matrix

Activity	Driver	Fleet Safety Manager	Maintenance Technician	Dispatcher
Perform pre-trip inspection	R/A	A	I	-
Complete and submit DVIR	R	A	I	I
Repair reported defect	I	A	R	I

Activity	Driver	Fleet Safety Manager	Maintenance Technician	Dispatcher
Approve vehicle back in service	I	R/A	R	I
Reassign load for out-of-service unit	I	C	I	R/A

R = Responsible, A = Accountable, C = Consulted, I = Informed

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- Pre-trip inspection checklist matching vehicle type
- DVIR form or fleet management app
- Tire tread depth gauge
- Flashlight
- Out-of-service tag
- Reflective warning triangles

Personal protective equipment

- High-visibility vest
- Gloves
- Safety shoes

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	Review the previous DVIR Check the most recent post-trip DVIR for the vehicle for any defects reported and confirm they were repaired and signed off before starting your own inspection.	Driver	☐
5.2	Check fluid levels and engine compartment With the engine off, check oil, coolant, power steering and washer fluid levels, and look for visible leaks, worn belts or damaged hoses in the engine compartment.	Driver	☐
5.3	Inspect tires and wheels Check tire tread depth, look for cuts, bulges or uneven wear, confirm tire pressure is within range, and verify all lug nuts are present and tight. Checkpoint: Every tire meets minimum tread depth and shows no visible damage before the vehicle leaves the yard.	Driver	☐
5.4	Check lights and reflectors Turn on headlights, turn signals, brake lights, hazard lights and marker lights, and walk around the vehicle to confirm each one works and reflectors are clean and intact.	Driver	☐
5.5	Inspect brakes and air system For air brake vehicles, check air pressure builds correctly and the low air warning activates as expected; for hydraulic brakes, check the pedal for firmness and full travel. Warning: Never operate a vehicle with an air system that fails to build pressure or a warning light that does not clear before driving.	Driver	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.6	Check coupling and trailer connections For a combination vehicle, verify the fifth wheel is locked, the kingpin is properly seated, and air and electrical lines are connected and not chafing.	Driver	☐
5.7	Inspect the trailer body and doors Check the trailer floor, walls, roof and ICC bar for damage, confirm doors latch and seal properly, and check that the load is not visible through any gap.	Driver	☐
5.8	Check mirrors, wipers and glass Adjust mirrors for visibility, check wiper blades for wear, and inspect the windshield for cracks or chips that could obstruct the driver's view.	Driver	☐
5.9	Verify required equipment on board Confirm the vehicle carries required items such as a fire extinguisher, reflective warning triangles, and a spare fuse kit, and that they are within any marked service dates.	Driver	☐
5.10	Complete the DVIR Record the inspection result on the DVIR or fleet app, noting any defect found, its severity, and whether it affects the vehicle's roadworthiness. Checkpoint: A DVIR is completed and submitted for every vehicle before it leaves the yard, defect or not.	Driver	☐
5.11	Tag and report an out-of-service defect If a defect makes the vehicle unsafe to drive, attach an out-of-service tag, do not operate the vehicle, and notify the dispatcher and fleet safety manager immediately.	Driver	☐
5.12	Confirm repair and clear for departure Once maintenance repairs a reported defect, confirm the sign-off on the DVIR before removing the out-of-service tag and departing.	Maintenance Technician	☐

6. Quality checks

- A completed DVIR exists for every vehicle departure, with or without a defect.
- Every out-of-service defect has a documented repair sign-off before the tag is removed.
- Tire tread and brake checks are recorded, not just marked as passed.
- Fleet safety manager reviews a sample of DVIRs weekly for completeness.

7. Records

- Completed DVIR forms
- Out-of-service tags and repair sign-offs
- Maintenance repair log
- Fleet safety audit notes

8. KPIs

- Percentage of departures with a completed DVIR
- Number of out-of-service defects found per month
- Average time from defect reported to repair completed
- Roadside inspection violation rate

9. Common mistakes

- Rushing the walkaround and skipping under-vehicle or trailer checks.
- Departing with a known defect because the vehicle 'usually runs fine'.
- Not documenting a defect that was fixed verbally without an updated DVIR.
- Reusing a prior day's DVIR instead of completing a new inspection.

10. Revision history

Revision	Date	Description	Reviewed by
1.0	September 15, 2026	Initial release	Iliia Pirozhenko

Approval

Prepared by	Approved by	Date

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