161-Point Pre-Trip Checklist

Tractor + single trailer or doubles | Printable inspection companion

Driver: _____ Date/time: _____

Tractor: _____ Trailer 1: _____ Trailer 2: _____ Dolly: _____

Location: _____ Odometer: _____ Load/run: _____

How to use

Mark each numbered item OK, DEFECT, or N/A. An unchecked item is unfinished. Repeat wheel/axle and trailer checks for every installed position; use the unit coverage record below.

Follow the route: front with hood closed, passenger engine area, driver engine area, driver tractor and trailers, rear, passenger trailers and tractor, close hood, then cab and brake tests.

This resource covers conventional air-braked linehaul tractors, van trailers, and converter dollies. It is not a universal checklist, CDL examination script, repair manual, or substitute for your carrier inspection/report. Add manufacturer checks and the special-equipment supplement for your vehicle.

Inspect from safe positions. Do not crawl beneath unsecured equipment, touch hot or moving parts, open a hot cooling-system cap, or disassemble spring-brake chambers. Qualified personnel must handle checks beyond your training or safe access.

If an item cannot be inspected safely, record it and obtain the appropriate qualified inspection. N/A means genuinely not installed or not applicable, not inaccessible.

Unit coverage record - copy checklist pages for additional units

Unit / ID Driver side Rear Passenger side All axles Couplings

Tractor _____ _____ ____ _____ _____ _____

Trailer 1 _____ _____ ____ _____ _____ _____

Dolly _____ _____ ____ _____ _____ _____

Trailer 2 _____ _____ ____ _____ _____ _____

Walkaround and cab checks

For every item: select one status. Repeat applicable items for every unit and axle.

Prepare and approach

		OK	D	NA
001	Identify tractor, every trailer, and every converter dolly assigned to this run.	☐	☐	☐
002	Review the previous inspection report and required repair certification.	☐	☐	☐
003	Confirm equipment-specific inspection instructions and carrier reporting process.	☐	☐	☐
004	Park on firm, level ground; apply parking brakes and secure transmission.	☐	☐	☐
005	Use wheel chocks whenever stationary checks require parking-brake release.	☐	☐	☐
006	Check surrounding people, traffic, overhead hazards, and available clearance.	☐	☐	☐
007	Wear appropriate visibility clothing; have a light, tire gauge, and tread gauge.	☐	☐	☐
008	Observe vehicle lean, load distribution, damage, and unusual odors.	☐	☐	☐
009	Look beneath the combination for fresh fluid leaks or hanging components.	☐	☐	☐
010	Verify registration, required inspection records, and applicable permits.	☐	☐	☐
011	Confirm unit numbers, dispatch assignment, route restrictions, and load documents.	☐	☐	☐
012	Identify special equipment and complete the applicable supplement on page 10.	☐	☐	☐

Front with hood closed

		OK	D	NA
013	Check windshield condition, cleanliness, and unobstructed view.	☐	☐	☐
014	Inspect wiper arms, blades, and attachment.	☐	☐	☐
015	Check front mirrors, brackets, and mirror-mounted equipment.	☐	☐	☐
016	Inspect hood, grille, bumper, and mounting hardware.	☐	☐	☐
017	Check headlights and lenses for condition and secure mounting.	☐	☐	☐
018	Verify low beams and high beams operate.	☐	☐	☐
019	Verify front turn signals and four-way flashers operate.	☐	☐	☐
020	Verify front clearance, identification, and parking lamps operate.	☐	☐	☐
021	Check front plate and bracket where required.	☐	☐	☐
022	Inspect front tow fittings and other installed accessories for secure mounting.	☐	☐	☐

Walkaround and cab checks - continued

Engine areas - passenger side, then driver side

		OK	D	NA
023	Shut engine off for hands-on checks; open and support hood as instructed.	☐	☐	☐
024	Check engine oil level using the specified checking procedure.	☐	☐	☐
025	Check coolant level using the safe manufacturer method; never open a hot cap.	☐	☐	☐
026	Inspect cooling hoses, clamps, radiator, and reservoir for deterioration or leaks.	☐	☐	☐
027	Check washer reservoir level and visible supply lines.	☐	☐	☐
028	Inspect power-steering reservoir level, pump, and hoses if equipped.	☐	☐	☐
029	Check other service fluids using the specified engine-on or engine-off procedure.	☐	☐	☐
030	Inspect fuel lines and fittings for wetness, damage, or insecure routing.	☐	☐	☐
031	Check accessible belts for wear, alignment, and specified tension.	☐	☐	☐
032	Check alternator, water pump, and accessory mounting where accessible.	☐	☐	☐
033	Inspect compressor mounting, visible lines, and belt drive if equipped.	☐	☐	☐
034	Check separately lubricated compressor oil if applicable.	☐	☐	☐
035	Inspect air intake, ducts, clamps, and restriction indicator if fitted.	☐	☐	☐
036	Inspect wiring insulation, connectors, routing, and attachment.	☐	☐	☐
037	Check battery enclosure, restraints, terminals, and visible corrosion.	☐	☐	☐
038	Inspect engine mounts and visible hardware.	☐	☐	☐
039	Check exhaust joints, shields, mounts, and signs of leakage.	☐	☐	☐
040	Inspect steering gearbox and mounting for damage or leaks.	☐	☐	☐
041	Inspect steering shaft, joints, pitman arm, drag link, and tie rods as accessible.	☐	☐	☐
042	Check steering fasteners and retaining devices.	☐	☐	☐
043	Inspect both sides of the engine; locate components from the actual equipment.	☐	☐	☐
044	Keep clear of hot surfaces and moving parts; account for tools before closing.	☐	☐	☐

Every wheel position and axle - repeat throughout the walkaround

		OK	D	NA
045	Measure inflation with a gauge against the equipment/load specification.	☐	☐	☐
046	Measure tread in major grooves: at least 4/32 inch on front tires, 2/32 elsewhere.	☐	☐	☐

Walkaround and cab checks - continued

Every wheel position and axle - repeat throughout the walkaround

		OK	D	NA
047	Inspect tread separation, exposed cord, cuts, bulges, and irregular wear.	☐	☐	☐
048	Check valve stems and caps; check inflation-system hoses if fitted.	☐	☐	☐
049	Verify tire size/type suitability and dual-tire compatibility.	☐	☐	☐
050	Check dual spacing and trapped objects; tires must not rub each other or equipment.	☐	☐	☐
051	Inspect rims for cracks, distortion, and suspect repairs.	☐	☐	☐
052	Inspect wheel nuts, studs, clamps, spacers, and retaining parts.	☐	☐	☐
053	Look for rust trails or other signs of loose wheel hardware.	☐	☐	☐
054	Check hub and axle seals for leakage; check hub lubricant by specified method.	☐	☐	☐
055	Inspect springs or air bags for damage, displacement, or leakage.	☐	☐	☐
056	Inspect hangers, shackles, bushings, U-bolts, and axle mounts.	☐	☐	☐
057	Inspect torque/radius rods and their mounting hardware.	☐	☐	☐
058	Inspect shocks, mounts, and visible leakage.	☐	☐	☐
059	Check suspension height and leveling components where fitted.	☐	☐	☐
060	Inspect brake hoses, fittings, chambers, and brackets for damage or leakage.	☐	☐	☐
061	Inspect accessible drums/rotors and linings/pads for damage, wear, contamination.	☐	☐	☐
062	Check slack adjusters, pushrods, clevises, and retainers where fitted.	☐	☐	☐
063	Verify brake adjustment/stroke by the approved method and correct chamber limits.	☐	☐	☐
064	Refer questionable adjustment to qualified personnel; do not mask faults by adjustment.	☐	☐	☐
065	Inspect ABS wiring/sensors as accessible and verify unit lamp self-test.	☐	☐	☐
066	Inspect fenders and mudflaps for secure mounting and tire clearance.	☐	☐	☐

Driver-side tractor and first coupling

		OK	D	NA
067	Inspect steps, handholds, door hinges, and latch.	☐	☐	☐
068	Inspect mirrors and brackets from this side.	☐	☐	☐
069	Inspect fuel tank, cap, straps, brackets, and visible leaks.	☐	☐	☐
070	Check DEF tank, cap, lines, and adequate supply if equipped.	☐	☐	☐
071	Inspect frame rails and crossmembers for cracks or loose hardware.	☐	☐	☐

Walkaround and cab checks - continued

Driver-side tractor and first coupling

		OK	D	NA
072	Inspect driveshaft, visible guards, and differential for damage or leaks.	☐	☐	☐
073	Inspect catwalk/deck, storage boxes, and mounted accessories.	☐	☐	☐
074	Apply all wheel/axle checks to steer and drive axles on this side.	☐	☐	☐
075	Inspect fifth-wheel plate, base, mounting bolts, and lubrication as specified.	☐	☐	☐
076	Verify kingpin condition and correct engagement using safe visual access.	☐	☐	☐
077	Verify locking jaws/bar surround the kingpin shank as designed.	☐	☐	☐
078	Confirm release handle and safety latch are secured.	☐	☐	☐
079	Verify trailer apron sits correctly with no unintended coupling gap.	☐	☐	☐
080	Check sliding fifth-wheel rails, stops, and locking pins if equipped.	☐	☐	☐
081	Confirm trailer clearance from cab, frame, and landing gear.	☐	☐	☐
082	Check air gladhand seals, connection security, and correct line connection.	☐	☐	☐
083	Check electrical plug connection, locking, routing, and adequate slack.	☐	☐	☐
084	Keep hoses/cables clear of rubbing, pinching, dragging, and turning interference.	☐	☐	☐
085	Perform approved coupling tug verification; also visually verify the lock.	☐	☐	☐

Each trailer and converter dolly

		OK	D	NA
086	Identify and inspect each trailer separately; repeat on both sides.	☐	☐	☐
087	Inspect front wall, side panels, roof edges, and visible structural damage.	☐	☐	☐
088	Inspect trailer frame and crossmembers as accessible.	☐	☐	☐
089	Inspect landing-gear legs, braces, pads/wheels, and attachment.	☐	☐	☐
090	Confirm landing gear is raised for travel and crank handle secured.	☐	☐	☐
091	Inspect side marker lamps, reflectors, and reflective tape.	☐	☐	☐
092	Verify trailer clearance and identification lamps.	☐	☐	☐
093	Apply wheel/axle checks to every trailer and dolly axle.	☐	☐	☐
094	Inspect air reservoirs, straps, drains, and accessible plumbing.	☐	☐	☐
095	Check air dryer/drain function according to equipment service instructions.	☐	☐	☐
096	Inspect sliding tandems, rail stops, release mechanism, and all locking pins.	☐	☐	☐

Walkaround and cab checks - continued

Each trailer and converter dolly

		OK	D	NA
097	Verify axle position, legal loading, and clearance for the planned route.	☐	☐	☐
098	Inspect each dolly frame, drawbar, eye, welds, and hardware.	☐	☐	☐
099	Inspect pintle hook, latch, and secondary safety lock.	☐	☐	☐
100	Check required safety chains/cables and secure attachments.	☐	☐	☐
101	Inspect the dolly fifth wheel and rear-trailer kingpin using coupling checks.	☐	☐	☐
102	Verify all intermediate air and electrical connections are secure.	☐	☐	☐
103	Verify air shutoff valves: open between units; closed at rear of final trailer.	☐	☐	☐
104	Verify air reaches every trailer using the approved combination test procedure.	☐	☐	☐
105	Confirm trailer emergency and service-brake operation by approved procedure.	☐	☐	☐
106	Verify every coupling visually and complete prescribed tug checks.	☐	☐	☐
107	Inspect dolly support wheel/leg and confirm proper travel position.	☐	☐	☐

Rear, passenger side, and return to front

		OK	D	NA
108	Inspect rear doors, hinges, latches, and locking bars.	☐	☐	☐
109	Verify required seal number against documents without unauthorized seal removal.	☐	☐	☐
110	Inspect rear structure, underride guard, and mounting hardware.	☐	☐	☐
111	Inspect rear plate, bracket, and plate lamp.	☐	☐	☐
112	Verify rear tail, stop, turn, and hazard lamps with a safe approved method.	☐	☐	☐
113	Inspect rear reflectors and reflective tape.	☐	☐	☐
114	Inspect rear mudflaps and visible underbody from a safe position.	☐	☐	☐
115	Walk forward on passenger side of every trailer and dolly.	☐	☐	☐
116	Repeat side structure, lighting, landing gear, wheel, suspension, and brake checks.	☐	☐	☐
117	Repeat coupling, air-line, electrical, and clearance checks from this side.	☐	☐	☐
118	Inspect passenger tractor tank, steps, door, handholds, and mirrors.	☐	☐	☐
119	Apply wheel/axle checks to passenger steer and drive positions.	☐	☐	☐
120	Verify cargo weight, distribution, restraint, and load security when accessible.	☐	☐	☐
121	Check cargo doors, liftgate, ramps, and equipment are secured for travel.	☐	☐	☐

Walkaround and cab checks - continued

Rear, passenger side, and return to front

		OK	D	NA
122	For sealed loads, follow the applicable inspection exception and reporting process.	☐	☐	☐
123	Confirm tools and loose materials are removed from engine and deck areas.	☐	☐	☐
124	Close and latch hood and all access panels as instructed.	☐	☐	☐
125	Enter cab using steps and handholds with three points of contact.	☐	☐	☐

In-cab and emergency equipment

		OK	D	NA
126	Confirm parking brakes and correct transmission position before starting.	☐	☐	☐
127	Adjust seat, mirrors, and steering position.	☐	☐	☐
128	Inspect seat belt webbing, anchorage, buckle, and latch.	☐	☐	☐
129	Secure loose objects and clear pedals/floor.	☐	☐	☐
130	Verify doors latch and emergency egress is unobstructed.	☐	☐	☐
131	Start engine by manufacturer procedure in a ventilated area.	☐	☐	☐
132	Confirm oil pressure rises normally; investigate abnormal readings.	☐	☐	☐
133	Check charging, temperature, fuel, DEF, and other fitted gauges.	☐	☐	☐
134	Check warning-lamp self-tests and resolve persistent fault indications.	☐	☐	☐
135	Verify tractor and trailer ABS lamp behavior for the equipment.	☐	☐	☐
136	Listen for unusual sounds and check for fumes.	☐	☐	☐
137	Inspect steering operation/play against equipment limits.	☐	☐	☐
138	Check accelerator, clutch, transmission, and brake controls for proper operation.	☐	☐	☐
139	Identify trailer brake, retarder, differential-lock, and other fitted controls.	☐	☐	☐
140	Verify windshield washer and wipers work.	☐	☐	☐
141	Verify heater and defroster clear the view.	☐	☐	☐
142	Verify required horns operate.	☐	☐	☐
143	Verify light switches, turn indicators, and high-beam indicator.	☐	☐	☐
144	Check extinguisher rating, charge, pin/seal, secure mount, and access.	☐	☐	☐
145	Confirm three usable reflective warning triangles.	☐	☐	☐
146	Check required spare fuses unless applicable circuits use circuit breakers.	☐	☐	☐

Walkaround and cab checks - continued

In-cab and emergency equipment

		OK	D	NA
147	Check carrier emergency kit, contact numbers, and accident supplies.	☐	☐	☐
148	Check required winter equipment and its secure storage.	☐	☐	☐
149	Confirm ELD/log status, available hours, and required driver credentials.	☐	☐	☐

Air checks and final departure

		OK	D	NA
150	Complete and record every applicable air-brake test on page 7.	☐	☐	☐
151	Rebuild normal operating air pressure in both circuits.	☐	☐	☐
152	Confirm brakes applied before removing chocks for movement tests.	☐	☐	☐
153	Verify clear, level test area and fasten seat belt.	☐	☐	☐
154	Complete prescribed tractor and trailer parking-brake holding checks.	☐	☐	☐
155	Complete slow service-brake response test; check pull, delay, and abnormal feel.	☐	☐	☐
156	Report inspection defects through the required carrier process.	☐	☐	☐
157	Confirm safety-affecting defects are corrected before operating.	☐	☐	☐
158	Recheck disturbed connections, repairs, seals, and access panels.	☐	☐	☐
159	Account for chocks, tools, helpers, and all loose equipment.	☐	☐	☐
160	Confirm final route, weather, fatigue status, and dispatch information.	☐	☐	☐
161	Complete required records; inspect again after equipment changes or new concerns.	☐	☐	☐

Air-brake test record

Use trained, equipment-specific procedures. This page records checks; it is not a repair guide.

Setup

Level ground; parking brakes applied; transmission secured. Chock before stationary brake-release tests. Verify all units connected and identify both pressure gauges. Keep people clear.

Observed / limits / result: _____

Buildup and governor

Use specified RPM and pressure range. Record buildup interval and elapsed time; governor cut-out and cut-in. Compare to manufacturer limits for the actual tank volume and combination.

Observed / limits / result: _____

Static leakage - brakes released

Fully charge; engine off; transmission neutral; wheels chocked. Release applicable parking controls, keep foot off pedal, allow stabilization, then time one minute on both gauges.

Observed / limits / result: _____

Applied leakage

Start at governor cut-out with engine off, wheels chocked, transmission neutral, and parking controls released. Fully hold service brake; after stabilization measure loss over one full minute.

Observed / limits / result: _____

Low-air warning

Engine off, electrical power on, wheels chocked. Reduce pressure with brake applications and record warning activation on both circuits. Verify the equipment-specific threshold.

Observed / limits / result: _____

Automatic protection / spring brakes

Continue reducing pressure by the approved method. Record when applicable tractor parking and trailer-supply controls activate. Verify manufacturer limits; secure brakes and rebuild pressure afterward.

Observed / limits / result: _____

Parking and service checks

At normal pressure, apply parking brakes before safely removing chocks. Belt on; clear level area. Gently check prescribed parking holds. Then release brakes and test service response at about 5 mph; stop for pull, delay, or abnormal feel.

Observed / limits / result: _____

Numeric reference: common CDL examples, not one universal acceptance table

Oregon Section 5 lists static loss under 2 psi/min single and under 3 psi/min combination; applied loss no more than 3/4 psi/min respectively. It describes low warning before below 55 psi, valve activation at manufacturer specification (20-45 psi), and dual-system buildup 85-100 psi in 45 seconds unless larger tanks require another specification. Multi-trailer criteria and examination procedures can differ. Write the applicable manufacturer/carrier/state limits above before testing.

Defects, special equipment, and follow-through

Record exact unit, side, axle/location, condition, and who received the report.

Safety-affecting defect or failed brake test: secure equipment, report it, and obtain correction before operation. This log supplements the required carrier report; it does not authorize departure.

1. Item # / unit / location: _____

Finding / report recipient / time: _____

Correction / verification / reference: _____

2. Item # / unit / location: _____

Finding / report recipient / time: _____

Correction / verification / reference: _____

3. Item # / unit / location: _____

Finding / report recipient / time: _____

Correction / verification / reference: _____

4. Item # / unit / location: _____

Finding / report recipient / time: _____

Correction / verification / reference: _____

Special-equipment supplements - attach applicable instructions

Hazardous materials: shipping papers, emergency information, placards, required extinguisher rating, segregation/securement, and applicable endorsements.

Refrigerated loads: reefer condition/fuel, set point, operating status, temperature record, and load-specific instructions.

Liftgates, ramps, flatbeds, tankers, intermodal chassis, triples, lift axles, alternative-fuel/high-voltage equipment, and hydraulic brakes: use their dedicated manufacturer/carrier checklists.

Winter/route equipment: required chains/traction devices, safe storage, route permits, and seasonal checks.

Additional installed equipment or carrier checks: _____

Completion: driver _____ Date/time _____

Unresolved concerns / required follow-up: _____

Reference and continued use

Keep this resource with your carrier and equipment instructions.

Scope and responsibility

This checklist helps organize inspection of conventional linehaul combinations. It does not certify roadworthiness or cover every specialized vehicle. Requirements depend on vehicle design, load, jurisdiction, and operation. Check the current instructions for your exact equipment.

Reinspect after coupling or changing units, after relevant repairs, and whenever new damage or abnormal operation appears. Continue monitoring equipment during the trip and complete required end-of-duty defect reporting.

Reference sources - checked October 2, 2026

FMCSA Motor Carrier Safety Planner: equipment, inspection, and use (49 CFR 392.7-392.9). Driver inspection and defect reporting are addressed in 49 CFR 396.13 and 396.11. Current regulations and carrier procedures control.

https://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/SafetyPlanner/

Oregon Commercial Driver Manual: Sections 2 (inspection), 5 (air brakes), 6 (combination vehicles), and 7 (doubles/triples). State manuals supply training examples; use the applicable state manual for examination criteria.

https://www.oregon.gov/odot/dmv/pages/online_cdl_manual_2/section_2.aspx

https://www.oregon.gov/odot/dmv/pages/online_cdl_manual_2/section_5.aspx

https://www.oregon.gov/odot/dmv/pages/online_cdl_manual_2/section_6.aspx

https://www.oregon.gov/odot/dmv/pages/online_cdl_manual_2/section_7.aspx

Equipment-specific additions

Record the applicable manual edition, brake-test limits, component locations, special load checks, and carrier additions here:

_____

_____

_____

Visit Linehaul Academy

Return to linehaulacademy.com for the companion pre-trip lesson, music, and future training resources.