

NSC Daily Trip Inspection Reference

A driver reference on trip inspection duties for National Safety Code regulated vehicles

This is a reference sheet, not an inspection form and not a legal document. Its job is to make sure a driver understands what a trip inspection is for, what has to be checked, and what to do when something is wrong.

The inspection is the driver's own check that the vehicle is safe to put on the road. It sits alongside the carrier's maintenance program, and it does not replace a mechanical inspection.

Check this yourself. The National Safety Code is applied through provincial and territorial regulation, and the details differ by jurisdiction: which vehicles are covered, the schedule that applies, the exact defect lists, how long a report stays valid, and how long records must be kept. Confirm every one of those points with the regulator in the jurisdictions you operate in, and use the schedule and defect list they publish. Do not rely on this sheet for those specifics.

What a trip inspection is for

- To find a defect before it becomes a collision, not to complete paperwork.
- To create a record that the vehicle was checked, by whom, and when.
- To route defects to the people who repair them, so the same fault does not travel out again the next morning.
- To give the driver the information they need to refuse to drive an unsafe vehicle.

The driver's duties, in order

1. Inspect the vehicle before driving it for the first time each day, and complete the report your carrier requires.
2. Carry the current inspection report and the applicable defect schedule in the vehicle, where they can be produced on request.
3. Monitor the vehicle while driving. Gauges, warning lights, brake feel, steering and handling are part of the inspection, not separate from it.
4. Record any defect found during the day as soon as it is safe to stop and do so.
5. Report defects to the carrier as required, and do not simply hand the vehicle to the next driver with a known fault.
6. Complete the end of day report if your jurisdiction or carrier requires one.

What the inspection generally covers

The categories below are the systems a daily inspection normally addresses. Use the specific schedule published by your jurisdiction for the authoritative list, because the wording and the defect thresholds are set there.

Systems normally inspected

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ Service brakes and connections | ☐ Park and emergency brake | ☐ Air system, including leaks and build up |
| ☐ Steering | ☐ Suspension and mounting | ☐ Frame and body |
| ☐ Tires and wheels, including fasteners | ☐ Lamps and reflectors | ☐ Turn signals and hazard lights |
| ☐ Windshield, glass and wipers | ☐ Mirrors | ☐ Horn |
| ☐ Coupling devices and fifth wheel | ☐ Cargo securement | ☐ Fuel system |
| ☐ Exhaust system | ☐ Driver seat and seat belt | ☐ Emergency equipment and safety devices |
| ☐ Heater and defroster | ☐ Dangerous goods requirements, where applicable | |

Major and minor defects

Jurisdictions separate defects into categories, commonly described as minor and major. The principle behind the split is consistent even though the exact lists are not.

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A minor defect is recorded on the report and repaired within your carrier's maintenance process. The vehicle can usually continue to operate.

A major defect means the vehicle is not to be operated. It is taken out of service until it is repaired, regardless of schedule pressure or how far the load has to go. Operating a vehicle with a major defect exposes the driver, the carrier and the safety fitness rating of the operation.

Read the defect schedule for your jurisdiction and know which category the common faults on your fleet fall into. That is the part drivers most often get wrong.

When a defect is found

1. Stop in a safe place if the defect appears while driving.
2. Decide whether the defect is one that prohibits operation under the schedule that applies to you. If you are not certain, treat it as though it does and call.
3. Record the defect on the inspection report, with the time and the reading.
4. Notify the carrier immediately, using the contact your carrier has named.
5. Do not move the vehicle if the defect prohibits operation. Arrange repair or towing.
6. Confirm the repair is recorded and the vehicle is released before it goes back to work.

What this connects to in your safety program

- Driver files: licence class and abstract, training, and the record that this reference was covered in orientation.
- Maintenance program: scheduled maintenance, defect repair records, and the paper trail from a driver report to a completed repair.
- Hours of service, where it applies to your operation.
- Corrective actions: a repeating defect on the same unit is a corrective action, not just a repair.
- Audit evidence: trip inspection reports are among the records a safety fitness audit will sample.

Driver acknowledgement

I have read this reference. I understand that I am responsible for inspecting the vehicle before driving it, for recording and reporting defects, and for not operating a vehicle with a defect that prohibits operation. I know who to contact and I understand I will not be disciplined for refusing to drive an unsafe vehicle.

Acknowledgement record

Keep this record with the driver file.

Printed name	Licence class	Signature	Date
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Carrier specifics, fill these in before issuing

Jurisdictions we operate in

Inspection schedule that applies to our vehicles

Who a driver calls about a defect, name and number

After hours contact

Where completed reports are submitted

How long reports are retained, confirmed with the regulator
