

CHECK YOUR VEHICLE

Introduction

While most vehicle collisions are preventable, they continue for a number of reasons. Driver error due to distraction, impairment, frustration or aggression continues to top the list of causes for most crashes; however, roughly one in ten crashes is caused by equipment that was not operating properly.

The simple truth is that motor vehicles have fluids that need to be replaced and parts that wear out. If you own a motor vehicle, you have a duty to make sure that your car is in safe working order every time you take it on the road.

Many crashes could be prevented with a regular inspection program that leads to proper maintenance of the equipment.

Overview

Aircraft pilots, railroad engineers, racecar drivers, professional truck drivers all inspect their vehicle before moving it one inch. It's not a lack of trust in the crew who actually maintain the vehicle, but a matter of being responsible for the vehicle once it is in operation.

If there's something broken, missing or working improperly it is the driver's responsibility to report it to your supervisor. Fleet Services will be contacted for a service repair. Driving is hard on any vehicle; therefore, every vehicle must be monitored closely.

You don't have to be a qualified mechanic to take a few moments and check out some of the basics before heading out.

Why Do Inspections?



If you leave on a trip without checking that the vehicle is safe to operate, you may suffer wasted time due to a mechanical breakdown, or worse, an injury from a collision due to mechanical failure while driving.

Inspections often reveal issues that affect fuel consumption, brake wear and tire condition. Tires that are properly inflated (consistently), rotated and aligned extend their service life and reduce fuel consumption. Brake systems that are adjusted, cleaned and repaired before critical failures save time and money for everyone.

Many state drivers' manuals mention the driver's general responsibility to ensure that the vehicle is safe for driving.

What Do Many Drivers Look For?

Most inspection checklists include the following items:

- Gauges function as designed
- Fuel and fluids are sufficient
- Wheels and tires (appearance, pressure)
- Mirrors and mirror adjustment
- Windshield for cracks and chips that obscure visibility
- Windshield wipers for condition and effectiveness
- Lights, including headlights, turn signals, and brake lights
- Emergency equipment is in place and ready for use



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Part of your inspection might be to adjust your seat and mirrors to fit your body position while driving, and to secure any personal or work items. Unsecured items could launch through the air in the event of a collision and cause injuries.

Another aspect of vehicle inspection is notifying supervisors when you've discovered something that doesn't seem correct. This applies during "pre-trip" inspections, and when you're driving. If you notice that the vehicle is running hot, or "pulls" to one side of the road consistently, you can help by letting them know that your vehicle may need repair.

Follow Up Repairs

When defects are reported, the vehicle will be repaired by a qualified Fleet Service technician as soon as possible. Safety related defects should be repaired before the vehicle is placed back in service.

Summary

Vehicle inspections help to prevent time wasting breakdowns, out-of-service delays, and crashes. Inspections help assure proper maintenance and extend vehicle life.

LESSONS LEARNED:

*******CHECK YOUR VEHICLE!*******

1. Catching a mechanical problem before heading out on a trip ultimately saves time.
2. Keep your assigned vehicle working properly can save fuel, and extend the service life of tires and brakes.
3. Signals, lights, and wipers should be working correctly to see others and be seen by them, too.