

CDL Pre-trip Inspection Practice Exam (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

- 1. What should be checked with the electrical line in a pre-trip inspection?**
 - A. It should have slack to ensure flexibility**
 - B. It must be unplugged for maintenance checks**
 - C. It should be completely loose for easy access**
 - D. It can be worn out as long as it functions**
- 2. What is the acceptable condition for the tie rod during an inspection?**
 - A. It should be bent**
 - B. It must not be overly tight**
 - C. It should not be bent or broken**
 - D. It can be damaged**
- 3. What condition should the rim be in according to pre-trip inspections?**
 - A. Not cracked, bent, or welded on**
 - B. Be cracked and bent**
 - C. Have a loose bead**
 - D. Should be coming apart**
- 4. What should be the condition of the steering column or shaft during an inspection?**
 - A. Bent or broken**
 - B. Loose or wobbly**
 - C. Not bent or broken**
 - D. Rusty and corroded**
- 5. How do you properly check the trailer lights during inspection?**
 - A. Activate the lights and observe from the side**
 - B. Activate the lights and walk behind to check functionality**
 - C. Use a tester device to check each light**
 - D. Perform a visual inspection without activating them**

- 6. What should be checked about the air lines during a pre-trip inspection?**
- A. They should be unchanged since the last check**
 - B. All connections should be loose for flexibility**
 - C. No leaks; not cut, frayed, or rubbing anything**
 - D. Air lines can be painted for visibility**
- 7. What is the minimum tread depth for steering wheels found in a pre-trip inspection?**
- A. 2/32 inch**
 - B. 4/32 inch**
 - C. 6/32 inch**
 - D. 8/32 inch**
- 8. What should be ensured about back doors on a trailer?**
- A. They should have holes for ventilation**
 - B. They must be closed securely, locked, and latched**
 - C. They can be open if not in motion**
 - D. They are not required to be locked**
- 9. How are spring brakes checked?**
- A. By visually inspecting them only**
 - B. Engage and release them, checking for proper operation without dragging**
 - C. Using an electronic diagnostic tool**
 - D. By tapping them lightly with a hammer**
- 10. Under what condition should fluid levels be topped off before a trip?**
- A. If they are at maximum levels**
 - B. If they are below the manufacturer's recommended minimum**
 - C. If they appear dirty or contaminated**
 - D. If the vehicle is 5 years old or older**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What should be checked with the electrical line in a pre-trip inspection?

- A. It should have slack to ensure flexibility**
- B. It must be unplugged for maintenance checks**
- C. It should be completely loose for easy access**
- D. It can be worn out as long as it functions**

During a pre-trip inspection, checking the electrical line is crucial for the safe operation of the vehicle. The correct response emphasizes that the electrical line should have slack to ensure flexibility. This is important because sufficient slack allows the line to move with the vehicle without putting undue strain on the connections, which can lead to wear, damage, or disconnection during operation. Maintaining flexibility in the electrical line reduces the risk of breakage from stress caused by the vehicle's movement, especially during turns or uneven terrain. Furthermore, an electrical line that is too tight may pull on connectors and lead to malfunctions, posing safety hazards. The other choices suggest practices that could lead to operational issues. For instance, unplugging the electrical line for maintenance checks is not typically necessary and should be done according to specific maintenance protocols rather than as a standard check. A loose electrical line could cause disconnections and may not be safe, while allowing a worn-out line to function is counterproductive and could lead to electrical failures or safety incidents.

2. What is the acceptable condition for the tie rod during an inspection?

- A. It should be bent**
- B. It must not be overly tight**
- C. It should not be bent or broken**
- D. It can be damaged**

The acceptable condition for the tie rod during an inspection is that it should not be bent or broken. The tie rod plays a crucial role in steering and suspension systems, linking the steering box to the steering knuckle. A bent or broken tie rod can compromise the vehicle's handling and safety, leading to potential loss of control while driving. Therefore, ensuring that the tie rod is straight and intact is vital to maintain the vehicle's steering accuracy and overall driving safety. This condition emphasizes the importance of structural integrity for critical components, as any deformity could lead to catastrophic failures while on the road. A tie rod that is free from damage ensures reliable function and contributes to the safe operation of the vehicle.

3. What condition should the rim be in according to pre-trip inspections?

A. Not cracked, bent, or welded on

B. Be cracked and bent

C. Have a loose bead

D. Should be coming apart

The condition of the rim is crucial during pre-trip inspections because it directly impacts the safety and performance of the vehicle while on the road. The correct answer emphasizes that the rim should not be cracked, bent, or welded on. A rim in good condition is vital for maintaining tire integrity and ensuring that the vehicle can handle the stresses of driving, such as cornering and braking forces. A rim that has cracks or bends could compromise its ability to support the tire correctly, leading to potential tire blowouts or loss of control of the vehicle. Welding on a rim is particularly concerning because it can weaken the structure and lead to failures under pressure. In contrast, the other options describe conditions that pose significant risks. Cracked and bent rims can fail unexpectedly, loose beads might cause a tire to unseat, and rims that are coming apart are a clear sign of imminent failure, which could lead to accidents. Ensuring that the rim is in proper condition is a fundamental aspect of a comprehensive pre-trip inspection.

4. What should be the condition of the steering column or shaft during an inspection?

A. Bent or broken

B. Loose or wobbly

C. Not bent or broken

D. Rusty and corroded

The condition of the steering column or shaft is crucial for vehicle safety and handling. During an inspection, it is essential that the steering column or shaft is not bent or broken. A straight and intact steering column ensures that the driver can maintain proper control of the vehicle, which is vital for maneuvering and responding to road conditions. A bent or broken steering mechanism can lead to steering failure, making it difficult to direct the vehicle accurately. This could result in hazardous driving situations, such as loss of control or accidents. Maintaining a steering column in good condition is part of ensuring the overall reliability and safety of the vehicle. Therefore, confirming that the steering column or shaft is intact and does not show signs of damage is a primary component of a thorough pre-trip inspection.

5. How do you properly check the trailer lights during inspection?

- A. Activate the lights and observe from the side**
- B. Activate the lights and walk behind to check functionality**
- C. Use a tester device to check each light**
- D. Perform a visual inspection without activating them**

To properly check the trailer lights during an inspection, the appropriate method involves activating the lights and walking behind the trailer to verify that each light functions correctly. This method allows you to visually confirm that all lights, including turn signals, brake lights, and marker lights, are operational while also checking for any faults such as burnt-out bulbs or misalignment. Seeing the lights while positioned behind the trailer provides a clear view of how they operate in real time. This hands-on approach is crucial for ensuring safety, as it allows the driver to confirm the visibility of the lights from the rear of the vehicle, which is important for communication with other drivers on the road. Other methods, while they can provide insight into the condition of the lights, do not guarantee the comprehensive checks needed for a safe driving experience. A visual inspection without activating them wouldn't confirm if the lights are functioning. Activating the lights and observing from the side might not give a complete view of all the lights' operations and could potentially miss issues that are only visible from the rear. Using a tester device to check each light can be effective but may not replicate the conditions under which the lights will actually function while driving. Thus, actively walking behind the trailer after activation is the most thorough and practical approach.

6. What should be checked about the air lines during a pre-trip inspection?

- A. They should be unchanged since the last check**
- B. All connections should be loose for flexibility**
- C. No leaks; not cut, frayed, or rubbing anything**
- D. Air lines can be painted for visibility**

During a pre-trip inspection, it is crucial to ensure that the air lines are in good condition to maintain the safety and functionality of the vehicle's braking system. The correct focus is on checking for leaks, signs of wear, such as cuts or fraying, and ensuring that the air lines are not rubbing against any other components, which could lead to damage over time. No leaks indicate that the air system can maintain pressure effectively, which is vital for reliable braking. Cuts and fraying can expose the inner parts of the air lines to wear and failure, potentially causing air loss and compromising the braking system. Additionally, ensuring that the air lines are not rubbing against other parts helps prevent premature wear and potential failure during operation. The other choices present misunderstandings regarding the condition and management of air lines. Monitoring for change and flexibility in connections would not address the fundamental requirement that air lines must be securely connected and undamaged. Painting air lines for visibility is not a standard practice nor an effective method of inspection; visible damage or potential issues should always be identified without the distraction of paint.

7. What is the minimum tread depth for steering wheels found in a pre-trip inspection?

- A. 2/32 inch
- B. 4/32 inch**
- C. 6/32 inch
- D. 8/32 inch

The minimum tread depth for steering wheels during a pre-trip inspection is indeed 4/32 inch. This specification is crucial for ensuring safe vehicle operation, as the tread depth directly affects traction and handling, especially in wet or slippery conditions. Adequate tread depth helps prevent hydroplaning and allows the tires to grip the road effectively, promoting better control of the vehicle. When performing a pre-trip inspection, it's essential to check this aspect of the tires because steering wheels are critical for directing the vehicle. If the tread is worn below the minimum depth, it compromises safety, which is why regulations set this specific benchmark. Maintaining proper tread depth is not only a matter of safety but also a legal requirement for commercial drivers, ensuring that they meet safety standards and can maneuver their vehicles safely in various driving conditions.

8. What should be ensured about back doors on a trailer?

- A. They should have holes for ventilation
- B. They must be closed securely, locked, and latched**
- C. They can be open if not in motion
- D. They are not required to be locked

Ensuring that the back doors of a trailer are closed securely, locked, and latched is crucial for several reasons. First and foremost, properly securing the doors helps prevent cargo from shifting, spilling, or falling out while the vehicle is in motion, thereby protecting both the load and the safety of other vehicles on the road. In addition, when doors are locked and latched, they help deter unauthorized access to the cargo, reducing the risk of theft or tampering. This is especially important for valuable or sensitive items being transported. Locking and latching the doors is also a critical part of a pre-trip inspection, as it reflects compliance with regulations and standards for safe vehicle operation. Ensuring the integrity of these securing mechanisms helps promote safe driving practices and mitigates potential accidents or incidents that could arise from unsecured cargo. Overall, confirming that the back doors are adequately fastened is essential for maintaining safety and efficiency in transporting goods.

9. How are spring brakes checked?

- A. By visually inspecting them only
- B. Engage and release them, checking for proper operation without dragging**
- C. Using an electronic diagnostic tool
- D. By tapping them lightly with a hammer

The correct approach to checking spring brakes involves engaging and releasing them to ensure that they operate correctly without dragging. This procedure is critical since it confirms that the brakes are functioning as intended under conditions that might be encountered in real driving situations. By engaging the brakes, the driver can assess if they hold the vehicle securely, while releasing them allows for an evaluation of the disengagement process. Observing for dragging is also important as it indicates that the brakes are not fully releasing, which could lead to overheating or uneven wear. Visual inspections alone do not provide a complete assessment of the brakes' operational functionality, as they may appear to be intact but still fail to engage or release properly under stress. Using an electronic diagnostic tool may be useful for other systems but is not the standard method for checking spring brake operation. Tapping them with a hammer does not give any reliable information about their condition or operational status and could potentially cause damage. Thus, the method of engaging and releasing the brakes is the most effective and thorough way to ensure their proper function during pre-trip inspections.

10. Under what condition should fluid levels be topped off before a trip?

- A. If they are at maximum levels
- B. If they are below the manufacturer's recommended minimum**
- C. If they appear dirty or contaminated
- D. If the vehicle is 5 years old or older

Topping off fluid levels before a trip is critical for ensuring safe vehicle operation. The best practice is to check the fluid levels against the manufacturer's recommended minimum. If the fluid levels are below this minimum, it can lead to potential engine problems or failures during operation. Fluids such as oil, coolant, and brake fluid need to be at adequate levels to ensure that systems function properly and to prevent overheating, diminished performance, or safety issues. While other options may appear relevant, they do not address the primary concern of maintaining optimal operational conditions. For instance, topping off fluids when they are at maximum levels isn't necessary, as this could lead to overfilling, causing potential leaks or system damage. Similarly, simply identifying dirty or contaminated fluid may indicate the need for a change rather than just a top-off. The age of the vehicle may not inherently require fluid levels to be topped off but could inform maintenance schedules or checks instead.

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://cdlpretripinspection.examzify.com>

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