

Section 11

Vehicle Inspection Test

This Section Covers:

- ✓ Internal Inspection
- ✓ External Inspection

During the Vehicle inspection, you must show that the vehicle is safe to drive. You will have to walk around the vehicle, name and point to/ touch each item and explain to the examiner what you are checking and why. Any vehicle that has components marked or labeled cannot be used for the Vehicle Inspection test.

11.1 All Vehicles

Study the following vehicle parts for the type of vehicle you will be using during the CDL skills tests. You should be able to identify each part and tell the examiner what you are looking for or inspecting.

11.1.1 Engine Compartment (Engine Off)

Leaks/Hoses

- ✓ Look for puddles on the ground.
- ✓ Look for dripping fluids on underside of engine and transmission.
- ✓ Inspect hoses for condition and leaks.

Oil Level

- ✓ Check oil level when engine is off.
- ✓ Indicate where dipstick is located.
- ✓ Check that the oil level is within safe operating range. Level must be above refill mark.

Coolant Level

- ✓ Inspect reservoir sight glass, or
- ✓ (If engine is not hot), remove radiator cap and check for visible coolant level.

Power Steering Fluid

- ✓ Check the dipstick and see where the fluid level is relative to the refill mark or checks sight glass. Level must be above refill mark.

Engine Compartment Belts

Check the following belts for snugness (1/2 to 3/4 inch play at center of belt), cracks, frays, loose fibers or signs of wear:

- ✓ Power steering belt.
- ✓ Water pump belt.
- ✓ Alternator belt.
- ✓ Air compressor belt.

Note: If any of the components listed above are not belt driven, you must:

- ✓ Tell the examiner which component(s) are not belt driven.
- ✓ Make sure component(s) are operating properly, are not damaged or leaking, and are mounted securely.

Safe Start

- ✓ Place gearshift lever in neutral (or park, for automatic transmissions).
- ✓ Depress clutch before attempting to start the vehicle
- ✓ Start the vehicle and keep clutch depressed until engine reaches idling speed.
- ✓ Then release clutch slowly.

11.1.2 – Cab Check/Engine Start

Oil Pressure Gauge

- ✓ Make sure oil pressure gauge is working.
- ✓ Check that pressure gauge shows increasing or normal oil pressure or that the warning light goes off.
- ✓ If equipped, oil temperature gauge should begin a gradual rise to the normal operating range.

Temperature Gauge

- ✓ Make sure the temperature gauge is working.
- ✓ Temperature should begin to climb to the normal operating range or temperature light should be off.

Air Gauge

- ✓ Check that the air gauge is working properly and that the air compressor builds the air pressure to governor cut-out at approximately 120-140 psi or as specified by manufacturer.

Ammeter/Voltmeter

- ✓ Check that gauges show alternator and/or generator is charging or that warning light is off.

Mirrors and Windshield

- ✓ Mirrors should be clean and adjusted properly from the inside.
- ✓ Windshield should be clean with no illegal stickers, no obstructions, or damage to the glass.

Emergency Equipment

- ✓ Check for spare electrical fuses.
- ✓ Check for three red reflective triangles and 6 fuses or 3 liquid burning flares.
- ✓ Check that the fire extinguisher is properly charged and securely mounted.

Note: If the vehicle is not equipped with electrical fuses, you must mention this to the examiner.

Wipers/Washers

- ✓ Check that wiper arms and blades are secure, not damaged, and operate smoothly.
- ✓ If equipped, windshield washers must operate correctly.

Lights/Reflectors/Reflector Tape Condition (Sides & Rear)

- ✓ Test that dash indicators work when corresponding lights are turned on:
 - Left turn signal.
 - Right turn signal.
 - Four-way emergency flashers.
 - High beam headlight.
 - Anti-lock Braking System (ABS) indicator.
- ✓ Check that all external lights and reflective equipment are clean and functional and none or broken or missing. Light and reflector checks include verification of correct color:
 - Clearance lights (red on rear, amber elsewhere).
 - Headlights (high and low beams).
 - Taillights.
 - Backing lights.
 - Turn signals.
 - Four-way flashers.
 - Brake lights.
 - Red reflectors (on rear) and amber reflectors (elsewhere).
 - Reflector tape condition

Note: Checks of brake, turn signal and four-way flasher functions must be done separately.

Horn

- ✓ Check that air horn and/or electric horn work.

Heater/Defroster

- ✓ Test that the heater and defroster work.

Parking Brake Check

- ✓ With air pressure built to governor cutout and the parking brake engaged (trailer brakes released on combination vehicles), check that the parking brake will hold vehicle by gently trying to pull forward with parking brake on.
- ✓ With air pressure built to governor cutout, the parking brake released and the trailer parking brake engaged (combination vehicles only), check that the trailer parking brake will hold vehicle by gently trying to pull forward with the trailer parking brake on.

Hydraulic Brake Check

- ✓ Pump the brake pedal three times, then hold it down for five seconds. The brake pedal should not move (depress) during the five seconds.
- ✓ If equipped with a hydraulic brake reserve (back-up) system, with the key off, depress the brake pedal and listen for the sound of the reserve system electric motor.
- ✓ Check that the warning buzzer or light is off.

Air Brake Check (Air Brake Equipped Vehicles Only)

Failure to perform all three components of the air brake check correctly will result in an automatic failure of the vehicle inspection test. Air brake safety devices vary. However, this procedure is designed to see that any safety device operates correctly as air pressure drops from normal to a low air condition. For safety purposes, in areas where an incline is present, you will use wheel chocks during the air brake check. The proper procedures for inspecting the air brake system are as follows:

- ✓ With the air pressure built up to governor cutoff (120 – 140 psi), shut off the engine leaving the key in the “on” or “battery charge” position, chock your wheels if necessary, release the parking brake (all vehicles), and the tractor protection valve (combination vehicle) and fully apply the foot brake. Hold the foot brake for one minute. Check the air gauge to see if the air pressure drops more than three pounds in one minute (single vehicle) or four pounds in one minute (combination vehicle).

- ✓ Begin fanning off the air pressure by rapidly applying and releasing the foot brake. Low air warning devices (buzzer, light, flag) should activate before air pressure drops below 55 psi or level specified by the manufacturer.
- ✓ Continue to fan off the air pressure. At approximately 40 psi on a tractor-trailer combination vehicle (or level specified by the manufacturer), the tractor protection valve and parking brake valve should close (pop out). On other combination vehicle types and single vehicle types, the parking brake valve should close (pop out).

Service Brake Check

You will be required to check the application of air or hydraulic service brakes. This procedure is designed to determine that the brakes are working correctly and that the vehicle does not pull to one side or the other.

Pull forward at 5 mph, apply the service brake and stop. Check to see that the vehicle does not pull to either side and that it stops when brake is applied.

Safety Belt

- ✓ Check that the safety belt is securely mounted, adjusts, latches properly and is not ripped or frayed.

11.2 – External Inspection (All Vehicles)

11.2.1– Steering

Steering Box/Hoses

Check that the steering box is securely mounted and not leaking. Look for any missing nuts and/or, bolts. Check for power steering fluid leaks or damage to power steering hoses.

Steering Linkage

See that connecting links, arms, and rods from the steering box to the wheel are not worn or cracked. Check that joints and sockets are not worn or loose and that there are no missing nuts, bolts, or cotter keys.

11.2.2 – Suspension

Springs/Air/Torque

Look for missing, shifted, cracked, or broken leaf springs.

- ✓ Look for broken or distorted coil springs.
- ✓ If vehicle is equipped with torsion bars, torque arms, or other types of suspension components, check that they are not damaged and are mounted securely.
- ✓ Air ride suspension should be checked for damage and leaks.

Mounts

- ✓ Look for cracked or broken spring hangers, missing or damaged bushings, and broken, loose, or missing bolts, u-bolts or other axle mounting parts. (The mounts should be checked at each point where they are secured to the vehicle frame and axle[s]).

Shock Absorbers

- ✓ See that shock absorbers are secure and that there are no leaks.

Note: Be prepared to perform the same suspension components inspection on every axle (power unit and trailer, if equipped).

11.2.3 – Brakes

Slack Adjustors and Pushrods

- ✓ Look for broken, loose, or missing parts.
- ✓ For manual slack adjustors, the brake pushrod should not move more than one inch (with the brakes released) when pulled by hand.

Brake Chambers

- ✓ See that brake chambers are not leaking, cracked, or dented and are mounted securely. There are no loose or missing clamps.

Brake Hoses/Lines

- ✓ Look for cracked, worn, or leaking hoses, lines, and couplings.

Drum Brake

- ✓ Check for cracks, dents, or holes. Also check for loose or missing bolts.
- ✓ Check for contaminants such debris or oil/grease.
- ✓ Brake linings (where visible) should not be worn dangerously thin.

Brake Linings

On some brake drums, there are openings where the brake linings can be seen from outside the drum. For this type of drum, check that a visible amount of brake lining is showing.

Note: Be prepared to perform the same brake components inspection on every axle (power unit and trailer, if equipped).

11.2.4 – Wheels

Rims

- ✓ Check for damaged or bent rims. Rims cannot have welding repairs.
- ✓ Check rims for rust trails that may indicate the rim is loose on the wheel.

Tires

The following items must be inspected on every tire:

- ✓ Tread depth: Check for minimum tread depth (4/32 on steering axle tires, 2/32 on all other tires).
- ✓ Tire condition: Check that tread is evenly worn and look for cuts or other damage to tread or sidewalls. Also, make sure that valve caps and stems are not missing, broken, or damaged.
- ✓ Tire inflation: Check for proper inflation by using a tire gauge. Note: You will not get credit if you simply kick the tires or use a mallet to check for proper inflation.

Hub Oil Seals/Axle Seals

- ✓ See that hub oil/grease seals and axle seals are not leaking and, if wheel has a sight glass, oil level is adequate.

Lug Nuts

- ✓ Check that all lug nuts are present, free of cracks and distortions, and show no signs of looseness such as rust trails or shiny threads.
- ✓ Make sure all bolt holes are not cracked or distorted.

Spacers or Budd Spacing

- ✓ If equipped, check that spacers are not bent, damaged, or rusted through; and are centered with dual tires evenly separated.
- ✓ Check the space between the tires for debris and/or foreign objects.

Note: Be prepared to perform the same wheel inspection on every axle (power unit and trailer, if equipped).

11.2.5 – Side of Vehicle

Door(s)/Mirror(s)

- ✓ Check that door(s) are not damaged and that they open and close properly from the outside.
- ✓ Hinges should be secure with seals intact.

- ✓ Check that mirror(s) and mirror brackets are not damaged and are mounted securely with no loose fittings.

Fuel Tank

- ✓ Check that tank(s) are secure, cap(s) are tight, and that there are no leaks from tank(s) or lines.

Drive Shaft

- ✓ See that drive shaft is not bent or cracked.
- ✓ Couplings should be secure and free of foreign objects.

Exhaust System

- ✓ Check system for damage and signs of leaks such as rust or carbon soot. Exhaust system should not have cracks, holes or severe dents
- ✓ System should be connected tightly and mounted securely.

Frame

- ✓ Look for cracks, broken welds, holes or other damage to the longitudinal frame members, cross members, box, and floor.

11.2.6 – Rear of Vehicle

Splash Guards

- ✓ If equipped, check that splash guards or mud flaps are not damaged and are mounted securely.

Doors/Ties/Lifts

- ✓ Check that doors and hinges are not damaged and that they open, close, and latch properly from the outside, if equipped.
- ✓ Ties, straps, chains, and binders must also be secure.
- ✓ If equipped with a cargo lift, look for leaking, damaged or missing parts and explain how it should be checked for correct operation.
- ✓ Lift must be fully retracted and latched securely.

11.2.7 – Tractor/Coupling

Air/Electric Lines

- ✓ Listen for air leaks. Check that air hoses and electrical lines are not cut, chafed, spliced, or worn (steel braid should not show through).

- ✓ Make sure air and electrical lines are not tangled, pinched, or dragging against tractor parts.

Catwalk/Steps

- ✓ Check that the catwalk is solid, clear of objects, and securely bolted to tractor frame.
- ✓ Check that steps leading to the cab entry and catwalk (if equipped) are solid, clear of objects, and securely bolted to tractor frame.

Mounting Bolts

- ✓ Look for loose or missing mounting brackets, clamps, bolts, or nuts. Both the fifth wheel and the slide mounting must be solidly attached.
- ✓ Check for loose or missing mounting bolts and for broken welds for pintle hook or other type of hitch mount, and tongue/draw-bar assembly to ensure that they are solidly attached in place.
- ✓ On other types of coupling systems (i.e., ball hitch, pintle hook, etc.), inspect all coupling components and mounting brackets for missing or broken parts.

Hitch Release Lever

- ✓ Check to see that the hitch release lever is in place and is secure.

Locking Jaws

- ✓ Look into fifth wheel gap and check that locking jaws are fully closed around the kingpin.
- ✓ On other types of coupling systems (i.e., ball hitch, pintle hook, etc.), inspect the locking mechanism for missing or broken parts and make sure it is locked securely. If present, safety cables or chains must be secure and free of kinks and excessive slack.

5th Wheel Skid Plate

- ✓ Check for proper lubrication and that 5th wheel skid plate is securely mounted to the platform and that all bolts and pins are secure and not missing.

Platform (Fifth Wheel)

- ✓ Check for cracks or breaks in the platform structure which supports the fifth wheel skid plate.

Release Arm (Fifth Wheel)

- ✓ If equipped, make sure the release arm is in the engaged position and the safety latch is in place.

Kingpin/Apron/Gap

- ✓ Explain that locking jaws holds kingpin in place and that the kingpin is not bent or damaged.
- ✓ Make sure the visible part of the apron is not bent, cracked, or broken.
- ✓ Check that the trailer is lying flat on the fifth wheel skid plate (no gap).
- ✓ Check for kingpin lock.

Locking Pins (Fifth Wheel)

- ✓ If equipped, look for loose or missing pins in the slide mechanism of the sliding fifth wheel. If air powered, check for leaks.
- ✓ Make sure locking pins are fully engaged.
- ✓ Check that the fifth wheel is positioned properly so that the tractor frame will clear the landing gear during turns.

Sliding Pintle

- ✓ Check the sliding pintle hook for excessive wear and to ensure it is secure with no loose or missing nuts or bolts and cotter pin is in place.

Tongue or Draw-bar

- ✓ Check that the tongue/draw-bar is not bent or twisted and checks for broken welds and stress cracks.
- ✓ Check that the tongue/draw-bar eye is not worn excessively.

Tongue Storage Area

- ✓ Check that the storage area is solid and secured to the tongue.
- ✓ Check that cargo in the storage area i.e. chains, binders, etc. are secure.

11.3 – School Bus Only

Emergency Equipment

- ✓ In addition to checking for spare electrical fuses (if equipped), three red reflective triangles, 6 fuses or 3 liquid burning flares and a properly charged and rated fire extinguisher, school bus drivers must also inspect the following emergency equipment:
 - Emergency Kit
 - Body Fluid Cleanup Kit

Lighting Indicators

- ✓ In addition to checking the lighting indicators listed in Section 10.2 of this manual, school bus drivers must also check the following lighting indicators (internal panel lights):
 - Alternately flashing amber lights indicator, if equipped.
 - Alternately flashing red lights indicator.
 - Strobe light indicator, if equipped.

Lights/Reflectors

- ✓ In addition to checking the lights and reflective devices listed in Section 10.2 of this manual, school bus drivers must also check the following (external) lights and reflectors:
 - Strobe light, if equipped is operational and is not broken.
 - Stop arm light, if equipped.
 - Alternately flashing amber lights, if equipped are operational and not broken.
 - Alternately flashing red lights, on both the front and back of the vehicle are operational and not broken.

Student Mirrors

- ✓ In addition to checking the external mirrors, school bus drivers must also check the internal and external mirrors used for observing students:
 - Check for proper adjustment.
 - Checks that all internal and external mirrors and mirror brackets are not damaged and are mounted securely with no loose fittings.
 - Checks that visibility is not impaired due to dirty mirrors.

Stop Arm/Safety Arm

- ✓ If equipped, check the stop arm to see that it is mounted securely to the frame of the vehicle. Also, check for loose fittings and damage. Check that stop arm extends fully when operated.

Passenger Entry/Lift

- ✓ Check that the entry door is not damaged, operates smoothly, and closes securely from the inside.
- ✓ Hand rails are secure and the step light is working, if equipped.
- ✓ The entry steps must be clear with the treads not loose or worn excessively.
- ✓ If equipped with a handicap lift, look for leaking, damaged, or missing parts and explain how lift should be checked for correct operation. Lift must be fully retracted and latched securely.

Emergency Exit

- ✓ Demonstrate that at least one emergency exit is not damaged, operates smoothly, and closes securely from the inside.
- ✓ Check that release handle can be operated properly from both inside and outside the vehicle.
- ✓ Point out and describe how all other emergency exits operate.
- ✓ Check that any emergency exit warning devices are working properly.

Seating

- ✓ Look for broken seat frames and check that seat frames are firmly attached to the floor.
- ✓ Check that seat cushions are attached securely to the seat frames.

11.4 – Trailer

11.4.1 – Trailer Front

Air/Electrical Connections

- ✓ Check that trailer air connectors are sealed and in good condition.
- ✓ Make sure glad hands are locked in place, free of damage or air leaks.
- ✓ Make sure the trailer electrical plug is firmly seated and locked in place.

Header Board

- ✓ If equipped, check the header board to see that it is secure, free of damage, and strong enough to contain cargo.
- ✓ If equipped, the canvas or tarp carrier must be mounted and fastened securely.
- ✓ On enclosed trailers, check the front area for signs of damage such as cracks, bulges, or holes.

11.4.2 – Side of Trailer

Landing Gear

- ✓ Check that the landing gear is fully raised, has no missing parts, crank handle is secure, and the support frame and landing pads are not damaged.
- ✓ If power operated, check for air or hydraulic leaks.

Doors/Ties/Lifts

- ✓ If equipped, check that doors are not damaged. Check that doors open, close, and latch properly from the outside.
- ✓ Check that ties, straps, chains, and binders are secure.
- ✓ If equipped with a cargo lift, look for leaking, damaged or missing parts and explain how it should be checked for correct operation.
- ✓ Lift should be fully retracted and latched securely.

Frame

- ✓ Look for cracks, broken welds, holes or other damage to the frame, cross members, box, and floor.

Tandem Release Arm/Locking Pins

- ✓ If equipped, make sure the locking pins are locked in place and release arm is secured.

11.4.3 – Remainder of Trailer

Remainder of Trailer

Please refer to Section 11.2 of this manual for detailed inspection procedures regarding the following components:

- ✓ Wheels.
- ✓ Suspension system.
- ✓ Brakes.
- ✓ Doors/ties/lift.
- ✓ Splash guards.

11.5 – Coach/Transit Bus

11.5.1 – Passenger Items

Passenger Entry/Lift

- ✓ Check that entry doors operate smoothly and close securely from the inside.
- ✓ Check that hand rails are secure and, if equipped, that the step light(s) are working.
- ✓ Check that the entry steps are clear, with the treads not loose or worn excessively.
- ✓ If equipped with a handicap lift, look for any leaking, damaged or missing part, and explain how it should be checked for correct operation.

- ✓ Lift should be fully retracted and latched securely.

Emergency Exits

- ✓ Make sure that all emergency exits are not damaged, operate smoothly, and close securely from the inside.
- ✓ Check that any emergency exit warning devices are working.

Passenger Seating

Look for broken seat frames and check that seat frames are firmly attached to the floor. Check that seat cushions are attached securely to the seat frames.

11.5.2 – Entry/Exit

Doors/Mirrors

- ✓ Check that entry/exit doors are not damaged and operate smoothly from the outside. Hinges should be secure with seals intact.
- ✓ Make sure that the passenger exit mirrors and all external mirrors and mirror brackets are not damaged and are mounted securely with no loose fittings.

11.5.3 – External Inspection of Coach/Transit Bus

Level/Air Leaks

- ✓ See that the vehicle is sitting level (front and rear), and if air-equipped, check for audible air leaks from the suspension system.

Fuel Tank(s)

- ✓ See that fuel tank(s) are secure with no leaks from tank(s) or lines.

Baggage Compartments

- ✓ Check that baggage and all other exterior compartment doors are not damaged, operate properly, and latch securely.

11.5.4 – Remainder of Coach/Transit Bus

Remainder of Vehicle

Please refer to Section 11.2 of this manual for detailed inspection procedures for the remainder of the vehicle. Remember, the Vehicle Inspection must be passed before you can proceed to the Basic Control Skills test.

CDL Vehicle Inspection Memory Aid

Combination Vehicles

Front of Vehicle, Lights/Reflectors,
Engine Compartment & Steering
Components

Steering Axle:

- Suspension
- Brakes
- Tires

Driver Door
Fuel Area

Under Vehicle

- Drive Shaft
- Exhaust
- Frame

Drive Axle(s)

- Suspension
- Brakes
- Tires

Coupling Devices

- Truck
- Trailer

Rear of Truck/Tractor
& Lights/Reflectors

Trailer Components
Front, Side, Lights &
Reflectors

- Frame
- Landing Gear
- Tandem Release

Trailer Axle(s)

- Suspension
- Brakes
- Tires



Rear of Trailer &
Lights/Reflectors

Straight Truck or Bus

Front of Vehicle, Lights/Reflectors,
Engine Compartment & Steering
Components

Steering Axle:

- Suspension
- Brakes
- Tires

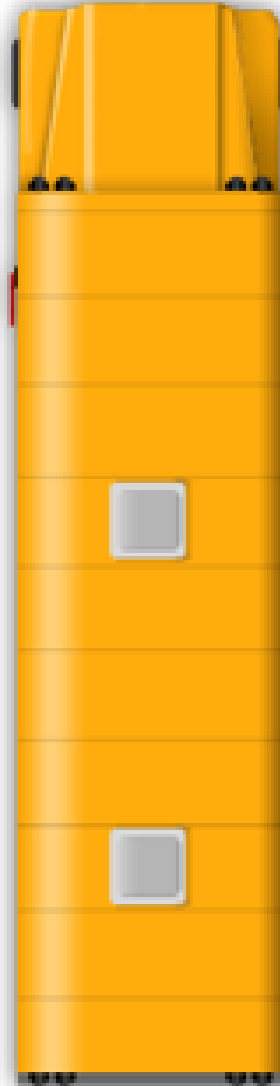
Driver Door
Fuel Area
(Truck)

Under Vehicle

- Drive Shaft
- Exhaust
- Frame

Drive Axle(s)

- Suspension
- Brakes
- Tires



Passenger Door
Fuel Area

Rear of Bus/Truck
& Lights/Reflectors