



BusTrusted
DRIVER'S LIBRARY

VOLUME 02

THE COACH PRE-TRIP INSPECTION

*The 8-stop walkaround that satisfies 49 CFR 396.13
— engine bay to emergency exits.*

Every bus. Vetted. Trusted.

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Educational guide — not legal advice. Verify current federal, state, county, and local regulations before relying on any content.



VOLUME 02 · SAFETY SERIES

The Coach Pre-Trip Inspection

Federal law (49 CFR 396.13) requires you to be satisfied the coach is safe before you drive it — and 396.11 requires the written DVIR after. Between those two rules lives the fifteen-minute habit that protects your passengers, your CDL, and your company.

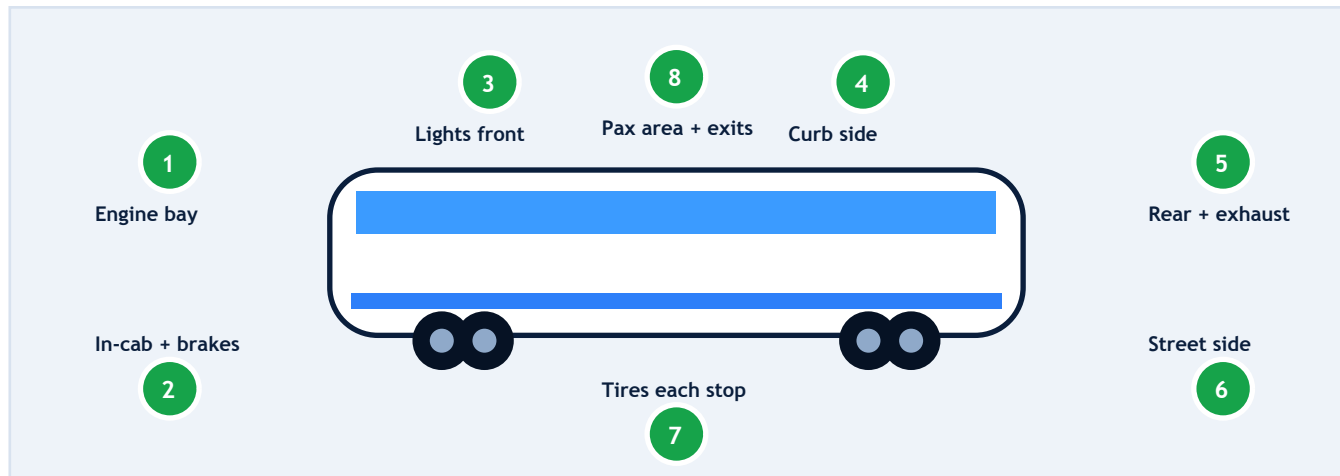


Figure 1 — The 8-stop walkaround: same route around the coach, every single time.

Stop 1 · Engine compartment (engine off)

- Oil, coolant, power-steering levels — and look UNDER the coach for fresh drips.
- Belts: no cracks, fraying, glazing. Hoses: nothing soft, bulging, or seeping.
- Front axle: steering linkage has no play; springs/airbags intact; shocks dry.

Stop 2 · In-cab + full air-brake test

- Run the complete 7-step air test (Volume 01) — it IS the heart of the pre-trip.
- Gauges live, warning lights out, horns (city + air), wipers/washers, defrost/HVAC.
- Mirrors set, windshield legal, seat belt firm and uncut.

Stops 3–6 · Lights & the full walkaround

- Every lamp: heads (both beams), turns, 4-ways, brake, tail, clearance, license, reflectors.
- Body: baggage doors latch, panels tight, fuel cap sealed, no exhaust leaks under the cabin.
- Suspension aired-up and level — listen for the hiss that shouldn't be there.

Stop 7 · Wheels & tires — every position

- Tread: 4/32" minimum on steers, 2/32" elsewhere; wear even; no cuts, bulges, cord.
- Gauge the pressure (kicking a tire measures your boot, not the tire).
- Lugs: no shine, no rust trails, none missing. Rims uncracked. Hub seals dry.

Stop 8 · The passenger cabin — where coach pros are made



- Entry door, steps, handrails, step lighting — the #1 passenger-injury zone.
- Every emergency exit opens, closes, latches, buzzes; aisles clear; signage legible.
- Seats bolted tight; belts where fitted; interior lights; restroom door and tank secure.
- Emergency kit aboard: extinguisher charged & mounted, 3 triangles, spare fuses, first-aid (Volume 07).

THE 15-MINUTE RULE

A real coach pre-trip takes 15-20 minutes. The operators who 'save' that time eventually spend it — at a roadside inspection, a breakdown, or a deposition. The walkaround is the cheapest insurance you will ever own.

PAPER FINISHES THE JOB

Defect found? It goes on the DVIR in writing, and safety items get fixed before the coach carries people (49 CFR 396.11/.13). Yesterday's DVIR with a mechanic's signature rides in the coach.

Sources & further reading: 49 CFR 396.11 & 396.13 (driver inspections/DVIR); 49 CFR 396.17; state CDL manuals.

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