CALGARY SAFETY CONSULTANTS

Equipment Pre-Use Inspection Checklist

How to use this checklist

Use this checklist for the pre-use inspection of powered mobile equipment such as skid steers, loaders, excavators, telehandlers, forklifts and elevating work platforms. Pages 2 and 3 cover items common to most machines. Page 4 adds forklift and elevating work platform modules, and every section has space for the items that matter on your equipment. Build those items from the manufacturer's operator's manual.

How to use this form

1. Fill in the equipment details on page 2, including the unit number and hour meter reading.
2. Check the work area, then do the walkaround with the engine off and the machine in a safe position (bucket or forks lowered, parking brake on).
3. Start the machine and complete the operational checks. Tick **OK**, **Defect** or **N/A** for each item you actually checked.
4. Complete the module on page 4 for a forklift or elevating work platform, and add equipment-specific items.
5. Record every defect on page 5. If any defect makes the machine unsafe, **don't use it**: tag it, hold the key and tell your supervisor.
6. Supervisors review the form and sign off repairs on page 6 before a tagged machine returns to service.

Key terms

Term	What it means
Pre-use inspection	A structured check of the equipment by a trained operator before it is used on a shift, aimed at defects that can be seen, heard or felt. It does not replace periodic inspections or preventive maintenance.
Powered mobile equipment	Saskatchewan's regulations define it as a self-propelled machine or combination of machines designed to manipulate or move materials or to provide a work platform for workers.
Elevating work platform	British Columbia's regulation defines it as a movable work platform that self-elevates to overhead work locations.
Defect that stops the machine	A defect that makes the equipment unsafe to use. The machine is tagged out and not used until a qualified person repairs it.
Qualified or competent person	A person with the knowledge, training and experience for the inspection, repair or examination. Check your jurisdiction's definition.

Who does what

Role	Responsibilities
Operator	Does the inspection before use, records it honestly, reports defects, monitors the machine while operating and doesn't use equipment that's unsafe.
Supervisor	Makes sure inspections happen before work starts, reviews forms, acts on defects the same day and never pressures anyone to run flagged equipment.
Mechanic or maintenance	Repairs defects, confirms the repair and clears the equipment for use; carries out scheduled maintenance and periodic inspections.
Employer	Provides equipment-specific checklists, training, defect and tagging procedures, records and follow-up, and meets manufacturer and regulatory requirements.

Before you start

- ☐ I am trained and authorized to operate this equipment.
- ☐ I have the operator's manual or know where it is kept.
- ☐ I know which defects stop this machine and who to report them to.

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Equipment details, work area and walkaround

Company | **Unit or serial number** | **Hour meter** | **Date**

Operator (print) | **Make and model** | **Shift and time**

Site or location | **Owner (own, rented, contractor)** | **Rental or asset no.**

Equipment type

- ☐ Skid steer or track loader
- ☐ Wheel loader
- ☐ Excavator
- ☐ Backhoe
- ☐ Forklift (lift truck)
- ☐ Telehandler
- ☐ Scissor lift
- ☐ Boom lift
- ☐ Other

Work area (before moving the machine)

Item to check	OK	Defect	N/A	Notes or defect details
Ground conditions firm and level enough for the machine and task	☐	☐	☐	
Overhead hazards identified: power lines, structures, doorways	☐	☐	☐	
Underground hazards identified where digging (locates in place)	☐	☐	☐	
Pedestrians, other equipment and traffic routes controlled	☐	☐	☐	
Field-level hazard assessment completed for the task	☐	☐	☐	

Walkaround (engine off, attachments lowered, parking brake on)

Item to check	OK	Defect	N/A	Notes or defect details
Overall condition: no visible damage, cracks or missing parts	☐	☐	☐	
Leaks under and around the machine: oil, fuel, coolant, hydraulic	☐	☐	☐	
Tires (inflation, cuts, wheel nuts) or tracks (tension, damage, rollers)	☐	☐	☐	
Hydraulic hoses, fittings and cylinders: no leaks, chafing or damage	☐	☐	☐	
Attachment, bucket, forks or quick coupler: secure, pins and locks in place	☐	☐	☐	
Rollover (ROPS) and falling object (FOPS) protection: no damage or modifications	☐	☐	☐	
Steps, handholds and grab rails: secure and clean	☐	☐	☐	
Guards, covers and engine compartment doors in place	☐	☐	☐	
Lights, mirrors and windows: clean, intact and working	☐	☐	☐	
Decals, capacity plate or load chart present and legible	☐	☐	☐	

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Fluids (engine off)

Item to check	OK	Defect	N/A	Notes or defect details
Engine oil level	☐	☐	☐	
Hydraulic oil level	☐	☐	☐	
Coolant level	☐	☐	☐	
Fuel level; cap secure	☐	☐	☐	
DEF level (where used)	☐	☐	☐	

Operator station and operational checks (engine running)

Item to check	OK	Defect	N/A	Notes or defect details
Seat and seat belt: belt latches and releases, seat locks in position	☐	☐	☐	
Operator presence system, lap bar or interlocks work	☐	☐	☐	
Gauges and warning lights normal after start-up	☐	☐	☐	
Horn works	☐	☐	☐	
Backup alarm and backup camera work	☐	☐	☐	
Beacon or strobe light works (where required)	☐	☐	☐	
Service brakes and parking brake work and hold	☐	☐	☐	
Steering responds smoothly, no binding	☐	☐	☐	
Travel controls: forward, reverse and speed work and return to neutral	☐	☐	☐	
Hydraulic controls (lift, tilt, boom, swing) work smoothly, no drift	☐	☐	☐	
Emergency stop or shut-off works (where fitted)	☐	☐	☐	
Fire extinguisher charged, tagged and mounted (where required)	☐	☐	☐	
Cab clean, no loose items near the pedals or controls	☐	☐	☐	

Equipment-specific items (from the operator's manual)

Item to check	OK	Defect	N/A	Notes or defect details
	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	

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Forklift (lift truck) module

Item to check	OK	Defect	N/A	Notes or defect details
Forks: no cracks, bends or heel wear; locking pins in place	☐	☐	☐	
Carriage and load backrest secure	☐	☐	☐	
Mast, chains and rollers: no damage, even chain tension, lubricated	☐	☐	☐	
Overhead guard secure; capacity (data) plate legible	☐	☐	☐	
Lift, lower and tilt work smoothly; forks hold position	☐	☐	☐	
Propane: cylinder secured, relief valve positioned right, no gas smell	☐	☐	☐	
Electric: battery connectors, cables and charge level good	☐	☐	☐	
Pedestrian warning lights work (if fitted)	☐	☐	☐	

Elevating work platform module (scissor or boom lift)

Item to check	OK	Defect	N/A	Notes or defect details
Guardrails, gate or chain and toe boards in place and undamaged	☐	☐	☐	
Platform floor clean and secure; anchor points intact	☐	☐	☐	
Ground controls work, including emergency stop	☐	☐	☐	
Platform controls work, including emergency stop and enable switch	☐	☐	☐	
Emergency or auxiliary lowering works	☐	☐	☐	
Tilt alarm and any load-sensing system work	☐	☐	☐	
Outriggers or stabilizers work (where fitted)	☐	☐	☐	
Operator's manual on the machine; capacity plate legible	☐	☐	☐	
Fall protection inspected where manufacturer or regulation requires it	☐	☐	☐	

Other equipment module (telehandler, excavator, attachments)

Item to check	OK	Defect	N/A	Notes or defect details
Telehandler: boom, outriggers and levelling work; load chart in cab	☐	☐	☐	
Excavator: swing lock works; teeth and quick coupler locked	☐	☐	☐	
Attachment: right for the machine, pinned, locked, hoses connected	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	

British Columbia requires elevating work platforms to be inspected before use on each shift and after any modification, with the manufacturer's operation manual available at the workplace. In Ontario, IHSA explains that platforms under the construction regulation must be inspected each day before use by a trained worker. Ontario filed a new elevating work platform regulation (O. Reg. 117/26) in April 2026, scheduled to come into force on January 1, 2027, so check e-Laws for the requirements that apply on your dates.

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Defect report and operator declaration

Record every defect. Decide whether it stops the machine using your company's defect list for this equipment. **If a defect makes the equipment unsafe, don't use it until a qualified person has repaired it.**

Defects found

Item and description of defect	Can be scheduled	Stops the machine	Reported to and time	Action taken
	☐	☐		
	☐	☐		
	☐	☐		
	☐	☐		
	☐	☐		
	☐	☐		
	☐	☐		
	☐	☐		

Inspection result

- ☐ No defects found
- ☐ Minor defects only: reported and scheduled for repair
- ☐ Unsafe defect: equipment tagged out, not used

Out-of-service steps (if the equipment is unsafe)

- ☐ DO NOT USE tag placed on the controls.
- ☐ Key removed and held by the supervisor or mechanic; battery disconnect or lockout used where needed.
- ☐ Supervisor told right away, in person or by phone.
- ☐ Machine left in a safe position: attachments lowered, parking brake on, area controlled.
- ☐ Defect added to the maintenance or corrective action list with an owner and a date.
- ☐ For rented equipment: supplier told in writing.

Tag number (if used)

Key held by

Supervisor notified (name and time)

Operator declaration

I inspected this equipment as listed on this form and recorded every defect I found. I will keep monitoring the equipment while I operate it and report any new defect right away.

Operator signature

Printed name

Date and time

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Repair and return to service

Defect	Repair done	Repaired by (qualified person)	Date	Tag off
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐

- ☐ Each repair was tested and the defect no longer exists.
- ☐ The repair is recorded in the equipment's maintenance file.
- ☐ The tag was removed and the key returned only after the repair was confirmed.

Returned to service by	Signature	Date

Weekly inspection log for this unit

Day	Date	Operator	Hours	Done	Defect	Notes
Monday				☐	☐	
Tuesday				☐	☐	
Wednesday				☐	☐	
Thursday				☐	☐	
Friday				☐	☐	
Saturday				☐	☐	
Sunday				☐	☐	

Supervisor review

- ☐ Forms complete and genuine: items ticked, hours match, declarations signed.
- ☐ Every defect has an owner and a date, and unsafe equipment was tagged out.
- ☐ Repeat defects raised with maintenance for a lasting fix.

Reviewed by	Signature	Date

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Pre-use inspection rules: examples by jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Requirement	Records
British Columbia	OHS Regulation s.16.3: the operator inspects mobile equipment before it is first operated on a shift and reports unsafe defects; s.13.3: elevating work platforms inspected before use on each shift and after any modification.	Defect records kept at least 2 years
Alberta	OHS Code Part 19: the operator visually inspects the equipment and surrounding area before operating (s.257); a competent worker inspects the equipment, and it is not used until defects are repaired (s.260); operator responsibilities (s.256).	Record of inspections and maintenance kept at the work site (s.260)
Saskatchewan	OHS Regulations, 2020, Part 11 includes visual inspection (11-3) and inspection and maintenance (11-4); s.3-14 requires immediate steps when equipment has a defect.	Follow the regulations and your program
Manitoba	Part 22: operator visual check before operating; competent person inspections for defects and unsafe conditions as often as necessary (SAFE Work Manitoba).	Written records of inspections, repairs and maintenance kept at the workplace and available to workers
Ontario	Reg. 851 s.51: a lifting device, read to include the whole lift truck, is examined by a competent person before it is first used and then at least once a year (more often if the manufacturer recommends).	Signed record of each examination; keep at least the two most recent
New Brunswick	Reg. 91-191 s.216: industrial lift trucks inspected daily; competent person inspection before first use and after possible damage.	Follow the regulation and your program
Federal	COHSR Part XIV: written inspection, testing and maintenance instructions set the frequency (s.14.20); defective equipment taken out of service (s.14.29).	Reports kept 1 year

Summary only, checked in October 2026. Confirm the Alberta wording against the official Part 19 text. Other provinces and territories have their own mobile equipment, lift truck and platform rules.

Common mistakes

- One generic form for every machine instead of checklists built from the operator's manual.
- Pencil-whipping: forms completed from the seat, in advance or at the end of the week.
- No written rule for which defects stop the machine.
- Defects recorded but never fixed, or tags used without key control.
- Treating the pre-use check as maintenance: it doesn't replace periodic inspections and servicing.
- Skipping rented or contractor equipment.

How to build your equipment-specific items

- Start with the daily or pre-operation checks in the manufacturer's operator's manual.
- Add items from your hazard assessment, incident history and repeat defects for that model.
- Keep the list short enough to use, and review it when equipment or tasks change.

Free guide. Read How to Conduct Vehicle and Equipment Pre-Use Inspections at calgarysafetyconsultants.ca/safety-guides/inspections/pre-use-inspections/. Calgary Safety Consultants can help build checklists and set up digital inspections in Site App Pro. Call 1-888-231-0358.

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