

CVSA BRAKE SAFETY WEEK — AN OPERATION AIRBRAKE CAMPAIGN

BRAKE SAFETY WEEK

AUGUST 23–29, 2026

Seven days of brake-focused inspection and enforcement across the United States, Canada and Mexico. Here's exactly what inspectors are looking for, what puts you out of service, and how to roll through it clean.

15.1%

Brake OOS rate, 2025 Brake Safety Week

2,296 of 15,175 vehicles parked — roughly 1 in every 6.6 inspected

14.3%

Brake OOS rate, April 14, 2026 Brake Safety Day

574 of 4,021 vehicles — same drum/rotor emphasis as this week

90.6%

Of April 2026 inspections were full Level I

37 steps, driver and vehicle. Don't prep the brakes only.

01 WHAT THIS WEEK ACTUALLY IS

The official name is **CVSA Brake Safety Week**, run under the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance's Operation Airbrake program. "Brake blitz" is industry shorthand — CVSA doesn't use it.

It is **not** "Roadcheck Part Two." Operation Airbrake runs two campaigns a year: this announced seven-day week, and a separate **unannounced one-day Brake Safety Day**, which already happened on April 14, 2026.

Certified inspectors in all three countries participate. In the U.S., the FMCSRs apply; Canadian and Mexican rules differ, but CVSA's standardized inspection and Out-of-Service Criteria keep enforcement consistent across the border.

NOT A BRAKE-ONLY INSPECTION

CVSA says inspectors will run **routine inspections with extra emphasis on brakes**. A bad tire, a dead marker light or a loose strap can still park you. Prep the whole truck.

02 2026 FOCUS: DRUMS & ROTORS

Beyond normal brake checks, inspectors are specifically **collecting data on brake drum and rotor condition**. CVSA's concern: defects reduce braking effectiveness, and broken pieces can separate from a moving vehicle.

CVSA'S OWN 2026 DRIVER CHECKLIST

- ☐ Inspect every visible drum and rotor surface
- ☐ Look for cracked or broken rotor friction surfaces
- ☐ Look for cracks extending through a drum, or missing drum material
- ☐ Watch for heavily rusted disc rotors
- ☐ Identify metal-to-metal grooving
- ☐ Make sure excessive rotor wear has not exposed the center vents
- ☐ Follow the brake manufacturer's repair requirements
- ☐ Document and report every defect found

There is no single universal rotor-thickness number. In the U.S., 49 CFR §393.47 says drum and rotor thickness cannot fall below the **manufacturer's** limit — check the spec for your axle, don't guess.

THE WEEK IN ONE LINE: INSPECTORS ARE ALREADY FINDING THESE DEFECTS.

On April 14 alone, inspectors logged 43 drum/rotor violations — 24 rusted rotors, 9 broken drums, 8 broken rotors, 2 metal-to-metal — and 21 of them were out-of-service. Same emphasis, same criteria, this week.

03 WALK IT LIKE AN INSPECTOR

Built from CVSA's published Operation Airbrake procedure. Work top to bottom. Anything you can't clear goes on the DVIR and to the shop — see the stop-and-fix triggers on page 3.

AIR BRAKE SYSTEM

- ☐ **Build-up:** air pressure builds at a normal rate from low to cut-out; governor cut-in/cut-out within spec
- ☐ **Low-air warning:** light and/or buzzer activates before pressure drops below the required threshold (in the U.S., before 55 psi)
- ☐ **Air-loss test:** engine off, brakes released, then applied — no excessive pressure drop. Inspectors test air loss wherever they detect a leak
- ☐ **Listen for leaks** at chambers, valves, gladhands, tanks and fittings with brakes applied
- ☐ **Drain air tanks** — excessive water or oil is a flag

PUSHROD TRAVEL & ADJUSTMENT

- ☐ Measure applied pushrod stroke at every chamber; compare to the stroke limit marked on the chamber type
- ☐ **Same axle, same parts:** service and spring brake chambers at each end of an axle must be the same size; slack adjusters at each end must have the same effective length
- ☐ Slack adjusters move freely, no binding, clevis pins and cotters in place

DON'T JUST "TIGHTEN IT UP"

If an **automatic slack adjuster** is out of adjustment, federal periodic-inspection guidance says the **underlying cause** must be found and fixed. Manually re-adjusting an automatic adjuster is not an acceptable repair — excessive travel usually means another component is distressed.

DRUMS, ROTORS, LININGS & PADS

- ☐ All eight CVSA drum/rotor checks from page 1
- ☐ Lining/pad thickness at or above the U.S. minimums in 49 CFR §393.47; drum/rotor thickness at or above the **manufacturer's** limit
- ☐ No cracked, broken, loose or missing linings; no oil or grease contamination
- ☐ No missing, loose or broken brake components; return springs intact

HOSES & TUBING

- ☐ Protected from **chafing, kinking and mechanical damage** — proper routing, clamps and grommets
- ☐ Kept away from exhaust and other high-temperature sources; no heat damage or crimp damage
- ☐ No exposed or damaged reinforcement ply, no bulging under pressure
- ☐ No audible leaks, no improper splices, no constrictions

Hose/tubing defects produced **121 OOS violations** in a single day in April 2026.

ABS — TRACTOR AND TRAILER

- ☐ Tractor ABS lamp **illuminates during self-test, then turns off**
- ☐ Trailer ABS lamp (on the trailer and/or in-cab indicator) does the same
- ☐ A lamp that never lights, or stays lit, indicates a malfunction or violation that needs attention before the week
- ☐ ABS wiring and sensors secure; no chafed or unplugged connectors at the trailer

TRACTOR PROTECTION & TRAILER EMERGENCY

- ☐ **Tractor protection valve** closes at the proper pressure when the trailer supply is lost
- ☐ Trailer **bleedback** system functions — inspectors have specifically called this out
- ☐ Trailer **breakaway / emergency brake** applies when the supply line is disconnected
- ☐ Parking/spring brakes hold on both units; parking brake warning works

Tractor-protection, parking/emergency brake and low-air warning defects accounted for **193 "other" brake OOS violations** on April 14, 2026.

THE REST OF THE TRUCK

- ☐ **Tires** — tread depth, flats, exposed cord, sidewall damage, inflation
- ☐ **Lights** — every required lamp and reflector, including trailer markers
- ☐ **Cargo securement** — straps, chains, binders, load shift
- ☐ **Driver side** — CDL, medical card, ELD/RODS, HOS status, registration, permits

Brakes, tires, lights and cargo were the top vehicle OOS categories in 2025 Roadcheck.

04 THE 20% RULE, IN DRIVER LANGUAGE

"20% defective brakes" does **not** mean the brakes are 20% worn. It means **20% or more of the service brakes on the vehicle or combination** have a qualifying defective condition under the CVSA Out-of-Service Criteria.

THE ARITHMETIC

A typical five-axle tractor-trailer has **10 service brakes**. Two defective service brakes = 20% = out of service. One bad brake on the tractor plus one on the trailer is enough.

Each individual defect still has to meet the current OOS criteria — this example is just the math.

The 20% criterion was the **single most-cited reason** for a brake OOS order in 2025 Brake Safety Week (1,199 violations) and put 313 vehicles out of service on April 14, 2026 alone.

05 STOP-AND-FIX TRIGGERS

DO NOT ROLL

Any one of these on pre-trip means the truck goes to the shop, not the scale house.

- Any pushrod stroke at or beyond the chamber's marked limit
- Any crack through a drum, missing drum material, or a cracked/broken rotor surface
- Heavily rusted rotors or metal-to-metal contact
- Lining or pad below the minimum, or loose, broken, or oil-soaked
- Audible air leak you can't locate and stop, or a failed air-loss test
- Low-air warning that doesn't activate
- Hose with exposed ply, bulging, chafed-through, or an improper splice
- ABS lamp that stays on or never lights — tractor or trailer
- Tractor protection valve or trailer breakaway that doesn't work
- Any **steering-axle** brake defect — 47 vehicles were parked for this in April
- Mismatched chambers or slack adjusters on the same axle

06 THE NUMBERS DRIVERS SHOULD SEE

The April 14, 2026 Brake Safety Day used the **same drum/rotor emphasis** as this week — making it the best preview of what inspectors are already finding in 2026.

APRIL 14, 2026 — ONE UNANNOUNCED DAY

RESULT	COUNT
Inspections conducted	4,021
Vehicles placed OOS for brake violations (14.3%)	574
Met the 20%-defective-brakes criterion	313
Hose / tubing OOS violations	121
Steering-axle brake OOS violations	47
Air-loss-rate failures	40
Other brake OOS (tractor protection, parking/emergency, low-air)	193
Drum / rotor violations (21 OOS)	43

DRUM / ROTOR VIOLATIONS BY TYPE, APRIL 2026

Rusted rotors	24
Broken drums	9
Broken rotors	8
Metal-to-metal	2

2025 BRAKE SAFETY WEEK — LAST YEAR'S FULL WEEK

Vehicles inspected	15,175
Placed OOS for brake violations (15.1%)	2,296
Most-cited reason: 20% defective brakes	1,199

PERFORMANCE-BASED BRAKE TESTERS

Ten U.S. jurisdictions used PBBTs in April; **26 of 349** vehicles tested failed. U.S. federal rules and the OOS Criteria require a **43.5% minimum overall braking efficiency** on a PBBT inspection.

07 FINAL DRIVER GATE CHECK — BEFORE YOU PULL OUT

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Air builds normally; low-air warning tested and working | ☐ Hoses and tubing routed clean — no chafe, kink, heat, bulge or splice |
| ☐ Air-loss test passed, engine off, brakes applied | ☐ Tractor and trailer ABS lamps self-test and go out |
| ☐ No audible leaks anywhere in the system | ☐ Tractor protection and trailer breakaway tested |
| ☐ Every pushrod stroke measured and within limit | ☐ Parking brakes hold on both units |
| ☐ Chambers and slack adjusters match across each axle | ☐ Tires, lights and cargo securement cleared |
| ☐ Every visible drum and rotor checked — no cracks, rust scaling, grooving or exposed vents | ☐ CDL, med card, ELD, HOS and paperwork in order |
| ☐ Linings/pads above minimum, dry, and secure | ☐ Every defect written on the DVIR — or nothing to write |

08 IF YOU FIND A DEFECT

Under U.S. rules (49 CFR §396.13), before driving, the driver must be **satisfied the vehicle is in safe operating condition**. If a safety-affecting defect is listed on a required DVIR, the carrier must **repair it — or certify that repair is unnecessary — before the vehicle operates again**.

Write it up. A DVIR line item costs minutes. An OOS order during Brake Safety Week costs the load, the day, and a mark on the carrier's record.

09 WHAT CHANGED FOR 2026

The **2026 CVSA North American Standard Out-of-Service Criteria** took effect April 1, 2026 and supersede every earlier edition. CVSA approved **17 changes**, including brake-related updates to the 20% criterion and to how hydraulic/electric lining thickness is treated.

SHOPS AND FLEETS

Do not prep for this week from an older OOS handbook. Work from the April 2026 edition.

OFFICIAL SOURCES

1. **CVSA** — "CVSA's Brake Safety Week Scheduled for Aug. 23–29" · cvsa.org/news/2026-bsw-dates
2. **CVSA** — Brake Safety Campaigns, Operation Airbrake · cvsa.org/programs/operation-airbrake/brake-safety-campaigns
3. **CVSA** — 2026 Brake Safety Week driver flyer (PDF) · cvsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2026-BSW-Flyer-English.pdf
4. **CVSA** — April 14, 2026 Brake Safety Day results · cvsa.org/news/2026-bsd-results
5. **CVSA** — Operation Airbrake Inspection Procedure · cvsa.org/programs/operation-airbrake/operation-airbrake-inspection-procedure
6. **CVSA** — Anti-lock Braking Systems · cvsa.org/programs/operation-airbrake/anti-lock-braking-systems
7. **CVSA** — 2025 Brake Safety Week results · cvsa.org/news/2025-bsw-results
8. **CVSA** — 2025 International Roadcheck results · cvsa.org/news/2025-roadcheck-results
9. **CVSA** — 2026 Out-of-Service Criteria now in effect · cvsa.org/news/2026-oosc
10. **eCFR** — 49 CFR §393.45, Brake tubing and hoses
11. **eCFR** — 49 CFR §393.47, Brake actuators, slack adjusters, linings/pads and drums/rotors
12. **eCFR** — 49 CFR §396.13, Driver inspection; Appendix A to Part 396, Minimum Periodic Inspection Standards

Note: This sheet is an educational summary prepared for the Truck N' Hustle community from CVSA publications and U.S. federal regulations current as of August 2026. It is not legal advice and does not replace the CVSA North American Standard Out-of-Service Criteria, the FMCSRs, applicable Canadian or Mexican requirements, or your brake manufacturer's specifications. Always verify against the current official documents.