Mississippi CDL General Knowledge 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. Don’t worry about getting everything right, 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, and take breaks to retain information better.

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.

7. Use Other Tools

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. When should you downshift in automatic transmissions?

A. When accelerating on flat ground.

B. When approaching an intersection.

C. When going down grades.

D. When driving in reverse.

2. What is the FIRST thing you should do if your brakes fail while going down a grade?

A. Apply the handbrake

B. Get off the road as soon as possible

C. Check your mirrors

D. Use your turn signals

3. When backing up, why is it advisable to back towards the driver's side?

A. It is easier to steer.

B. Because you can see better.

C. To avoid blind spots.

D. It aligns better with the lane.

4. What is the correct position of the emergency shut-off valve on the last trailer of a set?

A. Open

B. Closed

C. Partially open

D. Not applicable

5. What is a consequence of not draining air tanks regularly?

A. Improved braking efficiency

B. Air leaks will occur

C. Water condensation could freeze

D. No consequences

6. Should the floor liner for Division 1.1 and 1.2 materials (Explosive A) be stainless steel?

A. Yes, it must be stainless steel

B. No, it must be a non-metallic material

C. No, it must be ferrous material

D. Yes, but only for specific materials

7. Which type of vehicles are more prone to getting stuck on a railroad-highway crossing?

A. Heavy-duty trucks with double trailers

B. Standard passenger vehicles

C. Low Slug Units with a long trailer

D. High-clearance vehicles

8. What is one of the first actions to take at an accident scene to prevent further accidents?

A. Care for the injured

B. Notify authorities

C. Assess the damage

D. Remove vehicles from the road

9. Where are the shut-off valves located on a trailer?

A. On the front of the trailer

B. At the back of trailers used to tow other trailers

C. Underneath the trailer axle

D. Inside the trailer's storage compartment

10. Does ABS compensate for bad brakes or poor brake maintenance?

A. True

B. False

C. Only in emergency situations

D. It depends on the vehicle type

Answers

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

Explanations

1. When should you downshift in automatic transmissions?

A. When accelerating on flat ground.

B. When approaching an intersection.

C. When going down grades.

D. When driving in reverse.

Downshifting in automatic transmissions is particularly important when going down grades. When driving downhill, you want to utilize engine braking to help control your speed and prevent brake overheating. By downshifting, the transmission engages a lower gear, which allows the engine to provide more braking power as it slows the vehicle. This helps maintain a safe speed without over-relying on the brakes, which can lead to brake fade and reduce overall stopping power. On flat ground, accelerating typically does not require downshifting, as the vehicle can maintain speed efficiently in its current gear. Approaching an intersection may require a reduction in speed, but this is typically managed through braking rather than downshifting. Driving in reverse generally involves a specific gear selection rather than downshifting, as the transmission must be in reverse gear to move backward. Thus, downshifting is most crucial when managing speed and control on downhill slopes.

2. What is the FIRST thing you should do if your brakes fail while going down a grade?

A. Apply the handbrake

B. Get off the road as soon as possible

C. Check your mirrors

D. Use your turn signals

When facing brake failure while descending a grade, the first action to take is to get off the road as soon as possible. This response is crucial because it prioritizes safety by preventing further loss of control. A vehicle with failing brakes poses a significant risk not only to the driver but also to others on the roadway. By steering the vehicle off the road, preferably to a safe area like a runaway truck ramp or an open space, you can minimize the chances of a collision and damages. The other options, while they may be relevant in certain contexts, do not directly address the immediate emergency your vehicle is experiencing. Applying the handbrake or using methods such as checking mirrors or turn signals would not effectively mitigate the risks associated with brake failure. Instead, the focus should be on gaining control of the situation and guiding the vehicle away from traffic and potential hazards.

3. When backing up, why is it advisable to back towards the driver's side?

A. It is easier to steer.

B. Because you can see better.

C. To avoid blind spots.

D. It aligns better with the lane.

Backing up towards the driver's side is advisable primarily because you can see better from that position. When reversing a vehicle, particularly larger ones such as trucks, visibility is crucial to ensure safety and prevent accidents. On the driver's side, the driver has a direct line of sight to the rear and can more easily see nearby obstacles, pedestrians, or other vehicles. This increased visibility allows for better judgment when maneuvering in tight spaces or when close to other potential hazards. In contrast, backing towards the passenger side typically results in greater blind spots and limited visibility of what's behind the vehicle. Thus, backing towards the driver's side enhances safety by allowing the driver to have a clearer perspective of the surroundings during the reverse maneuver, significantly reducing the risk of accidents.

4. What is the correct position of the emergency shut-off valve on the last trailer of a set?

A. Open

B. Closed

C. Partially open

D. Not applicable

The emergency shut-off valve on the last trailer of a set is required to be closed. This is a crucial safety feature designed to prevent the accidental release of dangerous materials in the event of a mishap. By keeping the shut-off valve closed, it ensures that no substances can leak out, which is especially important if the trailer is carrying hazardous materials. The valve helps to control the flow of cargo and is part of the overall safety measures mandated for transporting goods. Keeping this valve closed in the last trailer is a standard operating procedure that enhances safety for both the driver and the general public by minimizing the risk of spills or leaks during transportation. In contrast, having the valve open or partially open could lead to potential hazards, including the risk of exposure or environmental contamination. Therefore, it is essential for operators to always ensure that the emergency shut-off valve is in the correct closed position before transport.

5. What is a consequence of not draining air tanks regularly?

A. Improved braking efficiency

B. Air leaks will occur

C. Water condensation could freeze

D. No consequences

Regularly draining air tanks is crucial for the effective functioning of an air brake system in commercial vehicles. When air tanks are not drained, water that has naturally condensed due to temperature changes remains in the system. This water can accumulate and, in colder weather, it can freeze. When the condensation freezes, it can block the air lines, which may cause braking problems when the driver needs to apply the brakes. If the system has ice, it can prevent the air brakes from operating correctly, posing a significant safety hazard on the road. This highlights the importance of maintaining the air brake system by periodically draining air tanks to prevent water accumulation and the potential freezing that can occur, thereby ensuring reliability and safety in braking performance.

6. Should the floor liner for Division 1.1 and 1.2 materials (Explosive A) be stainless steel?

A. Yes, it must be stainless steel

B. No, it must be a non-metallic material

C. No, it must be ferrous material

D. Yes, but only for specific materials

The correct choice indicates that the floor liner for Division 1.1 and 1.2 materials (Explosive A) must be a non-metallic material. This requirement is primarily based on safety considerations. Non-metallic materials are less likely to produce sparks or react with the explosive substances, reducing the risk of accidental ignition or detonation. Using non-metallic options, such as polyethylene or other synthetic materials, can also improve the overall durability and resistance to chemical reactions that might occur with metals. Stainless steel, while resistant to corrosion, can still pose a risk due to its ability to generate sparks when struck or subjected to impact. Therefore, the use of non-metallic liners is a crucial safety measure in the handling and transportation of explosive materials, ensuring compliance with regulations that prioritize risk mitigation.

7. Which type of vehicles are more prone to getting stuck on a railroad-highway crossing?

A. Heavy-duty trucks with double trailers

B. Standard passenger vehicles

C. Low Slug Units with a long trailer

D. High-clearance vehicles

Low Slug Units with a long trailer are more prone to getting stuck on a railroad-highway crossing due to their design and dimensions. These vehicles typically have a longer and lower profile, which may result in their undercarriage being closer to the ground. When navigating over railroad tracks, particularly if the tracks are elevated or if there are steep approaches, there is a higher risk that the vehicle could bottom out or become lodged. Additionally, these units may struggle more with uneven surfaces often found at crossings, where depressions or misalignments can pose challenges. The long trailer aspect further compounds the issue, as it can create a larger turning radius and may make it harder to maneuver away from tracks if the vehicle begins to get stuck. In contrast, heavy-duty trucks with double trailers and high-clearance vehicles generally have a design purpose and configurations that mitigate the risks associated with crossing railroad tracks. Standard passenger vehicles, while they can face issues at crossings, are less likely to get stuck compared to specialized units designed for cargo.

8. What is one of the first actions to take at an accident scene to prevent further accidents?

A. Care for the injured

B. Notify authorities

C. Assess the damage

D. Remove vehicles from the road

Notifying authorities is a crucial initial action at an accident scene to ensure the safety and proper response procedures. Alerting the relevant authorities, such as law enforcement or emergency services, establishes a chain of command for handling the situation. This helps coordinate medical assistance for the injured and traffic control to prevent additional incidents. While caring for the injured and assessing damage are important, these actions typically follow after the authorities are notified. Removing vehicles may be necessary but should only be done if it can be safely accomplished and in coordination with law enforcement to maintain scene integrity and appropriate documentation. Establishing contact with authorities first can facilitate a structured response, thereby enhancing overall safety for everyone at the scene.

9. Where are the shut-off valves located on a trailer?

A. On the front of the trailer

B. At the back of trailers used to tow other trailers

C. Underneath the trailer axle

D. Inside the trailer's storage compartment

The correct location for shut-off valves on a trailer is at the back of trailers that are used to tow other trailers. This is critical for safety when multiple trailers are connected. The shut-off valves control the flow of various fluids, such as air for the brakes or hydraulic fluid, and are strategically placed for easy access by operators during trailer setup and disconnect. Positioning the shut-off valves at the rear of a trailer allows the driver to manage the connections conveniently while ensuring that they can quickly access them without unnecessary obstructions. This enhances operational efficiency and safety, as the driver can quickly shut off fluid flow in case of an emergency or maintenance requirement. The other choices do not provide correct placements for shut-off valves. Valves are not typically located on the front of the trailer, under the trailer axle, or inside a storage compartment because these locations would impede access and operational efficiency when towing or maneuvering the trailer combination.

10. Does ABS compensate for bad brakes or poor brake maintenance?

A. True

B. False

C. Only in emergency situations

D. It depends on the vehicle type

The assertion that ABS (Anti-lock Braking System) does not compensate for bad brakes or poor brake maintenance is accurate. ABS is designed to prevent wheel lock-up during braking and maintain steering control under hard braking conditions. It achieves this through electronic control of brake pressure, allowing drivers to maintain better control of their vehicle. However, ABS is not a substitute for regular brake maintenance and cannot fix underlying issues such as worn brake pads, low brake fluid, or other mechanical failures. If the brake system itself is compromised, ABS cannot compensate for these problems; instead, it relies on the fundamental integrity of the braking system. Proper maintenance is crucial for safe braking performance, and ABS works best when combined with well-maintained brakes. In essence, while ABS enhances vehicle safety during certain conditions, it does not address the need for routine upkeep of the braking components. Proper brake maintenance is essential for optimal performance and vehicle 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://mscdlgenknowledge.examzify.com

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