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Is your tire “pre-trip” legal?

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# real QUESTIONS real ANSWERS

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 **BRIDGESTONE**

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While using a microscope to inspect tires isn't necessary, Bridgestone does recommend using a calibrated air gauge to check inflation pressures.

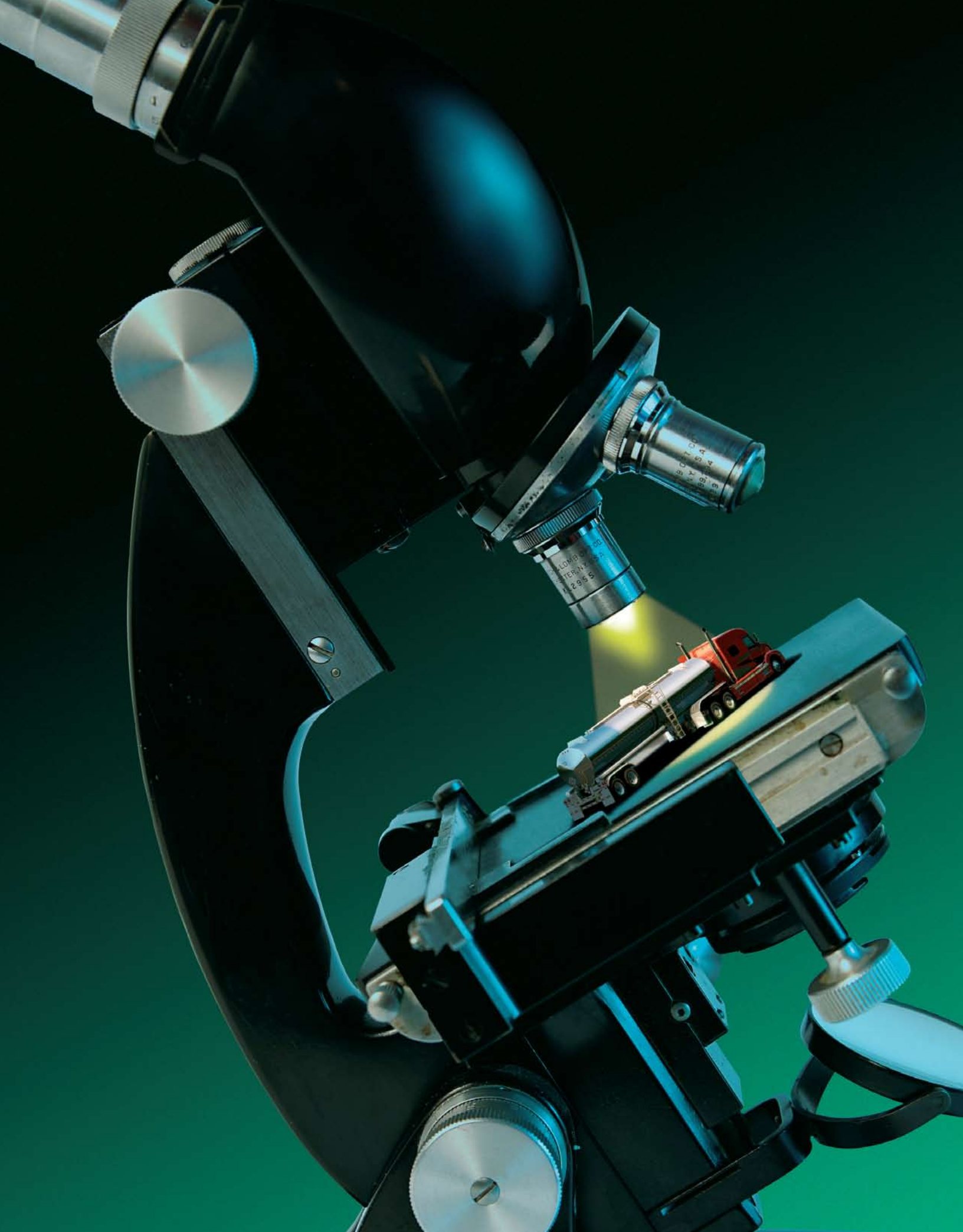
# Is your tire “pre-trip” legal



*That's a bit of a trick question. As a faithful reader of this magazine, you most likely inspect and often check pressures on cold tires as part of your pre-trip inspection. But are you legally required to do so?*

*No. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) directions for pre-trip inspections, it's not mandatory you check inflation pressure; it's simply good business – and safety – practice.*

*If checking tire pressure isn't legally required – what is? We asked Eric Arnold of Arnold Safety Consulting for guidance.*



### So you can help us on FMCSA regulations?

**Eric Arnold of Arnold Safety Consulting:** “I worked at FMCSA as an enforcement officer and safety investigator, among other duties for 13 years. In 2003, I started Arnold Safety Consulting to help fleets understand and follow the various regulations and vehicle inspection mandates.”

### Can you tell us about the pre-trip inspection mandate?

“Basically, the regulation says no motor vehicle should be driven until the driver is satisfied it’s in good working order, following an inspection of the service brakes, including brake connections, parking brake, steering mechanism, lighting devices and reflectors, tires, horn, windshield wipers, rear vision mirror or mirrors, and coupling devices.”

### That’s it?

“In a word, I would use ‘vague’ to describe the regulation. It’s caused quite a bit of confusion as to exactly what a pre-trip check should entail.

“We recommend that a pre-trip inspection should include a full walk-around the tractor and trailer. Honk the horn. Turn on the wipers. Get up and inspect the mirrors. Get down and inspect the tires. Turn on the lights.

“Spend a minimum of ten minutes making sure all systems on the truck are in good working order.”

### What does ‘good working order’ mean?

“Again, another part of the regulation that’s rather vague. Nowhere is the term clearly defined.

“We recommend relying on Part 393 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations for guidance. This code plainly states the performance standards of each and every part and accessory on that vehicle in order to legally operate on the public highway.

“If the steering or tires or headlamps are not operating properly, they clearly are not in ‘good working order.’”

### And if something is found?

“If a driver discovers a defect that could affect the safety of the vehicle or cause it to break down, they should not operate the vehicle until the defect is repaired.

“I recommend to my fleet clients that they prepare a checklist of everything they want inspected on a daily basis. Just as pilots use a pre-flight checklist so nothing is missed and procedures are consistent across the board, fleets could benefit from a similar course of action.

“A checklist isn’t a task for mega-sized transportation companies only. In fact, many smaller fleets rely on their drivers to check and maintain equipment so their trucks stay running, hauling freight.”

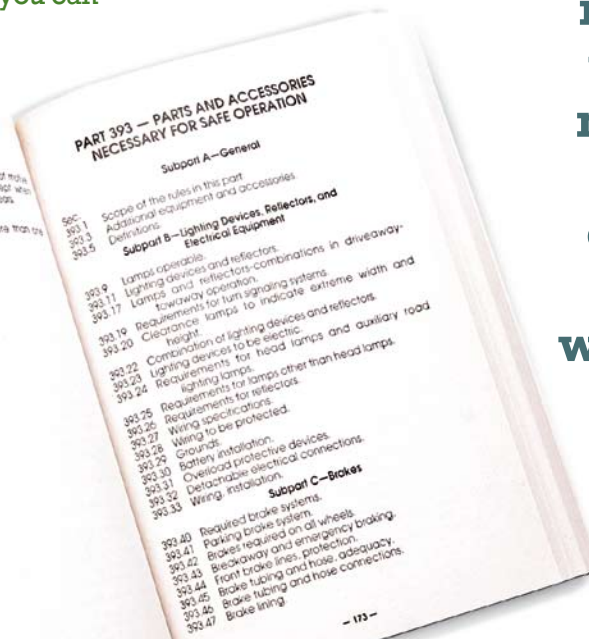
### Is a written copy of the pre-trip inspection required?

“No, just the results of the post-trip inspection.

Nothing has changed recently concerning Pre-Trip inspections, so if you have an older handbook, such as this one, you can continue using it for guidance.



§392.68  
 §392.68 Motive power not to be disengaged.  
 No motor vehicle shall be driven with the source of motive power disengaged from the driving wheels except when such disengagement is necessary to stop or to shift gears.  
 §392.69 Sleeper berth, occupation.  
 No sleeper berth shall be occupied by more than one person at any time when the vehicle is in motion.



“ ”  
**Spend a minimum of ten minutes making sure all systems on the truck are in good working order**

