

CDL General Knowledge Practice Test

Original Full-Length Form 2

Directions. Work through 50 original multiple-choice questions in a 60-minute session. Select the one best answer. Answers and explanations begin after the question section. This independent practice form is informed by federal CDL knowledge requirements; states may use different question counts, timing, and endorsement combinations. Always study the current CDL manual issued by your state.

Question 1

A driver should refuse to move a CMV when:

- A. A safety-critical defect has not been corrected.
- B. The route includes a hill.
- C. The mirrors are clean.
- D. The cargo is properly secured.

Question 2

An unusually high engine-temperature reading should prompt the driver to:

- A. Cover the gauge.
- B. Accelerate to cool the engine.
- C. Remove the radiator cap immediately while hot.
- D. Follow the vehicle procedure, reduce risk, and stop safely to investigate if needed.

Question 3

The primary reason a CMV driver should wear a seat belt is to:

- A. Make the vehicle's air pressure rise.
- B. Keep cargo from shifting.
- C. Reduce injury risk and help maintain control in a crash or sudden maneuver.
- D. Increase fuel economy.

Question 4

Before making a right turn in a large vehicle, the driver should:

- A. Move left without checking traffic.
- B. Position correctly, check mirrors and the blind area, and protect the space needed for off-tracking.
- C. Turn from the far-left lane whenever possible.
- D. Ignore pedestrians near the curb.

Question 5

A driver should select gears so the engine:

- A. Always remains at maximum rpm.
- B. Can be shifted without considering grade or load.
- C. Operates in the range recommended for the vehicle and conditions.
- D. Never uses engine braking.

Question 6

Blind-side backing is risky because:

- A. The trailer cannot turn.
- B. The driver has a more limited view of the path and hazards.
- C. The vehicle cannot move slowly.
- D. The spotter can always see everything.

Question 7

A good mirror-checking routine is:

- A. Only when the vehicle is stopped.
- B. Regular and frequent, with attention to changes behind and beside the vehicle.
- C. Only after hearing a horn.
- D. Only when changing lanes.

Question 8

Before changing lanes, a driver should:

- A. Signal after moving.
- B. Signal, check mirrors and blind spots, and move only when the gap is safe.
- C. Rely on the other driver to yield.
- D. Use the horn instead of a signal.

Question 9

The safest time to reduce speed for a sharp curve is:

- A. Before entering the curve.
- B. After the vehicle begins to lean.
- C. At the midpoint of the curve.
- D. Only after a warning sign ends.

Question 10

When passing a cyclist or roadside worker, a CMV driver should:

- A. Maintain speed because the vehicle is larger.
- B. Reduce speed, leave as much safe lateral space as conditions permit, and be ready to stop.
- C. Pass without checking mirrors.
- D. Move onto the shoulder without looking.

Question 11

High beams should be dimmed when they could:

- A. Improve the driver's own view.
- B. Be seen in a mirror.
- C. Illuminate an empty road.
- D. Glare another driver or reduce that driver's ability to see.

Question 12

On snow or ice, a driver should:

- A. Use cruise control to maintain a constant speed.
- B. Follow more closely to prevent merging.
- C. Brake sharply at every curve.
- D. Reduce speed, increase following distance, and use smooth steering and braking.

Question 13

A vehicle stopped with its door open near a travel lane should make the driver:

- A. Pass closely because the vehicle is stopped.
- B. Assume no one is nearby.
- C. Slow down and anticipate a person may enter the lane.
- D. Sound the horn and maintain speed.

Question 14

If the engine stalls while the vehicle is moving, the driver should:

- A. Keep control, move to a safe location if possible, and use warning devices as needed.
- B. Release the steering wheel.
- C. Turn sharply across traffic.
- D. Continue as if power loss had not occurred.

Question 15

During a drive-wheel skid, the driver should avoid:

- A. Reducing power smoothly.
- B. Looking where the vehicle should go.
- C. Checking the path for recovery.
- D. Abrupt braking, acceleration, or steering inputs.

Question 16

After driving a short distance, the driver should recheck cargo securement because:

- A. The load becomes exempt from the rules.
- B. The trailer's brakes stop working.
- C. Checking is needed only for hazardous materials.
- D. Tie-downs can settle or loosen as the load shifts.

Question 17

A pre-trip inspection of steering and suspension should look for:

- A. A full fuel tank.
- B. Only the steering-wheel color.
- C. Loose, damaged, or missing parts and conditions that could affect control.
- D. Only the driver's seat position.

Question 18

When transporting regulated hazardous materials, the driver should know how to use:

- A. A passenger manifest.
- B. Only the vehicle registration.
- C. Required shipping papers, labels, placards, and emergency information.
- D. A personal note with no material description.

Question 19

On a downgrade, a safe speed should be selected so that:

- A. The vehicle remains under control with planned braking and a usable escape option.
- B. The driver can coast in neutral.
- C. The service brakes stay applied continuously.
- D. The vehicle matches the speed of every other driver.

Question 20

Which condition can impair a driver's ability to operate a CMV safely?

- A. A clean windshield.
- B. A full fuel tank.
- C. Illness, fatigue, medication effects, or emotional distress.
- D. A complete pre-trip inspection.

Question 21

A driver should record and report defects because the record:

- A. Automatically repairs the vehicle.
- B. Allows the driver to ignore a dangerous defect.
- C. Replaces the pre-trip inspection.
- D. Communicates safety problems so they can be evaluated and repaired.

Question 22

A dashboard gauge should be interpreted by:

- A. Ignoring it until a warning sounds.
- B. Comparing it with the normal operating range and the vehicle manual.
- C. Assuming every gauge uses the same limits.
- D. Changing the gauge setting.

Question 23

If a fire starts in a CMV, the driver should:

- A. Open every compartment immediately.
- B. Drive to a fuel station.
- C. Stop safely, shut down if possible, evacuate people, call for help, and use the extinguisher only when appropriate.
- D. Continue to the destination.

Question 24

A high center of gravity makes a CMV more likely to:

- A. Stop in less distance.
- B. Ignore crosswinds.
- C. Roll over if the driver enters a curve too fast or steers abruptly.
- D. Track exactly like a passenger car.

Question 25

Why should a driver select a lower gear before beginning a long downgrade?

- A. The lower gear helps control speed before the vehicle gains momentum.
- B. It increases the need for service-brake use.
- C. It disables the parking brake.
- D. It makes the vehicle coast faster.

Question 26

When backing, the driver should stop and check the area if:

- A. The path or clearance is uncertain.
- B. The mirrors look clear once.
- C. The spotter is visible.
- D. The vehicle is moving slowly.

Question 27

At an intersection, a CMV driver should search for:

- A. Only the nearest traffic light.
- B. Vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, signals, signs, and possible cross traffic.
- C. No hazards if the signal is green.
- D. Only vehicles moving in the same direction.

Question 28

To communicate a planned slowdown, a driver should:

- A. Apply the brakes early and smoothly enough to activate the brake lights while maintaining control.
- B. Use the horn continuously.
- C. Turn off the headlights.
- D. Wait until the last second to brake.

Question 29

Which statement best reflects how vehicle loading can affect stopping and handling?

- A. An empty vehicle always stops in half the distance.
- B. A loaded vehicle can safely use a higher speed in every condition.
- C. An empty vehicle can have less traction in some conditions, while a loaded vehicle has more inertia.
- D. Weight never affects braking or steering.

Question 30

A space cushion is valuable because it:

- A. Lets the driver ignore the mirrors.
- B. Guarantees that a lane change is legal.
- C. Means the driver can drive faster.
- D. Provides time and room to respond to another road user's mistake.

Question 31

A driver is overdriving the headlights when the vehicle's stopping distance:

- A. Is shorter than the distance illuminated by the headlights.
- B. Can always be controlled by switching to high beams.
- C. Is unrelated to the vehicle's speed and visibility.
- D. Exceeds the distance illuminated by the headlights.

Question 32

In hot weather, a driver should pay particular attention to:

- A. Using the parking brake while moving.
- B. Only the radio volume.
- C. Driving closer to other vehicles.
- D. Tire condition, coolant, engine temperature, and the possibility of tire or brake problems.

Question 33

When approaching a work zone, the driver should:

- A. Pass a flagger if the lane appears open.
- B. Ignore workers if no truck is visible.
- C. Maintain the normal speed until the last cone.
- D. Reduce speed early, follow signs and flaggers, and expect changing lanes or narrowed space.

Question 34

If a CMV becomes disabled on a roadway, the driver should:

- A. Stand in the travel lane to direct traffic.
- B. Protect the scene, activate appropriate warning devices, and move away from traffic when safe.
- C. Turn off all lights.
- D. Leave without notifying anyone.

Question 35

The best way to prevent most skids is to:

- A. Adjust speed to conditions and use smooth steering, braking, and acceleration.
- B. Turn sharply to avoid every hazard.
- C. Follow closely so other vehicles cannot enter.
- D. Brake as hard as possible on every wet road.

Question 36

A partially filled tank can be especially challenging because liquid cargo can:

- A. Reduce rollover risk in every condition.
- B. Replace the need for a tank endorsement.
- C. Surge and shift the vehicle's weight during braking and turns.
- D. Stay completely still.

Question 37

A pre-trip check of lights and reflectors should confirm that they are:

- A. Needed only on the tractor.
- B. Clean, correctly colored, working, and visible as required.
- C. Covered to prevent glare.
- D. Optional during daylight.

Question 38

If a hazardous-materials package is leaking, the driver should first:

- A. Touch the material to identify it.
- B. Protect people, avoid contact, notify emergency authorities, and follow the emergency information.
- C. Wash it into a drain.
- D. Continue driving to the destination.

Question 39

An emergency escape ramp is intended for a vehicle that:

- A. Wants to pass slower traffic.
- B. Has an empty trailer on level ground.
- C. Needs a rest area.
- D. Cannot be controlled safely on a downgrade using normal methods.

Question 40

A break is most useful for fatigue when it includes:

- A. Stopping safely and obtaining real rest rather than relying only on stimulation.
- B. Checking social media at highway speed.
- C. Continuing to drive while eating.
- D. Increasing speed afterward.

Question 41

Air-brake lag means that:

- A. Only the trailer has brakes.
- B. The brakes never respond.
- C. There can be a short delay between applying the control and the brakes responding.
- D. The brakes work faster at higher speed.

Question 42

If a vehicle without antilock brakes locks wheels during an emergency stop, the driver should generally:

- A. Release braking enough to let the wheels roll, then reapply as needed while keeping the vehicle straight.
- B. Use the parking brake only.
- C. Turn off the engine.
- D. Keep the wheels locked until the vehicle stops.

Question 43

The tractor protection system helps:

- A. Increase engine oil pressure.
- B. Secure the cargo.
- C. Control the headlights.
- D. Protect tractor air pressure if the trailer connection or air line fails.

Question 44

Which condition can cause a tractor-trailer jackknife?

- A. The drive wheels lose traction and the trailer pushes the tractor out of line.
- B. The trailer is correctly coupled.
- C. The vehicle is parked with brakes set.
- D. The driver checks the mirrors.

Question 45

The trailer hand valve should not be used for:

- A. A controlled low-speed test when the manual directs it.
- B. A prescribed trailer-brake check.
- C. Normal service braking while driving.
- D. Verifying trailer-brake response during the required inspection.

Question 46

Before turning with a trailer, the driver should consider trailer swing because:

- A. The trailer always follows the exact tractor path.
- B. The trailer may move into an adjacent lane or strike an object while the tractor turns.
- C. Trailer swing matters only when backing.
- D. The trailer becomes shorter in a turn.

Question 47

FMCSA states that applicants must correctly answer at least what percentage of questions on the general and endorsement knowledge tests?

- A. 60 percent
- B. 80 percent
- C. 50 percent
- D. 100 percent

Question 48

Why should a CDL applicant study the manual issued by the applicant's state?

- A. The FMCSA does not set any federal standards.
- B. States administer their own programs and can add procedures or requirements while meeting federal minimums.
- C. Federal rules prohibit state manuals.
- D. Every state uses identical fees and questions.

Question 49

Before driving, the driver should ensure the windshield and mirrors are:

- A. Clean, unobstructed, and positioned to provide the required view.
- B. Needed only during rain.
- C. Covered to reduce glare.
- D. Adjusted only after entering traffic.

Question 50

Before coupling a tractor to a semitrailer, the driver should confirm that the trailer is:

- A. At the correct height and supported safely for coupling.
- B. Connected only by the electrical line.
- C. Moving toward the tractor.
- D. Supported by a loose landing-gear handle.

Answer key and explanations

Review each explanation after completing the timed question section. The answer key is for independent study and does not reproduce secure state examination content.

Question 1

Answer: A

A safety-critical defect has not been corrected

The driver must not knowingly operate an unsafe vehicle. A trip can be delayed for a safe repair; it cannot be made safe by ignoring a defect.

Question 2

Answer: D

Follow the vehicle procedure, reduce risk, and stop safely to investigate if needed

Overheating can damage the engine and may signal a dangerous problem. Follow the manufacturer's instructions, avoid opening a hot cooling system, and stop safely when required.

Question 3

Answer: C

Reduce injury risk and help maintain control in a crash or sudden maneuver

A seat belt helps keep the driver in the proper position and reduces the chance of being thrown from the vehicle. It is a basic part of safe vehicle operation.

Question 4

Answer: B

Position correctly, check mirrors and the blind area, and protect the space needed for off-tracking

A large vehicle may need room to complete a right turn without striking a curb, object, or road user. The driver must check traffic and keep the turn controlled.

Question 5

Answer: C

Operates in the range recommended for the vehicle and conditions

The proper gear depends on vehicle design, load, grade, speed, and conditions. Following the manufacturer's guidance keeps the drivetrain and brakes under control.

Question 6

Answer: B

The driver has a more limited view of the path and hazards

When possible, choose a position that allows the driver to see the area being entered. If blind-side backing is unavoidable, use a spotter and stop repeatedly to verify clearance.

Question 7

Answer: B

Regular and frequent, with attention to changes behind and beside the vehicle

Mirrors show how traffic, trailer position, and space are changing. Regular checks help the driver detect a hazard early rather than discovering it during a maneuver.

Question 8

Answer: B

Signal, check mirrors and blind spots, and move only when the gap is safe

A safe lane change combines communication with observation and space judgment. The signal does not guarantee a gap or give the CMV the right to move.

Question 9

Answer: A

Before entering the curve

Braking or abrupt steering in a curve can increase loss-of-control risk. Slow before the curve, choose the correct gear, and make a smooth turn.

Question 10

Answer: B

Reduce speed, leave as much safe lateral space as conditions permit, and be ready to stop

Vulnerable road users may move unexpectedly or be hidden by the vehicle's blind spots. Slow, scan, and provide safe space while obeying traffic rules.

Question 11

Answer: D

Glare another driver or reduce that driver's ability to see

Headlights are useful only when they improve safety. Dim them for approaching or leading vehicles according to the law and vehicle manual.

Question 12

Answer: D

Reduce speed, increase following distance, and use smooth steering and braking

Snow and ice reduce traction and make sudden inputs dangerous. Extra space and gentle controls help preserve traction and allow more stopping time.

Question 13

Answer: C

Slow down and anticipate a person may enter the lane

An open door or stopped vehicle is a clue to a hidden road user. Reduce speed, move only when safe, and maintain an escape option.

Question 14

Answer: A

Keep control, move to a safe location if possible, and use warning devices as needed
Loss of engine power may affect steering assist, brakes, or acceleration. Maintain control, signal, and move out of danger before diagnosing the problem.

Question 15

Answer: D

Abrupt braking, acceleration, or steering inputs
Smooth control preserves the limited traction that remains. Abrupt inputs can make the vehicle rotate or slide farther from the intended path.

Question 16

Answer: D

Tie-downs can settle or loosen as the load shifts
Cargo and securement devices can change after movement, vibration, or braking. Required inspections and rechecks help catch problems before they become a loss of load.

Question 17

Answer: C

Loose, damaged, or missing parts and conditions that could affect control
Steering and suspension failures can cause immediate loss of control. Inspect components according to the current state manual and report defects.

Question 18

Answer: C

Required shipping papers, labels, placards, and emergency information
Hazmat transportation depends on accurate communication and documentation. The driver must follow the current rules and never guess about an emergency response.

Question 19

Answer: A

The vehicle remains under control with planned braking and a usable escape option
Safe downgrade speed depends on grade, load, weather, traffic, and vehicle condition. The driver should plan before the descent and avoid letting speed build.

Question 20

Answer: C

Illness, fatigue, medication effects, or emotional distress
Fitness to drive includes physical and mental readiness. A driver should not operate when a condition or medication makes safe operation uncertain.

Question 21

Answer: D

Communicates safety problems so they can be evaluated and repaired

Accurate reports create a safety trail for drivers, mechanics, and carriers. Reporting does not eliminate the driver's duty to inspect and make a safe decision.

Question 22

Answer: B

Comparing it with the normal operating range and the vehicle manual

Different vehicles use different systems and ranges. A driver should know normal readings and act promptly when a reading is abnormal.

Question 23

Answer: C

Stop safely, shut down if possible, evacuate people, call for help, and use the extinguisher only when appropriate

Life safety comes first. A driver should stop away from traffic when possible, evacuate, call emergency services, and never fight a fire that is too large or unsafe.

Question 24

Answer: C

Roll over if the driver enters a curve too fast or steers abruptly

Large vehicles can roll when lateral forces become too high. Slow before the curve, keep the load stable, and steer smoothly.

Question 25

Answer: A

The lower gear helps control speed before the vehicle gains momentum

Downshifting before the grade begins provides engine braking and reduces the chance that speed will build beyond the driver's control.

Question 26

Answer: A

The path or clearance is uncertain

A slow speed does not make an unseen object safe. Stop whenever visibility or clearance is uncertain and verify the path before continuing.

Question 27

Answer: B

Vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, signals, signs, and possible cross traffic

A green signal does not guarantee that the intersection is clear. A wide scan detects road users and conditions that may affect a long or slow vehicle.

Question 28

Answer: A

Apply the brakes early and smoothly enough to activate the brake lights while maintaining control

Early, smooth speed changes give following traffic more time to react. Sudden braking reduces the space available to everyone behind the CMV.

Question 29

Answer: C

An empty vehicle can have less traction in some conditions, while a loaded vehicle has more inertia

Loading changes momentum, traction, braking, and handling. Empty vehicles can have less traction, while loaded vehicles carry more inertia; drivers must account for the actual load, road surface, grade, and vehicle condition.

Question 30

Answer: D

Provides time and room to respond to another road user's mistake

Space is a safety resource. Maintaining room ahead, behind, and to the sides reduces the need for emergency maneuvers.

Question 31

Answer: D

Exceeds the distance illuminated by the headlights

At night, the driver should be able to stop within the visible distance. Reducing speed and scanning beyond the beam helps prevent late reactions.

Question 32

Answer: D

Tire condition, coolant, engine temperature, and the possibility of tire or brake problems

Heat can expose or worsen mechanical problems. Pre-trip and en-route checks are especially important in hot conditions.

Question 33

Answer: D

Reduce speed early, follow signs and flaggers, and expect changing lanes or narrowed space

Work zones change the roadway and place workers and equipment near traffic. Early speed reduction and careful compliance leave more room for unexpected movement.

Question 34

Answer: B

Protect the scene, activate appropriate warning devices, and move away from traffic when safe
A disabled CMV can create a severe secondary-crash risk. Follow the current manual and company procedures for warning devices, notification, and safe positioning.

Question 35

Answer: A

Adjust speed to conditions and use smooth steering, braking, and acceleration

Skids are often caused by excessive speed or abrupt control inputs. Smooth operation keeps the tires within the available traction.

Question 36

Answer: C

Surge and shift the vehicle's weight during braking and turns

Liquid surge can move the center of mass and increase handling and rollover risk. Tank vehicles require specialized knowledge and appropriate testing or endorsements.

Question 37

Answer: B

Clean, correctly colored, working, and visible as required

Lights and reflectors communicate vehicle position and intentions. A daylight trip still requires the equipment to be present and in safe working order.

Question 38

Answer: B

Protect people, avoid contact, notify emergency authorities, and follow the emergency information

A spill can expose the driver and public to serious hazards. Keep people away, avoid ignition or contact hazards, and use the shipping papers and emergency information to guide notification.

Question 39

Answer: D

Cannot be controlled safely on a downgrade using normal methods

Escape ramps are emergency devices for runaway vehicles. A driver should use one when necessary and then follow emergency procedures rather than attempting an unsafe recovery.

Question 40

Answer: A

Stopping safely and obtaining real rest rather than relying only on stimulation

Short breaks can help, but a dangerously sleepy driver needs meaningful rest. The driver should plan breaks before fatigue becomes an emergency.

Question 41

Answer: C

There can be a short delay between applying the control and the brakes responding. Air pressure must travel through the system before braking force is applied. Drivers should look ahead, maintain space, and brake early and smoothly.

Question 42

Answer: A

Release braking enough to let the wheels roll, then reapply as needed while keeping the vehicle straight.

With conventional brakes, locked wheels reduce steering control. A controlled release and reapplication can restore rolling traction; follow the current manual for the specific system.

Question 43

Answer: D

Protect tractor air pressure if the trailer connection or air line fails.

The tractor protection system is part of the combination vehicle air-brake safety design. The driver should know the valve's operation and inspection procedure from the manual.

Question 44

Answer: A

The drive wheels lose traction and the trailer pushes the tractor out of line.

A jackknife begins when the tractor loses traction or the trailer pushes it out of line. Smooth braking, appropriate speed, and traction management reduce the risk.

Question 45

Answer: C

Normal service braking while driving.

The hand valve is for specific testing or controlled procedures, not normal service braking. Improper use can cause a trailer skid or loss of control.

Question 46

Answer: B

The trailer may move into an adjacent lane or strike an object while the tractor turns.

The rear of a trailer can swing outward while the front follows the turn. Mirrors and careful positioning help the driver protect nearby road users and objects.

Question 47

Answer: B

80 percent

FMCSA describes 80 percent as the minimum passing standard for knowledge tests, while the exact number of questions and test administration are determined by the state within federal standards.

Question 48

Answer: B

States administer their own programs and can add procedures or requirements while meeting federal minimums

FMCSA directs applicants to their state's CDL manual because state licensing, testing, fees, and additional requirements can differ. Federal minimums do not make every state process identical.

Question 49

Answer: A

Clean, unobstructed, and positioned to provide the required view

Visibility equipment supports every driving decision. A dirty or obstructed windshield or mirror can hide hazards and should be corrected before movement.

Question 50

Answer: A

At the correct height and supported safely for coupling

Safe coupling depends on trailer height, alignment, landing gear, and the fifth-wheel position. The driver should follow the current manual's coupling sequence exactly.