

Commercial motor vehicle (CMV) inspection, repair and maintenance

There are specific requirements for CMV operators to follow with regard to vehicle inspection, repair and maintenance. The following information is provided to assist you in the safe operation of your fleet and to gain compliance with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. For assistance in setting up your program or gaining compliance, please contact your local UFG loss control representative.

APPLICABILITY (396.1)

Every motor carrier, its officers, drivers, agents, representatives and employees directly concerned with inspection or maintenance of commercial motor vehicles must comply and be knowledgeable of these rules.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS (396.3)

Every carrier shall systematically inspect, repair and maintain all commercial motor vehicles under its control.

RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS (396.3)

Motor carriers must maintain the following information for every vehicle they have controlled for 30 days or more:

- Identifying information, including company number, make, serial number, year and tire size.
- A schedule of inspections to be performed, including type and due date.
- Inspection, repair and maintenance records.
- Records of tests conducted on buses with push-out windows, emergency doors and marking lights.

Note: These records must be retained for one year at the location where the vehicle is garaged and kept for six months after the vehicle leaves the carrier's control (e.g., sale, trade-in, scrap.)

ROADSIDE INSPECTION REPORTS (396.9)

Any driver who receives a roadside inspection report must deliver it to the motor carrier.

CERTIFICATION OF ROADSIDE INSPECTION REPORTS (396.9)

An official of the motor carrier is to examine the roadside inspection report and ensure that any violations or defects noted on the report are corrected. Within 15 days of the inspection, the carrier must sign the completed roadside inspection report to certify that all violations have been corrected and then return it to the indicated address. A copy must be retained for 12 months from the date of inspection.

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POST-TRIP INSPECTION REPORT (396.11)

Every carrier must require its drivers to prepare a daily written post-trip inspection report at the end of each driving day. Every driver is responsible for preparing this report for each vehicle driven. This report must cover at least the following parts and accessories:

- Service brakes (including trailer brake connections).
- Parking (hand) brake.
- Steering mechanism.
- Lighting devices and reflectors.
- Tires.
- Horn.
- Windshield wipers.
- Rearview mirrors.
- Coupling devices.
- Wheels and rims.
- Emergency equipment.

The report must list any condition the driver either found or had reported to him/her that would affect operation safety or cause a breakdown. If no defect or deficiency is reported or found, the report should state this. The driver must sign the report in all cases.

Before dispatching the vehicle again, a carrier shall ensure that a certification has been made as to any defect or deficiency, that they have been corrected, or state those deficiencies that do not require immediate correction. Carriers must keep the original post-trip inspection report and the certification of repairs for at least three months from the date of preparation.

DRIVER INSPECTION (396.13)

Before starting out, the driver must be satisfied that the motor vehicle is in safe operating condition. If the last vehicle inspection report notes any deficiencies, the driver must review and sign to acknowledge that the necessary repairs have been completed.

PERIODIC INSPECTION (396.17)

Every commercial vehicle, including each segment of a combination vehicle, requires periodic inspection that must be performed at least once every year. At a minimum, inspections must include all items listed in the *Minimum Periodic Inspection Standards, Appendix G, Subchapter B*. Carriers are able to perform these required annual inspections themselves. The original or a copy of the periodic inspection report must be retained by the motor carrier for 14 months from the report date. Documentation, including a report, sticker or decal, of the most recent periodic inspection must be kept on the vehicle.

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INSPECTOR QUALIFICATION (396.19)

Motor carriers must ensure that persons performing annual inspections are qualified. Inspectors must:

- Understand the inspection standards of Part 393 and Appendix G.
- Be able to identify defective components.
- Have knowledge and proficiency in methods, procedures and tools.

INSPECTOR TRAINING OR EXPERIENCE (396.19)

Inspectors may gain experience or training by:

- Completing a state or federal training program.
- Earning a state or Canadian province qualifying certificate in commercial motor vehicle safety inspections.
- A combination of other training or experience totaling at least one year.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Additional requirements include maintaining evidence of inspector qualifications (396.19), equivalency to periodic inspections (396.23), brake inspector qualifications to complete inspections of braking systems and maintaining evidence of their qualifications (396.25).

Sources

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, Part 396

U.S. DOT/FMCSA – “A Motor Carriers Guide to Improving Highway Safety”

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