

**SKILLS TEST & ROAD TEST
GUIDE**

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Preparing for the New CDL Challenge

Obtaining the new Commercial Driver's License (CDL) is a challenge which will require a greater degree of preparation and professional effort than either the new or seasoned truck or bus driver have ever experienced in the past.

Prior to the Federal Highway Administration's July, 1987 adoption of the new minimum regulations for testing and licensing of commercial vehicle drivers, the process of acquiring or renewing their commercial license was mostly a routine and relatively effortless experience for truck drivers. Now the new federal regulations, with tougher standards and licensing requirements, are creating concerns for truck and bus drivers, the truck trucking industry and individual state motor vehicle departments regarding how to meet the challenge of compliance with these new FHWA regulations.

The new FHWA regulations require commercial vehicle drivers in all 50 states to obtain a state-issued CDL by April 1, 1992. Groups exempted from the CDL requirements are farm-to-market operators, firefighters and military personnel, unless the state requires such drivers to be tested and licensed under its CDL program. All CDL applicants will have to pass a driving skills test in a vehicle representative of the type they intend to operate. The new regulations will allow states to use third parties, such as employers, school boards, driver training schools or transit authorities, to administer the CDL test.

Under minimum regulations states are permitted to "grandfather" in some drivers, depending on their driving record for the last two years, who now have a valid commercial license and have been regularly employed as a commercial driver. These experienced drivers with good driving records will not have to take the driving test if they pass the knowledge test. The FHWA rules will also allow states to issue a learner's permit for a temporary period to permit novice drivers to gain experience on public roads, provided they already have a valid automobile drivers license and are accompanied by a driver with a valid CDL.

It must be emphasized that the FHWA requirements are only minimum standards, and states are free to adopt more stringent methods if they so choose. States which are not in full compliance with the federal regulations by September, 1993 risk losing some of their federal highway money. Therefore, it can be expected that most states will attempt to meet, or preferably exceed, the federal standards in developing CDL requirements for their state.

Although states have until April 1, 1992 to institute their CDL program, many states intend to implement their programs much sooner. California was the first to meet the challenge by implementing its CDL program effective January 1, 1989. California's new licensing and testing requirements equal or exceed the federal standards and apply to all operators of commercial motor vehicles.

California's swift action in implementing the federal standards has been in reaction to the state's increase in truck-related and truck-at-fault accidents. According to Del Pierce, Director of the California Department of Motor Vehicles, "Truck accident deaths and injuries in California have increased almost 40% since 1982, with speed and improper driving skills being the major cause of truck accidents each year."

California took the initiative to improve highway safety through ungrading the testing, licensing and post-licensing procedures for commercial vehicle drivers. California's program is likely to become the example followed by other states as they attempt to implement their own CDL programs.

The licensing standards for California requires both new and experienced drivers to take a test of the driver's knowledge of the rules of the road. Although supposedly written on a sixth-grade level, the test is more involved and extensive than before. The basic general knowledge test consists of 50 questions, with additional 15-20 question tests required of those who drive double or triple trailers, tankers, passenger vehicles, or hazardous material placarded

vehicles. For example, a California applicant taking the general knowledge test and endorsements for air brakes, combination vehicles, double trailers, tankers and hazardous materials would need to correctly answer 120 of 150 questions to pass the exam.

After passing the required knowledge tests, applicants for the California CDL are required to take performance tests which consists of a pre-trip inspection, basic control skills test and a lengthy over-the-road driving test. Existing, experienced fleet drivers are not likely to have to take the road test providing their driving record is clean. However, those who have had accidents will probably be required by their companies to take the driving test.

California drivers will be allowed to retake both knowledge and performance tests three times under a single license application fee. However, drivers who fail any portion of the exam will not be allowed to drive again until they have taken and successfully passed the exam, even if they have had an excellent driving record for years. Consequently, drivers need to take the time and effort to prepare themselves for the exam, especially for half of the drivers who have taken the California CDL exam have failed some portion of it because they were not properly prepared.

"If a driver attempts to go in to take a CDL exam without reading the driver manual or getting some other type of instruction, there is a good chance that driver will fail on the first attempt," says Michael Trentacoste, Director of the Office of Motor Carrier Standards, U.S. Department of Transportation. Mr. Trentacoste advises fleets to actively look for ways to help drivers prepare for the CDL exams. He suggests in-house training, assistance in obtaining a manual and making the subject a lead item at driver meetings.

The California Department of Motor Vehicles has published the "California Commercial Driver Handbook" to help prepare California drivers for all phases of the Commercial Driver License exam. This 92-page manual explains the California CDL program and qualifications,

describes what to expect on each portion of the exam, and provides detailed information the driver will need to know in order to pass the exam.

So far California is the only state that has published a CDL driver's manual. However, a private educational testing contractor has developed a model driver study manual to be used for the CDL exam in other states. The Essex Corporation had prepared a model skills test, a "core" knowledge test and training materials for license examiners.

The states are being encouraged and pressured by the U.S. Department of Motor Vehicles to use the Essex material since the material meets the federal CDL minimum standards. Each state will be allowed to make changes and additions to the Essex material in order to adapt it for specific state requirements. To determine when manuals will be available from other states, contact the individual state's Department of Motor Vehicles.

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SKILLS TEST and ROAD TEST GUIDE

Basic Control Skills Include:

- Forward Stop
- Straight-line Backing
- Gradual Crossover Backing
- Measured Right Turn
- Parallel Parking
- Serpentine Backing

In the SKILLS TEST Video, you'll see a simulated test situation with an examiner and an applicant. Listen as the examiner explains what he is looking for and where he would take off points. Use this section of the Guide along with the Video to aid you in passing your CDL Skills Test. It explains the scoring procedure, the examiner's criteria, and the three levels of marking a pass or fail grade. **The video and guide do not explain how to perform the basic control skills, they only illustrate what the examiner looks for and what he or she will take points off for.**

Turn to this Guide's sample Road Test Score Sheet (P. 15) and you'll see what's expected of your performance on the Skills Test. In California, you're expected to perform four of the six basic control skills. Under each skill it's pointed out how you can lose points. In the Guide's Criteria section there is more detailed information that breaks down what each examiner looks for. Remember, there are three levels of point reduction: Improvement Needed, Poor and Fail. You can lose points and still pass, but a complete failure on any maneuver will immediately terminate the test.

One of the best ways to avoid losing points is to practice the basic control skills before you go to the test. Use the diagrams in this guide to set up your own testing site. If you have questions about how to do this, or drive a special kind of vehicle and don't know which ones apply, call your state agency. They will be glad to answer your questions.

Remember, even though the California test is based on Federal Standards, tests can vary state-to-state. In addition, Rules and regulations are always changing, so check with your state agency for updated information.





A Public Service Agency

COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLE AND TOUR BUS ROAD TEST SCORE SHEET

TO APPLICANT: You have 100 points at the start of the test. For each driving error points will be deducted. Failure on any maneuver will result in immediate termination of the test. PASSING GRADE: 75

Header section containing fields for DATE, LICENSE NO., CLASS, TYPE VEHICLE, MECHANICAL FAILURE REASON, FINAL SCORE, EXAMINER'S SIGNATURE, and I.D. NO.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE X

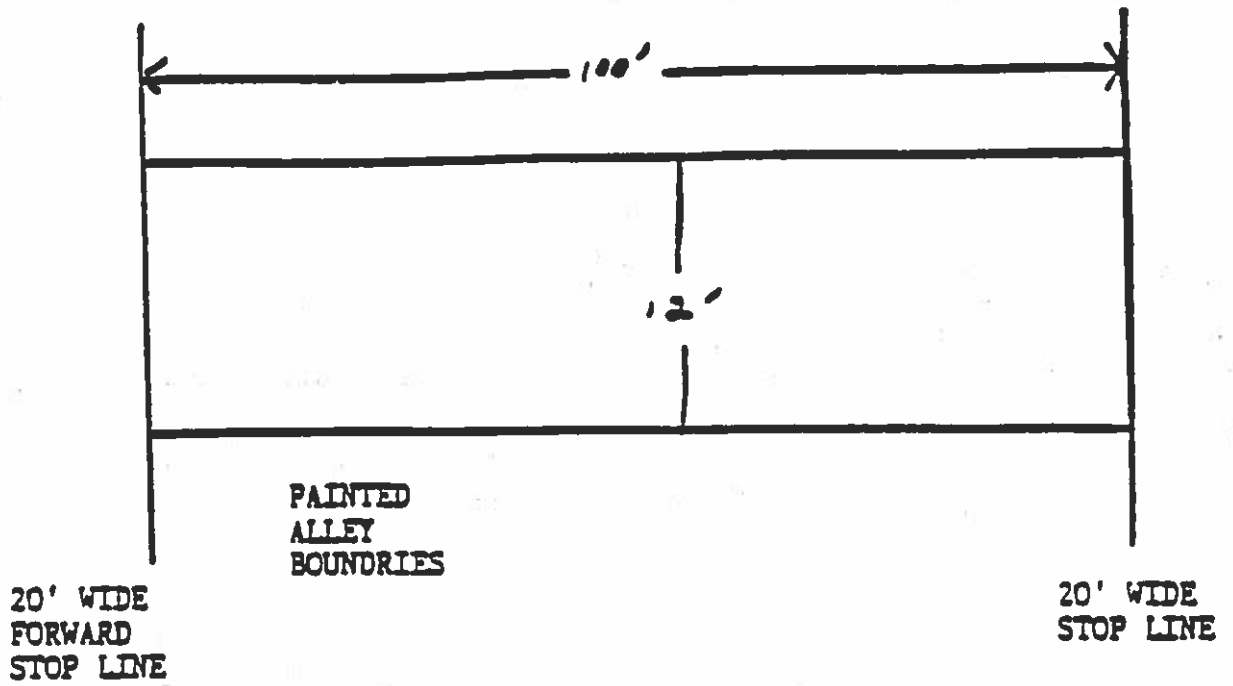
Table with columns: SKILL TESTS, IMPROVEMENT NEEDED, POOR, FAIL. Rows include FORWARD STOP, STRAIGHTLINE BACKING, CONTROL OF VEHICLE/TRAILER, PULLUPS, MIRROR USE, ALLEY DOCK, STRIKES MARKER/CURB, CONTROL OF VEHICLE/TRAILER, MEASURED RIGHT TURN, TURNS TOO WIDE, TURNS TOO SHARP, PARALLEL PARKING, STRIKES MARKER/CURB, CONTROL OF VEHICLE/TRAILER, SERPENTINE BACKING, STRIKES MARKER/CURB, CONTROL OF VEHICLE/TRAILER.

Table with columns: BASIC DRIVING SKILLS, IMPROVEMENT NEEDED, POOR, FAIL. Rows include CAUTION, GRADE CONTROL, RIGHT AND LEFT TURNS, RIGHT OF WAY, SPEED CONTROL, LANE USE, MECHANICAL OPERATION, EQUIPMENT USE.

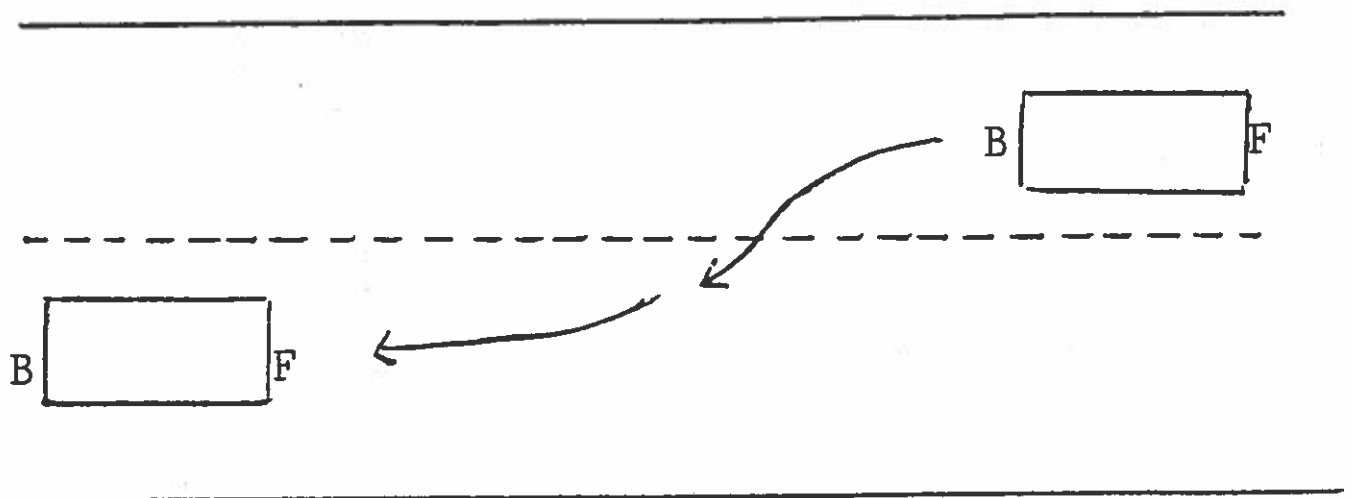
RESTRICTIONS: 48 Commercial motor vehicle—vehicles not equipped with air brakes. 64 Class A or B Automatic transmission. 49 Limited to operating a bus with a GVW of 10,000 lbs. or less and designed for carrying not more than 20 passengers plus the driver. When operating tour bus, restricted to vehicles not equipped with air brakes (Special cert. only). Other (specify):

REMARKS

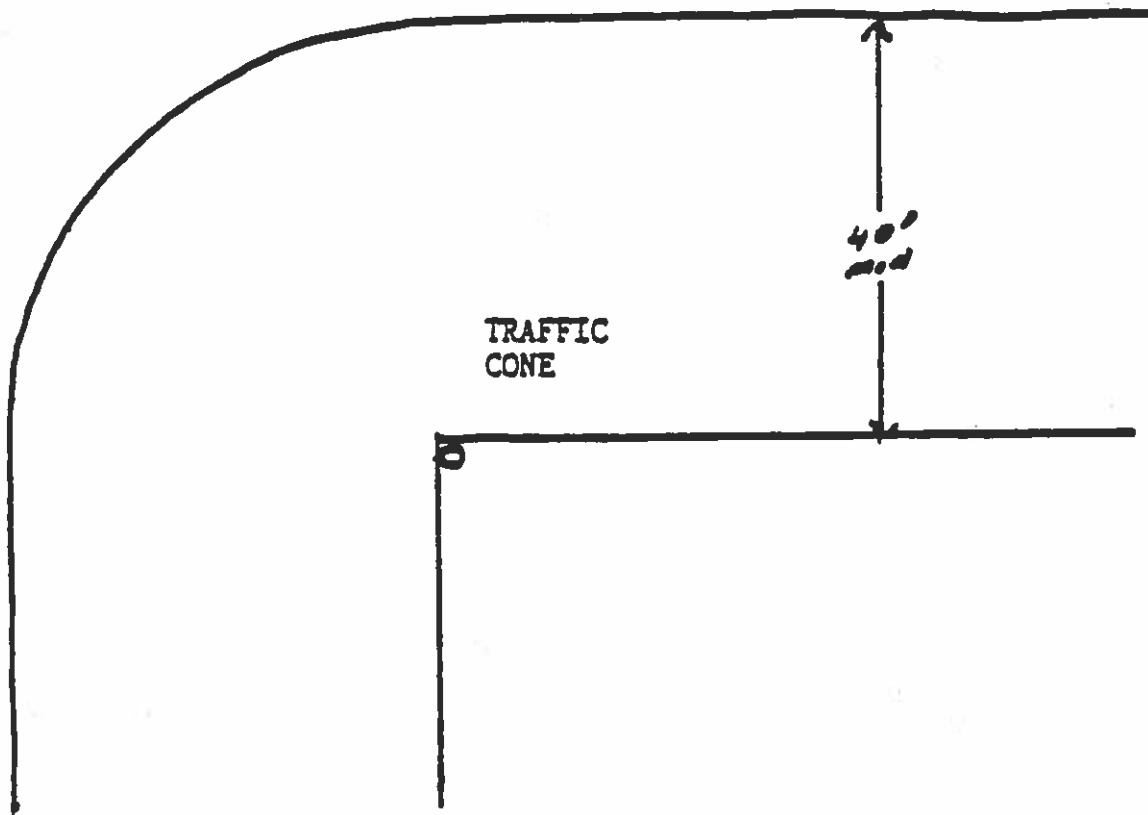
- 1 FORWARD STOP
- 2 STRAIGHT LINE BACK



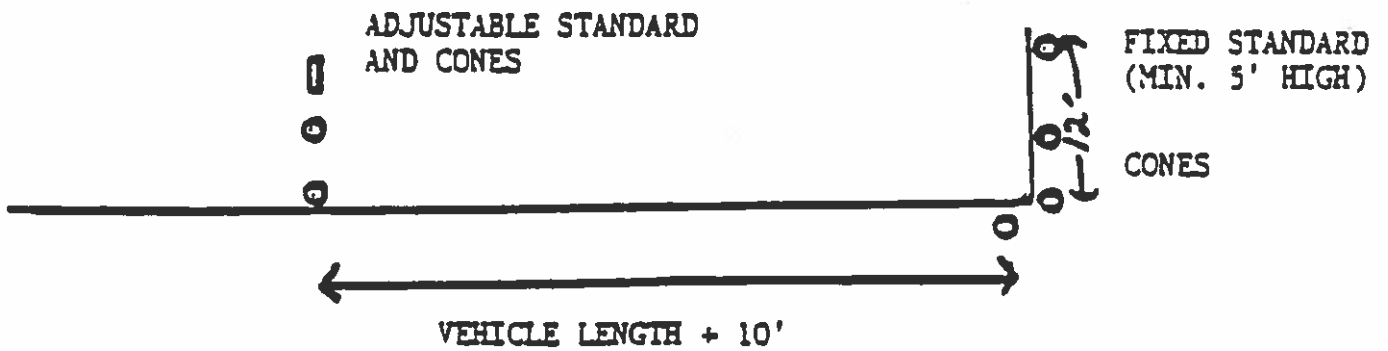
3 GRADUAL CROSSOVER BACKING



4 THE RIGHT TURN



5 PARALLEL PARK (ADJUSTABLE)



6 BACKWARD SERPENTINE



75'
MIN.

CRITERIA FOR THE SKILL TESTS

A failure on any maneuver of the skill test will immediately terminate the test. During all skill tests, the examiner will exit the vehicle and observe maneuvers from a location which will allow accurate assessment of performance and provide the opportunity to warn the driver of actual or potential hazards. Currently Gradual Crossover Backing is California state specific. Check with your state agency for updated information.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED	POOR	FAIL
<p><u>FORWARD STOP</u></p> <p>Drives forward and stops within 1 foot of a designated marker.</p> <p align="center"><u>Position after stopping</u></p>		
Stops 1 to 3 feet short of or beyond marker	Stops more than 3 feet short of or beyond marker	-----
<p><u>STRAIGHT-LINE BACKING</u></p> <p>Backs straight with no corrections.</p> <p align="center"><u>1. Control of Vehicle</u></p>		
<p>a. Begins by turning wheel the wrong way but recovers</p> <p>b. Slight weave</p>	<p>a. Turns wheel wrong way frequently but recovers</p> <p>b. Moderate weave (3-4 ft. off course)</p>	<p>a. Cannot backup</p> <p>b. Backs over marker or any wheel over curb</p>
<p><u>2. Pullups</u></p>		
In a bus, drives forward to straighten out once	In a bus, drives forward, twice	In a bus, drives forward more than 3 times
<p><u>3. Mirror Use</u></p>		
-----	Backs using one mirror only or both mirrors only intermittently	Does not use mirrors

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED	POOR	FAIL
<p><u>GRADUAL CROSSOVER BACKING</u> (Buses Only)</p> <p>The gradual crossover backing skill test is required when giving the drive test in a bus in lieu of the alley dock.</p> <p>Begins with the vehicle parallel and within 12 inches of a line to the <u>right</u> of it. Backs across the line repositioning the vehicle parallel and within 12 inches of the line to the <u>left</u> of the vehicle. One correction (pullup) is allowed.</p> <p><u>1. Control of Vehicle</u></p>		
Turns wheel wrong way but recovers	Turns wheel wrong way frequently but recovers	Cannot complete crossover backing maneuver
<p><u>2. Pullups</u></p>		
2 pullups	3 pullups	4 pullups



IMPROVEMENT NEEDED	POOR	FAIL
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MEASURED RIGHT TURN</u></p> <p>Drives forward and makes a right turn around a cone or marker. The rear wheels should come as close to the cone or marker as possible without touching it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1. <u>Turns Too Wide</u></p>		
Wheel 1-3 feet from cone/marker	Wheel over 3 feet from cone/marker	-----
<p style="text-align: center;">2. <u>Turns Too Sharp</u></p>		
-----	Bumps cone/marker	Drives over cone/marker
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>PARALLEL PARKING</u></p> <p>Performs parallel parking maneuver without touching stanchion or curb. This test to be conducted on the conventional (right) side but may be carried out on the sight (left) side if necessary.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1. <u>Strikes Marker/Curb</u></p>		
-----	Touches stanchion/curb lightly	Backs over stanchion or any wheel over curb
<p style="text-align: center;">2. <u>Control of Vehicle</u></p>		
a. Turns wheel wrong way but recovers b. 1 pullup	a. Turns wheel wrong way frequently but recovers b. 2 pullups	a. Cannot complete parallel park b. 3 pullups

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED	POOR	FAIL
<p><u>SERPENTINE BACKING</u></p> <p>Backs around 3 markers in a serpentine manner without striking markers/curbs or jackknifing trailer. One correction (pullup) is allowed. Driver may exit vehicle to check position. (Mirrors will not be scored during this skill test.)</p> <p><u>1. Strikes Marker/Curb</u></p>		
Touches marker/curb lightly	Bumps marker/curb sharply	Backs over marker or any wheel over curb
<p><u>2. Control of Vehicle</u></p>		
<p>a. Turns wheel wrong way, but recovers</p> <p>b. 2-pullups</p>	<p>a. Turns wheel wrong way frequently, but recovers</p> <p>b. 3 to 4 pullups</p>	<p>a. Cannot complete serpentine maneuver</p> <p>b. 5 pullups</p>

SKILLS TEST and ROAD TEST GUIDE

Basic Driving Skills :

- Caution
- Grade Control
- Stop Sign/Traffic Signal
- Right and Left Turns
- Right of Way
- Speed Control
- Lane Use
- Reaction to Hazards

Watch the accompanying Road Test Video, to see a simulated Basic Driving Skill test situation with an examiner and an applicant. The examiner reviews the basic individual driving skills needed to perform complex driving skill tasks, and explains what he's looking for and why he takes off points. In the Video, the applicant performs the maneuvers listed under the basic driving skills section of this guide's sample Road Test score sheet. The Mechanical Operation section of the score sheet singles out how well you operate different pieces of equipment. In your actual Road Test, the Mechanical Operation section will be graded while the examiner is grading you on your basic driving skills.

Used along with the Video, this basic driving skills section of the Guide can aid you in passing your Road Test and the Mechanical Operation tests, because it explains the **scoring procedure, the examiner's criteria, and the three levels of a pass or fail grade.** The Video and Guide **do not explain** how to perform the basic driving skills, only what the examiner looks for and what he or she will take points off for. We've also included a California examiner's "Road Test Elements" checklist. It explains the type of driving environments in

which you will be expected to perform. In some areas, you will be asked to simulate hill-driving skills (gears, etc.).

Remember, even though the California test is based on Federal Standards, tests can vary state-to-state. Plus, rules and regulations are always changing, so check with your state agency for updated information.



IMPROVEMENT NEEDED	POOR	FAIL
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>SPEED CONTROL</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>27. Over Speed Limit</u></p> <p>Drives within speed limit.</p>		
-----	1-5 mph over limit	over 5 mph over limit
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>28. Too Slow - Needless Stops</u> (Circle item scored)</p> <p><u>NOTE: Do not penalize for electing not to turn against red light.</u></p> <p>Drives at a safe speed considering weather, traffic, road conditions etc., but not too slow.</p>		
<p>a. Drives majority of course slightly slow for conditions</p> <p>b. Stops unnecessarily</p>	-----	Drives entirely too slow for conditions
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>29. Basic Speed Law</u></p> <p>Does not drive faster than it is safe to drive, considering weather, traffic, and road conditions.</p>		
Drives majority of course slightly fast for conditions	-----	Drives entirely too fast for conditions
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>30. On Turns/Curves</u></p> <p>Slows far enough in advance, and makes turn at a speed which allows driver to maintain safe control of vehicle.</p>		
Does not reduce speed sufficiently in advance	Turns too fast, but vehicle still under control	Turns too fast, skids, or otherwise loses control

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED	POOR	FAIL
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>31. On Approaching Corners</u></p> <p>Slowing to 15 mph upon blind intersection approach.</p>		
-----	Up to 5 mph over limit entering blind intersection	More than 5 mph over limit entering blind intersection
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>32. On Entering/Exiting Freeway</u></p> <p>Enters and exits freeway at a safe speed.</p>		
-----	Enters freeway slightly fast or slow for conditions	a. Enter freeway entirely too fast/slow for conditions b. Stops unnecessarily upon entering freeway
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>33. Following Distance</u></p> <p>Consistently follows at a safe speed and following distance.</p>		
-----	a. Does not keep proper following distance according to speed and conditions b. Constantly changes following distance	Any extended continuance of "tailgating"
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>LANE USE</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>34. Steering Smoothness</u></p> <p>Turns steering wheel smoothly and with full control. Complete movement of steering wheel unencumbered. Turns only by the amount necessary.</p>		
a. Somewhat erratic steering b. Over-steers, but makes quick recovery	a. Consistently erratic steering b. Occasionally removes both hands from wheel c. Causes weaving or lane straddling	-----

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED	POOR	FAIL
<u>35. Position in Lane</u> Drives completely within lane.		
a. Drives slightly out of lane b. Swings too far out into street on leaving curb	Occasionally drives in two lanes at once or straddles line, unless necessary due to width of vehicle	Continuous driving in two lanes at once, or line straddling, unless necessary due to width of vehicle
<u>36. Choice of Lane</u> NOTE: <u>One-way streets provide an exception to some of the criteria.</u> Drives in appropriate lane.		
a. Does not use appropriate lane b. Unnecessary lane change(s), and without good reason	Drives completely on left of center of roadway, but makes quick recovery	a. Continuously drives on left of center of roadway b. Drives on left side of double line c. Improperly uses lane which is posted for a specific maneuver or direction
<u>REACTION TO HAZARDS</u> <u>37. Dangerous Maneuver</u> Alert for, and responsive to, hazards.		
-----	-----	a. Commits any driving fault which causes immediate danger to any person, vehicle, or property b. Flagrantly violates any traffic law for which the driver could be cited

SKILLS TEST and ROAD TEST GUIDE

Summary/Conclusion

Study both Videos and Guide to gain a solid base of information and get a passing score. For successful Performance on CDL basic control Skills Test and driving skills Road Tests, we suggest you do the following:

- Use your state's handbook and this guide, and **practice a Skills Test and Road Test** on your own or with a partner.
- Bring the appropriate vehicle for the license you are applying for.
- If you need a memory aid, bring one, as long as it's not too detailed.
- **Listen to the examiner questions; they're asked to help you and highlight key points of the test.** An examiner does not want you to fail, he or she wants you to pass.



IMPORTANT NOTE:

This Guide and Video uses the California testing system, developed from the Essex Model Driver Program based on Federal Standards. Remember, even though the California test is based on Federal Standards, tests can vary state-to-state. Also, the tests vary due to each test's chosen location. In addition, rules and regulations are always changing, so if you have further questions, check with your state agency.

**NOW
AVAILABLE.**

COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSE WRITTEN TEST REFRESHER

In between 1 and 2½ hours, depending on driver skill, the CDL Written Test Refresher helps to prepare drivers to pass the general knowledge and necessary endorsement portions of the CDL test.

Because the material is presented in a video format, live action simulations reinforce concepts, and aid drivers to visualize questions from the written tests. Drivers are coached to pass the written portion — until they get it right. This approach is effective for drivers who learn visually.

A pre-screening test in the driver guide, lets them immediately identify areas where they need improvement, and each question has a key to help the driver quickly locate instructional material in the video or the guide. When drivers feel they have mastered the information, they complete sample tests in each area.

Questions used in the pre-screening and sample tests are derived from the Essex Model Driver Program and actual state tests. The material is organized so that drivers can proceed at their own pace. The program works equally well in both group and self-study situations.

WHAT'S IN THE PROGRAM.

- Live action vignettes allow drivers to answer questions from the video, without reading the material
- Visual "show and tell" reinforcement is memorable, without dependence on listening skills or reading ability
- Immediate review of information through sample tests of each subject area
- Brakes and gears explanations and demonstrations
- Rules of the road review
- Safe cargo transport review
- Safe passenger transport review
- Hazardous materials transport review
- Vignettes use all types of vehicles including buses, tankers, and combination vehicles
- All endorsements covered

WHAT'S IN THE COMPLETE PACKAGE.

- 2 VHS videotapes
- 16-page leader guide
- 96-page driver guide
- Certificate of completion

WHAT IT COSTS.

Product Number	Item	Member Price	Non-Member Price
344.19.	CDL Written Test	\$129.00	\$162.00
2222	Refresher	119.00	149.00
344.21	Driver Guide,		
	96 pp. with	\$7.95	\$9.95
	Certificate of	6.95	8.69
	Completion	6.50	8.13

