



Preventative Maintenance and Inspection Procedures

Control and manage insurance risks associated with vehicle maintenance.

Motor carriers can reduce the incidence of preventable vehicle accidents by incorporating maintenance and inspection procedures. TEC Insurance's recommended prevention measures can also improve the safety record of company drivers.

Brakes

Catastrophic brake failure often leads to losing control of the vehicle and the inability of the driver to recover. Instruct drivers to:

- Test brakes for stopping performance before entering the highway.
- Ensure that brakes are properly adjusted.
- Learn how to determine if the air system is operating satisfactorily.
- Check that low air warning devices are functioning.
- Stop and check brake adjustment before entering sever downgrades.

Tires

A tire that is worn or damaged may fail as a blowout and result in loss of control. Instruct drivers to:

- Monitor tire inflation and wear.
- Maintain correct tire inflation pressures.
- Check tire tread depth regularly.
- Mount matched tire sizes and pair tires in duals with similar wear.
- Never mix bias and radial tires on the same axle.
- Replace tread on on sound casings.

Wheels

Incorrectly assembled or damaged wheel components can result in collapse of the wheel assembly and loss of control. Instruct drivers to:

- Use established guidelines to determine whether components should be returned to service.
- Attempt to determine cause of damage or deterioration.
- Inspect wheels and look for cracks in wheels and rims, improperly seated lock rings, rust around wheel nuts, wheel nut tightness after recent tire change and missing components.

Steering system

Excessive steering wheel play makes it harder for the driver to steer. Instruct drivers to:

- Check for excessive steering wheel play during pre-trip inspections.
- Follow established company guidelines for taking the vehicle out of service.
- Indicate steering deficiencies in writing on vehicle inspection reports.

Trailer hitching

Trailer separation can occur due to improper hitching or inadequate or damaged equipment. Instruct drivers to:

- Check hitch components for deficiencies.
- Adjust coupler if necessary.
- Lock hook or ball hitch properly.
- Connect safety chains properly.
- Connect electric and air lines properly.

Contact TEC Insurance today to learn more about risk management and reduction.

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Coupling equipment

Proper coupling procedures for semi trailers ensure that the coupling equipment remains in good order, landing gear is not damaged, air and electric lines are hooked up, axle loads are balanced and the coupling is secure. Instruct drivers to:

- Adjust trailer height to minimize coupling impact.
- Check conditions of kingpin and jaws.
- Check that jaws are locked after coupling.
- Ensure that landing gear is raised.
- Hook up air and electric lines carefully.
- Lock adjustable trailer axles properly.
- Check to see that the kingpin is not riding on top of the jaws.
- Lock adjustment on adjustable fifth wheel trailers.

Lights and reflectors

Ensure that your truck's lighting systems and reflectors are adequate. Instruct drivers to:

- Keep all lights and reflectors operable and clean.
- Use extra care when making turns or crossing intersections during poor visibility conditions.
- Use extra care when pulling low profile trailers.

Loads

Heavy, high and offset loads can precipitate rollovers during emergency steering maneuvers or when driving at excessive speeds. Instruct drivers to:

- Make sure the vehicle and axle weights are within legal limits.
- Know the vehicle weight rating.
- Make sure that tire ratings and inflations are compatible with the load and driving conditions.
- Ensure suspension and coupling ratings are appropriate for the load.
- Place heaviest cargo on the bottom.
- Check to see that heavy articles are not offset to one side of the trailer.
- Use reduced speeds.
- Go slower than curve speed signs indicate.
- Know vehicle height and plan route to avoid low bridges.
- Determine payload characteristics when picking up a sealed trailer.
- Make sure the lading has been properly secured.
- Periodically check that tie downs and bracing are still intact and that the cargo has not shifted.
- Drive at reduced speeds during turns or braking
- Double-check bracing and tie downs when picking up unusual cargoes.

Source: The Federal Highway Administration and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. For more information on a range of issues affecting motor carrier safety and security visit www.fmcsa.dot.gov.

TEC Insurance wants to help you protect the assets that contribute to the success and profitability of your business. Be diligent with preventative maintenance and inspections. Your attention to safety will help minimize losses and reduce insurance costs.

See our web site at www.tecinsurance.net for more information.

This document contains general information on reducing risk. Always consult proper authorities and your legal counsel as appropriate.

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