

Taking the CDL Pre-trip Inspection Test

Class A Pre-trip Inspection Test:

If you are applying for a Class A CDL, you will be required to perform a pre-trip inspection in the vehicle you have brought with you for testing. The vehicle must be a combination vehicle, representative of the unit you will be driving and must meet the class weight requirements. If the vehicle is an air brake vehicle, you must first pass the air brake knowledge test. You also must have passed all applicable endorsement knowledge tests that pertain to the vehicle you bring in for testing. Your test will require an inspection of the areas of the vehicle as instructed by your CDL examiner.

Safe Start:

- Air Gauge:
- Make sure the air gauge is working properly.
- Build air pressure to governor cut-out, roughly 120-140 psi.

Mirrors and Windshield:

- Mirrors should be clean and adjusted properly from the inside.
- Windshield should be clean with no illegal stickers, no obstructions or damage to the glass.

Emergency Equipment:

- Check for spare electrical fuses, unless circuit breaker equipped vehicle.
- Check for three red reflective triangles, six fuses or three liquid burning flares.
- Check for a properly charged and rated fire extinguisher.

Steering Play:

- Play should not exceed 10 degrees (or about 2 inches on a 20-inch wheel).

Wipers/Washers:

- Check that wiper arms and blades are secure, not damaged and operate smoothly.

- If equipped, windshield wipers must operate correctly.
Lights/Reflectors/Reflector Tape Condition (Sides and Rear):
- Test that dash indicators work when corresponding lights are turned on:
 - Left turn signal.
 - Right turn signal.
 - Four-way emergency flashers.
 - High-beam headlight.

- Taillights.
- Backing lights.
- Turn signals.
- Four-way flashers.
- Brake lights.

Note: Checks of brake, turn signal and four-way flasher functions must be done separately.

Pedals:

- Check for obstructions under or around the floor pedals.
- Check for good pedal pad or grooved surface.

Horn:

- Check that the steering wheel horn (city horn) work.

Parking Brake Check:

- Pulling Unit: With the parking brake engaged (trailer brakes released on combination vehicles), check that the parking brake will hold vehicle by gently trying to pull forward with parking brake on.
- Trailer: With the parking brake released and the trailer parking brake engaged (combination vehicles only), check that the trailer parking brake will hold vehicle by gently trying to pull forward with the trailer parking brake on.

- **Air Brake Check (Air Brake Equipped Vehicles Only):**
Failure to perform all areas of the air brake check will result in an automatic failure of the Pre-Trip inspection test. Air brake safety devices vary. However, this procedure is designed to see that any safety device operates correctly as air pressure drops from normal to a low air condition. For safety purposes, in areas where an incline is present, you will use wheel chocks during the air brake check.

The proper procedures for inspecting the air brake system are as follows:

System Leak Check: Shut off the engine, chock your wheels, (if necessary), release the tractor protection valve and parking brake (push in), fully apply the foot brake and hold it for one minute. Check the air gauge to see if the air pressure drops more than 4 pounds in one minute (combination vehicle). After checking the brake with brake applied, release the foot brake and watch the gauges with brake unapplied for one minute. Check to see if the air pressure drops more than 3 pounds in one minute (combination vehicle).

Emergency System Check/Fan Down: Turn electrical power on and begin fanning off the air pressure by rapidly applying and releasing the foot brake. Low air warning devices (buzzer, light, other) should activate before air pressure drops below 60 psi. Continue to fan off the air pressure. Normally within the range of 20-40 psi on a tractor-trailer combination vehicle, the tractor protection valve and parking brake valve should close (pop out). On other combination vehicle types and single vehicle types, the parking brake valve should close (pop out).

Service Brake Check:

- You will be required to check the application of air or hydraulic service brakes. This procedure is designed to determine that the brakes are working correctly and that the vehicle does not pull to one side or the other.
- Pull forward at 5 mph, apply the service brake and stop. Check to see that the vehicle does not pull to either side and that it stops when brake is applied.

External Inspection (All Vehicles)

Suspension — Springs/Air/Torque:

- Look for missing, shifted, cracked or broken leaf springs.
- Look for broken or distorted coil springs.
- If vehicle is equipped with torsion bars, torque arms or other types of suspension components, check that they are not damaged and are mounted securely.
- Look for cracked or broken spring hangers, missing or damaged bushings and broken, loose or missing bolts, u-bolts or other axle mounting parts. (The mounts should be checked at each point where they are secured to the vehicle frame and axle(s)).

Shock Absorbers:

- See that shock absorbers are secure and that there are no leaks.

Note: Be prepared to perform the same suspension components inspection on every axle (power unit and trailer).

Brakes —

Slack Adjustors and Pushrods:

- Look for broken, loose or missing parts.
- For manual slack adjustors, the brake push rods should not move more than one inch (with the brakes released) when pulled by hand.

Brake Chambers:

- See that brake chambers are not leaking, cracked or dented and are mounted securely.

Brake Hoses/Lines:

- Look for cracked, worn, or leaking hoses, lines and couplings.

Drum Brake:

- Check for cracks, dents or holes. Also check for loose or missing bolts.

- Check for contaminants such as debris or oil/grease.
- Brake linings (where visible) should not be worn dangerously thin (no less than 1/4 inch of lining).

Brake Linings:

- On some brake drums, there are openings where the brake linings can be seen from outside the drum. For this type of drum, check that a visible amount of brake lining is showing.

Note: Be prepared to perform the same brake components inspection on every axle (power unit and trailer).

Wheels —

Rims:

- Check for damaged or bent rims. Rims cannot have welding repairs.

Tires:

The following items must be inspected on every tire:

- Tread depth: Check for minimum tread depth (4/32 on steering axle tires and 2/32 on all other tires).
- Tire condition: Check that tread is evenly worn and look for cuts or other damage to tread or sidewalls. Also, make sure that valve caps and stems are not missing, broken or damaged.
- Tire inflation: Check for proper inflation by using a tire gauge or a mallet.
Note: You will not get credit if you simply kick the tires to check for proper inflation.
- That there is no mismatch tires (size and construction).
- Re-grooved or re-capped tires not permitted on steer tires.

Hub Oil Seals/Axle Seals:

- See that hub oil/grease seals and axle seals are not leaking and, if wheel has a sight glass, oil level is adequate.

Lug Nuts:

- Check that all lug nuts are present, free of cracks and distortions and show no signs of looseness such as rust trails or shiny threads.
- Make sure all bolt holes are not cracked or distorted.

Tractor/Coupling — Air/Electric Lines:

- Listen for air leaks. Check that air hoses and electrical lines are not cut, chafed, spliced or worn (steel braid should not show through).
- Make sure air and electrical lines are not tangled, pinched or dragging against tractor parts.

Trailer — Trailer Front — Air/Electrical Connections:

- Check that trailer air connectors are sealed and in good condition.
- Make sure glad hands are locked in place, free of damage and oil/grease that can cause air leaks.
- Make sure the trailer electrical plug is firmly seated and locked in place.

Frame:

- Look for cracks, broken welds, holes or other damage to the frame, cross members, box and floor.

Fuel Tank(s):

- See that fuel tank(s) are secure with no leaks from tank(s) or lines.

Battery/Box:

- Check that battery box and cover or door is not damaged and is secure.