

Driving Large Vehicles

Pre-Trip Inspections

Car trouble is no fun. When car trouble happens to a large vehicle, your aggravation and expense can be doubled. Whether your vehicle is a commercial truck, delivery van or family recreation vehicle, take time for a pre-trip inspection to assure a trouble-free—and safe—trip.

Before you get in your vehicle, take a walk completely around it, checking all sides as well as the ground underneath. Check under the hood. Finally, inspect the condition of the interior. Follow this checklist:

Tires and Wheels

- Correct air pressure.
- Tire free of wear, high and low spots, damage.
- Rims free of damage.
- All lugs present and tight.
- Properly matched tires.

Lights

- Turn on lights—use low beams.
- Check high beams, left and right turn signals, break lights, and parking lights.

Brakes

- Parking brake: apply parking brake with vehicle moving slowly. Vehicle should stop.
- Service brake: push brake pedal firmly with vehicle going about 5 miles per hour. Vehicle should stop with no pulling to one side or delayed stopping action.
- Test steering with vehicle moving. Steering should be smooth and consistent with no play in the steering wheel.

Emergency Equipment

- Flags, jack, flares or other warning devices, flashlight, fire extinguisher, wheel blocks, etc. Check to see that supplies are in good working order.
- Spare tire properly inflated.

Inside of Vehicle

- Check mirrors, windshield wipers, panel gauges, horn.
- Adjust seat for comfort.
- Adjust side mirrors.
- Make sure cargo is properly secured.

Under Hood

- Fluid levels: oil, water, brake fluid, window fluid, battery fluid.
- Condition of belts. Look for loose or frayed belts.
- Hoses: check for loose or disconnected hoses.
- Check under vehicle for leaking fluids.

The open road offers enough surprises without adding unexpected vehicle problems. Your pre-trip inspection is your best guarantee that your trip won't be interrupted by the unpleasant surprise of a breakdown.

