

RISK COMMUNIQUÉ

Vehicle Preventive Maintenance

The nature of our work means that there is little latitude for “on the job” repair work. We have to show up ready to perform. Preventive maintenance is the key to readiness. It reduces unplanned equipment and vehicle breakdowns and helps keep the fleet in operational readiness.

Regular inspection of a vehicle is an essential step in its’ safe operation. The first step in any maintenance program is to budget enough to both maintain the fleet and be prepared long term to deal with parts and components that will need to be replaced or repaired.

The second part of the vehicle maintenance program is driver/operator responsibility. Emphasis should be placed on these responsibilities. The organization must identify the role of the driver/operator in the inspection and preventative maintenance program. While most operational crews are not trained or equipped to undertake major maintenance work, most organizations assign them some responsibilities for pre and post trip inspections. The organization should maintain a checklist for these inspections. The driver/operator should be responsible for completing the documentation, reporting deficiencies and verifying that the requested and needed maintenance was performed.

Types of Inspections

Two types of inspections should be conducted on a regular basis: pre-trip and post-trip. Always wear appropriate protective gear when performing a preventive maintenance inspection.

1. Pre-trip inspections should include as a minimum the following items:
 - a. Vehicle overview
 - b. Check the engine compartment
 - c. Start engine and check inside cab
 - d. Check headlights, signal lights, warning lights and audio devices
 - e. Conduct walk around inspection
 1. The Approach
 2. Left-front side
 3. Front
 4. Right front side
 5. Right Rear side
 6. Rear
 7. Left Rear side
 8. Engine compartment
 9. In-cab
 10. Check operation of special components (i.e. lifts, ramps)
 - f. Check brake system

2. Post-trip inspections should include, as a minimum, the following items:
 - a. Clean vehicle
 - b. Replace supplies
 - c. Refuel and check fluid levels, if justified
 - d. Report any unusual occurrences and/or malfunctions
 - e. Conduct the inspection the same way each time and use a written checklist
 - f. Report in writing any deficiencies found

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Maintenance Records

Inspections and preventive maintenance efforts (including repairs and malfunctions) should be documented and a record should be kept during the life of the vehicle. The records should include a vehicle log, a maintenance file, and all work order request forms.