

# Compliance made easy: Your vehicle maintenance guide



Motor carriers have a responsibility to their drivers and the motoring public to properly maintain their vehicles on public roadways. In fact, systematic inspections of all vehicles under a carrier's control are required per 49 CFR 396.3. In the event of an audit, proper recordkeeping is required and will demonstrate compliance.





# Compliance made easy: Your vehicle maintenance guide (continued)

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## Maintenance and repair

Motor carriers must keep a maintenance file on any vehicle that is in their control. This is any vehicle in operation for 30 days or more. This file can be stored in the carrier's location or with the shop that serviced the vehicle. In the event of an audit, the carrier will be asked to produce the service files within 48 hours. If records are stored at the repair facility, the carrier will be at the mercy of the shop to provide them and could be penalized for an inability to produce the records. For this reason, it's best practice to maintain records with the carrier for all vehicles under their control.

In addition to maintenance and repair records, this file must clearly identify the vehicle with:

- Company unit numbers (if applicable),
- Make,
- Serial number,
- Year, and
- Tire size.

These records must be retained for 1 year and 6 months after the vehicle leaves the carrier's control.



A J. J. Keller consultant can help you create policies and procedures that keep your vehicles safe and compliant.



## Periodic Inspections

Every commercial motor vehicle must be inspected before being placed in service for the first time, and every 12 months after that. The minimum requirements, as defined by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, must be met to pass this inspection. The vehicle must have a sticker affixed or maintain a copy of the inspection form in the vehicle as evidence that it has been inspected.

Carriers often ask if the unit needs both the inspection sticker and the inspection form. The answer is that only one or the other is required. If the inspection form is carried it should be a copy. The original should be stored with the carrier or the location that provided the inspection. The sticker affixed to the outside of the unit provides an easy way for law enforcement to see that your vehicle is compliant. It also potentially prevents a driver from being detained to provide proof of compliance.

Failure to perform periodic inspections and keep maintenance files can lead to fines and penalties. The ability to show evidence of repairs and maintenance is as important as having the work done, from a regulatory perspective. As they say, if there is no record of the work, it didn't happen.



Periodic inspection records must be maintained for 14 months after the inspection was completed.



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