

CDL Exam – Skills Tests

Breakdown of Skills Tests

Type of Skills Test	Description
Vehicle inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ evaluates the applicant's ability to determine if the vehicle is safe to drive▪ requires pointing/touching items as requested by the examiner and explaining the purpose of inspecting those items
Basic vehicle control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ evaluates the applicant's skills on how to control a CMV▪ involves performing basic maneuvers in a defined area as instructed by the examiner; includes a mandatory engine start, in-cab inspection, and coupling inspection
On-road test	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ evaluates the applicant's ability to safely operate a CMV in a variety of traffic conditions▪ includes performing various maneuvers as instructed by the examiner

CDL Skills Tests – Additional Information

Each component of the skills test is scored separately. Scoring varies by state but is roughly broken down as follows:

- **Vehicle inspection:** The examiner will keep track of how many items are properly inspected. You must properly inspect at least 80% of items you are asked to inspect:
 - If you fail, the examiner will review the missed items with you before officially concluding the exam.
 - If you successfully complete the inspection but find that the vehicle is not properly equipped or unsafe, you will be required to reschedule the rest of the skills test portions until the vehicle is safe to drive.

- **Basic vehicle control:** You are allowed NO MORE THAN 12 points on the basic vehicle control portion of the exam. Certain maneuvers carry separate penalties and may still result in failure—even if the 12-point threshold has not been met. Scoring more than 12 points means you have failed the exam. Your score is based on the following:
 - **Encroachments:** More than 3 encroachments results in failure.
 - **Pull-ups:** Using more pull-ups than allowed for a particular exercise will result in failure of the test. (Two pull-ups are allowed for each exercise EXCEPT the straight-line backing maneuver, where only 1 pull-up is allowed.)
 - **Outside vehicle observations/“looks”:** Too many looks will result in failure of the test. (Two outside vehicle observations are allowed for each exercise EXCEPT straight-line backing, where only 1 look is allowed.) Not safely securing and/or exiting the vehicle can result in an automatic failure. These are all scored as looks: opening the door, moving from a seated position (when in control of the vehicle), and/or walking to the rear of a bus to check the view.
 - **Inside parallel/final position:** You must maneuver the vehicle into its final position EXACTLY as described by the examiner; penalties or automatic failure of the test can result otherwise.

- **On-road test:** The examiner determines whether a required maneuver is performed correctly. Errors result in deductions; the number of deductions that will result in failure of the test varies by state. Typically, you must have 30 deductions OR LESS to pass. Other causes of failing include the following:
 - having or causing an accident
 - driving in a dangerous manner
 - being uncooperative with the examiner
 - any violations of the law