



The State of Roadside Inspections

Understanding and Interpreting 2023 CVSA Roadcheck
Results to Protect Fleets from Out-Of-Service Violations



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About Whip Around

Whip Around is a fleet inspection and maintenance platform helping fleet managers, drivers, and mechanics keep their fleets running smoothly and safely. With Whip Around's DOT-compliant software, you can efficiently manage

vehicle and asset inspections, create and track work orders, automatically schedule preventive maintenance, and reference detailed fleet and asset data in real time.

Visit our website to learn more: [whiparound.com](https://www.whiparound.com)



What is the CVSA?

The **Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA)** is a nonprofit organization of commercial motor vehicle (CMV) safety officials and industry representatives. The Alliance aims to prevent commercial motor vehicle crashes, injuries, and fatalities across North America.

The CVSA's International Roadcheck is a three-day event throughout Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. CVSA-certified inspectors focus on compliance,

enforcement, and educational initiatives aimed at motor carrier, vehicle, and driver safety.

Since its inception in 1988, the International Roadcheck has grown into the world's largest targeted enforcement program for commercial motor vehicles. During the 72-hour event, nearly 15 CMVs are inspected every minute, numbering more than 1.8 million roadside inspections since its inception.

Understanding the International Roadside inspection

The CVSA has made the [International Roadcheck results](#) available online since 2017. Examining these results provides insights into safety concerns across the industry, offering a clear glimpse into some of the biggest issues preventing motor carriers from passing roadside inspections.

The results of the [2023 International Roadcheck](#) (which occurred in May 2023 and had a specific focus on anti-lock braking systems (ABS) and cargo securement to highlight their importance to vehicle safety) were recently published.

The 2023 International Roadcheck resulted in 59,429 CMVs being inspected across the U.S., Canada and Mexico. CVSA-Certified inspectors discovered at least one out-of-service violation in 19% of the vehicles inspected. Inspectors also found 5.5% of drivers inspected had at least one out-of-service violation.

For all inspections conducted, there were a total of 116,669 violations cited, which included out-of-service and non out-of-service violations. With respect to the focus areas this year, there were 2,975 cargo securement violations and 4,127 ABS violations – four were discovered on motorcoaches, 1,426 on power units and 2,697 on trailers.

Commercial vehicles are under greater scrutiny than ever to ensure that roadways are safe. In fact, earlier this year the Department of Transportation announced a nearly [eight percent increase in civil](#)

[penalties](#) related to violations involving everything from recordkeeping infractions to unobserved commercial regulations.

International Roadcheck inspection levels

There are [eight different levels](#) of CVSA inspections, many of which are specific and conditional. The International Roadcheck typically focuses on four of these inspection levels:

Level I: North American Standard Inspection

This 37-step process includes an examination of details including:

- Driver's license
- Medical examiner's certificate
- Skill performance evaluation (SPE) certificate
- Drug and alcohol test
- Driver's record of duty status
- Hours of service records
- Vehicle inspection reports
- Top-to-bottom vehicle inspection

Level II: Walk-Around Driver/Vehicle Inspection

A level II inspection requires a review of a driver's operating credentials and requirements and includes an inspection of all areas except those requiring inspectors to physically crawl under the vehicle.

Level III: Driver/Credential/Administrative Inspection

This inspection examines driver credentials and operating requirements and must include an examination of the following:

- Driver's license
- Medical examiner's certificate
- SPE certificate
- Driver's record of duty status
- Hours of service records
- Seat belt inspection
- Vehicle inspection reports
- Carrier identification and status

Level V: Vehicle-Only Inspection

This inspection can occur at any location and covers all the vehicle-specific items covered in Level I. But it does not require the presence of the driver. In 2023, inspectors in Mexico performed 1,150 Level V inspections.

Let's examine the top five vehicle and driver violations that led to out-of-service orders during the CVSA's 2023 inspection event. We'll examine each infraction in detail, and then discuss ways to protect yourself from violations and how Whip Around can help.

Note: Level IV inspections are generally one-time examinations of a particular part in support of a study or to verify or refute a suspected trend.



The top five out-of-service vehicle violations

When you combine all the data from Canada, Mexico, and the U.S., you start to get a pretty clear picture of the common problem areas for commercial vehicles and drivers. Here are the top five violations that resulted in vehicles being pulled from service during this year's Roadcheck.

These five categories accounted for more than 82 percent of all out-of-service vehicle violations discovered during this year's Roadcheck.

It's no surprise that brakes and tires make up the top three areas of out-of-service violations. They make up areas of intense scrutiny because they represent dangers that could lead to costly and deadly collisions.

Brake systems

One out of every four out-of-service violations was related to brake systems. To get a better glimpse at

what the CVSA is looking at in this area, it's helpful to look at the CVSA's [Brake Safety Week](#).

This weeklong inspection and enforcement initiative is held annually, and the 2023 event was held August 20-26. In addition to performing inspections and reporting out brake-system inspection and violation data, inspectors will also report data on brake lining/pads and violations, the focus area for this year's event.

Some of the selected results they reported from last year's Brake Safety Week:

- Inspectors in Canada inspected 1,975 commercial motor vehicles and placed 351 (17.8%) out-of-service for brake-related violations.
- In Mexico, 1,740 commercial motor vehicles were inspected and 44 (2.5%) were placed out of service

Violation category	Number of OOS vehicle violations	Percentage of OOS vehicle violations
Brake systems	4,412	25.2%
Tires	3,368	19.3%
Defective Service Brakes	2,468	14.1%
Lights	2,015	11.5%
Cargo Securement	2,171*	12.4%

*Not all cargo securement violations are out-of-service violations. The cargo securement total noted previously is for all cargo securement violations – out-of-service and non-out-of-service violations combined. The cargo securement violations in the above table are out-of-service cargo securement violations only.

- In the U.S., of the 34,402 commercial motor vehicles inspected, 4,664 (13.6%) were placed out of service for brake-related violations.
- Inspectors identified and documented 6,305 brake hose/tube chafing violations, which are a common brake-related violation and was the focus area for last year's Brake Safety Week.

Defective service brakes

The out-of-service criteria for service brakes include the following:

- An absence of effective braking action when service brakes are applied
- An audible leak at an air brake chamber
- A missing brake on any axle required to have brakes
- Push-rod travel (for most typical brake chamber/push rod types) must be at least a quarter-inch beyond the maximum legal stroke

Tires

Tire inflation is a key area that the CVSA looks at during roadside inspections. Underinflated tires are responsible for a majority of blowouts. And as Bob Rutherford, a 50-year trucking-industry veteran, suggests, tire inflation issues can contribute to jackknifing.

Ensuring that tires are properly inflated is critical, as is a regular inspection of tire tread depth and checking for hazardous road damage or items caught in the tread. Tires are the only part of the

vehicle that touches the ground, and their condition is critical to the safe operation of the vehicle when you most need it.

Cargo Securement

The failure to secure cargo or equipment on a CMV is next on the list of the top five violations leading to a commercial vehicle being placed out-of-service. All cargo must be safely secured and prevented from shifting, tipping, and falling.

The most common service cargo violations were:

1. Failing to secure vehicle equipment
2. Failing to equip the vehicle to prevent load shifting or falling
3. Leaking/spilling/blowing/falling cargo
4. Insufficient tie-downs without headboard/blocking
5. Failure to secure load

Lights

Bringing up the rear of the top five are lights, with nearly 12 percent of the out-of-service violations. The out-of-service conditions for headlights and tail lights on trucks and trailers apply when conditions warrant.

This includes things like nighttime, inclement weather, construction zones, etc. And for an OOS violation, both headlights or steady-burning tail lights need to be non-functional. This also applies to the red lamp required on loads extending four feet or more.



Maintaining proper inspection protocol

Regular and thorough vehicle inspections are the key to keeping your vehicle safe from OOS violations. This means you need the confidence that drivers are actively inspecting their vehicles and not pencil-whipping forms, especially pre and post-trip inspections.

When faults and defects do show up, you need to know immediately so you can get problems corrected as quickly as possible.

With Whip Around, **drivers perform DOT-compliant inspections** (which can be customized to meet your specific fleet's needs) on their mobile device. For any section of the inspection, drivers can be required to upload a photo to ensure that they're physically examining critical areas of the vehicle.

Inspections are uploaded to the cloud immediately, so fleet managers can access them from their Whip Around dashboard. They don't have to wait for reports to be turned in at the end of the day or even the end of the week, and they don't have to worry if they'll be misplaced or damaged before they can be acted upon.

Fleet managers receive instant notifications if any defects are recorded, making it easy to create an internal or external work order to get it in front of a mechanic.

On top of that, each asset can be set up for routine maintenance based on the ideal criteria, whether it's engine hours, mileage, or date.

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Because they can take pictures of the defect, even if they're not sure if it's critical or not, our drivers know it goes to me and to the shop. We can look at it right away and determine we need to get that off the road and into the shop right now.

Charlie McKeen, Compliance Leader at Eppler Towing & Recovery

The top five driver out-of-service violations

Vehicles can be free of defects, and you can still find yourself in a situation where inspectors pull drivers out of service for a variety of causes. Here are the top five reasons Mexican, Canadian and U.S. drivers experienced out-of-service violations during the International Roadcheck—**which account for 89 percent of all out-of-service driver violations.**

Hours of service

The [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations \(FMCSR\)](#) includes specific hours of service (HOS) rules. These rules are intended to minimize driver fatigue and improve road safety. Suppose a driver is found violating hours of service.

In that case, law enforcement can shut the vehicle down until the driver has accumulated enough off-

duty time to put them back into compliance and be able to drive again. This can exceed a twenty-four-hour period.

On top of pulling a driver out of service, inspectors can levy stiff financial penalties against drivers violating HOS rules.

False logs

False logs were the number two reason for pulling drivers out of service, constituting more than a quarter of the out-of-service decisions. Historically, drivers have doctored paper logbooks to make it seem like they were following hours-of-service rules.

In fact, it wasn't unheard of for drivers to keep two log books: one for the DOT and one for the company.

Violation category	Number of OOS driver violations	Percentage of OOS driver violations
Hours of service	2,169	41.1%
False logs	1,392	26.4%
Other	487	9.2%
Canceled/Revoked License	416	7.9%
No medical card	241	4.6%

In this digital world with electronic logging devices, it's (thankfully) becoming more and more difficult to maintain false logs. The CVSA finds drivers trying to cheat the system in the following ways

- Failing to log in or assign drive time to a specific driver
- Creating ghost drivers that don't exist or neglecting to log in when switching between drivers
- Driving in personal conveyance mode so the ELD doesn't log as driving time
- Unplugging an ELD device
- Using a broken or malfunctioning ELD device
- Falsely editing duty statuses

Wrong class license

Driving a CMV is serious business, and there are many ways to have your CDL canceled, suspended or revoked, including infractions like:

- Driving under the influence
- Excessive speeding
- Reckless driving
- Improper or erratic lane changes
- Using a cell phone while operating a CMV
- Driving a CMV without a CDL in the driver's possession
- CDL class violations

Getting caught driving on a canceled, suspended or revoked license results in an immediate out-of-service order.

No medical card

All CMV drivers who operate in interstate commerce are required to have a medical certificate based on FMCSA requirements.

- If they operate a motor vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR), gross combination weight rating (GCWR), gross vehicle weight (GVW), or gross combination weight (GCW) of 10,001 pounds or more.
- If they transport hazardous materials in a quantity requiring placards.
- If they operate a motor vehicle designed or used to transport more than 15 passengers (including the driver).
- If they operate a motor vehicle designed or used to transport between 9 and 15 passengers, for direct compensation, beyond 75 air miles from the driver's normal work-reporting location.

Intrastate certification is regulated by the DMV of each state. All states have based their physical qualifications on some Federal requirements but may grant waivers for specific medical conditions. Some carriers, like FedEx, UPS, and DHL, are subject to interstate regulations even if they drive intrastate.

Every driver is responsible for having their medical card available. If one is lost or damaged, you may call the doctor's office that did the original DOT exam and find out how to get a duplicate made and sent to you. The medical office has to keep this information on file for at least three years, so they will have it.

The easiest way to manage driver information

Drivers are required to carry quite a bit of documentation in case of a roadside inspection, including things like their CDL, medical examiner certificate, hours-of-service log, state permits, and hazardous material paperwork.

“It definitely helps our drivers remain compliant. It’s really easy to use, and made us a lot more organized. We can check that we’ve got all the required paperwork, and if we’re missing something from one truck we can grab it.”

Ryan Weinstein, M&M Waste

The [Whip Around Wallet](#) makes it easy for fleet managers and drivers to maintain, manage, and access this information through the Whip Around app. Documentation is stored in the cloud, so it’s always accessible to your team, but you don’t have to worry about critical documents being lost or damaged.

And it’s easy to set up expiration reminders about documents that need to be updated. Once you set a reminder, no one has to worry about whether or not a CDL needs to be renewed. Whip Around will nudge the appropriate person when it’s time to take action.



The four-pronged approach to preventing OOS violations

Your company's bottom line depends on keeping your drivers and vehicles on the road and in compliance to deliver goods and services on time. A single out-of-service violation is more than an inconvenience. It's a setback that impacts the rest of your fleet and potentially frustrates customers.

It's impossible to overemphasize the importance of:

- 1. Consistent and thorough inspections**
- 2. Quick maintenance turnarounds**
- 3. Regular preventative maintenance**
- 4. Managing driver details and information**

When you're able to get these four areas dialed in, everything falls into place. Roadside inspections stop being a potential hazard to worry about.

With Whip Around, you have the tools you need to ensure that detailed inspections happen every day and the confidence that you can immediately act on any issues that arise. Getting vehicles into the maintenance pipeline is an effortless process, and mechanics can sign off in the app as soon as problems are fixed.

Meanwhile, Whip Around pings you when a vehicle is due for a tune-up or scheduled part replacement. This allows you to craft a maintenance schedule that keeps projects moving and allows you to dictate your highest-priority service needs.

When it comes to all the documentation necessary to please CMV inspectors, Whip Around equips you to manage it in a way that takes the stress off your drivers. When they find themselves under inspection, they don't have to tear the cabin apart looking for their paperwork or binder. Everything they need is right there in the app they already use for daily inspections.



Streamline your inspections & preventative maintenance

If you're interested in how Whip Around can give you a leg up in these four critical areas so you don't have to worry about out-of-service violations, schedule a [free demo](#) or [contact us](#) today.

START FREE TRIAL

SCHEDULE DEMO

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