

The Biennial Inspection of Terminals (BIT)

Background

- California Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1988, commonly referred to as the Biennial Inspection of Terminals (BIT) Program, was enacted by the California Legislature in an effort to alleviate the growing number of truck related collisions.
- The intent of the BIT Program is to ensure every truck terminal throughout the state is inspected by the California Highway Patrol (CHP) on a regular basis.
- Each motor carrier is permitted to set up his or her own maintenance program.
- The CHP will determine if the selected maintenance schedule for individual motor carriers is adequate to prevent collisions or mechanical breakdowns involving these vehicles, and all required maintenance and driver records are prepared and retained as required by law.
- All carriers large or small must comply with the same basic requirements.
- Section 34501.12 of the California Vehicle Code (VC) requires that any person or organization directing the operation of certain trucks and trailers to participate in the BIT Program.
- CHP is required to inspect California truck terminals every 25 months (~ 2 years).

Applicability: for being required to perform and maintain a BIT Program

- A motor carrier subject to the BIT Program is the registered owner of any of the following vehicles, whether or not for hire:
 - Any motor-truck with three or more axles having a GVWR of 10,000+ lbs.
 - Truck tractors.
 - Trailers or semi-trailers used in combination with the vehicles listed above.
 - Any truck or combination of a truck and any other vehicle, transporting hazardous materials that require placards, a hazardous materials transportation license, or hazardous waste transporter registration, including pickups used for this purpose.
 - Any motor-truck with a gross vehicle weight (GVW) rating of more than 10,000 pounds (excluding a pickup truck as defined in Section 471 VC), while towing any trailer semi-trailer that results in a combination length over 40 feet (excluding trailer coaches, camp trailers, and utility trailers, as those terms are defined in the Vehicle Code).
- Exceptions to the BIT Program for registered owners and vehicles:
 - If registered owner leases the vehicle to another person for a term greater than four months, the lessee is the motor carrier. The lessor and lessee must be identified on the vehicle registration (Section 4453.5 VC).
 - If registered owner operates the vehicle exclusively under the authority and direction of another person, that other person may assume the responsibilities as the motor carrier. If not so assumed in writing as specified in law, the registered owner is the motor carrier.
 - The following vehicles are not subject to the BIT Program: historical vehicles as defined in Section 5004 VC; vehicles that display SE plates; and vehicles owned or operated by an agency of the federal government.
- “Terminal” as defined in the BIT Program:
 - Any place where a vehicle described above is regularly garaged, maintained, operated or dispatched from, including a dispatch office, cross-dock facility, maintenance shop, business, store, or even a private residence.
 - For BIT inspection purposes a terminal is the location or locations in California that are designated by a motor carrier, where vehicles subject to the BIT program may be inspected by the CHP and where vehicle maintenance records and drivers’ records will be made available for inspection (Section 34515 VC).
 - The terminal inspection does not include inspection of any building or land, only vehicles and required records located there.

Applying for a BIT inspection

- By law all motor carriers in California are required to have a carrier id number (CA number) from the CHP.
- The carrier identification number can be obtained through the California Highway Patrol.
- A motor carrier must first obtain a carrier identification number and then complete the “Application for Truck Terminal Inspection-BIT Program” form CHP 365 from the California Highway Patrol.
- A fee, depending on terminal fleet size, is included with the processing of the BIT application when submitting to the California Highway Patrol.
- In addition to the BIT application fee an additional fee of \$350.00 must be submitted for each terminal not previously inspected under this program.
- State and local government agencies are exempt from the inspection fees, but must apply for and undergo BIT inspections.
- Federal agencies are exempt from the BIT Program

Inspection Requirements

- Periodic Inspections
 - Carriers who operate vehicles regulated under the BIT Program are required to have vehicles inspected within 90-day intervals, or sooner if necessary to ensure safe operation.
 - Inspections must be documented and inspection reports must be retained for at least two years.
 - At a minimum, the following items need to be inspected:
 - Brake adjustment.
 - Brake system components and leaks.
 - Steering and suspension systems.
 - Tires and wheels.
 - Vehicle connecting devices (fifth wheels, kingpins, pintle hooks, drawbars, chains, etc.).
 - Periodic inspection reports must include:
 - Identification of the vehicle including, make, model, license number, company vehicle number or other means of positive identification.
 - Date and nature of each inspection and repair performed.
 - The signature of your authorized representative attesting to the inspection and to the completion of all required repairs.
- BIT inspection
 - During a BIT inspection, CHP Motor Carrier Specialist (MCS) personnel will inspect a sample of regulated vehicles, maintenance records of the vehicles, and driver records to determine if the motor carrier is in compliance with applicable motor carrier safety related statutes and regulations.
 - If the motor carrier transports hazardous materials or hazardous waste, relevant hazardous materials records and safety practices will also be inspected.
 - MCS personnel do not issue citations for violations discovered.
 - A safety compliance rating is assigned in each category: regulated vehicles; maintenance program; driver records; and hazardous materials (if applicable).
 - The ratings are either “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory.” A “conditional” rating may be issued under limited circumstances on re-inspections.
 - If each category is rated satisfactory, the composite terminal rating is satisfactory, and the next inspection should take place within 25 months.
 - If any category is rated unsatisfactory, the motor carrier is informed that there is an unsatisfactory condition, specific direction is given to correct the unsatisfactory condition, and a reinspection will be scheduled within 120 days to ensure the motor carrier has corrected the unsatisfactory condition.

California Penalties

- Any inspected terminal that receives an unsatisfactory rating will be reinspected within 120 days.
- A terminal's first required reinspection will be without charge unless, in the judgment of the CHP, the motor carrier's operation presented an imminent danger to public safety, or the motor carrier was not in compliance with the requirement to enroll all drivers in the Pull Notice Program, or the motor carrier failed to provide all required records and vehicles for a consolidated inspection.

- In the event of a second and subsequent consecutive unsatisfactory rating, the motor carrier must submit a reinspection application and another full fee within 60 days of issuance of the unsatisfactory rating. Vehicle Code Section 34501.12(h).
- The full fee for submitting a reinspection application ranges from \$270 to \$1870 depending on terminal fleet size.