SEMI TRUCK GEAR

Pre-trip and post-trip. CDL skills-test vehicle inspection order.

Say it this way. Name the part, point at it, then say it is properly mounted and secured, not cracked, broken, or bent, and there are no leaks.

Date _____ Truck number _____ Trailer number _____ Odometer _____ Driver signature _____

1. Engine compartment, engine off

- ☐ Oil level. Between add and full. No leaks.
- ☐ Coolant level. In range. No leaks.
- ☐ Power steering fluid. In range. No leaks.
- ☐ Leaks under the engine. Oil, coolant, fuel, power steering. None.
- ☐ Alternator, water pump, and A/C belts. Properly mounted. Not cracked or frayed. Play is what this truck calls for. The CDL manual says learn that play. Schools often say no more than 3/4 inch at the center.
- ☐ Hoses. Properly mounted and secured. Not cracked or leaking.
- ☐ Air compressor. Mounted. Gear-driven, or the belt is not cracked or frayed.
- ☐ Steering box, linkage, and hoses. Properly mounted and secured. Not cracked, broken, or bent. No leaks.
- ☐ Front suspension. Springs, mounts, shocks. Properly mounted and secured. Not cracked, broken, or bent. No leaks.
- ☐ Front brakes. Slack adjuster, pushrod, chamber, hoses, drum and linings. Not cracked or leaking. Pushrod travel not past the limit.
- ☐ Steer tires, rims, wheels. 4/32 inch tread in every major groove. CDL manual number. Inflated. Sidewalls not cut or bulged. Valve stem and cap OK. Lug nuts present and tight. Hub oil seal not leaking.
- ☐ Driver door, mirror, and steps. Properly mounted and secured. Not cracked or broken. Steps clear.

2. Engine start and in-cab

- ☐ Safe start. In neutral or park. Parking brake on.
- ☐ Clutch. If the truck has one, it frees before the floor.
- ☐ Oil pressure. Comes up to normal.
- ☐ Air pressure. Gauges work and pressure builds.
- ☐ Ammeter or voltmeter. In the normal range.
- ☐ Coolant temperature. Comes up to normal. No overheat.
- ☐ Warning lights and buzzers. On at start, then off when they should be.
- ☐ Steering play. No more than 10 degrees. About 2 inches at the rim of a 20-inch wheel. CDL manual.
- ☐ Horn. Works.
- ☐ Wipers and washers. Work. Blades not torn.
- ☐ Heater and defroster. Work.
- ☐ Lights and indicators. Left, right, four-ways, high and low beam. Dash shows them.
- ☐ Mirrors and windshield. Clean. Adjusted. Not cracked through your view.
- ☐ Emergency equipment. Three reflective triangles. Extinguisher charged and mounted. Spare fuses if this truck still carries them.
- ☐ Seat belt. Mounted, latches, not ripped or frayed.

3. Air brake checks

- ☐ Wheels chocked before the parking brake comes off.
- ☐ Leak test, brakes released. After the first drop, less than 2 psi in one minute for a single. Less than 3 psi for a combination. CDL manual.
- ☐ Leak test, foot brake held at 90 psi or more. Less than 3 psi in one minute for a single. Less than 4 psi for a combination. CDL manual.
- ☐ Low-air warning. Light and buzzer come on before pressure drops below 55 psi. CDL manual. Older manuals said 60 psi.
- ☐ Spring brakes. Parking-brake knob pops out between 20 and 45 psi. CDL manual. Older copies said 20 to 40.
- ☐ Buildup. 85 to 100 psi within 45 seconds. The skills-test script says at idle. The air-brake chapter says operating rpm. Use the script your examiner uses.
- ☐ Governor. Cut-out about 120 to 140 psi. Often taught as about 125. Cut-in about 100 psi. CDL manual: use the manufacturer spec.
- ☐ Parking brake test. Set it. Ease into gear. The truck does not roll.
- ☐ Service brake test. Release the parking brake. Roll a few feet. Brake. The truck stops straight and does not pull.

4. External walk-around, each side

- ☐ Fuel tank and cap. Cap on. Tank properly mounted and secured. No leaks.
- ☐ Battery box. Cover on. Not broken. Cables not loose or broken.
- ☐ Drive shaft. Not bent. U-joints not broken. Guard in place.
- ☐ Exhaust. Properly mounted and secured. No leaks. Not rubbing a line or the frame.
- ☐ Frame. Not cracked, broken, or bent.
- ☐ Splash guards. Properly mounted. Not missing.
- ☐ Rear brakes and suspension. Slack adjuster, chamber, hoses, springs, mounts, shocks. Properly mounted and secured. Not cracked, broken, or bent. No leaks.
- ☐ Drive and trailer tires. 2/32 inch tread. CDL manual number for tires that are not the steer tires. Inflated. Sidewalls OK. Valve stems OK. Nothing stuck between duals.
- ☐ Lights and reflectors. Properly mounted. Not broken. Right color. Clean. They work when you check them.

5. Coupling

- ☐ Air and electric lines. Connected. Not cut, cracked, or leaking. Slack enough to turn. Not dragging.
- ☐ Catwalk. Secure. Clear.
- ☐ Mounting bolts. Present and tight.
- ☐ Fifth-wheel platform. Not cracked. Sits flat.
- ☐ Release arm. Not bent. Locked.
- ☐ Locking jaws. Closed around the shank of the kingpin, not the head.
- ☐ Kingpin. Not bent, broken, or worn through.
- ☐ Apron. Flat on the fifth wheel. No gap.
- ☐ Slide locking pins. In place on a sliding fifth wheel.

6. Trailer

- ☐ Header board. Secure if the load needs it. Not bent or broken.
- ☐ Doors and hinges. Open, close, and latch. Not cracked or broken.
- ☐ Trailer frame. Not cracked, broken, or bent.
- ☐ Tandem release. Pins locked if the tandem slides.
- ☐ Landing gear. Up. Crank secured. Not bent. No missing parts.
- ☐ Trailer suspension, brakes, tires, and lights. Same words as the truck. 2/32 tread. No leaks. Lights work.
- ☐ Seal. On, and the number written down, if this load is sealed.

7. Post-trip and DVIR

- [ ] Defects noted.
- [ ] DVIR written up.
- [ ] Tires and leaks checked again.
- [ ] Fuel and DEF.
- [ ] Cab secured. Windows up. Doors locked if you leave it.

Defects

Based on the CDL manual's vehicle inspection test. Check your state's CDL manual and your carrier's policy; requirements vary.