

## Heat-sensing cameras u

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By ROB PIERCY / KING 5 News



The cameras detect heat given off by tires, brakes and other parts of big rigs.

SKAGIT COUNTY, Wash. - At a Skagit County weigh station, a camera that looks like the head of a Star Wars character mounted on a tripod watches an 18-wheeler pass.

Commercial vehicle inspector Dale Kavanagh operates the infra-red camera from a nearby van.

It measure heat given off by tires, brakes and other moving parts on trucks – which helps spot defects or dangerous problems.

"What we do is monitor the brakes and tires of commercial vehicles," Kavanagh said.

A dark wheel could mean a failed brake. A white hot tire?

"If they show an extreme amount of heat on the tires they're under inflated or there is some defect in them," Kavanagh said.

It's a very sensitive piece of equipment that can detect very minor changes in temperature.

"It allows us to look at problems and take action on them before they become disasters," said Kirk Rudeen, of Washington State Patrol.

In May of this year one such disaster happened when a wheel flew off a big rig in Tukwila and killed a man.

Since then there have been similar incidents. Troopers say they're caused by improperly installed wheel assemblies.

They're problems a traditional inspection may not catch, but the camera might.

"if we can get in close enough with the zoom, we can see if they have missing lug nuts or something like that," Kavanagh said.

This year the infra-red camera will inspect more than 50,000 trucks.

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