



## Vehicle Self-Inspection Procedures

GuideOne Insurance recommends that vehicles be inspected using the Vehicle Self-Inspection Checklist on a weekly basis. The company **requires** that tire pressure be monitored on all 15-passenger, or extended body passenger, vans on a weekly basis. It is also **required** that the inspection be completed prior to any trip in excess of 50 miles. This inspection must be documented using the Vehicle Self-Inspection Checklist. In addition, a daily vehicle walk-around is recommended to visually observe the condition of the vehicle and identify any obvious vehicle deficiencies.

**Important:** This inspection procedure is **not** intended to satisfy the pre-trip and post-trip inspection requirements for commercial vehicles. Do **not** use these procedures or the related report form for the purpose of satisfying federal, state, or local regulations pertaining to vehicle inspections.

The Vehicle Self-Inspection Checklist will help you perform the inspection in a logical sequence and assist you in doing a complete and thorough inspection of the vehicle. If your vehicle does not contain all of the equipment that is reflected in the checklist, simply cross out the items that do not apply and move on to the next item. Keep the completed self-inspection as a permanent record and have any indicated repairs made to the vehicle immediately.

### Before Starting the Engine

- Make sure the vehicle is in park with the parking brake engaged. Use wheel chocks if required or if the vehicle is parked on a slope.
- Reference the vehicle's owner's manual prior to performing the self-inspection and prior to operation of the vehicle.

### Exterior

- Check the vehicle body condition for any damage.
  - Bumpers, fenders, and trim must be in good condition and must not be loose or significantly damaged.
  - Check all doors and their locking mechanisms for easy operation.
  - Make sure that the doors are functional and not obstructed or otherwise damaged.
  - Check all emergency exits if your vehicle is so equipped.
- Check the direction signals/emergency flashers for operation and for cracked or missing lenses.
- Make sure the windows and mirrors are free of ice, snow, or frost.
- Check the windshield wipers and washers.
- Adjust all mirrors to fit the driver and minimize blind spots.
- Tap the horn to make sure the horn works properly.
- Check the vehicle registration tag, and make sure the vehicle license has not expired.
- Check the vehicle's tires and wheels.
  - Look for loose or missing lug nuts.
  - Look for any oil residue on the inside or outside of the wheel. This type of oil leak could indicate a bad brake cylinder or axle seal. Either condition can result in decreased brake performance that could result in an accident.

(Updated 4.14.08)

This material is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to give specific legal or risk management advice, nor are any suggested checklists or actions plans intended to include or address all possible risk management exposures or solutions. You are encouraged to retain your own expert consultants and legal advisors in order to develop a risk management plan specific to your own activities. For more information, contact the GuideOne Center for Risk Management at (877) 448-4331, ext. 5118 for Church and Schools, or ext. 5175 for Senior Living Communities.

<http://www.guideonecenter.com>

- Make sure the tires are properly inflated. Recognize that every vehicle type has different requirements for tire pressure. The manufacturer's recommended tire pressure is listed in the owner's manual and on the driver's door or door pillar. 15-passenger vans require up to 80 PSI of tire pressure.
  - Make sure the tire can handle the pressure required. It is not uncommon for a vehicle to be fitted with the wrong tires. For example, 15-passenger vans must be equipped with load range E tires. Load range D tires can only be safely inflated to 65 PSI.
  - Check the tire pressure using a high-quality tire pressure gauge.
  - If your vehicle is equipped with an automatic tire pressure monitoring system, be familiar with the system and possible limitations. Some systems do not provide the actual PSI reading and only sound an alarm when the tire pressure drops below a prescribed limit.
- Make sure the tires have adequate tread depth (greater than 1/8 inch) and that the tires have no visible signs of deterioration.
- Make sure the spare is in good condition and adequately inflated.

## Under the Hood / Under the Vehicle

**Important:** Under-the-hood inspections are best done on a **cold engine**. If the engine has been running, take extreme care not to burn yourself on any engine component. NEVER remove the radiator cap.

- Open the hood, and check the battery, battery connections, and engine accessory drive belts.
- Check the engine oil level, brake cylinder fluid level, power steering fluid level, engine coolant level, and washer fluid level.
- Look for any leaks or loose components under the hood.
- The coolant level should be easily checked by looking at the coolant reservoir tank.
- Look under the vehicle next.
  - Look for any sign of oil or fluid leaks.
  - Look at the vehicle muffler and exhaust system checking for holes, missing support hangers, missing tailpipes, and other defects.
  - Check the suspension system for loose or hanging components.
  - Check the shock absorbers for oil leaks or worn insulator bushings.

## Interior

- Check the general housekeeping of the vehicle interior.
  - Loose cups, cans, and other items have been known to lodge under the brake pedal of a vehicle and cause major accidents.
  - Keep the vehicle interior clear of any loose objects.
- Commercial vehicles are required to carry a fire extinguisher, first aid kit, and warning reflectors. If your vehicle is equipped with these safety items, make sure they are in good condition and correctly stowed.
- Check the operation and availability of seat belts for all seating positions.
  - If child safety seats are needed, make sure the seats are properly installed following the child safety seat manufacturer's instructions.
  - If operating a vehicle with removable seats, make sure the seats are properly secured to the floor of the vehicle.  
Fatalities and serious injuries have occurred in passenger vans due to the seats not being installed properly. If possible, remove the back seat.

## After Starting the Engine

**Important:** Before starting the engine, make sure the **parking brake is engaged**.

- Listen for any unusual noises.  
Any squealing, clicking, grinding, popping, or other unusual sound could be an indication of a significant mechanical problem.
- Check the gauges.
  - Make sure the oil pressure, fuel level, coolant temperature, voltage, and/or amperage readings are all within operating ranges.
  - If your vehicle is equipped with air brakes, make sure that the low pressure alarm and pressure gauge are working properly.
- Press the brake, and check for firm resistance.
  - If the pedal presses to the floor or feels spongy the brake system must be checked by a certified mechanic.
- With the brake engaged, move the transmission shift control through the selection range.
  - Any delay or unusual noises may be an indication of a problem and should be checked by a certified mechanic.
- Check the parking brake for proper adjustment and effectiveness.
- Check the heater, defroster, and air conditioner for operation.
- Turn the steering wheel, and check for looseness or excessive play in the wheel.
  - If the steering feels loose or has excessive play, it must be checked by a certified mechanic.

## While Driving

Certain deficient conditions can only be identified when the vehicle is in motion. Note these items, and check any problems on the Vehicle Self-Inspection Checklist after your test drive.

- Check for any unusual movement, vibration, or sound, which could be an indication of a defective condition.
- Check for any smoke, steam, or unusual odors, which could also be an indication of a defective condition.
- Verify that the vehicle does not pull while driving or braking.
  - Do not operate a vehicle if the vehicle wanders or pulls to one side during normal operation, acceleration, or braking.
- Check the operation of the speedometer.
- In addition to full concentration on the driving task, keep an eye on all the gauges; and immediately find a safe place to stop if any of the gauges register outside of the normal operating range.

## Closing

Transportation of people and materials is a critical element of your ministries and operations. Failure to maintain your owned, hired, and borrowed vehicles can result in catastrophic accidents. Please use the information and forms provided to safeguard your ministries and operations.