

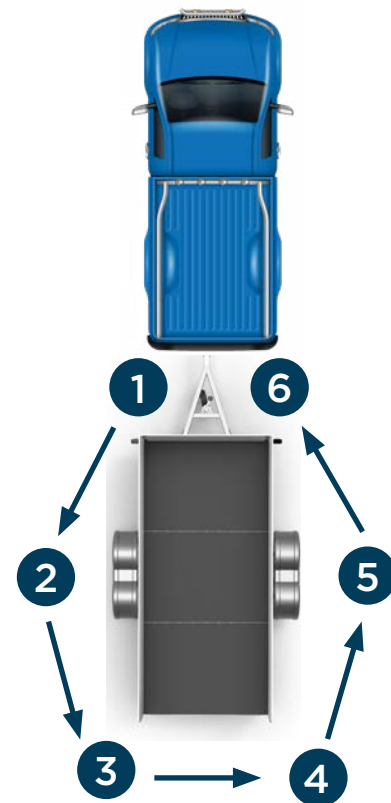
Trailer pre- and post-trip inspections

Regular inspections ensure trailers meet safety standards. Conducting inspections before and after trips promotes proper functioning, prevents accidents, and assists in maintaining regulatory compliance, avoiding fines and ensuring the continuous operation of your trailer.

Trailer components often fail more frequently than vehicle components because

- Organizations often keep trailers longer, so they have more wear and fatigue.
- External storage leads to moisture problems: corrosion, electrical connections, etc.
- Empty trailers bounce around more, causing additional stress on components.

Key inspection points



Federal motor carrier safety regulations (DOT)

Formal annual inspection

- Completed by qualified individual
- Copy in vehicle or sticker on trailer

Post-trip inspection required; documentation required if defects identified

Pre-trip

- Must validate (sign-off) that defects identified in prior post-trip have been corrected
- Must ensure vehicle is in safe operating condition

Enroute cargo must be checked within first 50 miles, then every 150 miles or three hours thereafter; whichever comes first

For further guidance, refer to Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration 49 CFR Part [396](#) and [392.9](#)

Develop a consistent inspection routine.
For example, follow path 1-6



For assistance with risk management services or safety resources, contact us at RMSolutions@nationwide.com or 1-800-260-1356.

Inspection checklist



Trailer/truck attachment

Hitch—Examine for cracks and bends that could lead to failure.

Coupler, ball/ring/pintle—Check connection to trailer and tow vehicle are secured and adjusted. Ensure all parts are compatible such as correct ball size to hitch.

Safety chains and hooks—Make sure they are properly crisscrossed and connected, not touching the road but with enough slack to make turns.

Breakaway devices—Ensure connection to tow vehicle but not to the safety chain or ball mount.

Weight—Verify the proper trailer/weight for vehicle.



Lights

Brakes—Use the operating brake controller inside tow vehicle to test brakes.

Signals lamps—Check turn signals and hazard lights for functionality.

Reflectors—Ensure tape is clean, secure and correctly colored (amber for front and sides, red for rear)

Striping—Check for damage, frayed wires, or loose connections.



Cargo securement

Correct # tie-downs—No knots or fraying to ensure cargo is safely secured to prevent failure during transit.

Working Load Limits (WLL)—Be sure securement system (tie-downs and connection points) meet correct WLL.

Trailer connection points—Examine secure points and look for defects.



Tires/wheels/brakes

Tread depth—Use a tire gauge or penny to measure proper tread depth. Replace worn tires immediately.

Wear, cracks—Cracked or chipped brake pads should be replaced to ensure safe operations of trailer.

Lug nuts—Be sure all are present, tight, and free of rust.

Spare tire—Check for proper air pressure, signs of aging, damage or