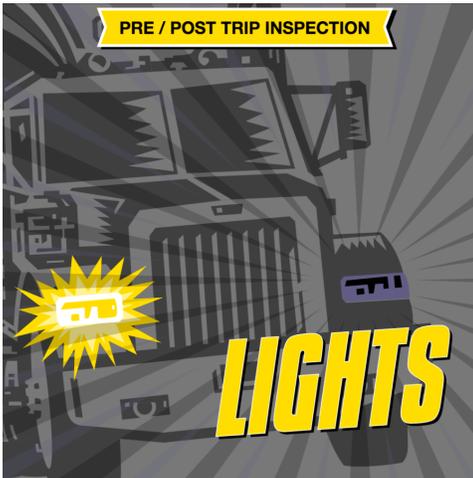




# TAKE A SAFETY SECOND

Topics: Pre/Post Trip Inspection

## Pre/Post Trip Inspections



Just like breakfast is the most important meal of the day, your pre-trip inspection is the cornerstone to operating a healthy vehicle. The reasons for having a healthy vehicle should be obvious. It ensures the safety of not just the driver, but also everyone else on the road. Currently, there are no guidelines as to how long a pre-trip inspection should take. If you check everything you should be checking, a full inspection should take you approximately 30 to 50 minutes. The

key to a good inspection is to take your time while working your way systematically around each section of your vehicle and performing each check fully. Drivers can eliminate many CSA violations with a thorough pre-trip inspection. It's in your best interest to find a problem before an inspector does, as the fines can be high, on top of your vehicle being put out of service.

### Here are some of the most commonly overlooked inspections items:

**ALERT:** Always make sure your vehicle is secured from movement before starting your inspection. Engage your parking brake, and chock both sides of the vehicle to prevent movement of the truck and trailer during inspection.

1. Cleanliness – Inside your cab and outside appearance
2. Brakes – On both your truck and trailer
3. Emergency Kit – Fire extinguisher, hazard triangles, spare fuses, reflective strips
4. Lights and reflectors – All required lights must work
5. Seatbelt – Must be in working order
6. Wheel lug nuts – Check for tightness
7. Paperwork – Log book up to date, Bill of lading, driver's license, and inspection
8. Tires – Must have 2/32 on drive tires and 4/32 on steer tires and all properly inflated

## Inspection vs CSA

How does the lack of a good pre-trip inspection affect your CSA scores? Here's how it works. This CSA score is shown by a percentage with 100% being the worst and 0% being the best. A good, clean inspection goes a long way to keeping a carrier's score down. If a carrier has a score worse than 80%, the DOT typically instigates an intervention program. As you can see, the purpose of this DOT enforcement is to identify and focus on the most 'at risk' carriers and drivers from year to year. Taking a CSA score seriously is indicative of taking your business seriously. It shows that your company is committed to highway safety and respects the lives of your drivers and those they share the road with. It's also good for a company's overall bottom line. Insurance rates remain low and it's easier to acquire and retain both customers and good drivers with a good CSA score. Additionally, all drivers should be well-trained when it comes to pre-trip inspections. Many common violations found during roadside inspections can be identified in the pre-trip inspection. Poor Vehicle Maintenance/Cargo Securement – Observed mechanical defects like poor brakes, a non-working headlight or taillight, or not making required repairs will worsen a carrier's CSA score. Additionally, a driver found to be carrying an unsafe improperly secured load will also impact CSA and Safety Measurement System (SMS) scores. (FMCSR Parts 392, 393 and 396)

