

# SURVIVING CSA: ROADSIDE INSPECTIONS

The roadside inspection is where “the rubber meets the road” under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s CSA enforcement program. How well you perform on roadside inspections will directly impact your BASIC scores — and those of your employer — and could have long-lasting effects on your career.

## Are YOU Prepared?

The key to avoiding inspections, or passing them when you’re selected, is preparation. If you’re always ready for the next inspection and strive for total compliance, the result will be fewer inspections, a good safety record and reputation, a positive impact on your carrier’s safety rating, and less concern about the CSA program overall, because you’ll fall below the FMCSA’s radar.

## Be Ready for Your Next Inspection!

- **Don’t give them an excuse.** Vehicles are often selected for an inspection because of something visibly wrong with them. Inspect your vehicle regularly for defective lights and tires, broken reflective devices, and other easy-to-spot defects, and get them repaired promptly.
- **Follow the rules of the road, especially speeding!** Most roadside inspections take place after an officer spots a traffic violation. Comply with the rules, avoid speeding, and wear your seatbelt, and there will be fewer excuses to pull you over.
- **Become familiar with the high-frequency, high-severity violations.** Knowing which violations to avoid in particular can go a long way toward lowering your scores.
- **Carry all required paperwork.** This includes a valid license and medical card, an up-to-date log and supporting documents (for today plus previous 7 days), proof of annual inspection, instructions for any on-board recording devices, hazmat paperwork, permit credentials, and bills of lading or shipping papers.
- **Keep your vehicle in top shape** with thorough inspections and regular maintenance. Don’t perform your own brake adjustments unless you’re fully qualified.
- **If you are inspected, cooperate with the inspector.** If there are any “puzzling” violations, have them explained to you. Be sure to get a copy of the inspection report.
- **Keep track of your inspection record** and make improvements wherever possible. Most inspections are not random, so if you’re “always” being selected, there’s probably a reason!
- **Make sure your record is accurate.** If you wish to dispute the results of an inspection, contact the inspecting agency or use the DataQs system to file a complaint.

## The Importance of Clean Inspections

Clean inspections — those with no violations in one or more of the BASICs — can dramatically improve your CSA scores on the Fatigued Driving, Driver Fitness, Vehicle Maintenance, and Cargo-Related BASICs, often after just one inspection. They can also improve your employer’s Drugs & Alcohol BASIC score. Even if you have violations in one BASIC, the inspection may still be clean in other BASICs. *Always strive for clean inspections, and make sure those inspections are recorded!*



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