



Kansas RTAP Fact Sheet

A Service of The University of Kansas Transportation Center for Rural Transit Providers

Vehicle Inspections

A “Safety in Ten” training article.

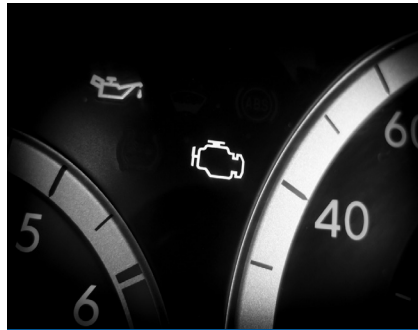
By Anne Lowder

*Audience: Managers, Supervisors,
Trainers*

Daily vehicle inspection is an important safety element that is in your control. When done properly, the vehicle is prepared to safely transport passengers and is better able to respond to safety hazards that might arise throughout the day. This article will discuss vehicle inspections from the view point of National RTAP, the Kansas Department of Transportation, and the Federal Motor Carriers Association.

Vehicle inspections should take place every day before the vehicle begins its route (**pre-trip**), throughout the day while the driver is providing service on the route (**en-route**), and when a route is completed (**post-trip**).

Your agency should have written procedures for conducting pre-, en-



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KDOT-required post-trip inspections include checks of various aspects of the interior, exterior, and internal mechanism of the vehicle. One internal aspect is checking the dashboard for any warning lights.

route, and post-trip inspections. Forms should be available for drivers to follow during their pre- and post-trip inspections.

Pre-trip

According to National RTAP’s START Training module, pre-trip inspections involve the following four components:

- **The approach** – assess as you approach the vehicle
- **Under the hood** – check engine fluids and components
- **The walk around** – circle the outside of the vehicle
- **On board** – inspect on-board areas, equipment and supplies.

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) requires a pre-trip inspection. The form for this inspection is at <http://www.ksdot.org/burtransplan/pubtrans/TransitForms.asp>.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations FMCSR Preventive Maintenance and Inspection Procedures Part 392.7; Part 396 D1& D2 states that drivers need to be trained on what to check on the vehicle, how to spot defects, whom to call when there is a problem, and how and when to submit documentation. This regulation has the following questions for management:

- Are there established inspection and reporting procedures for drivers?
- Are these procedures in compliance with FMCSR rules?
- Are drivers adequately trained to inspect safety critical components and determine whether their condition is adequate? How? When? By whom?
- Are drivers equipped with inspection aids and the necessary report forms?
- Are maintenance personnel responsive to driver-reported deficiencies?
- Does the company have established standards for placing vehicles out of service?
- Are drivers encouraged not to drive when they discover a deficiency which should cause the vehicle to be placed out-of-service?

En-route

An en-route inspection is not required by KDOT or the Federal Motor Carriers Association (FMCSR), but throughout the course of the day the driver should do periodic checks of the vehicle, such as looking for trouble such as an oil gauge warning light, listening for trouble such as a knock when the engine idles, smelling for trouble such as oil burning, and feeling for trouble such as excessive vibrations. Some of these same items could also be part of a post-trip inspection, as are now required in Kansas.

New KDOT policy on post-trip inspections

Last March KDOT modified its policy on vehicle inspections to include post-trip inspections. The policy can be found at KDOT's Office of Public Transportation website, at the Transit Program Policies link: <http://www.ksdot.org/burtransplan/pubtrans/index.asp>, and reads as follows:

- "Post-trip Inspections: Effective March 01, 2013 all transit services agencies will also be required to complete a post trip inspection to help assure the KDOT funded vehicles are being safe to operate well maintained, & in good condition. The post trip inspection form can be found on the KDOT website. The post trip inspection forms must be retained by the transit services agency as a part of the project file."

The KDOT post-inspection form is online at <http://www.ksdot.org/burtransplan/pubtrans/TransitForms.asp>

How inspections affect liability

It is important to inform your drivers that they are ultimately responsible for the vehicle they are driving and the accuracy of their reports. For example, your driver has completed pre- and post-trip inspection forms for the last 30

Post-trip Training Tool: National RTAP "2 the Point" Cards

Below is an example of a National RTAP training card and quiz on post-trip inspection, part of the "2 the Point" series. See page 12 for more information on 2 the Point training cards, which cover several issues on a variety of topics. To view and download the cards, go to <http://www.nationalrtap.org/2ThePointTraining.aspx>.

Passenger Safety

Issue Two: Post-trip Inspection



The following items should be reviewed when changing vehicle assignments, relieving another driver in service or at the end of a shift:

- Parking brake should be set and secure.
- All passengers should be off of the vehicle.
- No passenger's personal property should be on the bus.
- All windows and hatches should be closed.
- No signs of damage or vandalism are apparent inside or outside the vehicle.



You should also report any noncritical defects that you observed during your shift to ensure that the vehicle is in proper working order for the next driver.

**Information taken directly from National RTAP's Safety Training and Rural Transit Training Module. Photo by Nusura, Inc.

Passenger Safety

Quiz Two: Post-trip Inspection



Please answer the following questions:

1. Post-trip inspections should take place in the following situations (circle all that apply):

- (a) when a driver changes vehicle assignments
- (b) when a driver relieves another driver in service
- (c) at the end of a driver's shift

2. You can conduct the post-trip inspection while your final few passengers are on board the vehicle.

True or False (circle one)

3. You do not have to report noncritical defects during your shift.

True or False (circle one)

Trainee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sources

- National RTAP. (2010). START Safety Training and Rural Transit. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.
- Kansas Department of Transportation. (April 2013). Transportation Program Grantees. Pg 22.
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. Preventive Maintenance and Inspection Procedures. Accessed August 15, 2013. <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/facts-research/research-technology/publications/accidenthm/vehicle.htm>
- National RTAP. (2013). 2 The Point Training. Retrieved July 18, 2013 from <http://www.nationalrtap.org/2thePointTraining.aspx>
- National LTAP press release: National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) Announces the Release of New Free Training Product, 2 the Point Training. <http://www.nationalrtap.org/Admin/AllNews/tabid/10396/token/detail/nid/138/Default.aspx>

days on Vehicle xyz. Each inspection form is marked with tires in good condition. On day 31 there is an incident due to tire failure from insufficient tread. Your agency trip inspection reports, signed by your driver, state that the tires are in good condition, yet the police investigation refutes that claim. The incident occurred because your vehicle's tires were unsafe and should not have been on the road. The driver, as well as the agency, could be held accountable for the incident based on the erroneous inspection sheets and the driver choosing to drive when the vehicle was unsafe.

In sum

Federal and State laws require that you not drive a vehicle unless you are satisfied that it is in a safe operating condition. The FMSCR recommends that drivers monitor the condition of vehicle components that may affect the safety of the vehicle, and if something seems to be wrong with the vehicle, stop and check it out. Do not continue with the trip until you are satisfied it is safe to do so.

A daily regimen that includes the required KDOT pre- and post-trip inspections, along with the (optional but recommended) en-route inspection, is a best practice to adopt for your agency's drivers. Couple the daily pre- and post-trip inspections with good documentation and agency policies that answer the FMSCR's questions for management to keep your vehicles on the road and in good shape. ●

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