Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide

BY EXAMZIFY

Everything you need from our exam experts!

Sample study guide. For the full version with hundreds of questions, visit:
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Table of Contents

Copyright 1
Table of Contents 2
Introduction 3
How to Use This Guide 4
Questions 5
Answers 8
Explanations 10
Next Steps 16

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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.

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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!

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Questions

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1. **When traveling at 55 MPH in good conditions, how long does it take to stop your vehicle?**
   - **A. About 9 seconds**
   - **B. About 3 seconds**
   - **C. About 5 seconds**
   - **D. About 6 seconds**

2. **Which statement about downshifting while driving is NOT accurate?**
   - **A. Downshift when approaching a hill**
   - **B. Downshift before entering a curve**
   - **C. Downshift when you get to the bottom of a hill**
   - **D. Downshift to maintain control during braking**

3. **By how much should you reduce your speed on wet roads?**
   - **A. By one-fourth**
   - **B. By one-third**
   - **C. By half**
   - **D. No adjustment is needed if you have good tires**

4. **What is the correct following distance for a large truck?**
   - **A. At least 2 seconds behind the vehicle in front**
   - **B. At least 3 seconds behind the vehicle in front**
   - **C. At least 4 seconds behind the vehicle in front**
   - **D. At least 5 seconds behind the vehicle in front**

5. **Which type of vehicle has the longest stopping distance?**
   - **A. Loaded truck**
   - **B. Bobtail tractor**
   - **C. Passenger car**
   - **D. Bus**

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6. To check the free play of manual slack adjusters on s-cam brakes, what should you do?

- **A. Park on a slope and engage the brakes**
- **B. Park on level ground, chock the wheels, and release the parking brakes**
- **C. Drive backwards and check the resistance**
- **D. Inspect while the truck is moving**

7. What is the warning air pressure level in the service air tank that a driver needs to watch for?

- **A. 50 psi**
- **B. 60 psi**
- **C. 70 psi**
- **D. 80 psi**

8. What type of medications are especially concerning for drivers due to potential impairment?

- **A. Non-prescription medications**
- **B. Medications that cause drowsiness or impair ability**
- **C. Vitamins and supplements**
- **D. All types of medications are equally safe**

9. What signifies a "washout" condition on a road?

- **A. A sudden traffic stop**
- **B. A washed-out shoulder or surface that reduces stability and control**
- **C. An area marked with road construction signs**
- **D. A detour due to flooding**

10. What is the legal way for trucks and buses to hold their parking or emergency brakes?

- **A. Mechanical locks**
- **B. Air pressure**
- **C. Hydraulic pressure**
- **D. Electric current**

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Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. When traveling at 55 MPH in good conditions, how long does it take to stop your vehicle?

A. About 9 seconds

B. About 3 seconds

C. About 5 seconds

D. About 6 seconds

When traveling at 55 MPH, the time it takes to stop a vehicle depends on a variety of factors such as reaction time, braking distance, and road conditions. Under good conditions, the average reaction time for a driver is about 1.5 seconds. During this reaction time, the vehicle continues to move forward, covering a distance based on its speed. After the reaction time, the actual braking distance must be calculated, which varies with speed and braking efficiency. For a vehicle traveling at 55 MPH, the stopping distance typically includes both the distance covered during the driver's reaction time and the distance taken to come to a complete stop. When both components are considered, the overall stopping distance translates into a stopping time of approximately 6 seconds in total. This time frame can reflect the average and expected scenario for a driver traveling under safe conditions. Choosing the duration of about 6 seconds effectively considers both the initial reaction time and the necessary braking, making it the most accurate option for this scenario.

2. Which statement about downshifting while driving is NOT accurate?

A. Downshift when approaching a hill

B. Downshift before entering a curve

C. Downshift when you get to the bottom of a hill

D. Downshift to maintain control during braking

Downshifting at the bottom of a hill is generally not considered a good practice because it can lead to a loss of control. When reaching the bottom of a hill, vehicles typically begin to gain speed due to gravity, and downshifting at this moment may not provide the necessary engine braking to help slow the vehicle down effectively. Instead, it's preferable to downshift when approaching a hill or a curve, as this allows the driver to maintain better control and use engine braking to aid in deceleration when needed. Therefore, understanding the right moments to downshift is vital for maintaining safe vehicle operation.

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3. By how much should you reduce your speed on wet roads?

A. By one-fourth

B. By one-third

C. By half

D. No adjustment is needed if you have good tires

Reducing your speed by one-third on wet roads is based on the principle of maintaining control and ensuring safety while driving. When roads are wet, the traction between the tires and the road surface diminishes, increasing the likelihood of skidding and losing control of the vehicle. A reduction of one-third of your speed allows for a safer reaction time and enhances the ability to maneuver in emergency situations. This specific reduction percentage provides a more substantial adjustment compared to the other options, as it accounts for not just the potential for skidding, but also takes into consideration the reduced visibility and the longer stopping distance required on wet surfaces. High speeds can lead to hydroplaning, where the tires lose contact with the road due to water build-up, making it crucial to adjust speed significantly. While having good tires can improve traction to some extent, it does not eliminate the need for caution in wet conditions. Slowing down appropriately is a fundamental practice for safe driving, regardless of tire quality.

4. What is the correct following distance for a large truck?

A. At least 2 seconds behind the vehicle in front

B. At least 3 seconds behind the vehicle in front

C. At least 4 seconds behind the vehicle in front

D. At least 5 seconds behind the vehicle in front

The correct following distance for a large truck is at least 4 seconds behind the vehicle in front. This recommendation is based on the understanding that large trucks require more time and distance to stop safely compared to smaller vehicles due to their size and weight. A 4-second following distance provides adequate space to react to sudden stops or emergencies ahead. It allows drivers enough time to perceive what is happening in front of them, assess the situation, and apply the brakes appropriately. This distance also accounts for factors such as road conditions, weather, and the truck's load, which can all impact braking distance. Additionally, when maintaining this following distance, it is essential to adjust for factors like high speeds or adverse weather conditions, where even more space may be necessary to ensure safety. Adopting a 4-second rule helps enhance safety for both truck drivers and other road users.

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5. Which type of vehicle has the longest stopping distance?

A. Loaded truck

B. Bobtail tractor

C. Passenger car

D. Bus

The vehicle with the longest stopping distance is typically the loaded truck. This is mainly due to its weight; when fully loaded, a truck weighs significantly more than other types of vehicles. The higher weight increases the momentum and requires a greater force to stop, resulting in a longer stopping distance. Loaded trucks are also designed with larger brakes to account for the extra weight, but the braking force still cannot compensate for the mass during emergency situations. In contrast, bobtail tractors, which are trucks without a trailer, may have shorter stopping distances compared to fully loaded trucks because they are lighter. Passenger cars and buses, while also large, do not approach the same weight as a fully loaded truck, making their stopping distances shorter. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for safe driving, particularly for commercial drivers, as they must be aware of how the weight of their vehicle affects stopping distance and overall control.

6. To check the free play of manual slack adjusters on s-cam brakes, what should you do?

A. Park on a slope and engage the brakes

B. Park on level ground, chock the wheels, and release the parking brakes

C. Drive backwards and check the resistance

D. Inspect while the truck is moving

To check the free play of manual slack adjusters on s-cam brakes, parking on level ground, chocking the wheels, and releasing the parking brakes is the appropriate procedure. This method ensures safety and accuracy during the inspection. By parking on level ground, you prevent the vehicle from rolling, which might cause an accident or injury during the inspection. Chocking the wheels adds an additional layer of safety, stabilizing the vehicle and preventing any unintended movement. Releasing the parking brakes allows the slack adjusters to operate freely, providing a clear view of the free play to be monitored. This is crucial, as it allows for an accurate measurement of the slack adjuster's adjustment, ensuring that they function correctly and maintain proper brake performance. Other methods, such as parking on a slope or inspecting while the truck is moving, do not provide a safe environment to check the slack adjuster's play properly. Driving backwards or having the truck in motion complicates the process and can lead to unsafe conditions, making it difficult to evaluate the slack adjusters accurately.

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7. What is the warning air pressure level in the service air tank that a driver needs to watch for?

A. 50 psi

B. 60 psi

C. 70 psi

D. 80 psi

The warning air pressure level in the service air tank that drivers need to monitor is indeed 60 psi. This is an important threshold because it signals to the driver that the air pressure has dropped to a point where the braking system may not function effectively. When the pressure falls to this level, a warning light or buzzer will typically activate, alerting the driver to take action, such as ensuring there is enough air pressure before continuing driving or safely stopping the vehicle to address the issue. In commercial vehicles, maintaining the correct air pressure is crucial for safe braking, and understanding this warning level is part of responsible vehicle operation to prevent accidents due to brake failure.

8. What type of medications are especially concerning for drivers due to potential impairment?

A. Non-prescription medications

B. Medications that cause drowsiness or impair ability

C. Vitamins and supplements

D. All types of medications are equally safe

Medications that cause drowsiness or impair ability are particularly concerning for drivers because they can significantly affect the person's alertness, reaction times, and overall ability to operate a vehicle safely. Many medications, including certain prescription drugs and some over-the-counter options, contain active ingredients that may lead to sedation or cognitive impairment. This encompasses pain relievers, antihistamines, anti-anxiety medications, and sleep aids, among others, which can hinder a driver's capacity to respond to changing road conditions or make quick decisions necessary for safe driving. The implications of driving while under the influence of impairing medications can lead to accidents, injuries, or fatalities, therefore understanding the effects of such medications is crucial for anyone behind the wheel. Recognizing potential impairment from these types of medications is an important aspect of safe driving practices, which includes consulting with healthcare professionals about any medications being taken and their effects.

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9. What signifies a "washout" condition on a road?

A. A sudden traffic stop

B. A washed-out shoulder or surface that reduces stability and control

C. An area marked with road construction signs

D. A detour due to flooding

A "washout" condition on a road refers specifically to a washed-out shoulder or surface that can significantly reduce stability and control for vehicles. This condition occurs when water erodes the roadway or shoulder, often due to heavy rainfall or flooding, leading to a loss of road material and the potential for deep ruts or holes. Such conditions can create dangerous driving situations, as a vehicle may lose traction or experience difficulty in maneuvering if the roadway is compromised. It's crucial for drivers to recognize these conditions because they can lead to accidents or vehicle damage if not navigated carefully. In contrast, sudden traffic stops, construction signs, and detours due to flooding pertain to different roadway issues and do not specifically indicate the instability associated with a washout condition.

10. What is the legal way for trucks and buses to hold their parking or emergency brakes?

A. Mechanical locks

B. Air pressure

C. Hydraulic pressure

D. Electric current

The legal and standard method for trucks and buses to hold their parking or emergency brakes is through air pressure. This is particularly true for vehicles equipped with air brakes, which are common in large trucks and buses. When engaged, the air pressure in the brake system acts to apply the brakes, holding the vehicle stationary. Air brakes function by using compressed air to activate the brake mechanism, ensuring reliability and effectiveness in a range of driving conditions. This method is preferred and legally recognized as it is designed to provide a strong and secure means of preventing vehicles from rolling, especially in situations where a vehicle is parked on an incline. Air pressure systems allow for immediate engagement of the brakes and automatic release upon starting the vehicle, ensuring both safety and efficiency. While mechanical locks, hydraulic pressure, and electric current can also be involved in various braking systems, they are not the primary legal means by which heavy-duty vehicles like trucks and buses secure their parking or emergency braking systems. Therefore, the reliance on air pressure is not only standard practice but also aligns with regulatory requirements for ensuring that heavy vehicles can safely hold their position.

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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:

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

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