

Inspect These 7 Items To Prevent Truck Fires

It's one of a professional driver's worst nightmares – driving down the highway when a fire breaks out. Whether it's under the hood of your rig or inside the trailer, a fire has devastating consequences, including the risk for serious injuries or loss of life for the driver and any nearby motorists or bystanders.

Thankfully, you can reduce your risk. Look for these seven potential fire-causing hazards on your daily pre- and post-trip inspections:

- 1. Tires** – Keep them properly inflated. Tires at low air pressure run the risk for a blowout, which may then cause the rim to slam against the pavement and potentially spark a fire. Improperly inflated tires can also cause your brakes to overheat. In addition, make sure your dual tires aren't touching. If they are, the friction alone can create a fire once the tires heat up while you're on the road.
- 2. Wheels** – Check the wheel hub bearing oil level and look for any blown wheel seals. A loss of wheel or axle lubricant may cause a fire.
- 3. Electrical wires** – When electrical wires are either frayed or loose, they may spark and catch fire. Inspect your truck's electrical system and report any defects to your carrier immediately.
- 4. Cargo** – Make sure it's loaded and sealed properly. Take standard precautions with flammable cargo.
- 5. Items inside the cab** – Follow all safety precautions when using devices like cab heaters, stoves or hot pots. Make sure the wires on any aftermarket electrical devices aren't torn or worn.



- 6. Fire extinguisher** – Regularly check your truck's fire extinguisher. If it has a gauge, make sure the pressure is at the recommended level (in the green zone). Keep the extinguisher secured (don't let it roll around the truck). Check it for dents, leaks, rust, oil, gunk or any other signs of wear. And know the type and proper use of your extinguisher. An A:B:C extinguisher works with wood, paper, cloth and electrical fires, and with burning liquids. A B:C extinguisher can be used only for electrical fires and burning liquids.
 - 7. Yourself** – Do you smoke? If so, do so with caution – or look into quit-smoking programs.
- If you smell smoke or see flames while driving, pull your truck off the road and away from trees, buildings or other vehicles. Get out. If it's safe, uncouple the tractor from the trailer with the fifth-wheel puller. If you're using a fire extinguisher, follow the PASS method – Pull the pin; Aim at the base of the fire; Squeeze the trigger; and Sweep from side to side until the fire is out. Call 9-1-1 to report the fire.