

**CHAPTER 10**  
**ON-HIGHWAY BUS INSPECTIONS**  
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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<u>GENERAL</u> .....	10-1
Purpose.....	10-1
Scope .....	10-1
Scheduling .....	10-1
<u>INSPECTION PROCEDURES AND REPORTS</u> .....	10-2
Coordination.....	10-2
Depth of Inspection .....	10-2

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## CHAPTER 10

### ON-HIGHWAY BUS INSPECTIONS

#### 1. GENERAL.

a. Purpose. Unannounced on-highway inspections of buses serve several purposes. In addition to identifying and requiring correction of unsafe mechanical conditions, they provide an opportunity to check vehicle registration and drivers' licenses and timekeeping records which otherwise would not be routinely inspected. They enable the Department to identify bus carriers who operate without authority from the Public Utilities Commission or who operate from locations such as private homes or churches. They also provide an effective means of quality control between periodic terminal inspections.

b. Scope. The on-highway bus inspection program may include uniformed personnel, MCSU staff, Commercial Vehicle Inspection Specialists, and often personnel from allied agencies, including the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and the federal Office of Motor Carrier Safety (OMCS). The emphasis of the program is on obtaining compliance with legal requirements through unannounced roadside inspections of buses in operation.

c. Scheduling. When staff resources and workloads permit, field Divisions may schedule and conduct on-highway bus inspections if a need is indicated. Inspections should be scheduled along major corridors of bus travel, at times of peak bus density. Sites selected must be adjacent to the roadway and provide adequate area to ensure personnel and vehicle safety. Additional desirable features of an inspection site are paving, shelter, separate parking area for out-of-service buses, and passenger comfort facilities, such as rest rooms and restaurants. Departmental inspection facilities have proven to be ideal for bus inspections. When planning an on-highway bus inspection, consideration should be given to the availability of emergency medical facilities or services (including Emergency Medical Technicians), and of heavy duty vehicle repair facilities. If possible, a list of such facilities should be available at the inspection site.

#### 2. INSPECTION PROCEDURES AND REPORTS.

a. Coordination. Having selected the date and location, composition of the inspection team must be determined, taking into consideration the route chosen, probable origin and destination points of buses, and past experience with vehicle registration violations in the area. For example, if the route chosen

is regularly traveled by interstate buses, it is appropriate to consider inviting the OMCS; on routes where all or most of the traffic is expected to be intrastate, including the PUC should be considered; if experience has shown a significant number of registration violations on commercial vehicles, DMV participation may be beneficial. Notification of, and coordination with, allied agencies should allow the selected agencies sufficient preparation time.

b. Depth of Inspection. In addition to the North American Standard Level I Inspection, each inspection should include, when applicable, verification of the carrier's operating authority and the type of operation being conducted (e.g., charter group or individual fare passengers). When inspections are conducted at departmental inspection or scale facilities, a selected sampling of buses (particularly two-axle transit coaches) should be weighed.

(1) Notice of Inspection. Signs or other appropriate methods should be used to direct buses from the highway into the inspection area.

(2) Passenger Information. At the earliest opportunity after a bus has entered the inspection area, a departmental representative (ideally, a Public Affairs Officer) should board the bus, and advise the passengers of the purpose of the inspection (to ensure their safety), the approximate time it will take (10 to 20 minutes), and that the bus will be raised on ramps. Passengers should be asked to remain on board during the inspection.

(3) Inspection Team. Each bus inspection team should consist of at least the following personnel: a team leader (Officer or MCS) to instruct the driver, coordinate the mechanical inspection and prepare the CHP 407F; two undercarriage inspectors, one at the front and one at the rear of the bus; one Officer to issue enforcement documents and to check drivers' timekeeping records, operators' licenses and vehicle registration.

(4) Mechanical Inspection. As each bus enters the inspection lane, it should be stopped, inspection ramps placed in front of or behind the wheels as appropriate, and the driver instructed to drive carefully up the ramps, stop at the top, then release all brakes. (See Chapter 11, par. 2.a., for procurement of ramps.) When the bus is safely in the saddle of the ramps, chock blocks should be placed in front of and behind at least one drive wheel. At this point, the team leader should board the bus to instruct the driver for the mechanical inspection: run/stop engine, apply/release brakes, etc. The team leader must exercise caution to assure the safety of the undercarriage inspectors as the controls are operated. The North American Standard Inspection should be performed, with defects or violations recorded on CHP 407F by the team leader. Upon completion of the inspection, the driver should be directed to the enforcement officer, the

out-of-service parking area, or to return to the highway, whichever is appropriate.

(5) Enforcement. In addition to citations for violations noted during the Level I Inspection, any overweight violations should be cited in accordance with current guidelines. If, after review by the MCSU where the bus is domiciled, it is determined that the bus was operated from a terminal which has not had a terminal inspection within the past thirteen months, a citation for violation of 34501(e) VC or, as a minimum, a warning letter, should be issued.

(6) Reports. Copies of CHP 407F should be forwarded to the DMV or to the PUC if indications of noncompliance are noted which concern these agencies. Copies of CHP 407F and of other documents written (e.g., CHP 215), should be forwarded to the Division MCSU where each cited bus is domiciled. Copies of documents written on out-of-state buses may be forwarded to the OMCS for information.

(7) Statistical Summaries. Division MCSU's shall compile data on each on-highway bus inspection, and shall forward a summary to CVS to arrive not later than the 20th of the month following the month of the inspection. Summaries shall include, as a minimum, the following information for each inspection:

- (a) Date and location of inspection.
- (b) Number of buses inspected.
- (c) Number of buses placed out-of-service.
- (d) Number of citations issued (CHP 215).
- (e) Number of violations:
  - 1 Brakes.
  - 2 Steering.
  - 3 Tires and wheels.
  - 4 Suspension.
  - 5 Vehicle registration.
  - 6 Drivers' license/medical card

7 Drivers' timekeeping record

8 Other

(f) MCSU staff hours expended.