

VIRGINIA CDL GENERAL KNOWLEDGE PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE) STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE**

<https://virginia-cdl.examzify.com>



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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. What should you do if your vehicle runs off the road?**
 - A. Immediately turn the steering wheel hard
 - B. Ease off the gas and steer smoothly back onto the road
 - C. Accelerate to get back on the road quickly
 - D. Pull the emergency brake
- 2. What is the maximum load that can be legally carried on a single axle in Virginia?**
 - A. 15,000 pounds
 - B. 20,000 pounds
 - C. 25,000 pounds
 - D. 30,000 pounds
- 3. What should you do if you experience brake failure while driving?**
 - A. Use the emergency brake gradually
 - B. Shift to neutral and turn off the engine
 - C. Deploy hazard lights and coast to a stop
 - D. Steer towards a clear area
- 4. What happens if you swing wide to the left before making a right turn?**
 - A. A vehicle may try to pass you on the right
 - B. It will allow for a smoother turn
 - C. You increase the risk of overturning
 - D. It reduces the turn radius
- 5. What is the recommended action if you see an emergency vehicle approaching from behind?**
 - A. Speed up to get out of the way
 - B. Pull to the right and stop
 - C. Maintain your speed and lane
 - D. Move into the left lane

- 6. How many red reflective triangles should be carried in your vehicle?**
- A. 1 reflective triangle
 - B. 2 reflective triangles
 - C. 3 reflective triangles
 - D. 4 reflective triangles
- 7. What is the primary function of the air brake system?**
- A. To enhance fuel efficiency
 - B. To provide stopping power using compressed air
 - C. To assist in uphill driving
 - D. To lower overall vehicle weight
- 8. Why is it important to make emergency plans when encountering a hazard?**
- A. To take unnecessary risks
 - B. To reduce the potential danger
 - C. To confuse other drivers
 - D. To avoid making any changes
- 9. At what speed does hydroplaning typically begin?**
- A. 10 mph
 - B. 20 mph
 - C. 30 mph
 - D. 35 mph
- 10. What is the minimum following distance recommended in ideal conditions?**
- A. One car length
 - B. Two car lengths
 - C. Three seconds
 - D. Four seconds

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What should you do if your vehicle runs off the road?

- A. Immediately turn the steering wheel hard
- B. Ease off the gas and steer smoothly back onto the road**
- C. Accelerate to get back on the road quickly
- D. Pull the emergency brake

If your vehicle runs off the road, easing off the gas and steering smoothly back onto the road is the safest and most effective action to take. This approach allows you to regain control of your vehicle without making sudden movements that could lead to losing traction or causing a rollover. A gradual return to the roadway minimizes the risk of skidding or overcorrecting, which can create a more dangerous situation. Using smooth steering helps maintain stability, allowing the tires to regain grip as you transition back onto the paved surface. It's important to avoid hard steering maneuvers because they can result in a loss of control, making it more difficult to navigate back safely. Options that suggest immediate sharp turns or accelerating can lead to loss of control and potentially cause an accident, while the use of the emergency brake is not advisable in this situation as it could lock the rear wheels, increasing the likelihood of skidding. Thus, the best strategy in this scenario emphasizes controlled and deliberate actions to safely guide the vehicle back onto the road.

2. What is the maximum load that can be legally carried on a single axle in Virginia?

- A. 15,000 pounds
- B. 20,000 pounds**
- C. 25,000 pounds
- D. 30,000 pounds

The maximum load that can be legally carried on a single axle in Virginia is 20,000 pounds, which aligns with the federal standards for axle weight limits. This regulation is important for maintaining road safety and infrastructure integrity, as excessive weight on a single axle can lead to increased wear and tear on road surfaces and create hazards for other vehicles. Understanding the single axle weight limit helps drivers ensure compliance with regulations and contributes to the safe operation of their vehicles on public roads. Carrying loads beyond this limit can result in fines and increased risk of accidents due to loss of control or vehicle malfunction.

3. What should you do if you experience brake failure while driving?

- A. Use the emergency brake gradually**
- B. Shift to neutral and turn off the engine
- C. Deploy hazard lights and coast to a stop
- D. Steer towards a clear area

In the event of brake failure while driving, using the emergency brake gradually is a crucial first step. The emergency brake is designed to provide additional stopping power when the regular brakes fail. By applying it gradually, you reduce the risk of skidding or losing control of the vehicle, as a sudden application can lock the rear wheels and cause the vehicle to skid. This method allows the driver to regain control and safely slow down the vehicle. Coasting to a stop or turning off the engine may not be the safest or most effective actions in this scenario. Additionally, while deploying hazard lights is important for alerting other drivers, it does not directly assist in controlling the vehicle's speed or stopping it. Steering towards a clear area can be helpful, but the primary focus should be on safely bringing the vehicle to a stop using the emergency brake.

4. What happens if you swing wide to the left before making a right turn?

- A. A vehicle may try to pass you on the right
- B. It will allow for a smoother turn
- C. You increase the risk of overturning
- D. It reduces the turn radius

Swinging wide to the left before making a right turn can create a hazardous situation for other vehicles on the road. When a driver makes a left swing, it can signal to other motorists that they have room to pass on the right side, which is typically a no-go zone for vehicles—especially larger trucks or buses. As you begin your right turn from the left side of the lane, vehicles may misinterpret your actions and attempt to squeeze by you on the right, which can lead to collisions or dangerous situations. By understanding the dynamics of turning, it's crucial to maintain proper lane positioning to ensure both your safety and the safety of others. Ensuring proper turning techniques can prevent other drivers from attempting risky maneuvers around you.

5. What is the recommended action if you see an emergency vehicle approaching from behind?

- A. Speed up to get out of the way
- B. Pull to the right and stop
- C. Maintain your speed and lane
- D. Move into the left lane

When an emergency vehicle approaches from behind, the recommended action is to pull to the right and stop. This action allows the emergency vehicle to pass safely and quickly. It is crucial for drivers to yield the right-of-way in these situations, as emergency responders often need to reach their destination without delays due to traffic. Maintaining speed or moving into another lane can create additional hazards, as it may obstruct the path of the emergency vehicle and can lead to accidents. Speeding up could endanger other vehicles on the road and is not a safe practice. By pulling safely to the right and stopping, you ensure the emergency vehicle can proceed unhindered, which can be vital in situations where every second counts.

6. How many red reflective triangles should be carried in your vehicle?

- A. 1 reflective triangle
- B. 2 reflective triangles
- C. 3 reflective triangles
- D. 4 reflective triangles

The correct answer is that a vehicle should carry three red reflective triangles. This is in line with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) regulations, which require commercial vehicles to have these triangles as part of their emergency equipment. The purpose of the red reflective triangles is to provide warning to other drivers when a vehicle is disabled or parked on the side of the road, particularly in low visibility conditions or at night. Having three triangles allows for placement in multiple locations, enhancing visibility and safety. For example, one triangle can be placed at the rear of the vehicle, while the others might be positioned further down the road to alert oncoming traffic. This strategic placement is crucial for alerting other drivers, thereby reducing the risk of collisions. Carrying only one or two triangles would not provide sufficient warning, especially on roads with high-speed traffic, which is why three is the mandated quantity for safe operation. Having four or more would exceed the requirements without being necessary or practical for most purposes.

7. What is the primary function of the air brake system?

- A. To enhance fuel efficiency
- B. To provide stopping power using compressed air**
- C. To assist in uphill driving
- D. To lower overall vehicle weight

The primary function of the air brake system is to provide stopping power using compressed air. In large commercial vehicles, air brakes are crucial because they create a strong and reliable braking force that can effectively manage the weight and size of the vehicle. The system operates by using air pressure to activate brake mechanisms that slow down or stop the vehicle. In contrast to other braking systems, air brakes are particularly advantageous for heavy loads as they can apply brake pressure consistently and evenly across all the wheels, which increases safety and control. This system is essential for vehicles such as buses and large trucks, where effective braking is necessary for safe operation, especially in emergency situations or when descending steep grades. Other options, like enhancing fuel efficiency or lowering overall vehicle weight, do not pertain to the primary function of air brakes. The options related to assisting in uphill driving or claiming that air brakes contribute to weight reduction are also not correct as the air brake system primarily serves to ensure safe stopping and control of the vehicle.

8. Why is it important to make emergency plans when encountering a hazard?

- A. To take unnecessary risks
- B. To reduce the potential danger**
- C. To confuse other drivers
- D. To avoid making any changes

Making emergency plans when encountering a hazard is crucial as it significantly reduces the potential danger posed to both the driver and others on the road. By having a well-thought-out plan, a driver can respond quickly and effectively to unexpected situations, such as mechanical failures, severe weather conditions, or other emergencies. This proactive approach enhances safety, as it helps maintain control of the vehicle and ensures that appropriate actions are taken, whether it is pulling over to a safe area, calling for assistance, or following specific protocols designed to mitigate risks involved in hazardous situations. Being prepared leads to more informed decision-making, which can ultimately prevent accidents or reduce the severity of an incident.

9. At what speed does hydroplaning typically begin?

- A. 10 mph
- B. 20 mph
- C. 30 mph
- D. 35 mph**

Hydroplaning typically begins at speeds of around 35 mph on wet surfaces. This phenomenon occurs when the tires of a vehicle can no longer make contact with the road due to a layer of water between the tires and the pavement. When vehicles travel at this speed or higher on slick, wet surfaces, they risk losing traction, which can lead to a loss of control. The likelihood of hydroplaning increases as speed increases, particularly if the road is covered in standing water. Understanding this threshold is essential for maintaining safe driving practices, especially in adverse weather conditions.

10. What is the minimum following distance recommended in ideal conditions?

- A. One car length
- B. Two car lengths
- C. Three seconds**
- D. Four seconds

The minimum following distance recommended in ideal conditions is three seconds. This guideline is based on the concept of maintaining a safe distance that allows the driver adequate time to react to sudden stops or unforeseen circumstances on the road. The three-second rule means that when the vehicle ahead passes a fixed point, such as a sign or a tree, the driver should be able to count to three before reaching that same point. This time-based measurement helps ensure that there is enough space to maneuver safely without tailgating or risking a collision. In varying driving conditions—such as poor weather, heavy traffic, or when driving larger vehicles—the recommended following distance would naturally increase to provide greater safety. In contrast, choosing a distance based on car lengths can be misleading due to the varying sizes of vehicles on the road and isn't as reliable as the time-based guideline.

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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:

<https://virginia-cdl.examzify.com>

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

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