



To manage a fleet properly, a program for maintaining the mechanical condition of the equipment is necessary. The primary purpose of such a system is to ensure safe, efficient vehicle performance and lengthened lifespan. The benefits of a vehicle maintenance program include:

- **Reduced Maintenance Costs** – Minor adjustments and repairs made during regularly scheduled service checks help prevent unnecessary and costly repairs.
- **Decrease in Downtime** – Preventive maintenance reduces interruptions to product flow caused by breakdowns.
- **Accident Reduction** – Proper vehicle maintenance can reduce accidents caused by faulty brakes, tires, steering, and other major components.
- **Improved Driver Morale** – When vehicles are kept in top condition, drivers are more likely to handle the equipment with care.
- **Customer Relations** – Clean, well-maintained vehicles enhance the company image as a safety minded entity.

Equipment Specifications

The maintenance program begins when the vehicles are ordered. Management must consider use, route, terrain, cargo size, and weight when setting specifications.

Specifications should call for as much standardization as possible. Vehicle standardization can be by manufacturer and model type or by component within the vehicle. Advantages to standardization include reduced parts inventory, enhanced ability of mechanics to make repairs more efficiently and dependably due to their familiarity with the various components, reduction of inadvertent abuse of vehicles by drivers and, if the fleet has many similar units, better appraisal of the suitability of equipment for the task.



Motor Vehicle Equipment

- **Critical Equipment Maintenance** – Critical component parts which impact the safe operation of the vehicle must always be maintained. They include: brakes, tires, suspension equipment, steering components, lights, mirrors, windshield and windows, wipers, and horn.
- **Demand Maintenance** – To retain the safety and reliability of the vehicle, it is essential that periodic inspections, maintenance and service be performed (follow the manufacturer's schedule of maintenance), including lubrication service, inspection/replacement of filters, engine drive belts, exhaust system, etc.
- **Driver Responsibility for Maintenance** – Management must require driver inspections to report vehicle safety defects. Prior departure and in-route checks should be mandatory. A Vehicle Inspection Report should be completed quarterly or more frequently depending on usage.

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Recordkeeping

Up-to-date records are an essential part of a complete vehicle maintenance program. Record-keeping forms should serve one of three purposes—showing vehicle's maintenance needs, indicating a schedule of work to be done, and recording completed maintenance and costs. The usual types of records which cover these requirements include:

- Driver's Vehicle Condition Report
- Service and Inspection Report
- Vehicle History Folder – Provides a complete history of the costs of maintenance, parts, and labor associated with the vehicle.

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