

CHAPTER 21
EN ROUTE BUS INSPECTIONS
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CHAPTER 21

EN ROUTE BUS INSPECTIONS

1. PURPOSE. The purpose of this chapter is to provide departmental policy for en route bus inspections at designated Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facilities (CVEF).

2. SCOPE. This chapter applies to all employees assigned to a designated CVEF. Nothing in this policy or federal regulations prohibits conducting an enforcement stop on either laden or unladen buses for a violation of law (e.g., speed, holding and operating a handheld communications device) when a North American Standard (NAS) or other safety inspection is not conducted.

3. BACKGROUND. The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act requires laden bus strike forces be limited to points of origin, stations, terminals, border crossings, maintenance facilities, destinations, highway rest areas, or other locations where a motor carrier may make a planned stop. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has interpreted that weigh stations are not planned stops. Therefore, any en route bus inspection conducted because of an inspector-identified obvious or imminent-hazard condition is considered an unplanned stop.

4. GENERAL PROVISIONS.
 - a. En Route Bus Inspections. The following facilities have been designated to conduct en route bus inspections:
 - (1) Eastbound Cordelia CVEF.
 - (2) Northbound Gilroy CVEF.
 - (3) Southbound Mountain Pass CVEF.

 - b. Operation Plan. Prior to implementing en route bus inspections, commanders of designated CVEFs shall submit an operation plan to their respective Division, certifying their facility meets the minimum standards established in this policy. If the facility commander becomes aware the CVEF no longer meets the minimum requirements established by this policy, they shall cease en route bus inspections and notify the Division commander or designee. When a designated CVEF is conducting en route bus inspections, they shall meet the following minimum standards:

- (1) Personnel who are trained and certified to conduct NAS Passenger Vehicle Inspections (PVI).
- (2) Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant public restrooms.
- (3) A public telephone.
- (4) Drinking fountains or other potable water supply.
- (5) Public vending machines with refreshments.
- (6) Adequate indoor waiting area.

c. Division Commander Responsibilities. The Division commander or designee shall review en route bus inspection operation plans to ensure they meet the minimum standards required by this policy prior to providing approval for en route bus inspections at a designated CVEF. If the Division commander or designee becomes aware of a facility that no longer meets the minimum standards established by this policy, they shall ensure the command ceases en route bus inspections until the minimum standards are met.

d. Required Signage. Commanders of designated CVEFs shall coordinate with the California Department of Transportation to ensure regulatory signs are posted. The following required signs shall be posted on the right shoulder and in the center median (where possible) prior to the designated facility:

- (1) "ALL BUSES STOP AT SCALES."
- (2) "NO LOADED SCHOOL BUSES."

e. Training. Commanders of designated CVEFs shall ensure officers and Commercial Vehicle Inspection Specialists assigned to the designated CVEF and performing bus inspections have met the following minimum training and certification requirements:

- (1) Level I NAS inspections.
- (2) Passenger Vehicle Inspection course.

NOTE: The PVI course is required for officers assigned to designated CVEFs. Commercial Vehicle Inspection Specialists are not required to attend the PVI course but are encouraged to be trained. Commercial Vehicle Inspection Specialists certified through the PVI course are eligible to participate in Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program-funded PVI strike-force overtime.

f. Buses Entering Designated Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facilities. Consistent with the interpretations of the FMCSA, both laden and unladen buses are required to enter designated CVEFs when open.

NOTE: Laden school buses are exempt from the requirement to enter a CVEF.

(1) Unladen buses may be randomly selected for inspection pursuant to Section 2813 of the California Vehicle Code.

(2) Laden buses may only be selected for inspection if an obvious or imminent safety hazard condition is observed.

(a) If a laden bus is selected for inspection, the passengers may remain on the bus for the duration of the inspection.

(b) The passengers should only be off-loaded or transferred to another bus if the inspected bus is placed out-of-service and the inspector, with the concurrence of a supervisor, determines off-loading is appropriate.

g. Reporting. Passenger Vehicle Inspections conducted at designated CVEFs shall be documented and submitted electronically in compliance with Chapter 18, Electronic Inspection Procedures, of this manual.

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