Arizona has remained high on the list of the most intense states for inspection activity through the four years analyzed as part of Overdrive’s ongoing CSA’s Data Trail series, now in its third year.

In the 2011-’12 first analysis, it ranked fourth for inspection intensity. In subsequent years, it dropped to No. 5. The Arizona Department of Public Safety and partner agencies have maintained a dizzying pace of nine inspections per lane-mile per year in recent years.

Significant among partner inspecting agencies statewide are both the Arizona Department of Transportation, with jurisdiction over ports of entry on the major interstates, and the border patrol, says DPS Capt. Brian Preston, lead Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program coordinator. Locals also work the roads: 38 non-DPS agencies are engaged in some degree of commercial motor vehicle inspection, he says.

The vast majority of such inspections are Level 1, covering essentially the full gamut of driver and truck operations. “We have 238 non-DPS people certified to do inspections,” Preston says, with 116 DPS personnel on the beat. DPS troopers account for the majority of on-road activity, with about 66,000 in-
spections of the more than 90,000 total conducted in 2014.

Border enforcement makes up a significant piece of the pie, with about 23,000 inspections conducted there in 2014, or 25 percent of the total. That high well of activity could be a primary reason Arizona also ranks No. 5 nationwide for violations issued per inspection. Along the border, driver and vehicle out-of-service rates are 16 percent and 14 percent, respectively — indicative of more serious (and numerous, says Preston) violations.

As for types of violations, Arizona’s program appears balanced, mostly in line with national averages for any maintenance or moving violations. Looking at violation categories’ shares of total inspections, none rank above No. 18 nationally — but for hours of service.

“We do put a particular focus on a driver’s hours,” says Preston, ranking that a high priority because of fatigue’s role in crashes. “DUI is a big one for us, however many wheels a vehicle has. Seat belt, too, and unsafe driving, generally. And because fatigue directly ties to hours of service, that’s a huge focus.”

Inspectors are encouraged to put more scrutiny on the log book than the truck. If an inspector has to choose between getting the “creeper out to slide under the truck,” Preston says, or “making sure we’ve got a driver that should still be driving, I’d rather focus on the latter.”

Preston cites crash data and the state’s causation determinations showing that there has been no truck-related fatality since 2013 where the direct cause was equipment-related. In injury crashes, only 6 percent are equipment-caused. “That’s why we focus where we do,” he says.

Preston believes that “Arizona is ground zero for 11-hour problems” when analyzing high-volume freight origins and destinations across the region. For certain drivers passing through the state to California and back on Interstate 10, “it’s common to see guys who should have shut down at Blythe,” Calif., near the state line, he says. “But Phoenix is just two hours more. They made it to California and came back, and now they can see the glow of Phoenix on the horizon.”

If that describes you, go on and shut it down, Preston says. If you don’t, an Arizona DPS trooper is highly likely to do it for you.

![Image of state map highlighting inspection hot zones](image-url)