

Auditing Drivers paperwork

The weather is turning to be a little more pleasant to be outdoors. It is nice to get the opportunity to get the fresh air and of course see the longer day light hours. Many will be thinking about heading to the golf course or off to the soccer or baseball field. While others will be busy with the chores in the back yard.

I am sure that our friends at MTO will be itching to get out in the nicer weather and do some serious truck inspection at the big new Super Truck Inspection Stations.

So no matter what your involvement is with fleet safety you had better be prepared for those inspections to take place.

Recently I was in the safety office of one of my customers and the subject of driver inspections came up. The carrier has a not too bad Out of Service Rate but wants to see better numbers. It just happened that there was a stack of logs and drivers inspection reports sitting there. They have not yet gone electronic. So we started to look at the inspection reports for the last few days. There were about 50 reports and not one had a defect recorded on the 50 inspection reports. So I asked for the last 2 drivers that would have had defects recorded on a Commercial Motor Vehicle Inspection Reports (CVIR) I started thumbing through and again on the 6 months of inspection reports for the 2 drivers there were no defects recorded on the driver's inspection report. To satisfy my suspicions and to prove a point I asked for 2 other drivers the most senior and the last hire. There were no defects recorded on any of these driver inspection reports as well.

You may well be asking yourself what does any of this have to do with the fleet OOS rate?

We got a little further into the matter at this point and discovered that there was no documented training on file for the drivers on conducting a proper pre trip inspection as well as training on documenting the pre trip inspection. This may be perceived by the drivers that the company does not see the pre trip inspection as a serious matter. Therefore likely they are not doing a proper pre trip inspection and maybe no

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to book your
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pre trip inspection at all. Now somewhere along the line the bells should ring to someone in the maintenance department the safety department that things are not as they should be.

Is there a person in the organization that is auditing the systems and has that person been trained and knowledgeable in the responsibilities with their job?

Is there ongoing communication within the safety department as to what is taking place? I see safety departments that have got the neatest filing systems set ups for logs and pre trip inspections. Filing and record keeping are a small part of auditing and will only get a carrier so far on a MTO facility audit.

Pointers:

- When a driver discovers a defect that defect (Major or Minor according to Schedule I) must be recorded on the drivers inspection report.
- A major defect must be repaired before the transport unit leaves on the run.
- If the defect has been repaired before the driver starts the trip the driver must still record the defect on his/her inspection report.
- Inspection reports must be retained by the carrier for 6 months.
- An inspection report that has a defect recorded now becomes a maintenance record and must be retained for 2 years.
- The carrier must maintain a record of maintenance for each piece of equipment. As a minimum requirement it is required to have a repair records. Those records must have equipment related data as well as the vehicle odometer reading at the time of repair. This would be in the form of a work order or invoice or both.
- The last bullet above is a point that the carrier can get into compliance troubles real quick. The odometer reading or a missing odometer reading is important.
- On an MTO Facility Audit it can be proven that there is a discrepancy such as a driver operating a piece of equipment when the shop shows that it is down for repairs opens to door for falsification charges to the driver and the carrier.
- My suggestion as a person or team member from safety and compliance is take the step and start to train drivers and other staff on a proper vehicle inspection. I say other staff because once a dispatcher sees what it takes to do a proper vehicle inspection they may not place so much pressure on the driver to get out of the yard.

Audit your department and make sure that you are catching as much as possible in your system. That may require the help of a 3rd party to randomly audit some of your logs and inspection reports. A safety department audit is allot more than making sure there are proper identification of truck and trailer, driver name and signature as well as an equal number of reports for the number of days worked. Once you call the drivers in and show them what they are expected to do the task of auditing will get better and at the same time so will the OOS rating. Not overnight of course. My suggestion is not to give the driver that this is a company enforcement meeting but rather an education period.

You will hear stuff like the last company I worked for did not do it that way! Or I was at the scale last week and the officer their seen my log and inspection report and told me it was good. Take that with a grain of salt.

I hope that this assists you with your safety and compliance. If I can assist you in anyway please do not hesitate to contact me. Ways I can help is a drivers safety meeting, training operation and safety department staff on the regulations or review what you are doing for record keeping. It is often said another pair of eyes will not hurt.

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Incident Investigation

"When the incident is over, recommendations suggested and actions developed, the next challenge is follow-up on the actions. We need to make sure the actions do not fade as a result of production pressures."

John Wettstein

Entry Level Drivers:

Over the last year there has been an outcry to improve the skills of the entry level driver. Many carriers have implemented mentoring programs within their fleet as a way to fill those empty seats.

I applaud those carriers for taking the initiative to educate those drivers.

Let's go back one step to the driving schools. First off like anything else there are good schools and then there are the other guys.

Some of the schools are only giving their students the information that they will need to pass the MTO test. Which by the way that in cab test is only a matter of a 20 minute drive if that long.

The industry is currently working with MTO to raise the bar. That is not going to happen overnight and there are stilling going to be substandard drivers slip by the rules and into trucks running up and down the road.

As a carrier if you decide to start your own mentoring program it takes some careful planning. One of the first things I suggest is to contact your insurance company and get their thoughts and ideas on implementing the program.

Once you have received insurance approval and they will give you some restrictions you have to start getting that into an action plan.

You require a written training program. You have to select a person to be your in cab trainer. That can be a challenge. Not all people should be in a trainer role.

And not all people want the role and responsibility.

Warning your senior driver is not always your best choice.

I have assisted fleets in a mentoring program and would be pleased to share those experiences with you.

Employee Involvement

"The magic of employee involvement is that it allows individuals to discover their own potential - and to put that potential to work in creative ways ... People develop in themselves pride in workmanship, self-respect, self-reliance, and a heightened sense of responsibility."

Philip Caldwell, retired CEO, Ford Motor Company