



TRUCKER FOCUS
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**MAXIMIZE UPTIME WITH
MAINTENANCE**

MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION PROGRAMS

A motor carrier's safety program is an ongoing challenge many carriers work tirelessly on improving for their business and employees. Investing in proper CMV preventative maintenance is an important component that provides many benefits, including:

- **Reduced crashes.** Proper CMV maintenance will substantially reduce accidents caused by brake, tire, steering, and other mechanical component failures.
- **Reduced breakdowns.** Preventive maintenance minimizes equipment failure, increases equipment uptime, and improves customer satisfaction as on-time deliveries increase.
- **Reduced maintenance.** Properly scheduled CMV maintenance inspections provide opportunities to make minor repairs and adjustments that will help prevent premature wear and identify mechanical issues before they become catastrophic failures. This attention will reduce maintenance costs significantly.
- **Improved driver morale.** Having equipment in top operating condition demonstrates to drivers that a company cares about its drivers. Drivers also take pride in well-maintained equipment and operate it more safely, with care and professionalism.
- **CSA scores and public perception.** Maintaining good CSA scores shows the public that a motor carrier offers safe and reliable transportation services. This perception is reinforced when the public sees clean, well-maintained equipment.

Types of Maintenance

There are three basic types of vehicle maintenance in use today:

1. **Crisis maintenance.** This program is reactive in nature, with work performed only when a vehicle has broken down while in service. This program has the highest cost of maintenance as repairs are unscheduled and work is completed in outside shops at higher costs with unknown quality.
2. **Demand maintenance.** Repairs and service are performed only when a problem arises, resulting in high costs due to premature equipment failure.
3. **Preventive maintenance.** Services and repairs are performed before operational problems interfere with daily business responsibilities. This maintenance program has the lowest cost as equipment is maintained in a reliable state and equipment uptime is maximized.

Motor carriers should focus on preventive maintenance as a critical component of operation. Check your FMCSA Safety Management Systems scores to determine what types of violations your equipment is receiving and to find out if any specific equipment is raising your scores.

Components of Preventative Maintenance

A preventive maintenance and inspection program will address:

- Daily driver vehicle inspection reports (DVIRs)
- Greasing interval/visual inspection
- Preventative scheduled maintenance
- Annual inspections
- Recordkeeping of all inspections, repairs, and maintenance

For more information on DVIRs, see the article on page 4. ●



DOES YOUR COMPANY NEED TO MAINTAIN DRIVER QUALIFICATION FILES?

Some motor carriers are unsure of whether they need to maintain driver qualification files (DQFs). Others mistakenly believe the regulation doesn't apply to them.

Fortunately it's easy to determine whether you need to maintain DQFs.

Do your drivers:

- Operate vehicles with a GVWR/GCWR of 10,001 pounds or more?
- Transport at least 8 passengers (including the driver) for compensation?
- Transport hazardous materials that require placarding?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, your

company is required to have a DQF containing driver qualification documents.

The DQF should be kept separate from an employee's personnel file. The DQF will include documentation demonstrating the driver is trained, experienced, and medically able to operate a CMV.

It's also important to note that DQF requirements apply to all drivers, including the owner of the company. If you are an owner-operator operating under your own authority, you must maintain a DQF file.

For more information on DQFs, refer to FMCSA regulations 391.21 through 319.27, 391.31, 391.33, 391.43, and 391.63, available at [fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations](https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations).

Acuity can help!
Our Motor Carrier Toolbox contains a DQF checklist along with many other forms and useful information. Download your checklist for free at [acuity.com/mctb](https://www.acuity.com/mctb).



DON'T COME UP SHORT ON YOUR DVIRS

Most motor carriers are subject to requirements to complete driver vehicle inspection reports (DVIRs). However, maintaining DVIRs is an area where many motor carriers run into trouble. Some motor carriers do not have formalized policies in place, while others may have a maintenance program but do not enforce the policy, train drivers, or hold employees accountable for program success.

It's not just smaller carriers that can run into trouble. Some larger carriers have fallen short in their DVIR programs and have seen their CSA scores skyrocket as a result of roadside inspection enforcement.

More Than Compliance

CSA scores are important for motor carriers to monitor and maintain in good standing, and regulatory compliance is a factor in these scores. However, performing driver vehicle inspections and maintaining a functional DVIR policy is not just about compliance. Vehicle inspections are critical to safe operation, equipment uptime, and customer satisfaction, as well as reducing overall maintenance costs through repairing or replacing components preventing premature failure.

If drivers don't complete their DVIRs, issues can arise that maintenance personnel are not aware of in a timely manner. This can lead to expensive mechanical failures. For example, failing to notice an oil leak and not checking for low oil level can lead to catastrophic engine failure. Driver inspections can uncover anything from seemingly minor issues like burned out lights that can result in citations to serious issues like vandalism, including ensuring that fifth wheel pin remains locked in place and nothing else has been tampered with. Safety defects uncovered during an inspection must be addressed before the vehicle is placed into operation.

DVIR Completion

Although vehicle inspections are required by the FMCSA, rule changes made in 2014 state that drivers do not have to complete burdensome daily paperwork when no defects were found. Regulations require a driver to be satisfied

that specific parts and accessories are available and in good working order prior to driving the vehicle. Those parts include:



- Brakes and air system
- Steering
- Lights and reflectors
- Tires, wheels, and rims
- Windshield wipers
- Rear-view mirrors
- Coupling equipment and fifth wheels
- Safety and emergency equipment

The driver must also ensure that all cargo and vehicle components are properly placed and secured. Also, if the previous inspection uncovered defects or deficiencies, the driver must review the last DVIR and sign that the vehicle

is safe to operate again.

With the electronic logging device (ELD) mandate taking effect on December 18, 2017, many drivers are already using or will soon be switching to electronic DVIRs. However, paper inspection reports will still be used by some, including motor carriers who are exempt from the ELD mandate.

Full inspection requirements are outlined in 49 CFR 396.11, available at fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations. The FMCSA site also provides a detailed interpretation of the rule and answers many common questions concerning DVIRs. ●



Acuity Can Help With DVIRs

Vehicle inspections are an important part of your safe truck operation and keeping your CSA scores in check. They should be part of every driver's daily routine. You can find a DVIR template in Acuity's Motor Carrier Toolbox at acuity.com/mctb.

THE VALUE OF TRUCKING ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

Is your trucking company a member of your state's trucking association? If not, have you considered a membership?

With many issues demanding your time and attention, association membership may be able to help move your company ahead in the competitive trucking industry. Whether your trucking company is a one-person operation or a large national fleet, you can benefit from association services such as:

- **Safety, Operations, and Maintenance Classes.**

Many trucking associations hold classes on issues such as maintenance, regulations, safety, and other areas of operation. Having a better knowledge of these topics can positively impact your business. These classes are often provided at no charge or for a very nominal cost.

- **Industry Experts.** State trucking associations have knowledgeable experts who can provide direction or resources in dealing with compliance, regulatory, and operational issues for your trucking company.

- **Annual Conferences.** Many trucking associations hold annual conferences that bring together trucking executives, managers, and operations people for education, advocacy, and networking. These conferences often highlight economic,

regulatory, and business trends that affect motor carriers. Attendees may hear from industry experts on issues such as driver recruitment and retention, infrastructure, regulatory enforcement, and new and upcoming trucking technology.

- **Publications.** State associations often provide their members with print and online publications that highlight trucking news and information relevant to carriers in the state.

- **Industry Representation.** Through regulatory and legislative involvement at the local, state, and national levels, trucking associations advocate for the interests of motor carriers operating in their region.

- **Truck Driver and Technician Championships.** Some associations also sponsor competitions. State truck driver competitions foster a spirit of positive professionalism, achievement, and competition. Winners at the state level can advance to the national championships. A newer event embraced by many trucking associations is a truck technician competition that often takes place in conjunction with driving competitions.

For knowledge, networking, and more, check out your state's trucking association and see what they can do for you! ●



DEADLINE APPROACHES FOR THE ELD MANDATE

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) first published the final electronic logging device rule in December 2015 with a two-year window for final implementation of devices. With the December 2017 deadline approaching, it's time to review and answer some basic questions regarding ELDs.

History

The United States Congress enacted the "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century" bill, more commonly referred to as MAP-21, in 2012. This bill included a provision requiring the FMCSA to develop a rule mandating the use of ELDs.

ELDs are electronic devices used to record a driver's record of duty (ROD). ELDs simply replace the paper logbooks many drivers had used to record their hours. Although December 18, 2017, is the deadline for implementing ELDs, motor carriers already using automatic on-board recording devices (AOBRD) in their fleet have until December 2019 to meet the ELD mandate requirements.

HOS Regulations and ELDs

There are many ELD manufacturers producing devices with different features. However, all must track a driver's record-of-duty status electronically and be able to be paired with a truck's engine or electronic control module (ECM), ensuring vehicle operation and driving times are captured. In addition, many ELDs report their data to a home office system where software allows dispatch or safety areas to review electronic logs, which both ensures compliance and allows companies to maximize equipment utilization under regulations.

Depending on the ELD vendor, a device may also have the capability to monitor and document vehicle and driver data well beyond the ROD function. This can include capturing driver vehicle inspection reports; vehicle idle time, speed, and location; expected arrival times; and events such as hard braking and swerving. Many are also capable of capturing mileage from each state and can be used for automating IFTA reporting and more.

Smartphones

FMCSA's ruling allows smartphones, tablets, and other handhelds to be used as ELDs as long as the system meets minimum ELD requirements.

Motor carriers may choose to utilize a smartphone-style ELD to reduce costs or, depending on their needs, a larger tablet or permanently mounted device may be more suitable.

Benefits

Although some concerns have been raised about devices, the rule is here to stay. ELDs deliver benefits to both motor carriers and drivers, including:

- Saving time by reducing required handwritten paperwork.
- Improving accuracy of ROD and minimizing duty-related violations.
- Providing dispatch with better information on vehicles and drivers, helping drivers be more efficient with their time and equipment.

Limited Exceptions

There are a few exceptions to the ELD mandate:

- Drivers who are exempt from the hours-of-service (HOS) rules, such as government drivers and drivers of utility service vehicles.
- Short-haul drivers using the timecard exception and not required to complete a log for more than 8 days during any 30-day period.
- In-state-only (intrastate) drivers who are exempted by their state.
- Drivers operating in a "driveaway-towaway" operation in which the vehicle being driven is part of the shipment being delivered.
- Drivers of vehicles manufactured before model year 2000, since these vehicles were not required to have electronic control modules (ECMs) to which an ELD can connect.
- Drivers who are using a compliant AOBRD by December 18, 2017, will not be required to use an ELD until December 16, 2019.

Exceptions apply to very few operations. It is best to be sure before claiming an exception. ●



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