



## “Compliance Matters”



### PRE-TRIP / POST TRIP

The pre-trip, post-trip report has been given a variety of names by trucking companies – Daily Vehicle Inspection Report (DVIR), Vehicle Condition Report (VCR), and Driver’s Daily Inspection and Vehicle Condition Report to name just three. For simplicity, we will refer to the report as a VCR.

The requirements for pre-trip and post-trip inspection of your fleet are found in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations in section 396.11 and 396.13.

#### **The Pre-Trip Inspection**

The rules in part 396.13 indicate a driver must be “satisfied” the motor vehicle is in a “safe operating condition”. This refers to basic parts and accessories. The specific items which must be checked are listed in 392.7.

Drivers must also inspect the required emergency equipment (392.8 and 393.5). This includes a 5 lb BC or larger fire extinguisher (in serviceable condition), spare fuses, and three red emergency reflective triangles.

Good pre-trip reports can result in lower overall maintenance costs. Running an engine low on oil or water can cause thousands of dollars worth of unbudgeted repairs. A tire that is flat when it leaves the yard can be ruined before the driver reaches his first stop. Catching these problems during a pre-trip is always less expensive and less disruptive to operations.

#### **The Post-Trip Inspection Report**

The post-trip inspection and report is just as important because it allows maintenance to do the repair or service before it becomes a serious matter. It’s also easier to do repairs in the shop or on the yard. Post-trip inspection requirements and procedures are outlined in Part 396.11. Companies should pay very close attention to these rules which describe signature, repair, and record retention requirements.

Recent audits of transportation companies have turned up dozens of deficiencies (violations) in pre-trip, post-trip reports, and related maintenance records. Drivers can be cited and fined for failure to inspect, properly complete, sign, and date the VCR’s. Companies can be cited and penalized for failing to enforce the rules and maintain the proper records.

The most common practice is to use a three (3) copy form; the original for operations, one copy for maintenance, and one copy to be carried in the vehicle the next day – reviewed and signed by maintenance if appropriate. The operations copy should be the one retained for the required 90 days. Whenever repairs are made as a result of a VCR indication, the maintenance copy should be stapled to the repair order and filed in the truck’s maintenance file. The driver can discard his copy of the previous days VCR at the end of the day.

Refresher training is strongly recommended for both drivers and mechanics if your pre-trip, post-trip procedures are not up to par.

Pre-Trip / Post-Trip procedures require teamwork and cooperation between drivers and mechanics. The process has to be a partnership if it is going to be effective and at the same time, comply with DOT and State regulations.

It’s really a WIN-WIN procedure for everyone. It builds communication between drivers and mechanics. It reduces wasteful road-calls and maintenance costs. This results in improved customer service – and that is good for business!