



## **MARYLAND COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE PRE-TRIP INSPECTION GUIDE**

This guide has four sections:

- **Engine Compartment**
- **In-Cab Checks**
- **Outside of Vehicle**
- **Air Brake Test**

Applicants may conduct the pre-trip inspection in any order they choose. It is suggested that the inspection be conducted in the order listed above.

It is not necessary to touch any item when pointing it out or get under the vehicle. You must be able to identify and describe the items on this checklist.

This guide is made available to Agents and applicants. It may not be used by applicants during the pre-trip inspection.

**Pre-trip inspections will be timed and must be completed in the time allowed based on class of license being obtained.**

**Class A, B & C - 45 minutes**

**Failure to do so will result in immediate disqualification.**

**DL-152 (03/04)**

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR THE COMMERCIAL DRIVER**

### **□ SKILLS TEST ARE ADMINISTERED BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**

The CDL Skills Test is a three-part test that consists of a:

- (1) Pre-trip inspection to include air brake test if vehicle is equipped.
- (2) Basic skills test; and
- (3) Public road test.
- (4) **YOU MUST PASS PRE-TRIP TO CONTINUE ON TO BASIC SKILLS.  
YOU MUST PASS BASIC SKILLS TO CONTINUE ON TO PUBLIC ROAD TEST.**
- (5) If you fail any portion of the test you must pay a retest fee before scheduling another appointment. After failing the test for the second time you must wait a minimum of seven days.

### **QUALIFYING SCORES:**

- Pre-trip score is based on the type of vehicle and axles.
- Basic skills test is based on total points (17 points are a failure) or if an automatic failure occurs, (hitting a cone, side of the dock, etc.)
- Public road test is based on total points (26 points are a failure) or if an automatic failure occurs, (accident, running a red light, etc.)

### **TIME LIMIT (currently):**

- Pre-trip inspection 45 minutes
- Basic skills test 10 minutes per maneuver
- Public road test, average 35 to 40 minutes based on MVA location.

## **DRIVING, DRINKING, AND DRUGS**

Signing a Maryland driver's license or learner's permit application form enters you into an agreement. It says that if you are detained by a police officer who suspects you are driving or attempting to drive under the influence or intoxicated by alcohol and/or drugs, you agree to submit to a chemical test of your blood, breath or urine. This is called a Blood Alcohol Concentration or BAC test.

### **0.04% Alcohol Concentration or more when driving a Commercial Motor Vehicle**

- Disqualified from driving a commercial motor vehicle for one year (three years if the vehicle was required to be placarded for HAZMAT) for the first offense.
- Disqualified for life for a subsequent offense.

Maryland Motor Vehicle (MVA) works closely with The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) in testing procedures that meet Federal requirements. Future plans are in the developing stages in updating CDL testing.

## **ENGINE COMPARTMENT (Engine Off) ALL VEHICLES**

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

### **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**

- Indicate where dipstick is located.
- See that oil level is within safe operating range.
- Explain how you would check oil level. (Pull dipstick out, wipe it off, reinsert it, put it back out.) Level must be above refill mark.

### **Coolant Level**

- Inspect reservoir sight glass, or
- If vehicle is not equipped with sight glass (if engine is not hot), I would remove radiator cap and check for visible coolant level. (Not necessary to manually remove cap; however, must mention.)

### **Power Steering Fluid**

- Indicate where power steering fluid dipstick is located.
- Explain how you would check for adequate power steering fluid level. Level must be above refill mark.

### **Engine Compartment**

- Check the following components to see that they are operating properly, not damaged, leaking, and are securely mounted. You must check the following belts for cracks, frays, and snugness (up to 3/4 inch play at center of belt):
  - Power steering housing and belt.
  - Water pump and belt.
  - Alternator and belt.
  - Air compressor and belt.

**NOTE: If any of the components listed above are not belt driven, you must identify which components are not.**

## **CAB CHECK/ENGINE START**

### **Clutch/Gearshift**

- Depress clutch.
- Place gearshift lever in neutral (or park for automatic transmissions).
- Start engine, then release clutch slowly.

### **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.

### **Ammeter/Voltmeter**

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

### **Mirror 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.
- Check for fully charged and properly rated fire extinguisher.

Note: If the vehicle is not equipped with electrical fuses, you must mention this to the Agent. (Some vehicles are equipped with circuit breakers.)

## **Steering Play**

- Non-power steering: Check for excessive play by turning steering wheel back and forth. Play should not exceed 10 degrees (or about two inches on a 20-inch wheel).
- Power Steering: With the engine running, check for excessive play by turning the steering wheel back and forth. Play should not exceed 10 degrees (or about two inches on a 20-inch wheel) before front left wheel barely moves.

## **Wipers/Washers**

- Check that wiper arms and blades are secure, not damaged, and operate smoothly.
- Check that windshield washer operates correctly.

## **Lighting Indicators**

Show that dash indicators work when corresponding lights are turned on:

- Left turn signal.
- Right turn signal.
- 4-way emergency flashers.
- High beam headlight.

## **Horn(s)**

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

## **Heater/Defroster**

- Test by showing that the heater and defroster work by placing hand in vent areas.

## **Parking Brake Check**

- Apply parking brake **ONLY** and make sure that it will hold the vehicle by shifting into a lower gear and gently pulling against the brake.

## **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 an air brake check will result in an automatic failure of the Air Brake 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 engine running, build the air pressure to governed cut-out (100-125 PSI). Shut off the engine, chock your wheels if necessary, release the tractor protection valve and parking brake (push-in), fully apply the foot brake, allow pressure to stabilize, then hold it for one minute. Check the air gauge to see if the air pressure drops more than three (3) pounds in one minute (single vehicle) or four (4) pounds in one minute (combination vehicle).
  - Key On Position: 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 60 PSI.
  - Continue to fan the air pressure. At approximately 40 PSI on a tractor-trailer combination vehicle, 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).

Note: Engine must be off during one-minute hold.

## **Safety Belt**

- Check that the safety belt is securely mounted, adjusts, and latches properly.

## **Lights/Reflectors**

- Check that all external lights and reflective equipment are clean and functional. Light and reflector checks include:
  - Clearance lights (red on rear, amber elsewhere).
  - Headlights (high and low beams).
  - Taillights.
  - Turn signals.
  - 4-way flashers.
  - Brake lights.
  - Red reflectors (on rear) and amber reflectors (elsewhere).

Note: Turn signals and four-way flashers must be done separately.

## **External Inspection (School Bus/Truck/Tractor)**

### **Steering Box/Hoses**

- Check that the steering box is securely mounted and not leaking. Look for any missing nuts, bolts, and cotter keys.
- 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.

## **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: (Power unit and trailer, if equipped.)

## **Slack Adjusters**

- Look for broken, loose, or missing parts.
- The angle between the push rod and adjuster arm should be a little over 90 degrees when the brakes are released, and not less than 90 degrees when the brakes are applied.
- When pulled by hand, the push rod should not move more than one inch (with the brakes released).

## **Brake Chambers**

- See that brake chambers are not leaking, cracked, or dented and are mounted securely.

## **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.
- 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: (Power unit and trailer, if equipped.)

# WHEELS

## Rims

- Check for damage or bent rims. Rims cannot have welding repairs.

## Tires

- The following items must be inspected:
  - Tread depth: Explain how you would check for minimum tread depth (4/32 on steering axle tires, 2/32 on all other tires).
  - Tire condition: Explain how you would check that tread is evenly worn and look for cuts or other damage to tread and sidewalls. Also, make sure that valve caps and stems are not missing, broken, or damaged.
  - Tire inflation: Explain how you would check for proper inflation by using a tire gauge, or by striking tires with a mallet or other similar device.

Note: You **will not** get credit if you simply kick the tires 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**

- If equipped, check that spacers are not bent, damaged or rusted through.
- Spacers should be evenly centered with the dual wheels and tires evenly separated.

**Note: On bud wheels, check to make sure no debris is caught in between tires. (Power unit and trailer, if equipped.)**

## **SIDE OF VEHICLE**

### **Door(s)/Mirror(s)**

- Check that doors are not damaged and that they open and close properly.
- 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) is secure, cap(s) is tight, and that there is no damage or leaks from tank(s) or line(s).

### **Battery/Box**

- Wherever located, see that battery(s) is secure, connections are tight and cell caps are present.
- Battery connections should not show signs of excessive corrosion.
- Battery box and cover or door must be secure.

## **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.
- System should be connected tightly and mounted securely.

## **Frame**

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

## **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 operations.
- Lift must be fully retracted and latched securely.

## **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**

- Check that the catwalk is 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.
- 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.

## **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.

## **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**

- Check that the kingpin is not bent.
- Make sure the visible part of the apron is not bent, cracked, or broken.
- Check that the trailer is laying flat on the fifth wheel skid plate (no gap).

## **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.

## SCHOOL BUS ONLY

### Lighting Indicators

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

### Lights/Reflectors

- In addition to checking the lights and reflective devices listed in the CDL manual, school bus drivers must also check the following (external) lights and reflectors.
  - Strobe light, if equipped.
  - Stop arm light, if equipped.
  - Alternately flashing amber lights, if equipped.
  - Alternately flashing red lights.

### Stop 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.

### Passenger Entry/Lift

- Check that the entry door is not damaged, operates smoothly, and closes securely from the **inside**.
- Handrails 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 the lift should be checked for correct operation. Lift must be fully retracted and latched securely.

## **Emergency Exit**

- Make sure that all emergency exits are not damaged, operate smoothly, and close securely from the **inside**. (School bus drivers must show how emergency exits operate.)
- Check that any emergency exit warning devices are working.

## **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.

## **TRAILER**

### **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.

## **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 is 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.

## **REMAINDER OF TRAILER**

- Please refer to the CDL manual for detailed inspection procedures regarding the following components:
  - Wheels
  - Suspension System
  - Brakes
  - Doors/Ties/Lift
  - Splash Guards

## **COACH/TRANSIT BUS**

### **Passenger Entry/Lift**

- Check that entry doors operate smoothly and close securely from the **inside**.
- Check that handrails are secure and, if equipped, that the step light(s) is 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 parts, 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.

## **ENTRY/MIRRORS**

### **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.

## **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) is secure and not damaged, with no leaks from tank(s) or lines.

### **Compartments**

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

## **Battery/Box**

- Wherever located, see that battery(s) is secured, connections are tight, and cell caps are present.
- Check that battery box and cover or door is not damaged and is secure.

## **REMAINDER OF COACH/TRANSIT BUS**

- Please refer to the CDL manual for detailed inspection procedures regarding the following components:
  - Wheels

Remember, the Pre-Trip Vehicle Inspection must be passed before you can proceed to the Basic Vehicle Control Skills Test. The Pre-Trip Inspection must be successfully completed in allotted time or less.

## **BASIC VEHICLE CONTROL SKILLS TEST**

- Maneuvers for the Basic Vehicle Control Skill Test are timed. The time begins once instructions have been given and all questions have been answered.
  - Straight Line Backing: 10 Minutes
  - Parallel Parking Sightside: 10 Minutes
  - Parallel Parking Conventional: 10 Minutes
  - Alley Docking: 10 Minutes