

CDL Class A Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. Which of the following best describes a combination vehicle?**
 - A. A vehicle with a trailer that is 10,000 pounds or less**
 - B. A vehicle that tows another vehicle**
 - C. A vehicle over 26,000 pounds that tows any weight**
 - D. A motorcycle towing a sidecar**

- 2. Why should the trailer hand brake not be used to straighten out a jackknifing trailer?**
 - A. It might cause the trailer to gain speed**
 - B. It will worsen the jackknifing situation**
 - C. It helps to realign the trailer**
 - D. It does not affect traction**

- 3. What should you do to verify that the trailer brakes operate correctly?**
 - A. Apply the trailer hand brake while parked on a hill**
 - B. Ensure that the trailer rolls freely before applying any brakes**
 - C. Charge the air system and check the braking action**
 - D. Test the brakes only when the vehicle is fully loaded**

- 4. True or False: If you are away from your vehicle for a short time, you do not need to use the parking brake.**
 - A. True**
 - B. False**
 - C. Only for automatic vehicles**
 - D. It is optional in all cases**

- 5. What is a "double" in trucking terminology?**
 - A. A vehicle that has two trailers attached**
 - B. A truck with dual rear wheels**
 - C. A type of heavy-duty tow truck**
 - D. A vehicle designed for off-road driving**

- 6. When checking for air flow to trailers, what is the significance of the service line valve?**
- A. It prevents air from reaching the brakes**
 - B. It allows air pressure to be tested through all trailers**
 - C. It isolates the trailer from the tractor**
 - D. It automatically charges the trailer's air system**
- 7. What are spring brakes primarily used for?**
- A. Acceleration**
 - B. Emergency and parking brakes**
 - C. Regular driving speed control**
 - D. Towing other vehicles**
- 8. How do you verify the functionality of the service brakes during a moving test?**
- A. By engaging the hand brake at high speeds**
 - B. By monitoring the tachometer readings**
 - C. By moving the vehicle forward slowly and applying the hand brake**
 - D. By checking the air supply continuously**
- 9. Which of the following is a common defect in the suspension system?**
- A. Cracked or broken spring hangers**
 - B. Leaking fuel tanks**
 - C. Worn brake pads**
 - D. Faulty electrical systems**
- 10. How should you use in-vehicle communication equipment safely?**
- A. Only use it while driving**
 - B. Use it for long conversations**
 - C. Find a place to pull over and keep conversations short**
 - D. Do not use it at all**

Answers

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1. C
2. B
3. C
4. B
5. A
6. B
7. B
8. C
9. A
10. C

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Explanations

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1. Which of the following best describes a combination vehicle?

- A. A vehicle with a trailer that is 10,000 pounds or less**
- B. A vehicle that tows another vehicle**
- C. A vehicle over 26,000 pounds that tows any weight**
- D. A motorcycle towing a sidecar**

A combination vehicle is defined as a motor vehicle that consists of a combination of two or more vehicles, such as a tractor and a trailer, or a truck and a trailer. The key to categorizing a combination vehicle is the weight of the vehicle being towed, which is generally significant. In this context, the correct answer signifies that a combination vehicle is over 26,000 pounds when the weight of the towing vehicle is taken into account, regardless of the weight of the vehicle being towed. This classification is important for understanding licensing requirements and safety regulations. A vehicle with a weight over 26,000 pounds typically requires a CDL to operate, ensuring that the driver is trained and qualified to handle such a large and potentially complex vehicle. The other choices do not accurately capture the legal definition of a combination vehicle. For instance, a vehicle towing another vehicle or a setup with a trailer weighing 10,000 pounds or less might not meet the specific requirements for what constitutes a combination vehicle within regulatory frameworks. Similarly, a motorcycle towing a sidecar does not fit the definition of a combination vehicle as it involves a fundamentally different vehicle type and typically does not require the same level of licensing or training.

2. Why should the trailer hand brake not be used to straighten out a jackknifing trailer?

- A. It might cause the trailer to gain speed**
- B. It will worsen the jackknifing situation**
- C. It helps to realign the trailer**
- D. It does not affect traction**

Using the trailer hand brake to straighten out a jackknifing trailer is inadvisable because it can exacerbate the jackknifing situation. In the event of a jackknife, the angle between the cab and the trailer becomes too sharp, which leads to instability and potential loss of control. Engaging the trailer hand brake can actually increase the angle of the jackknife, making the situation worse by causing the rear wheels of the trailer to lock up. This locking can prevent the trailer from following the path of the towing vehicle, leading to further loss of control and increasing the risk of a rollover or additional accidents. The dynamics of a jackknife situation already introduce severe instability; applying the hand brake disrupts the natural corrective forces that could help realign the trailer. Instead, the focus should be on steering and accelerating gently to straighten the rig. Understanding this principle is crucial for safe driving and for managing emergency situations effectively.

3. What should you do to verify that the trailer brakes operate correctly?

- A. Apply the trailer hand brake while parked on a hill**
- B. Ensure that the trailer rolls freely before applying any brakes**
- C. Charge the air system and check the braking action**
- D. Test the brakes only when the vehicle is fully loaded**

To verify that the trailer brakes operate correctly, it is essential to charge the air system and check the braking action. The air system must be adequately charged with air pressure to ensure the brake components work effectively. This involves checking that the air compressor reaches the required pressure before testing the brakes since proper air pressure is crucial for the brakes to function as designed. After charging the system, you can perform a brake test by applying the brakes and monitoring their response. This step ensures that there are no leaks in the air system and that the trailer brakes engage and release properly. This systematic approach helps identify any issues with the braking system, which is vital for safety while operating a heavy vehicle. Other options, while they may relate to certain aspects of brake function, do not provide a thorough assessment of the brakes' operational readiness. The process of charging the air system is an initial step that directly correlates with the effectiveness of the trailer brakes and should always be done before proceeding with a practical braking test.

4. True or False: If you are away from your vehicle for a short time, you do not need to use the parking brake.

- A. True**
- B. False**
- C. Only for automatic vehicles**
- D. It is optional in all cases**

Using the parking brake when leaving a vehicle, even for a short time, is essential for safety and stability. The parking brake helps to prevent the vehicle from rolling, especially on inclines or uneven surfaces. If the vehicle is left in gear or in 'park' mode without the parking brake engaged, there is a risk that the vehicle could shift or roll, potentially causing damage to property or endangering lives. This safety practice is critical, regardless of whether the vehicle is manual or automatic. Engaging the parking brake is a standard protocol that ensures that the vehicle remains stationary while unattended. It demonstrates responsible vehicle management and adherence to safety regulations.

5. What is a "double" in trucking terminology?

- A. A vehicle that has two trailers attached**
- B. A truck with dual rear wheels**
- C. A type of heavy-duty tow truck**
- D. A vehicle designed for off-road driving**

In trucking terminology, a "double" refers to a configuration where a vehicle has two trailers attached, commonly known as a double trailer truck. This setup is used to increase the cargo capacity and efficiency of the transport process. The primary advantage of using double trailers is that it allows for the transportation of more goods in one trip compared to a standard single trailer. This is particularly beneficial for long hauls and can help reduce the number of trips needed to move a certain amount of freight. Understanding this terminology is vital for CDL holders, as driving a double requires specific knowledge about handling longer vehicles, turning radius, and overall maneuverability on the road. This might involve ensuring adherence to specific regulations regarding double trailer combinations, which can vary by state or federal laws. The other options refer to different aspects of trucking and vehicle configurations but do not accurately define what a "double" is within the context of trailer setups. For example, a truck with dual rear wheels does enhance stability and load distribution but is not specific to having two trailers. Similarly, a heavy-duty tow truck and an off-road vehicle have distinct functions that do not involve the configuration of trailers.

6. When checking for air flow to trailers, what is the significance of the service line valve?

- A. It prevents air from reaching the brakes**
- B. It allows air pressure to be tested through all trailers**
- C. It isolates the trailer from the tractor**
- D. It automatically charges the trailer's air system**

The service line valve plays a crucial role in the functioning of the air brake system for trailers. Its primary significance is that it allows air pressure to be tested through all trailers, ensuring that the air supply is adequate for the operation of the trailer's braking system. When the service line valve is functioning properly, it ensures that air flows from the tractor to the trailer, allowing the brake system to engage effectively when needed. This flow of air is essential not only for regular braking but also for checking the system during pre-trip inspections. By ensuring that the air pressure is present throughout the entire system, the driver can confirm that the brakes on all trailers connected to the tractor will function properly when required. Understanding how this valve operates additionally informs drivers about what to monitor during routine checks, enhancing overall safety and performance. Proper knowledge of system components like the service line valve reinforces the importance of thorough inspections and maintenance of the air brake system in commercial vehicles.

7. What are spring brakes primarily used for?

- A. Acceleration
- B. Emergency and parking brakes**
- C. Regular driving speed control
- D. Towing other vehicles

Spring brakes are primarily used as emergency and parking brakes in commercial vehicles. They utilize a powerful spring mechanism that engages the brakes when the air pressure in the brake system drops below a specific threshold. This design ensures that the brakes activate automatically in emergency situations, such as when there's an air system failure, ensuring that the vehicle remains stationary and preventing it from rolling away. In addition to serving as an emergency measure, spring brakes are also extensively utilized for parking. When the vehicle is parked, the spring brakes can be engaged to securely hold the vehicle in place, providing safety and stability. This dual functionality is critical for the safe operation of heavy-duty vehicles, as it offers assurance that the vehicle will not inadvertently move while parked or during an unexpected loss of air pressure. The other options do not accurately represent the primary function of spring brakes. They are not designed for acceleration, regular driving speed control, or towing, which involves different braking or traction systems. Thus, identifying their role as emergency and parking brakes encapsulates their fundamental importance in commercial vehicle safety.

8. How do you verify the functionality of the service brakes during a moving test?

- A. By engaging the hand brake at high speeds
- B. By monitoring the tachometer readings
- C. By moving the vehicle forward slowly and applying the hand brake**
- D. By checking the air supply continuously

Verifying the functionality of the service brakes during a moving test is essential for ensuring safety while operating a vehicle. The correct method involves moving the vehicle forward slowly and applying the hand brake. This process allows the driver to assess how effectively the service brakes are functioning in a controlled environment. When the vehicle is in motion, applying the hand brake will engage the brakes and provide immediate feedback on their responsiveness. By slowly moving the vehicle, you can better gauge whether the brakes are engaging properly without risking loss of control. This action also allows the driver to feel the brake response and determine if the braking system is functioning as intended, ensuring it meets safety standards before operating the vehicle under more demanding conditions. Other choices do not provide a practical approach for checking service brake functionality. For instance, engaging the hand brake at high speeds could lead to loss of control and potential accidents, while monitoring tachometer readings doesn't assess brake effectiveness directly. Checking the air supply continuously, while important for air brake systems, does not directly verify the act of braking itself.

9. Which of the following is a common defect in the suspension system?

- A. Cracked or broken spring hangers**
- B. Leaking fuel tanks**
- C. Worn brake pads**
- D. Faulty electrical systems**

A common defect in the suspension system is cracked or broken spring hangers. Spring hangers are crucial components that support the leaf springs and maintain proper alignment of the axle. When spring hangers are cracked or broken, it can lead to a misalignment of the suspension and affect the overall handling and stability of the vehicle. This may result in excessive wear on tires, alignment issues, and can even compromise the safety of the vehicle by leading to a potential failure of the suspension system during operation. The other options, while important issues to address, are not related to the suspension system. Leaking fuel tanks pertain to the fuel system, worn brake pads affect the braking system, and faulty electrical systems relate to any electrical components within the vehicle. Hence, recognizing the significance of spring hangers in the suspension system helps in maintaining vehicle safety and performance.

10. How should you use in-vehicle communication equipment safely?

- A. Only use it while driving**
- B. Use it for long conversations**
- C. Find a place to pull over and keep conversations short**
- D. Do not use it at all**

Using in-vehicle communication equipment safely is essential to maintain focus on driving and ensure the safety of all road users. Finding a place to pull over and keeping conversations short is the best approach because it minimizes distractions that could lead to accidents. When you stop in a safe and designated area, you can divert your attention to the conversation without compromising your ability to operate the vehicle safely. This method prioritizes both safety and effective communication. Engaging in lengthy conversations while driving can significantly distract you from your primary responsibility of controlling the vehicle. Similarly, exclusively using communication devices while driving is risky, as it takes your attention away from the road. It is also important to acknowledge that completely avoiding the use of such equipment is not practical or necessary; rather, the focus should be on finding a balance that allows for communication without jeopardizing safety.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://cdl-class-a.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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