

eBook

4 Tips for Passing Your Next Roadside Inspection

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Peace of mind

Do your drivers get nervous stopping at an inspection station? Do their palms get a little sweaty when pulled over by a state trooper because they're unsure of what they might find?

You can alleviate much of their stress by making sure you have good systems in place – and that starts long before the actual roadside inspection.

The difficulty of clearing road inspections is real. With more than 160,000 drivers and over 460,000 vehicles receiving violation notices every year, it makes sense to give your drivers every chance to prepare for and pass roadside inspections.



Based on recent FMCSA data, 20 out of every 100 vehicles (1 in 5) that get inspected receive an Out-of-Service (OOS) violation.¹



Why improve your pass rate?

Successfully overcoming the challenge of roadside inspections not only benefits your business, but it also puts your drivers at ease.



Passing Roadside Inspections

This comparison chart gives you a quick overview of why it makes sense to review your inspection process and make changes where needed.

- Improved productivity and efficiency of your drivers
- Improved CSA score
- Reduced chance of future or more in-depth inspections
- Better company reputation and more reliable ETAs

Failing Roadside Inspections¹

- OOS orders mean lost productivity or missing deadlines
- Increased targeting for future inspections / more chance of incurring additional violations
- Drop in driver morale
- Lost business due to poor record or fewer available vehicles to meet customer commitments

¹This is when a driver or vehicle receives an OOS order

Do your pre-trip inspection to pass your roadside

To improve the success rate with roadside inspections you need to trace it back to where many of the problems originate from – issues with driver inspections, both pre- and post-trip. Get that right and expect better results at your next roadside inspection.

Speaking of pre-trip inspections, federal laws (DOT 392.7) requires that no commercial motor vehicle (CMV) shall be driven unless the driver is satisfied.

Drivers should do a detailed visual inspection – service brakes, trailer brake connections, parking brakes, steering mechanisms, lighting devices, reflectors, horns, tires and windshield wipers – to make sure the vehicle is road-worthy and without observable defects.



Did you know?

Our pre-trip inspection software uses smart detection technology to make sure drivers have physically inspected the vehicle as well as taking sufficient time based on the complexity of the checks that need to be made.

Tip #1

Getting schooled

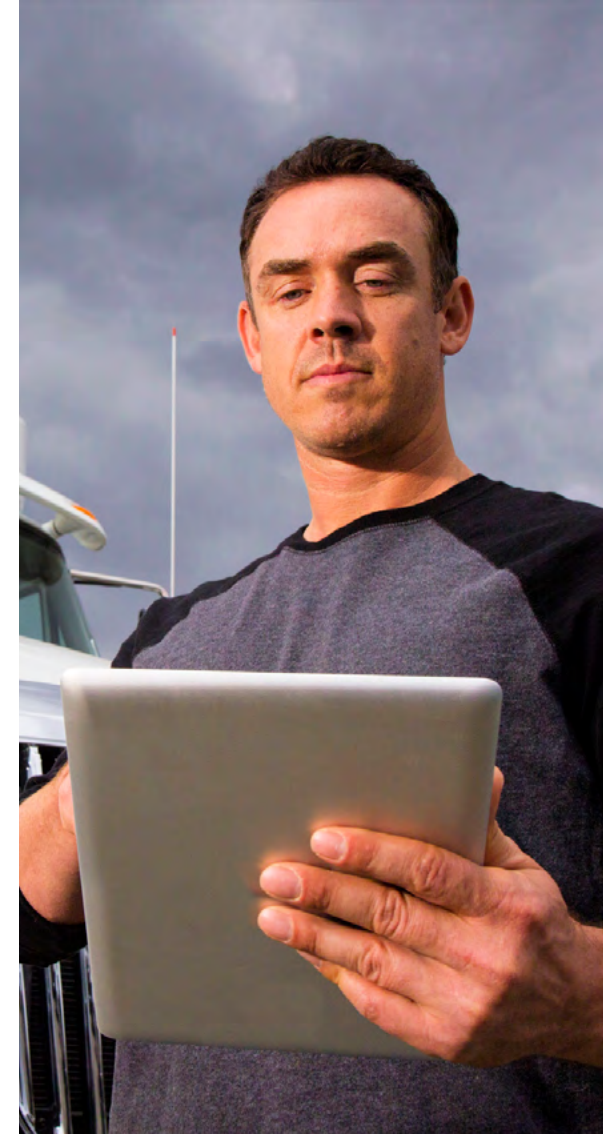
Educating your team

With more than 1,050 potential violations it can seem like a daunting task to get your drivers up to speed with all the regulations that could lead to a failed inspection. Even the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) has a 76-page manual on the subject.

It seems like a lot but break it down into sections and it quickly becomes manageable. In terms of objectives for your team, everyone should have a working knowledge of the following aspects of vehicle compliance:

- The 7 BASIC categories and what they cover
- What the Inspection Selection System (ISS) is and how it affects your fleet
- What your CSA score is and how it's calculated
- The regulations that apply to commercial vehicle operators – essentially Part 392 of the FMCSA regulations
- The types of violations you generally get targeted for (Tip #2 addresses this in more detail)
- The three different levels of inspections – Level 1 North American Standard Driver and Vehicle, Level 2 Vehicle Only/Walk-around or Level 3 Driver Only
- An overview of vehicle inspections, DVIRs and what to look for

Understanding the current state and specific vulnerabilities of your business will help you to get the best return on company training programs—and have the biggest impact on reducing compliance violations.



The FMCSA provides a range of resources online that can be used to complement your own training collateral.

Tip #2

Know your fleet

Review your fleet's current state of play

There's a big difference between a safe fleet and an unsafe fleet, even if the CSA scores are identical.

We mentioned before the huge number of potential violations that can crop up at a roadside inspection – understanding your fleet's behavior can help you laser focus on what is referred to as the “critical few”. To get a good grasp of what you need to work on, review your OOS rates.

Review your inspections reports including what and when they were triggered – you'll start to identify patterns for what's generating the bulk of violations. Is it observable defects? Are drivers getting citations, such as speeding tickets, that lead to an inspection?

Work backward to identify root causes and you'll know where to make changes. One beneficial change is removing subjectivity from vehicle inspections – to achieve this you need to standardize.



Did you know?

Our mobile form software allows you to create standard templates that match the inspection needs of each equipment type.

Tip #3

Consistency is key

Standardizing your inspection process

This particular suggestion is a good reminder that all four of these tips are designed to work together to improve the consistency of your internal inspection process.

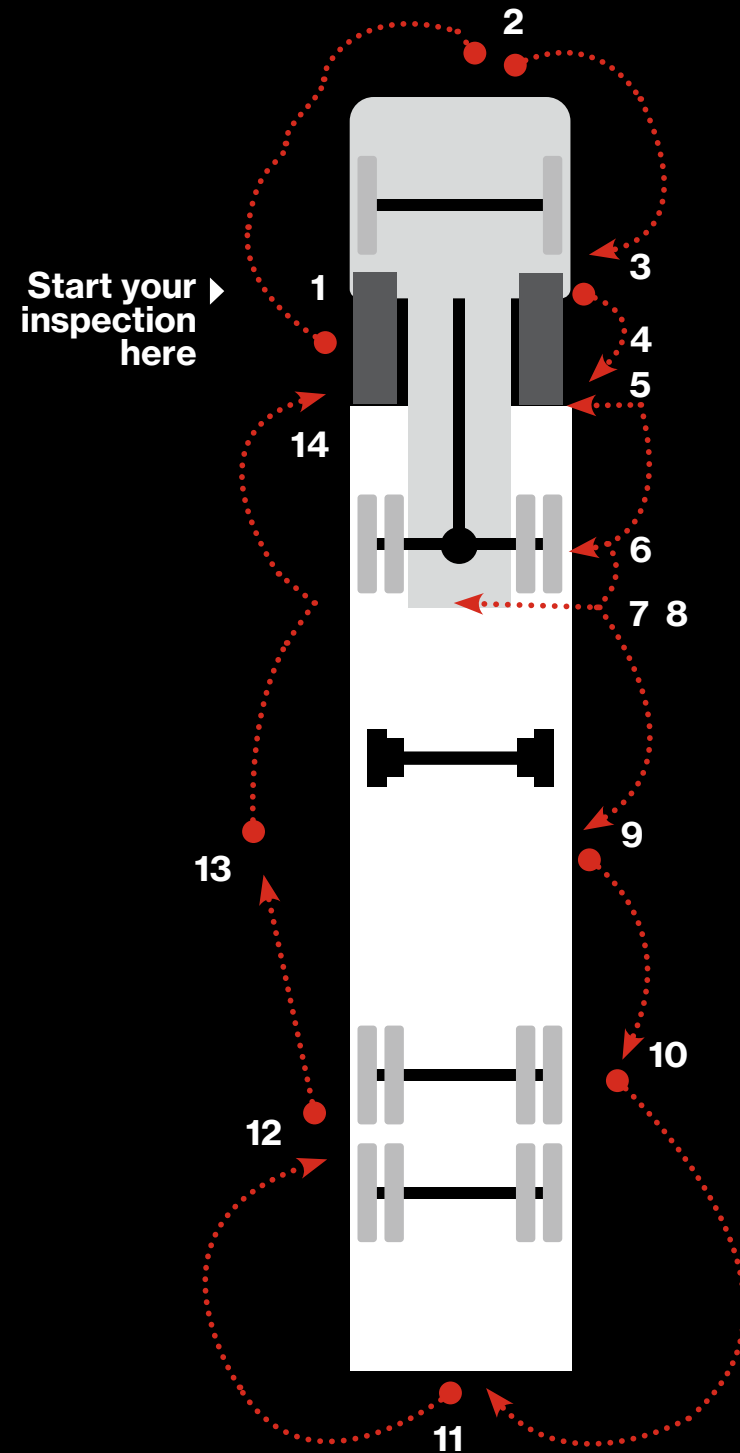
Use the information you gather (Tip #2) to build your standardized inspection (Tip #3), which you'll train your team with (Tip #1) and they can follow through on with updated technology (Tip #4).

Creating a standard inspection is about deciding how you want your drivers to inspect their vehicles day after day, week after week. Make it completely objective so there's no room for variation that could trigger an inspection.

With standard pre- and post-trip inspections in place, you'll also be able to start measuring how well drivers adhere to the process and whether training is in order.

A better way to train:

Go out there and take photos of each step – each and every component – turn it into a PowerPoint. Show it as part of your orientation and an annual refresher for all drivers.



Tip #4

Get your geek on

Behavior-based management technology

While a lot of fleets are still largely paper-based, the introduction of the ELD mandate is forcing change. This is proving to be a perfect opportunity to embrace technology to improve efficiency, productivity and inspection standards.



Custom inspection forms/ Driver Vehicle Inspection Report (DVIR)

Provide operators with step-by-step checks (include photos of satisfactory condition). Drivers can complete using their mobile device and sign-off electronically. Proprietary technology verifies actual inspection is done.



Behavior-based scorecards

Drivers can compete for rewards based on good driving behavior using actual vehicle data.



Electronic Logging Device (ELD)

Now legally required for most commercial drivers, ELDs will streamline Hours of Service (HOS) record-keeping and eliminate all Form & Manner errors (currently these represent approximately 25% of all violations).



Smart, automated routing

Get optimized routes for all your vehicles that make allowance for flexible sales territories, multiple stops and route restrictions (such as having trucks avoid a particularly troublesome inspection station).



On-premise navigation

Drivers can get accurate turn-by-turn directions to the loading dock with safety tips for each location, minimizing costs (currently estimated at 28% of the total trip cost). Some carriers also state that on-site collisions account for over 70% of accident claims.

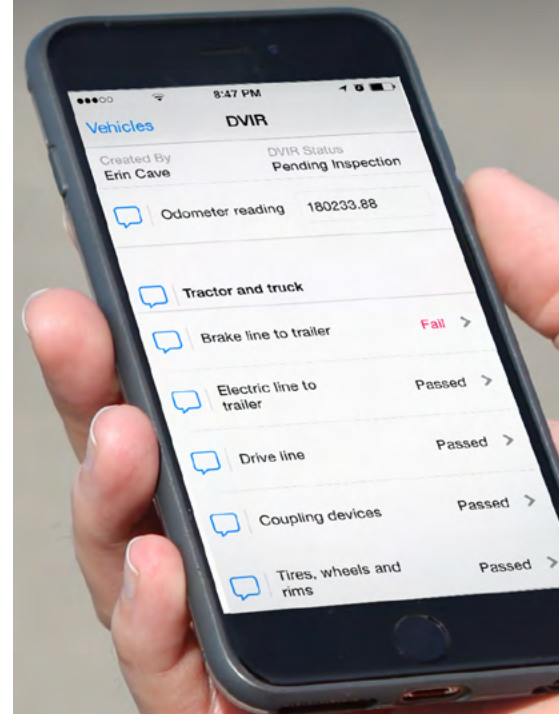


ETA & scheduling

Work more efficiently with customers including shippers and receivers to schedule loading/unloading.

Everybody wins:

Some fleets are shy about introducing technology fearing a backlash from drivers – the reality is that when you take advantage of tools to prevent or minimize idle time everybody wins. Drivers, like everybody else in the business, know that if the wheels aren't turning they're not earning.



Improving more than just your pass rate

Raising the standard of your vehicle inspections with the aid of technology and better processes is just the start. It's a critical time for fleets to invest in better systems to overcome the expected impact of future changes.

Loss of productivity

Electronic logging eliminates the option drivers currently have to hide hours and compress miles. Fleets will need to work more efficiently to make up the reduced driving hours.

More emphasis on vehicle safety

With HOS violations being a thing of the past, inspectors will focus more on checking vehicles are up to standard.

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