

Toolbox talk - Check your vehicle

Delivering the toolbox talk

- Put up the 'Check your vehicle' key message poster in the work place – preferably somewhere where the drivers will see it on a regular basis
- Introduce yourself and ask drivers to introduce themselves
- Let the audience know that the talk will take approximately twenty minutes
- Make sure you have a copy of the walkaround checklist that all your drivers will have in their handbook. A copy is in your Toolkit

1. Aim

The aim of this toolbox talk is to communicate company policy of ensuring all drivers (including sub-contracted and agency drivers) conduct a daily walkaround check of their vehicle to ensure they are in full working order.

2. Reason why

A recent study by DVSA revealed that many vans fail their first time and around a quarter of prohibitions issued to vans are due to the condition of the tyres.

A daily walkaround check helps to ensure that the vehicle is:

- Clean
- Roadworthy
- Safe to drive

This helps keep drivers, their vehicles and other road users safe by reducing the likelihood of an accident. The walkaround check should also help to highlight and fix any defects before they cause a more serious problem.

This can reduce maintenance costs as well as vehicle downtime.

3. Incentive

Undertaking daily walkaround checks results in:

- Improved vehicle performance - defects are reported and fixed before serious problems occur
- Improved reputation and corporate image as a clean and well maintained van looks professional
- Reduced likelihood of accidents with their attendant cost, time and reputation loss
- Reduced fines and penalty points

If vehicle defects are sufficiently serious they can result in a charge of dangerous driving. This can result in 3-11 points, two years imprisonment, unlimited fines and obligatory disqualification.

4. Outline

This toolbox talk covers what and how to check the vehicle for roadworthiness and report any defects. Our vehicles are an important asset. As such they need to be looked after. Our company goal is to minimise any issues that will impact negatively on our business. If not well managed and maintained we are more likely to have or cause accidents.

The talk will end with some confirmatory questions, so listen up!

5. Who needs to do the vehicle checks?

All drivers (including sub-contracted and agency) are required to check their vehicles on a daily basis.

6. When should the checks be done?

Drivers shall check the vehicle at the start of their shift, before setting out. They must do it before any loads have been put on the vehicle because if the vehicle is subsequently found to be unroadworthy, the load will have to be taken off.

7. Points to emphasise

- It's a fact that more vans fail their MOT first time than HGVs. This means that many vans on our roads, this very minute, are not roadworthy. This means they are a risk to their drivers as well as the public. We need to make sure our vehicles don't contribute to this, by noticing defects on vehicles before they drive out of the front gate. (If this is being delivered in a company the actual pass rate should be stated and a target attributed to defects and the pass rate improving.)
- Checking a vehicle before setting out means that you make sure your vehicle is roadworthy and will spot any defects before they cause an accident, helping to keep you and other road users safe.
- As part of your walkaround check you should also check that the vehicle is clean outside and inside. Do not leave rubbish on the dashboard. Make sure paperwork and delivery notes are in a ring binder or folder and not scattered around the cab.
- Ultimately, checking for roadworthiness is about safety; but it's also about being professional. We don't want to conform to the stereotypical reputation of 'white van man' and want to defy any misconceptions the public might have.
- If you identify and report defects early then the maintenance team can fix them before they become more serious. This means that the repair cost may be lower and the vehicle will spend less time off the road, helping the company to become more profitable - which ultimately benefits you.
- You, the drivers, are legally responsible for the vehicle you are driving. If you knowingly go out and drive a vehicle that isn't roadworthy, it could mean trouble for both you and the company. We don't want to go down that road and I'm sure you don't, so I'm going to tell you how to do a walkaround check and report any defects and then I expect you to do them every day.

8. How you can conduct a van daily walkaround check

- Refer to your driver handbook walkaround checklist when checking the vehicle. Everything that needs to be checked on your vehicle is on this checklist. Fill in the checklist and if everything is fine, simply complete and submit it to your manager for record keeping purposes. Sheets should be submitted on a weekly basis unless you spot a defect.

- If you discover a defect, you must record it and report it by submitting the walkaround check immediately. Don't wait for the end of the week. If the defect means that the vehicle is not roadworthy then you should not drive it. Speak to your manager or supervisor immediately to confirm that the vehicle is not roadworthy and they will arrange for a repair or an alternative vehicle for the shift. Remember to do the walkaround check on any substitute vehicle provided.
- As you carry out each check, tick it off. If there is an issue, highlight it. If you are not sure about something, ask for help either from your manager, supervisor or another colleague. Shortly, I will take you out and do a practice walkaround check so you can see what needs to be done.
- It is important that we have a record that these checks have taken place. Completed forms are reviewed and influence decision making. For example, if a particular vehicle keeps on having defects reported we might consider replacing it with a newer vehicle. It may even influence the make of van we buy in future.

9. Confirmatory questions

1. Who needs to do the vehicle checks?
2. How often should a walkaround check be done?
3. What is the purpose of doing a walkaround check?
4. What must you do if you discover a defect?
5. What things should you be looking for when checking the tyres and wheels?

10. Final summary

To sum up, we need to make sure our vehicles are roadworthy and safe to drive. You should now understand why walkaround checks are so important, how to do them, what to look out for, and when and how to submit the forms if there is nothing to report and how to report a defect. The key priorities are to keep you and other road users safe. Remember to always submit your completed walkaround check sheets, even if no defects have been found as we need them for our records.

Thank you for your time – and now I would like your feedback.