

RISK COMMUNIQUÉ

Vehicle Preventive Maintenance

The emergency response nature of our work means that there is not latitude for “on the job” repair work. We have to show up ready to perform. Preventive maintenance is the key to readiness. It reduces unplanned equipment and vehicle breakdowns when responding to emergencies and operating at the scene. It keeps the fleet at your best effort of operational readiness.

Regular inspection of an emergency vehicle is an essential step in the safe operation under emergency conditions. The first step in any maintenance program is to budget enough to both maintain the fleet and be prepared long term to deal with parts and components that will need to be replaced or repaired.

The second part of the vehicle maintenance program is driver/operator responsibility. Emphasis should be placed on these responsibilities. The emergency service organization must identify the role of the driver/operator in the inspection and preventative maintenance program. While most operational crews are not trained or equipped to undertake major maintenance work, most organizations assign them some responsibilities for pre and post trip inspections. The organization should maintain a checklist for these inspections. The driver/operator should be responsible for completing the documentation, reporting deficiencies and verify that the requested and needed maintenance was performed.

For more information on driver/operator responsibilities, see NFPA Standard 1002, DOT National Standard Curriculum for Ambulance Operators and CDL.

Types of Inspections

Two types of inspections should be conducted on a regular basis: pre-trip and post-trip. Depending upon the extent of use, the type of organization and local policy, pre-trip inspections should be conducted on either a daily or weekly basis. Post-trip inspections should occur after every use. Always wear appropriate protective gear when performing a preventive maintenance inspection.

1. Pre-trip inspections should include as a minimum the following items:
 - a. Vehicle overview
 - b. Check the engine compartment
 - c. Start engine and check inside cab
 - d. Check headlights, signal lights, warning lights and audio devices
 - e. Conduct walk around inspection
 1. The Approach
 2. Left-front side
 3. Front
 4. Right front side
 5. Right Rear side
 6. Rear
 7. Left Rear side
 8. Engine compartment
 9. In-cab
 10. Pump Operator’s Position

This is a sample guideline furnished to you by VFIS. Your organization should review this guideline and make the necessary modifications to meet your organization's needs. The intent of this guideline is to assist you in reducing exposure to the risk of injury, harm, or damage to personnel, property, and the general public. For additional information on this topic, contact your VFIS Risk Control Representative at (800) 233-1957.

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- f. Check controls and indicators at pump operator's position or any other special function components, wherever located
 - g. Check brake system
2. Post-trip inspections should include, as a minimum, the following items:
- a. Clean vehicle
 - b. Replace supplies
 - c. Refuel and check fluid levels, if justified
 - d. Report any unusual occurrences and/or malfunctions
 - e. Conduct the inspection the same way each time and use a written checklist
 - f. Report in writing any deficiencies found

Maintenance Records

Inspections and preventive maintenance efforts (including repairs and malfunctions) should be documented and a record should be kept during the life of the vehicle. The records should include a vehicle log, a maintenance file, and all work order request forms.