
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission

Vehicle Inspections: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

VEHICLE REGISTRATION AND INSPECTIONS

Q. How do I present my vehicles for WMATC inspection?

A. WMATC will not inspect an applicant's vehicles until it has filed all of the following documents: 1) a vehicle list; 2) registration cards; 3) for vehicles registered in Maryland, current safety inspection certificates; 4) a tariff; 5) a WMATC Insurance Endorsement; and 6) if necessary a lease. To schedule an appointment log in to WMATC's e-filing system at www.wmatc.gov and submit a vehicle inspection request form. Commission staff will e-mail you the next available inspection appointment time. Inspections are typically scheduled one to two weeks in advance. WMATC will not conduct vehicle inspections without an appointment.

Q. Where do WMATC inspections take place?

A. Vehicle inspections are conducted in front of the WMATC office building, located at 8701 Georgia Avenue, (northbound side), Silver Spring, Maryland. Do not leave the vicinity of your vehicle or park on Cameron Street. When you arrive at the inspection site, call the WMATC office at (301) 588-5260 to notify staff of your arrival.

Q. What type of vehicle registration is required?

A. Vehicles registered in the District of Columbia must be registered for-hire before scheduling a WMATC vehicle inspection. This means you must have B-tags or L tags. Applicants should take their WMATC conditional grant order to the DMV to support a request for for-hire tags. Current carriers should take their WMATC certificate of authority to the DMV.

Vehicles registered in Maryland must be registered for-hire before scheduling a WMATC vehicle inspection. This generally means you must have B-tags, P-tags, LM-tags, or a registration card with a PDP class code. Applicants should take their WMATC conditional grant order to the MVA to support a request for for-hire tags. Current carriers should take their WMATC Certificate of Authority to the MVA.

Current WMATC carriers operating vehicles registered in Virginia must register vehicles for-hire before scheduling a WMATC vehicle inspection. This generally means you must have H-tags. Current carriers should take their WMATC Certificate of Authority to the VA DMV to support a request for for-hire tags. In addition, if a vehicle registered in Virginia is leased, current WMATC carriers must first furnish a copy of a WMATC-approved lease to VA DMV in order to obtain for-hire tags.

Applicants with vehicles registered in Virginia are not able to obtain for-hire tags from VA DMV until after they have completed the application process and obtained WMATC authority (unless they already hold VA intrastate authority from VA DMV). Applicants without authority may furnish a personal-use class Virginia registration card prior to WMATC inspection, but may not transport passengers in the vehicle until a WMATC certificate of authority has been issued and the vehicle has been re-registered for-hire. The vehicle must be registered for-hire within 30 days after a WMATC Certificate of Authority is issued.

In all cases, temporary tags are not acceptable.

Q. How do I show that my vehicle complies with safety inspection requirements?

A. Each vehicle registered in the District of Columbia or Virginia must display a current, valid safety inspection sticker on its windshield from an authorized inspection station during the WMATC inspection. For vehicles registered in Maryland, before scheduling your WMATC inspection you must provide a copy of a paper vehicle inspection certificate from a local inspection station. The vehicle must have passed the safety inspection within the previous 12 months.

Q. Can I have passengers aboard the vehicle at the time of inspection?

A. No. Commission staff will not inspect a vehicle that has passengers aboard.

Q. What will the inspectors look for during the WMATC inspection?

A. WMATC inspectors will determine the seating capacity of the vehicle and examine the vehicle markings, license plates, registration card, safety inspection decals, and VIN number. License plates must be firmly affixed to the front and back of the vehicle at the time of inspection. A copy of the vehicle registration card must be inside the vehicle at the time of inspection. Inspectors will also examine the vehicle's horn, tires, seat belts, mirrors, windshield wipers and washers, headlights, brake lights, and turn signals to be sure they are functioning properly. If a vehicle is equipped with a wheelchair lift or ramp, the inspector will confirm these items and any tie-downs function properly in conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Q. Are there any additional requirements for vehicles seating 9 or more persons?

A. If a vehicle's seating capacity, including the driver, is 9 or greater, the inspector will also check to ensure the required emergency equipment (fire extinguisher and warning triangles/flares) are inside the vehicle.

VEHICLE MARKINGS

Q. What markings must appear on my vehicles?

A. Unless a vehicle is exempt from marking requirements, a carrier's legal name or approved trade name must appear on each vehicle, as well as the carrier's WMATC number.

Q. What types of vehicles are exempt from markings requirements?

A. Luxury sedans/SUV's and limousines seating 9 persons or less, including the driver, do not need to display a name or WMATC number. Luxury sedans or SUV's and limousines seating 10-15 persons, including the driver, must display a WMATC number but do not need to display a name. If a carrier's vehicle falls within these categories, a carrier may wish to request a markings waiver letter from WMATC, which can be kept in the vehicle and presented to law enforcement personnel.

Q. How large must the vehicle markings be?

A. Each individual letter and number of the required vehicle markings must: 1) contrast sharply with the background paint, 2) measure at least 2½" in height, and 3) be permanent.

Q. Can my vehicle markings be displayed on removable magnetic signs?

A. No. Removable magnetic signs are not allowed, except in rare circumstances involving vehicles in temporary use that have been previously reported to the Commission.

Q. What if another name appears on the vehicle?

A. If some other name appears on the vehicle, the carrier's legal name or approved trade name must be preceded by the words "OPERATED BY" so it is clear who is actually operating the vehicle.

Q. Where should the markings be placed?

A. Markings must be displayed on both the passenger and driver's side of each vehicle. Most carriers place their WMATC number on the front door, behind the rear tire, or on the front fender of their vehicle. Carriers can select the spot on their vehicle where they place their legal name (or trade name), but it must appear somewhere on both the passenger and driver's side.

Q. Could I see some examples of vehicles with acceptable vehicle markings?

A. These four vehicles display acceptable marking configurations.



If another name appears on the vehicle, the carrier's legal name or trade name must be preceded by the phrase "OPERATED BY".



Q. Could I see some examples of vehicles with unacceptable vehicle markings?

A. The markings displayed on the two vehicles below are not acceptable under WMATC Regulation No. 61.



Lower-case lettering that contains individual letters less than 2½" high is presumed to violate WMATC Regulation No. 61.



Removable magnetic signs are not allowed, except in rare circumstances. See WMATC Regulation No. 61-03.