

New Trip Inspection Standard for Trucks Begins National Rollout July 1

Straightforward guidelines provide more certainty for carriers and drivers

-- On July 1, a new National Safety Code (NSC) standard on daily inspections of commercial vehicles will begin to have a tangible effect across the country. Saskatchewan, which has already implemented the new standard, will require full compliance by all carriers as of that date. Ontario's regulation comes into effect July 1, and a period of educational enforcement will continue until the end of the year. The other provinces will follow in the months to come.

Those provinces which will not yet have the new rules in place have agreed to accept use of the updated standard, so that drivers will not need to comply with different rules when crossing provincial borders.

Despite this rather uneven start, carriers and drivers should see real benefits from the new regulations. Whereas the old requirements provided only vague guidance on exactly what is a defect and what a driver should do about it, the new approach allows drivers to conduct detailed inspections, and gives them specific vehicle defects to look for.

The defect list tells a driver when a vehicle is safe to operate, or when it must be repaired before it can get on the road. Operations and maintenance staff will use the same criteria to determine vehicle status.

During the development of the standard, a pilot program was carried out and it included a survey designed to evaluate drivers' knowledge of the existing rules. While most drivers felt they had a good understanding of the rules, only a minority were in fact able to decipher what the regulations required.

In contrast, the ground rules under the new standard are very clear and virtually all drivers participating in the pilot program were able to accurately identify vehicle defects. Carriers involved in the pilot found that operations and maintenance staff were also supportive of the new approach since it provides a standardized basis for all to work from.

CTA played a key role in the development of the new NSC standard for daily vehicle inspections, which is the model that all provinces are following. To a large extent it reflects industry views on the need for enforcement policy makers to reach decisions on the severity of defects in an objective manner and to communicate that information clearly to drivers and carriers. These decisions are reflected in the schedules of vehicle defects that are part of the new NSC standard. The Alliance is optimistic that the industry will find the common-sense approach of the new standard both easier to comply with and of greater practical value.

About CTA: The Canadian Trucking Alliance is a federation of provincial trucking associations. We represent a broad cross-section of the trucking industry—some 4,500 carriers, owner-operators and industry suppliers. With our head office in Ottawa and provincial association offices in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Moncton, CTA represents the industry's viewpoint on national

and international policy, regulatory and legislative issues that affect trucking.
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