# Pre-Trip Inspections — Driving Safety Meeting Kit

## WHAT'S AT STAKE

Pre-trip inspections in driving safety refer to the systematic assessment and examination of a vehicle's critical components before embarking on a journey. These inspections are carried out by drivers or operators to ensure that the vehicle is in proper working condition, minimizing the risk of accidents and breakdowns.

## WHAT'S THE DANGER

#### ASSOCIATED WITH PERFORMING INSPECTIONS

- Physical Hazards: Performing pre-trip inspections often involves working around the vehicle, which can expose you to physical hazards. These hazards may include slippery surfaces, hot engine components, or sharp edges.
- Environmental Conditions: Pre-trip inspections may need to be conducted in various weather conditions, including extreme heat, cold, rain, or snow.
- Time Constraints: Drivers may face time constraints when performing pre-trip inspections. Rushing through the inspection process can lead to overlooking critical issues that could compromise safety.
- Complacency: Drivers may become complacent with pre-trip inspections, mainly if they perform them frequently. Complacency can lead to skipping steps or overlooking potential hazards.
- Inadequate Training: If drivers are not adequately trained on how to conduct pre-trip inspections, they may miss necessary safety checks or fail to identify potential hazards.
- Incomplete Inspections: Failing to check tire pressure,

brake conditions, or load securement properly could lead to accidents or breakdowns during the trip.

- Assuming Vehicle Maintenance is Up-to-Date: Drivers should not assume that previous maintenance was done correctly and should still inspect all aspects of the vehicle themselves.
- **High-Stress Situations:** In some cases, drivers may feel pressured to skip or rush pre-trip inspections.

## **HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF**

#### KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PRE-TRIP INSPECTION

#### **Exterior Inspection:**

- Check the tires for proper inflation, tread depth, and signs of damage.
- Inspect all lights, including headlights, taillights, turn signals, and brake lights.
- Look for any cracks, chips, or impairments in the windshield and mirrors.
- Verify that the vehicle's registration, inspection, and insurance documents are up to date and accessible.

## **Engine Compartment:**

- Check fluid levels, including engine oil, transmission fluid, brake fluid, coolant, and power steering fluid.
- Inspect the engine belts and hoses for wear and proper tension.
- Ensure that the battery terminals are clean and secure.

## **Interior Inspection:**

- Adjust and check all mirrors for proper alignment.
- Test all dashboard indicators and gauges to ensure they are functioning correctly.
- Check the condition and functionality of the vehicle's safety equipment (seat belts, airbags, and horn).

## **Brake Inspection:**

- Test the brake pedal for proper resistance and responsiveness.
- Check the brake fluid level and ensure there are no leaks.
- Inspect brake pads and shoes for wear, and ensure they are functioning correctly.

#### Cargo and Load Inspection (For Commercial Drivers):

- •Verify that the cargo is properly secured and evenly distributed.
- Ensure that the vehicle's load does not exceed its capacity limits.

#### Trailer Inspection (For Commercial Drivers with Trailers):

- Check the condition of the trailer, including lights, tires, and brakes.
- Ensure the trailer is properly connected to the towing vehicle.

## Air Brake System Inspection (For Vehicles with Air Brakes):

 Test the air brake system for leaks and ensure it builds and holds air pressure correctly.

#### **ESSENTIAL PRE-TRIP INSPECTION ITEMS**

- Vehicle Manual
- Flashlight
- Safety Equipment
- Tire Pressure Gauge
- Tire Tread Depth Gauge
- Fluid Level Checkers
- Tool Kit
- Reflective Triangles or Cones
- Chocks or Wheel Blocks
- Battery Charger or Jumper Cables
- Cleaning Supplies
- Clipboard and Inspection Checklist

# FINAL WORD

Pre-trip inspections play a vital role in driving safety by promoting proactive vehicle maintenance, preventing accidents, ensuring regulatory compliance, and protecting the well-being of drivers, passengers, and others on the road.