

# **Key points of a good maintenance system**

## **Getting it right**

VOSA recognises that operators of heavy goods or passenger carrying vehicles will not get everything right all the time. However, we do want you to be vigilant and responsible. The penalties for and consequences of non-compliance to you the operator and/or driver – and to the general public – can range from the inconvenient to the very serious and, sometimes, to the catastrophic. You and your staff may be fined or prosecuted and your vehicles may be prohibited. At worst, you may cause serious injury or fatal accidents because of badly maintained vehicles.

## **Key points of a good maintenance system**

Use these important key points as a guide to help you plan and set up a compliant and effective maintenance system for your vehicles.

1. A responsible person must undertake a daily walk around check, preferably immediately before a vehicle is used.
2. First-use inspections are essential for operators who lease, hire or borrow vehicles. These are especially important where vehicles and trailers have been off the road for some time.
3. Drivers must be able to report promptly any defects or symptoms of defects that could adversely affect the safe operation of vehicles.  
Reports must be recorded and provision should be made to record details of any rectification work done.
4. Drivers' defect reports, used to record any faults, must be kept for at least 15 months.
5. Operators must ensure that regular checks are carried out on items that may affect roadworthiness.
6. Safety inspections must include those items covered by the appropriate Department for Transport annual test.
7. Safety inspections should be pre-planned, preferably using a time-based programme.
8. The system of safety inspections must be regularly monitored, especially in the early stages.
9. It is acknowledged that modern vehicle systems now have the ability to support maintenance systems.
10. Any remedial work carried out as a result of safety inspections must be recorded.
11. The safety inspection record must include:
  - Name of owner/operator
  - Date of inspection
  - Vehicle identity
  - Odometer (mileage recorder) reading, if appropriate
  - A list of all the items to be inspected
  - Details of any defects
  - Name of inspector
  - Details of any remedial/rectification or repair work and by whom it was done
  - That any defects have been repaired satisfactorily and the vehicle is now in a safe roadworthy condition
12. On some types of vehicles and operations, intermediate safety checks may be necessary.
13. Records of safety inspections must be kept for at least 15 months.
14. Staff carrying out safety inspections must be competent to assess the significance of defects. Assistance must be available to operate the vehicle controls as necessary.
15. There must be an internal system to ensure that unroadworthy vehicles are removed from service.
16. Operators who undertake their own safety inspections must have the correct tools and facilities for the size of the fleet and type of vehicle operated.

17. All operators should have access to a means of measuring brake efficiency and setting headlamp aim. If you operate older vehicles you may need to have access to exhaust emission equipment.
18. Operators are responsible for the condition of vehicles and trailers that are inspected and/or maintained for them by agents, contractors or hire companies.
19. Operators who have contracted out their safety inspections must draw up a formal written contract with an inspection agency or garage. Such operators should have a means of regularly monitoring the quality of work produced for them.
20. The dates when safety inspections are due must be the subject of forward planning.  
A maintenance planner or wall chart should be used to identify inspection dates at least six months before they are due. Computer based systems are equally acceptable.
21. Any system of maintaining roadworthiness of vehicles should be effectively and continually monitored.
22. Any changes by licensed operators to arrangements for safety inspections must be notified to the Central Licensing Unit without delay.
23. Drivers must be given clear written instructions about their responsibilities

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/vosa/repository/Guide%20to%20Maintaining%20Roadworthiness%20-%20Proposed%20New%20Edition.doc>.