

§ 396.7

49 CFR Ch. III (10-1-02 Edition)

§ 396.7 Unsafe operations forbidden.

(a) *General.* A motor vehicle shall not be operated in such a condition as to likely cause an accident or a breakdown of the vehicle.

(b) *Exemption.* Any motor vehicle discovered to be in an unsafe condition while being operated on the highway may be continued in operation only to the nearest place where repairs can safely be effected. Such operation shall be conducted only if it is less hazardous to the public than to permit the vehicle to remain on the highway.

§ 396.9 Inspection of motor vehicles in operation.

(a) *Personnel authorized to perform inspections.* Every special agent of the FMCSA (as defined in appendix B to this subchapter) is authorized to enter upon and perform inspections of motor carrier's vehicles in operation.

(b) *Prescribed inspection report.* The Driver-Equipment Compliance Check shall be used to record results of motor vehicle inspections conducted by authorized FMCSA personnel.

(c) *Motor vehicles declared "out of service."* (1) Authorized personnel shall declare and mark "out of service" any motor vehicle which by reason of its mechanical condition or loading would likely cause an accident or a breakdown. An "Out of Service Vehicle" sticker shall be used to mark vehicles "out of service."

(2) No motor carrier shall require or permit any person to operate nor shall any person operate any motor vehicle declared and marked "out of service" until all repairs required by the "out of service notice" have been satisfactorily completed. The term "operate" as used in this section shall include towing the vehicle, except that vehicles marked "out of service" may be towed away by means of a vehicle using a crane or hoist. A vehicle combination consisting of an emergency towing vehicle and an "out of service" vehicle shall not be operated unless such combination meets the performance requirements of this subchapter except for those conditions noted on the Driver Equipment Compliance Check.

(3) No person shall remove the "Out of Service Vehicle" sticker from any

motor vehicle prior to completion of all repairs required by the "out of service notice".

(d) *Motor carrier disposition.* (1) The driver of any motor vehicle receiving an inspection report shall deliver it to the motor carrier operating the vehicle upon his/her arrival at the next terminal or facility. If the driver is not scheduled to arrive at a terminal or facility of the motor carrier operating the vehicle within 24 hours, the driver shall immediately mail the report to the motor carrier.

(2) Motor carriers shall examine the report. Violations or defects noted thereon shall be corrected.

(3) Within 15 days following the date of the inspection, the motor carrier shall—

(i) Certify that all violations noted have been corrected by completing the "Signature of Carrier Official, Title, and Date Signed" portions of the form; and

(ii) Return the completed roadside inspection form to the issuing agency at the address indicated on the form and retain a copy at the motor carrier's principal place of business or where the vehicle is housed for 12 months from the date of the inspection.

(49 U.S.C. 3102; 49 CFR 1.48(b))

[44 FR 38526, July 2, 1979, as amended at 49 FR 38290, Sept. 28, 1984; 57 FR 40964, Sept. 8, 1992]

§ 396.11 Driver vehicle inspection report(s).

(a) *Report required.* Every motor carrier shall require its drivers to report, and every driver shall prepare a report in writing at the completion of each day's work on each vehicle operated and the report shall cover at least the following parts and accessories:

- Service brakes including trailer brake connections
- Parking (hand) brake
- Steering mechanism
- Lighting devices and reflectors
- Tires
- Horn
- Windshield wipers
- Rear vision mirrors
- Coupling devices
- Wheels and rims
- Emergency equipment

(b) *Report content.* The report shall identify the vehicle and list any defect or deficiency discovered by or reported to the driver which would affect the safety of operation of the vehicle or result in its mechanical breakdown. If no defect or deficiency is discovered by or reported to the driver, the report shall so indicate. In all instances, the driver shall sign the report. On two-driver operations, only one driver needs to sign the driver vehicle inspection report, provided both drivers agree as to the defects or deficiencies identified. If a driver operates more than one vehicle during the day, a report shall be prepared for each vehicle operated.

(c) *Corrective action.* Prior to requiring or permitting a driver to operate a vehicle, every motor carrier or its agent shall repair any defect or deficiency listed on the driver vehicle inspection report which would be likely to affect the safety of operation of the vehicle.

(1) Every motor carrier or its agent shall certify on the original driver vehicle inspection report which lists any defect or deficiency that the defect or deficiency has been repaired or that repair is unnecessary before the vehicle is operated again.

(2) Every motor carrier shall maintain the original driver vehicle inspection report, the certification of repairs, and the certification of the driver's review for three months from the date the written report was prepared.

(d) *Exceptions.* The rules in this section shall not apply to a private motor carrier of passengers (nonbusiness), a driveaway-towaway operation, or any motor carrier operating only one commercial motor vehicle.

[44 FR 38526, July 2, 1979, as amended at 45 FR 46425, July 10, 1980; 53 FR 18058, May 19, 1988; 59 FR 8753, Feb. 23, 1994; 63 FR 33279, June 18, 1998]

§ 396.13 Driver inspection.

Before driving a motor vehicle, the driver shall:

(a) Be satisfied that the motor vehicle is in safe operating condition;

(b) Review the last driver vehicle inspection report; and

(c) Sign the report, only if defects or deficiencies were noted by the driver who prepared the report, to acknowl-

edge that the driver has reviewed it and that there is a certification that the required repairs have been performed. The signature requirement does not apply to listed defects on a towed unit which is no longer part of the vehicle combination.

[44 FR 76526, Dec. 27, 1979, as amended at 48 FR 55868, Dec. 16, 1983; 63 FR 33280, June 18, 1998]

§ 396.15 Driveaway-towaway operations and inspections.

(a) *General.* Effective December 7, 1989, every motor carrier, with respect to motor vehicles engaged in driveaway-towaway operations, shall comply with the requirements of this part. EXCEPTION: Maintenance records required by § 396.3, the vehicle inspection report required by § 396.11, and the periodic inspection required by § 396.17 of this part shall not be required for any vehicle which is part of the shipment being delivered.

(b) *Pre-trip inspection.* Before the beginning of any driveaway-towaway operation of motor vehicles in combination, the motor carrier shall make a careful inspection and test to ascertain that:

(1) The towbar or saddle-mount connections are properly secured to the towed and towing vehicle;

(2) They function adequately without cramping or binding of any of the parts; and

(3) The towed motor vehicle follows substantially in the path of the towing vehicle without whipping or swerving.

(c) *Post-trip inspection.* Motor carriers shall maintain practices to ensure that following completion of any trip in driveaway-towaway operation of motor vehicles in combination, and before they are used again, the towbars and saddle-mounts are disassembled and inspected for worn, bent, cracked, broken, or missing parts. Before reuse, suitable repair or replacement shall be made of any defective parts and the devices shall be properly reassembled.

[44 FR 38526, July 2, 1979, as amended at 53 FR 49410, Dec. 7, 1988; 53 FR 49968, Dec. 12, 1988]

§ 396.17 Periodic inspection.

(a) Every commercial motor vehicle shall be inspected as required by this