

2026 WINTER FLEET READINESS CHECKLIST

Prepare Your Fleet for Peak Winter Demand

Freezing temperatures, icy roads, and changing winter conditions can put added stress on your vehicles and operations.

Proactive inspections and preventive maintenance can help identify issues early, reduce unexpected downtime, and support reliable service throughout the season.



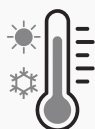
Please note: This checklist is a general, non-exhaustive maintenance resource provided for informational purposes only. It does not replace vehicle manufacturer manuals, OEM requirements, or applicable federal, state, and local inspection and maintenance requirements, including FMCSA and DOT regulations. Each operator remains solely responsible for the inspection, maintenance, and safe operation of its vehicles and for regulatory compliance. ABC Companies makes no warranty, express or implied, about the use of this checklist

Quick-Start Winter Readiness Priorities

Use this checklist to review vehicle systems, accessibility and safety equipment, and winter-specific maintenance needs before conditions worsen. If your inspection identifies a service, parts, or maintenance need, ABC Companies is ready to help keep your fleet moving.



**Vehicle Exterior
& Body Inspection**



**HVAC System
& Cabin Comfort**



**Tires
& Wheels**



**Electrical
& Battery Health**



**Engine, Fuel
& Cooling Systems**



**Brake, Suspension
& Air Systems**



**Accessibility
& Passenger Safety**



**Emergency
Equipment & Exits**



**In-Service Reliability
& Rider Comfort**



**Fleet Technology
& Telematics Systems**



**Winterization
& Freeze Protection**



Vehicle Exterior & Body Inspection

Winter weather can worsen existing wear and create new issues as moisture, freezing temperatures, snow, ice, and road salt affect exterior components. Inspect the vehicle body and exterior systems before and throughout winter to identify and correct damage that could affect safe operation.

- ☐ **Inspect the entrance door.** Check operation, alignment, seals, weather stripping, controls, and safety/reversal functions. Look for gaps or damage that could allow water or cold air into the vehicle.
- ☐ **Inspect steps and handrails.** Confirm they are secure and in good condition. Check step surfaces for wear or damage that could increase slip risks in wet or icy conditions.
- ☐ **Inspect and clean the windshield and windows.** Check for leaks, chips, cracks, damaged seals, and fogging. Repair or replace damaged glass as needed.
- ☐ **Inspect all exterior lighting.** Verify headlights, taillights, brake lights, turn signals, clearance lights, marker lights, and other exterior lighting operate properly. Clean lenses and check for cracks or damage.
- ☐ **Clear roof drains and body drain/weep points.** Remove debris and verify water can drain properly to help prevent trapped water from freezing and contributing to leaks or damage.
- ☐ **Inspect luggage and service-compartment doors.** Check seals, latches, hinges, and drains for damage or conditions that could allow water, snow, or ice intrusion.
- ☐ **Inspect exterior body penetrations.** Check clearance and marker lights, roof-mounted equipment, and other sealed openings for damaged seals or potential water intrusion.
- ☐ **Remove snow and ice from the roof before operation.** Pay particular attention to emergency hatches, HVAC equipment, antennas, and other roof-mounted components.
- ☐ **Inspect body panels and wraps.** Check for corrosion, road-salt damage, loose or damaged panels, and peeling or damaged wraps.
- ☐ **Inspect mud flaps and splash guards.** Verify they are secure, properly positioned, and free from cracks or other damage.
- ☐ **Inspect the underbody and apply rust-prevention treatment as needed.** Check for corrosion, road-salt buildup, and damage to exposed components and mounting points.
- ☐ **Check convex mirror weep holes.** Verify weep holes are positioned at the bottom and remain clear so water can drain rather than collect, freeze, and potentially damage the mirror.



HVAC System & Cabin Comfort

Heating and airflow are critical for passenger comfort, visibility, and cold-weather operation. Inspect the complete HVAC and heating system for proper performance before temperatures drop.

- ☐ **Test auxiliary heaters.** Verify proper operation and heat output, and complete annual service as recommended. Check for leaks or unusual noise.
- ☐ **Test the cabin heating system.** Run the system through its operating range and verify consistent heat and airflow throughout the passenger compartment.
- ☐ **Inspect and replace HVAC filters.** Check for dirty or restricted filters and replace as needed to maintain proper airflow.
- ☐ **Inspect rooftop units and defroster vents.** Check rooftop HVAC components for damage, leaks, or blocked drainage. Confirm defroster vents are clear and delivering adequate airflow.
- ☐ **Inspect heater hoses.** Check hoses, fittings, and connections for leaks, cracks, deterioration, or other signs of wear.
- ☐ **Inspect coolant valves.** Check for leaks and verify proper operation and coolant flow through the heating system.
- ☐ **Test auxiliary pumps.** Check for leaks or damage and confirm proper coolant circulation through the heating system.
- ☐ **Inspect passenger-compartment heating circuits.** Check heating circuits and related components for leaks or deterioration, and verify proper heat distribution throughout the cabin.
- ☐ **Pressure Test:** After any cooling system repair, perform a cooling system pressure test to verify system integrity and confirm there are no leaks.





Tires & Wheels

Cold temperatures can affect tire pressure, traction, and overall tire performance. Inspect tires, wheels, and related systems before winter conditions arrive and continue monitoring them throughout the season.

- ☐ **Inspect tire chains or traction devices, if applicable.** Verify the correct size, condition, and quantity for your vehicles, and confirm they are stored securely and accessible when needed.
- ☐ **Inspect tire tread depth and tread type.** Verify tread depth meets applicable requirements and confirm tires are appropriate for expected winter operating conditions.
- ☐ **Check tires for degradation and wear.** Inspect for cracks, cuts, bulges, uneven wear, or other damage that could affect performance.
- ☐ **Verify tire load capacity and air pressure.** Confirm tires meet vehicle load requirements and adjust pressure to manufacturer specifications, accounting for colder temperatures.
- ☐ **Rotate tires if uneven wear is detected.** Address irregular wear patterns and investigate potential underlying causes before they worsen.
- ☐ **Check wheel alignment and balancing.** Inspect for signs of improper alignment or imbalance, including uneven tire wear or vibration, and correct as needed.
- ☐ **Inspect the Automatic Tire Inflation System, if equipped.** Check lines, fittings, connections, and system components for leaks, damage, or wear.
- ☐ **Test the Automatic Tire Inflation System, if equipped.** Verify the system maintains proper tire pressure and responds correctly to pressure changes.

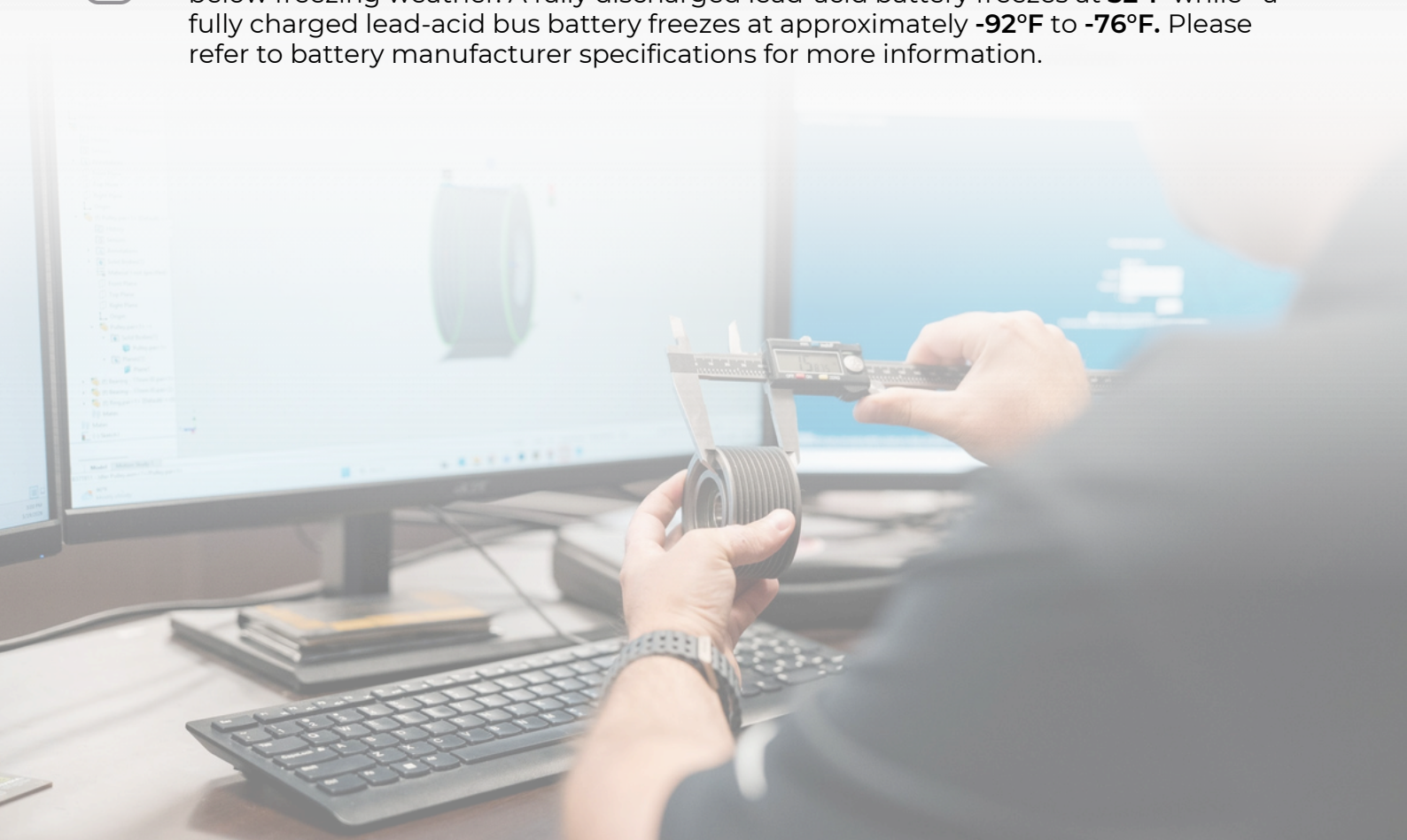




Electrical & Battery Health

Cold temperatures can reduce battery performance and place additional demand on electrical systems. Check batteries, charging systems, and onboard electronics before winter to help prevent cold-weather starting and power issues.

- ☐ **Test battery voltage and cold cranking amps (CCA).** Verify batteries meet manufacturer specifications and replace weak or failing batteries before cold weather affects performance.
- ☐ **Test alternator output.** Confirm the charging system is operating properly and providing sufficient output to support the vehicle's electrical demands.
- ☐ **Inspect battery terminals and connections.** Check for corrosion, loose connections, or damage, and clean and secure components as needed.
- ☐ **Check batteries for parasitic draw.** Test for unexpected electrical loads that could drain batteries while the vehicle is not in operation.
- ☐ **Verify batteries are completely isolated when required.** Confirm battery disconnects and isolation systems function properly to help prevent unintended discharge during storage or extended downtime.
- ☐ **Test onboard electronics.** Check vehicle electronics and electrical accessories for malfunctions, intermittent operation, or other issues that could indicate an electrical-system problem.
- ☐ **Cold weather charge.** It is important to keep your batteries charged when exposed to below freezing weather. A fully discharged lead-acid battery freezes at **32°F** while a fully charged lead-acid bus battery freezes at approximately **-92°F** to **-76°F**. Please refer to battery manufacturer specifications for more information.





Engine, Fuel & Cooling Systems

Cold weather can affect fuel delivery, fluid performance, and engine temperature management. Inspect these systems before winter to help prevent starting issues, leaks, freezing, and other cold-weather problems.

- ☐ **Inspect and drain the fuel/water separator.** Remove accumulated water and check for contamination that could contribute to cold-weather fuel problems.
- ☐ **Test the DEF cold-weather system.** Verify the DEF tank, lines, heaters, and related components operate properly in freezing conditions.
- ☐ **Inspect cooling-system components.** Check coolant levels and condition, connections, valves, pumps, and other components for leaks, deterioration, or damage.
- ☐ **Test block heaters, if equipped.** Verify proper operation before cold temperatures require engine preheating.
- ☐ **Service coolant heaters annually.** Complete recommended maintenance and verify heaters operate properly before winter.
- ☐ **Inspect belts, hoses, and clamps.** Check for cracks, leaks, deterioration, looseness, or other signs of wear and replace components as needed.
- ☐ **Review OEM engine oil recommendations for severe cold.** Confirm whether winter-grade viscosity engine oil is recommended for the vehicle and expected operating conditions.





Brake, Suspension & Air Systems

Winter moisture, road treatments, and freezing temperatures can affect braking, suspension, and air-system performance. Inspect these components for proper operation and address moisture, corrosion, leaks, or wear before winter conditions intensify.

- ☐ **Inspect the air dryer.** Check for proper operation, leaks, damage, or excessive moisture that could affect the air system in freezing temperatures.
- ☐ **Drain the air tanks.** Remove accumulated moisture and monitor for excessive water or contamination that could indicate an air-dryer issue.
- ☐ **Test the air-dryer heater and purge system.** Verify the heater operates properly, and the purge cycle removes moisture as designed.
- ☐ **Inspect brake pads, rotors, and calipers.** Check for excessive wear or corrosion, and verify calipers move freely without dragging.
- ☐ **Flush brake fluid on hydraulic brake-equipped vehicles if due.** Follow the recommended service interval and use the specified brake fluid.
- ☐ **Clean and lubricate the brake treadle valve.** Check for proper movement and operation, and service according to manufacturer recommendations.
- ☐ **Test ABS functionality.** Verify the system operates properly and address warning lights, fault codes, or other identified issues.
- ☐ **Inspect suspension components.** Check air lines, fittings, air springs, and related components for leaks, wear, or damage that could affect cold-weather operation.
- ☐ **Inspect shocks.** Check for leaks, damage, or wear and verify proper operation for winter road conditions.





Accessibility & Passenger Safety

Winter conditions can affect accessibility equipment, entrances, and passenger safety systems. Inspect these components for proper operation and confirm required equipment and signage are secure, functional, and ready for service.

- ☐ **Inspect the wheelchair-access door.** Verify proper operation, alignment, seals, latches, and interlocks. Check for damage or gaps that could allow moisture or ice buildup.
- ☐ **Test the wheelchair lift or ramp.** Cycle the system completely and inspect the platform, switches, warning systems, interlocks, and emergency/manual operation.
- ☐ **Inspect wheelchair securement equipment.** Check restraints, straps, buckles, anchor points, and related equipment for damage, wear, and proper operation.
- ☐ **Inspect seat belts.** Check webbing, retractors, buckles, and mounting points for wear or damage, and verify each belt operates properly.
- ☐ **Verify seat-belt-use decals and passenger signage.** Confirm required decals and signage are present, secure, and legible.



Emergency Equipment & Exits

Emergency equipment and exits need to remain accessible and fully operational in winter conditions. Inspect each system before the season and keep emergency supplies stocked for the conditions your vehicles may encounter.

- ☐ **Inspect emergency exit windows.** Verify proper operation and check latches, hinges, seals, weather stripping, and required decals or instructions.
- ☐ **Inspect emergency roof hatches.** Test operation, latching, emergency release, and seals. Confirm required signage is present and legible.
- ☐ **Inspect fire extinguishers.** Confirm extinguishers are properly secured, accessible, within their service date, and ready for use.
- ☐ **Inspect fire-suppression equipment, if equipped.** Verify system components are in proper condition and service is current according to manufacturer requirements.
- ☐ **Check emergency triangles and reflectors.** Confirm the required equipment is present, accessible, and usable.
- ☐ **Restock first-aid kits.** Check contents for missing, damaged, or expired supplies and replenish as needed.
- ☐ **Inspect emergency hammers and tools.** Confirm required tools are present, securely mounted, accessible, and usable.
- ☐ **Stock and maintain winter emergency supplies.** Carry blankets, gloves, flashlights, ice scrapers, traction aids, emergency reflectors or flares, winter-rated washer fluid, and other appropriate spare fluids and supplies for expected operating conditions.



In-Service Reliability & Rider Comfort

Before vehicles enter winter service, check the onboard systems that support passenger comfort, visibility, and communication. Confirm these features remain reliable throughout the season.

- ☐ **Test passenger charging ports and emergency communications equipment.** Verify charging ports, communication systems, and related connections are working properly.
- ☐ **Test interior and emergency lighting.** Confirm passenger-area, step, aisle, and emergency lights operate properly and provide adequate visibility.
- ☐ **Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces.** Maintain a regular cleaning schedule for handrails, armrests, controls, and other frequently touched areas.
- ☐ **Verify cabin comfort before service.** Confirm the HVAC system maintains a comfortable temperature and consistent airflow for passengers.



Fleet Technology & Telematics Systems

Winter conditions can affect the visibility and performance of cameras, sensors, and other onboard technology. Inspect these systems before winter service and keep exterior components clear of snow, ice, and road debris.

- ☐ **Inspect CMS/ADAS cameras.** Confirm cameras are clean, secure, properly positioned, and free from snow, ice, or other obstructions.
- ☐ **Inspect radar sensors.** Check sensor covers and surrounding areas for damage, buildup, or obstructions that could interfere with operation.
- ☐ **Verify the ABC Connect Telematics System (if equipped).** Confirm the system is connected and reporting vehicle information properly.
- ☐ **Test the Tire Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS).** Verify the system is operating properly and investigate alerts or inaccurate readings.
- ☐ **Check the Wheel-End Monitoring System.** Confirm sensors and monitoring functions are operating properly and address identified alerts or faults.
- ☐ **Update onboard software and GPS mapping.** Install applicable updates to help keep vehicle systems and navigation information current.
- ☐ **Inspect mirrorless camera systems, if equipped.** Clean cameras and displays, check for damage or obstructions, and verify proper operation.
- ☐ **Confirm Wi-Fi connectivity, if installed.** Test the connection and verify onboard Wi-Fi is available and operating properly.



Winterization & Freeze Protection

Freezing temperatures can damage plumbing, fluid systems, and other cold-sensitive components. Complete winterization before sustained cold weather and verify freeze-protection systems remain ready throughout the season.

- ☐ **Test defrosters and window and mirror heaters.** Verify proper operation and confirm heated surfaces and defrosters clear condensation, frost, and ice effectively.
- ☐ **Winterize the restroom/toilet system.** Use the appropriate antifreeze and inspect plumbing, valves, fittings, drain lines, and the holding tank for leaks, damage, or other freeze-related concerns.
- ☐ **Inspect windshield washer nozzles and lines.** Verify proper spray pattern and check lines and nozzles for restrictions, leaks, or freezing.
- ☐ **Fill with winter-rated windshield washer fluid.** Use fluid appropriate for expected operating temperatures and verify adequate levels before vehicles enter service.
- ☐ **Stock appropriate spare winter fluids.** Carry fluids recommended for the vehicle and expected operating conditions, and store them safely and securely.



Turn Winter Readiness Into Reliable Performance

Winter readiness starts with identifying potential issues before they affect your operation. Use your checklist findings to prioritize maintenance, address potential problems early, and plan for the demands of the season ahead.

ABC supports commercial passenger fleets with service, parts, technical expertise, and fleet support resources designed around operators' needs. If your inspection identifies areas that need attention, ABC's service and diagnostic capabilities, mobile service, parts support, and longer-term maintenance resources can help support reliable fleet performance throughout the winter.



**Full-Service Maintenance
& Repairs**



**OEM & ABC Select
Parts Support**



**Nationwide Service
Network**



**24/7 FleetAssist
Support**



Schedule Winter Service

Partner with ABC to help prepare your fleet for the season ahead.

800-222-2871

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