

TOOLBOX TALK: DRIVING AND VEHICLE CHECKS

Job or site _____

Date _____

Led by _____

Open with this

Hands up who checked their brakes, tires and horn before leaving the yard this morning. That check is not a suggestion, it is a requirement, and it is once a shift.

The talk

Every vehicle in use on this job gets checked at the beginning of each shift. Not weekly, not when something feels wrong. Each shift, before it is used.

The list is written down in the standard and it is short: brakes including the trailer connection, the hand brake, the emergency stopping system, tires, horn, steering, coupling devices, seat belts, controls and safety devices.

Seat belts have to be installed in every motor vehicle, and the reason people still die not wearing one on a jobsite is that the drive is short. Every fatal jobsite drive was a short one.

Backing is where the trucks on a site actually hurt people. You either have a reverse alarm that can be heard over the noise around it, or you have somebody watching who signals that it is safe. One or the other, every time.

The phone is the part nobody wants to talk about. Reading one message at thirty miles an hour means driving the length of this site with your eyes shut. There is no version of that which is fine because the message was quick.

Cracked glass and dead wipers are the two defects everybody drives with for months. You cannot see out of a windshield you have stopped looking through, and a wiper that smears is the reason a reversing truck does not see a man in a vest.

Point at these before anybody starts

- The vehicle you drove in. Walk to it and look at the tires now.
- Any cracked windshield or split wiper blade on the vehicles here.
- Where trucks reverse on this site, and who has been standing in that spot.
- The coupling on any trailer here, and the safety chains.
- The horn. Somebody sound it, so everybody knows what it sounds like.

- The load in the bed, and whether it is tied or just sitting there.

The rules that apply

- Every vehicle in use is checked at the start of each shift: service brakes including trailer brake connections, parking brake, emergency stopping system, tires, horn, steering, coupling devices, seat belts, operating controls and safety devices.
- Seat belts and anchorages meeting the federal motor vehicle safety standards must be installed in all motor vehicles, and they get worn.
- Service brake, emergency brake and parking brake systems all have to be there and all have to be kept in working condition.
- A vehicle is backed up only when it has a reverse signal alarm audible above the surrounding noise, or when an observer signals that it is safe to do so.
- Vehicles with cabs must have windshields and powered wipers. Cracked and broken glass gets replaced, and where windshields fog or frost the defroster has to work.
- Haulage vehicles loaded by a crane, shovel or loader must have a cab shield or canopy adequate to protect the operator from shifting or falling material.

Ask the crew

- What is on the start of shift check, without looking at the sheet?
- Who checks the trailer coupling, the man who hitched it or the man driving it?
- Where is your phone going to be while you drive off this site?

Close with this

The check takes two minutes and it is the only part of the day that protects you before anything has gone wrong.

Attendance

Everybody who was present signs, including subcontractors and anybody visiting the site.

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This talk is general safety information for a crew briefing, not legal advice and not a substitute for the training your employees are required to have. Standards are quoted for orientation only. Check the current text of the standard and your own state plan, which may be stricter than the federal rule.