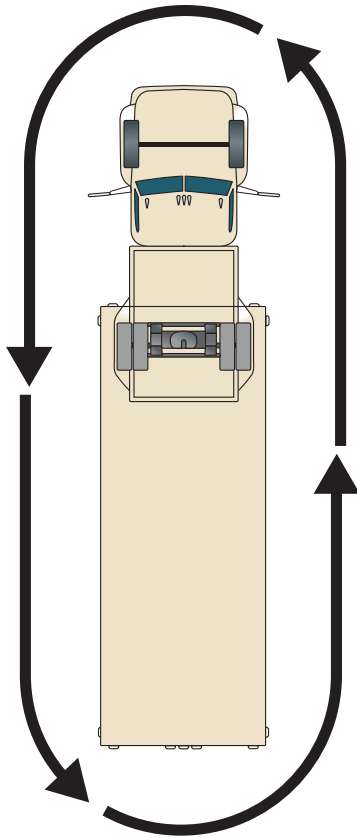


# 3

## Pre-Trip Inspection



Conducting a pre-trip inspection can make the difference between a safe trip and one that ends in disaster. While the primary purpose of conducting a pre-trip inspection is to look for possible safety defects, you may also spot potential mechanical problems and avoid costly repairs and delays while on the road by fixing them now.

You should conduct a full pre-trip inspection daily to make sure that your truck and trailer are safe for operation. With a bit of practice, a full pre-trip inspection does not take long to complete. When travelling, you should do a brief inspection of your truck and trailer every time you stop.

While a pre-trip inspection can be conducted in any order, a good order to follow is shown here. The pre-trip inspection begins with checking under the hood, then getting into the truck to check gauges, etc, then walking around the truck and trailer to check lights, then walking around to check certain mechanical components. The final step is to pull ahead slowly to check for brake and steering response.

As part of your road test, you will be tested on your ability to complete a pre-trip inspection. You should assume that the vehicle has not been operated on the day of your test and that a pre-trip inspection has not been done. During the test, point to and physically check the items you are inspecting. At the same time, tell the examiner what you are looking for; for example, *“I am checking the four-way flashers to see if they work, and are securely mounted, that the lenses are clean, and not cracked and that the colour is correct.”*

### Before You Begin

- Park your vehicle safely away from traffic on a level surface.
- Set parking brake. Place transmission in Park (or low gear if manual transmission).
- Shut off the engine.
- Block the trailer wheels for added safety.
- Do a circle check to conduct your inspection, walking in a counterclockwise direction to face oncoming traffic.
- During your circle check, you will need to return to the driver’s seat several times to turn on (and then turn off) lights to check that they are working properly. Be particularly cautious when you are walking with your back to traffic.

## What to Look For

### 1. Front of truck and under hood

*As you approach, look under the vehicle for leaks. Check the following:*

<input type="checkbox"/> Licence plate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check for licence plate</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Fluids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check fluid levels and condition (e.g., colour, smell) including: engine oil • engine coolant • power steering fluid • brake fluid • windshield washer fluid</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Belts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure any drive belts have good tension and no cracks, frayed cord or missing teeth</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Hoses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure they are secure with no kinks, leaks, cuts, abrasions or cracks</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Battery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check for visible corrosion or leaks • terminal connections are secure</li> <li>• battery is securely mounted • battery fluid level (if accessible)</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Engine compartment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check for fuel, oil or coolant leaks</li> </ul>

*Close and secure hood.*

### 2. In passenger compartment

<input type="checkbox"/> Seats, seatbelts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check driver's seat is adjusted for you • seatbelt is in working order</li> <li>• check that all seatbelts are in good condition and work well • seats and passenger compartment is clean</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Mirrors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure they are adjusted for you and are clean and free of cracks</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Windows/windshield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure they are clean and free of cracks • check that they open and close</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that vehicle licence, registration and insurance for both the truck and trailer are up-to-date</li> </ul>

*Start engine, check the following:*

<input type="checkbox"/> Instrument panel	<p>Ensure that all gauges and warning lights are working properly, and that they respond properly as the engine warms up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• charge rate indicator or gauge — ensure voltmeter or ammeter works properly — charge is good</li> <li>• oil pressure indicator or gauge — ensure that it indicates normal pressure soon after engine starts</li> <li>• coolant temperature indicator or gauge — check that indicator rises to normal operating temperature — light should go off after engine starts</li> <li>• fuel gauge — indicate sufficient fuel</li> <li>• instrument lights — ensure they work</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Windshield wipers/washers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure wipers and washers work</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Heater/defroster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure heater and defroster controls work including fan, in heater and defroster positions</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Interior lights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure they work</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Four-way flashers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check that both indicators on dashboard work (the exterior lights will be checked later as part of checking the turn signals)</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Horn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure it works</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Engine noises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• listen for unusual sounds</li> </ul>

### 3. Circle check for lights

*Turn on left turn signal, low beam headlights and clearance lights.*

- Conduct circle check by walking counterclockwise to face traffic. Be particularly cautious when you are walking with your back to traffic.

<input type="checkbox"/> Lights	<p>As you inspect the vehicle, check all lights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure they work</li> <li>• lenses are clean and not cracked</li> </ul>
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1. Check that left turn signals, low beam headlights, tail lights, licence plate lights and clearance lights are working.

*Turn off left turn signal. Turn on high beam headlights and right turn signal.*

2. Check that right turn signal and high beam headlights are working.
3. Check that brake lights are working.

*Return to cab. Turn off lights. Turn off engine.*

#### 4. Mechanical circle check

*Leave cab and begin circle check.*

##### Left side of truck

<input type="checkbox"/> Mirrors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure they are securely attached</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhaust system (if accessible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure it is in good condition</li> <li>no leaks</li> <li>mufflers and pipes securely fastened</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Fuel cap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure fuel cap is securely fastened</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Storage compartments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure compartments are securely fastened</li> <li>doors open and close properly</li> <li>contents are secure</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>check for body damage</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Fifth wheel connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>plate is flush to the trailer apron (no daylight is visible between fifth wheel and apron)</li> <li>fifth wheel is securely fastened to truck</li> <li>fifth wheel location allows sufficient space for trailer to turn without striking truck</li> <li>locking jaws are closed around trailer kingpin</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other type of trailer connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure pintle hitch or ball hitch is not worn</li> <li>locking mechanism is closed and secure</li> <li>chains or cables (if equipped) have no stress cracks or weld breaks and are securely attached to truck and trailer</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Suspension, axles, drive train and frame (if accessible)	<p>As you inspect the vehicle, check the suspension, axles, drive train and frame:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure there are no cracked, missing or broken springs or torsion bars</li> <li>no loose, missing or broken U-bolts</li> <li>if air suspension, no cracked, worn or inoperative airbags</li> <li>mounts are secure</li> <li>check for axle leaks</li> <li>check for bent or broken axles</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tires/wheels	<p>As you inspect the vehicle, check all tires, wheels and mud flaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>check tires for inflation, signs of bulges, sidewall separation, cuts to cord, exposed or frayed belts</li> <li>adequate tread depth</li> <li>tire wear is even</li> <li>duals are not touching and nothing is stuck between them</li> <li>check wheels for cracks, missing pieces, bends or rust streaks (may indicate loose wheel nuts)</li> <li>ensure wheel lugs and nuts are secure, not missing, broken or loose</li> <li>check that mud flaps are secure</li> <li>mud flaps do not rub tires</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Licence plate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>check for rear licence plate and decal</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tailgate, pickup bed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tailgate securely latched</li> <li>cargo in pickup bed secure</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Trailer line, emergency breakaway switch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure trailer line, connection and breakaway switch are securely attached</li> <li>check for kinks, cuts, abrasions or cracks</li> </ul>

**Left side of trailer**

<input type="checkbox"/> Suspension and frame (if accessible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check trailer suspension and frame</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tires/wheels/mud flaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check trailer wheels</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Trailer body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check for body damage</li> <li>• front and rear stabilizers are raised</li> <li>• handles and locking pins are secure</li> </ul>

**Rear of trailer**

<input type="checkbox"/> Exterior storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that items attached or stored on the outside of the trailer (e.g., bicycles, chairs) are secure and do not obscure lighting or licence plate</li> <li>• check that propane tanks are turned off</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Licence plate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check for licence plate and valid decal</li> </ul>

**Inside of trailer**

<input type="checkbox"/> Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check that there are no loose objects that could be a safety hazard when the trailer is in motion</li> <li>• if RV is equipped with slide-outs, check that they are closed and locked</li> <li>• check that propane appliances and pilot lights are turned off</li> </ul>
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**Right side of trailer**

<input type="checkbox"/> Suspension, axles and frame (if accessible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check trailer suspension, axles and frame</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Trailer side door(s), steps, water tanks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure door is secure</li> <li>• steps are properly stored</li> <li>• tanks are shut off</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tires/wheels/mud flaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check trailer wheels</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Trailer body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check for body damage</li> <li>• front and rear stabilizers are raised</li> <li>• handles and locking pins are secure</li> </ul>

**Right side of truck**

<input type="checkbox"/> Mirrors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure they are securely attached</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhaust system (if accessible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure it is in good condition</li> <li>• no leaks</li> <li>• mufflers and pipes securely fastened</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Fuel cap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure fuel cap is securely fastened</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Storage compartments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure compartments are securely fastened</li> <li>• doors open and close properly</li> <li>• contents are secure</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check for body damage</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Fifth wheel connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plate is flush to the trailer apron (no daylight is visible between fifth wheel and apron)</li> <li>• ensure slider is locked and secure with sufficient space for trailer to turn without striking truck</li> <li>• locking jaws are closed around trailer kingpin</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other type of trailer connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure pintle hitch or ball hitch is not worn</li> <li>• locking mechanism is closed and secure</li> <li>• chains or cables (if equipped) have no stress cracks or weld breaks and are securely attached to truck and trailer</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Suspension, axles and frame (if accessible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check truck rear suspension, axles and frame</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tires/wheels/mud flaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check truck wheels</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tailgate, pickup bed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tailgate securely latched</li> <li>• cargo in pickup bed secure</li> </ul>

*Set parking brakes. Remove blocks by wheels.*

**5. Brake response, tug and steering wheel slack tests**

*Perform the following steps:*

1. Start engine.
2. In low gear, gently tug against the parking brakes. The brakes should prevent the combination from moving.
3. Release the parking brakes.
4. Apply the trailer brakes. In low gear, gently tug against the trailer brakes. The trailer should resist moving with the truck. (This test checks that the units are securely coupled and that the trailer brakes are working.)  
Note: If the truck has an integrated trailer brake controller, the trailer brakes may activate only if the trailer is moving at speeds of 25 km/h or more. In this case, use steps 9 and 10 to test the trailer brakes.
5. Release all brakes.
6. Move the vehicle ahead slowly and gently apply the foot brake to check brake response.
7. Set the parking brakes. Place transmission in low gear (Park if automatic transmission).
8. Exit the cab.
9. Disconnect the trailer electrical cable, then, pull the pin from the trailer breakaway switch housing.
10. Check that the trailer brakes have applied by gently tugging against the trailer brakes in low gear. The trailer brakes should prevent the trailer from moving.
11. Reinstall the pin in the trailer breakaway switch housing and reconnect the trailer electrical cable.
12. Move the steering wheel to check for excessive slack or lash (play).

