

HOW TO SPOT & PREVENT SUMMER TRUCK BREAKDOWNS

From overheating engines and tire blowouts to battery failures and air conditioning problems, high temperatures can place significant stress on your truck’s most critical components and systems. Fortunately, many of trucking’s most common summer breakdowns are preventable. Before it’s too late, here’s what you can do to prepare your medium- and heavy-duty truck for summer.

SUMMER SEMI TRUCK MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

ENGINE OVERHEATING

COMMON CAUSES

- ☐ Low coolant levels
- ☐ Coolant leaks
- ☐ Faulty thermostat
- ☐ Damaged radiator hoses
- ☐ Failing water pump
- ☐ Malfunctioning cooling fan
- ☐ Clogged radiator

WARNING SIGNS

- Engine temperature rising
- Steam from engine compartment
- Sweet coolant smell
- Coolant puddles
- Dashboard warning lights

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

- ✓ Check coolant before long trips
- ✓ Inspect hoses, clamps, and fittings
- ✓ Clean bugs and debris from radiator
- ✓ Test cooling fan operation
- ✓ Flush coolant per manufacturer schedule
- ✓ Schedule a cooling system inspection

TIRE BLOWOUTS

INSPECT FOR

- ☐ Proper tire pressure (when cold)
- ☐ Uneven wear
- ☐ Low tread depth
- ☐ Sidewall damage
- ☐ Cracks
- ☐ Cuts or punctures

WARNING SIGNS

- Rapid pressure loss
- Excessive vibration
- Bulges
- Exposed cords
- Uneven tread wear

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

- ✓ Follow recommended PSI
- ✓ Rotate tires as needed
- ✓ Align every 80,000 - 100,000 miles
- ✓ Balance every 15,000 - 20,000 miles
- ✓ Monitor with a Tire Pressure Monitoring System

BATTERY FAILURE

INSPECT FOR

- ☐ Corroded battery terminals
- ☐ Loose battery cables
- ☐ Loose battery mounting
- ☐ Alternator charging properly
- ☐ Battery age

WARNING SIGNS

- Slow cranking
- Dim lights
- Battery warning light
- Corrosion buildup

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

- ✓ Clean corrosion
- ✓ Tighten cable connections
- ✓ Secure battery hold-downs
- ✓ Test battery voltage
- ✓ Replace aging batteries

AIR CONDITIONING MALFUNCTIONS

INSPECT FOR

- ☐ Refrigerant leaks
- ☐ Damaged hoses
- ☐ Cabin air filter
- ☐ Blower motor
- ☐ Compressor operation

WARNING SIGNS

- Weak airflow
- Warm air
- Strange noises
- Musty odors

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

- ✓ Replace dirty cabin filter
- ✓ Repair refrigerant leaks
- ✓ Service A/C before peak summer

FLUID LEAKS

CHECK

- ☐ Engine oil
- ☐ Coolant
- ☐ Transmission fluid
- ☐ Brake fluid
- ☐ Power steering fluid
- ☐ Windshield washer fluid

WARNING SIGNS

- Fluid under truck
- Burnt smell
- Dirty fluids
- Low fluid levels

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

- ✓ Check fluid levels regularly
- ✓ Follow fluid change intervals
- ✓ Perform oil analysis when needed
- ✓ Repair leaks immediately

BRAKE SYSTEM PROBLEMS

INSPECT

- ☐ Brake pads
- ☐ Brake shoes
- ☐ Rotors
- ☐ Drums
- ☐ Air brake components
- ☐ Brake fluid
- ☐ Air lines and fittings

WARNING SIGNS

- Longer stopping distances
- Brake fade
- Air leaks
- Grinding noises

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

- ✓ Inspect brakes regularly
- ✓ Replace worn components
- ✓ Repair air leaks immediately

FUEL SYSTEM ISSUES

INSPECT

- ☐ Fuel lines
- ☐ Fuel fittings
- ☐ Fuel filters
- ☐ Fuel leaks

WARNING SIGNS

- Reduced power
- Poor fuel economy
- Fuel odor
- Hard starting

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

- ✓ Replace fuel filters on schedule
- ✓ Inspect lines for leaks
- ✓ Address performance issues promptly