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1. A driver notices the truck feels like it is being pushed forward when slowing down. What is the most likely cause of this sensation?

- A. The brakes are applying uneven pressure across the axles
- B. The cargo has settled toward the rear during transit
- C. The tank is overfilled and liquid is spilling through the vent
- D. Front-to-back liquid surge is shifting weight toward the front of the vehicle

2. Which tank design uses internal metal walls that completely divide the tank into separate sealed compartments, preventing all liquid movement between sections?

- A. Unbaffled tank
- B. Baffled tank
- C. Smooth-bore tank
- D. Bulkheaded tank

3. A smooth-bore tank is MOST commonly used to transport which type of cargo?

- A. Dry bulk cement
- B. Food-grade liquids such as milk or juice
- C. Gasoline and diesel fuel
- D. Liquefied petroleum gas

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4. You are driving a baffled liquid tank that is half full. Compared to a smooth-bore tank at the same fill level, how do the baffles affect surge on curves?

- A. Baffles eliminate all side-to-side surge on curves
- B. Baffles increase side-to-side surge because they trap liquid against the tank walls
- C. Baffles reduce front-to-back surge but do little to control side-to-side surge on curves
- D. Baffles only affect surge when the tank is more than three-quarters full



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5. A tank truck is 80% full of a low-viscosity liquid. The driver begins a gradual braking maneuver on a level road. Which outcome best describes what happens to vehicle handling?

- A. The moving liquid creates a forward surge force that supplements braking
- B. The moving liquid creates a forward surge force that adds to stopping distance
- C. The high fill level prevents the liquid from moving, eliminating surge
- D. The vehicle will be unaffected because the tank is nearly full

6. Which of the following fill levels typically produces the WORST liquid surge in an unbaffled tank?

- A. 10% full
- B. Around 50% full
- C. 100% full
- D. 90% full

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7. A driver is turning left at an intersection with a partially loaded smooth-bore tanker. What unique hazard does a smooth-bore tank create compared to a baffled tank in this situation?

- A. The tank is lighter, so the steering is harder to control
- B. The absence of baffles lowers the center of gravity, making turns more stable
- C. Liquid shifts fully to one side without restriction, creating severe side-to-side surge and increasing rollover risk
- D. Smooth-bore tanks develop higher internal pressure during turns

8. A tanker driver accelerates quickly from a stop with a tank that is one-third full of liquid. What handling problem is MOST likely to occur?

- A. The brakes automatically engage to compensate for the weight shift
- B. The engine overheats because surge restricts exhaust flow
- C. Rearward surge shifts weight to the back, reducing front-axle traction and steering control
- D. The rear axle lifts off the road because of forward surge



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9. What is the primary purpose of outage (ullage) space inside a liquid cargo tank?

- A. To provide room for cleaning equipment during washouts
- B. To improve fuel efficiency by keeping the tank lighter
- C. To give the driver a visual reference for measuring fill level
- D. To allow liquid to expand as temperature increases without overpressurizing or overflowing the tank

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10. A driver is hauling a bulkheaded tank with four equal compartments, each filled to 90% capacity with different liquid products. How does the bulkhead design change the surge dynamic compared to a single-chamber tank of the same total volume at the same average fill level?

- A. Surge is eliminated entirely because bulkheads block all liquid movement
- B. Bulkheads convert front-to-back surge into side-to-side surge, worsening cornering stability
- C. Surge within each compartment is independent and smaller in magnitude, but multiple compartments can still produce additive handling forces
- D. Surge is identical to a single-chamber tank because total liquid mass is the same

11. On a long downhill grade, a driver of a partially loaded unbaffled tanker applies steady brake pressure rather than intermittent braking. What surge-related risk does continuous steady braking create on a downgrade?

- A. If the brakes fade, the liquid's forward momentum from sustained deceleration suddenly adds to the vehicle's speed, extending stopping distance dramatically
- B. Steady brake pressure heats the liquid, causing it to expand and rupture the tank
- C. Steady braking forces surge to the sides of the tank, reducing rollover risk compared to intermittent braking
- D. Continuous braking prevents surge because the liquid reaches equilibrium quickly



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12. A driver is about to enter a highway on-ramp that curves sharply to the right while also ascending a grade. The tanker is 55% full of a low-viscosity fluid in a smooth-bore tank. Which combination of forces makes this maneuver particularly hazardous?

- A. Lateral surge to the right plus forward surge from the grade push down on the front axle and improve stability
- B. Lateral surge to the left plus grade-induced rearward surge reduce front-axle load, while the elevated center of gravity increases rollover risk
- C. Lateral surge to the left plus rearward surge from the grade combine to raise the right-side center of gravity
- D. The ascending grade cancels surge because gravity holds the liquid in place

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13. Which statement BEST explains why a tank truck with a high center of gravity can roll over at a speed that would be safe for a flatbed carrying the same total weight?

- A. The cylindrical tank shape creates aerodynamic lift that reduces tire contact
- B. Tank trucks have fewer axles, so braking force is concentrated on fewer wheels
- C. Tank trucks are required by regulation to use softer suspension, which increases body roll
- D. Liquid cargo shifts laterally during a turn, raising the effective center of gravity above what the static weight distribution suggests, reducing the rollover threshold

14. A driver must make an emergency lane change on a freeway while hauling an unbaffled tank that is approximately 40% full. Why is this scenario especially dangerous compared to an emergency lane change in a dry van at the same speed and weight?

- A. The free liquid surges laterally toward the new lane direction, compounding the lateral force from the steering input and greatly increasing rollover risk
- B. The tank's aerodynamic profile creates more wind resistance during sudden steering inputs
- C. Liquid cargo reduces brake effectiveness because the weight is unevenly distributed across axles
- D. The smooth tank exterior reduces friction with the road surface if the vehicle tilts



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15. A tanker loaded with a product requiring outage space is filled exactly to the legal weight limit. The temperature rises 30°F during transit, causing the liquid to expand. Which combination of problems can result?

- A. Weight decreases because the liquid becomes less dense, bringing the vehicle under its legal limit
- B. Expanding liquid fills the outage space, may pressurize or overflow the tank, and could cause the vehicle to exceed legal weight limits if product is retained in the vents
- C. Expansion only affects compressed gases, not liquid cargo
- D. The liquid contracts because heat converts some of it to vapor, reducing surge hazard

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16. During a pre-trip inspection of a baffled tanker, a driver discovers one baffle has a crack running across its full diameter. How does this specific damage alter the surge characteristics of the tank during a normal braking event?

- A. A cracked baffle has no effect because baffles are only safety devices for collisions
- B. The cracked baffle will deflect more liquid rearward during braking, reducing front surge
- C. The compromised baffle allows liquid to pass more freely, increasing front-to-back surge beyond what an intact baffled tank would exhibit, approaching the behavior of a smooth-bore tank
- D. The crack converts front-to-back surge to rotational surge, causing the vehicle to yaw unpredictably

17. Why do tanker trucks have a higher rollover risk compared to most other commercial vehicles?

- A. Their center of gravity is higher, making them more top-heavy and unstable
- B. Their steering systems are less responsive in turns
- C. Their tires are narrower and provide less road contact
- D. Their braking systems are less effective at high speeds

18. A tanker driver is approaching an on-ramp posted at 35 mph. What is the safest approach for a loaded tanker?

- A. Slow well below the posted advisory speed, since the rating does not account for high-CG vehicles
- B. Use the posted speed only when carrying hazardous liquids
- C. Take the ramp at 5 mph above the posted speed to maintain momentum
- D. Match the posted advisory speed exactly, as it accounts for all vehicle types



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19. Which combination of conditions creates the GREATEST rollover risk for a tanker on a curve?

- A. Partial load with free liquid movement, high speed, sharp curve
- B. Empty tank, wet pavement, sharp curve
- C. Full load, cold weather, slight curve
- D. Full load, dry pavement, gentle curve

20. A driver notices a freeway on-ramp has a sharp curve with an advisory speed sign reading 40 mph. The driver is hauling a tanker that is 60% full of liquid fertilizer. What should the driver do?

- A. Drive faster than 40 mph to exit the ramp quickly and reduce exposure time
- B. Drive 40 mph since the posted advisory speed is sufficient for any legal load
- C. Maintain highway speed through the ramp to keep liquid from sloshing
- D. Drive considerably slower than 40 mph to account for the high center of gravity and liquid surge

21. Which statement BEST explains why a tanker filled to only 50% capacity can be more dangerous in a turn than one filled to 95%?

- A. A 50% load is lighter and therefore causes less friction between tires and road
- B. A 50% load makes the suspension softer, allowing more body roll
- C. A 50% load lowers the center of gravity, causing understeer through curves
- D. A 50% load creates a large free liquid surface that can surge laterally, destabilizing the vehicle

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22. A tanker driver is exiting a highway on a curved off-ramp and feels the truck starting to lean outward. The BEST immediate action is to:

- A. Ease off the accelerator and steer smoothly, avoiding abrupt corrections
- B. Accelerate to straighten the vehicle with centrifugal force
- C. Apply the trailer brakes only to reduce rear-end swing
- D. Steer sharply toward the outside of the curve to counterbalance the lean



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23. Why is the posted curve speed on a highway sign particularly hazardous to ignore when driving a tanker loaded with a low-viscosity liquid such as water?

- A. Low-viscosity liquids flow faster inside the tank, amplifying lateral surge forces during the curve
- B. Water is heavier per gallon, so it increases overall gross weight beyond legal limits
- C. Low-viscosity liquids vaporize in turns, reducing tank pressure and braking ability
- D. Water causes corrosion that weakens the tank walls under cornering stress

24. A smooth-bore tanker at 70% capacity is taking a long gradual curve. Compared to a baffled tanker with the same load, the smooth-bore tanker is MORE likely to:

- A. Handle better because the continuous fluid reduces resonance in the tank
- B. Experience less rollover risk because the liquid can flow to the low side and stabilize
- C. Have stronger braking because all the fluid momentum adds to axle downforce
- D. Experience greater side-to-side surge during the curve because there are no baffles to slow liquid movement

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25. A driver must take an unmarked rural intersection curve. The curve appears gentle, but the road is slightly crowned. What is the primary rollover risk specific to the tanker's center of gravity?

- A. Crowned roads increase suspension travel, which lowers the fifth wheel
- B. The curve will cause the tanker engine to lose power on the uphill side
- C. The crowned road raises the inside wheels, effectively tilting the vehicle toward the outside of the curve
- D. The crowned road flattens the tire contact patch, reducing grip

26. When a fully loaded tanker and a partially loaded tanker of the same type travel the same curve at the same speed, which vehicle is at greater rollover risk and why?

- A. The fully loaded tanker, because total weight multiplies cornering forces more than liquid surge
- B. The partially loaded tanker, because free liquid can surge to the outside and shift the center of gravity
- C. The empty tanker, because low weight reduces tire friction below a safe threshold
- D. Both present identical risk, as speed and curve radius are the only variables



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27. A tanker driver is traveling downhill toward a tight curve at the bottom. The driver has been engine-braking and is at the posted advisory speed when reaching the curve. Which factor specifically related to the high center of gravity makes this scenario more dangerous than the advisory speed suggests?

- A. The downhill approach means the driver enters the curve with greater kinetic energy, and the high CG multiplies the overturning moment beyond what the flat-road advisory speed anticipates
- B. The grade increases liquid vaporization, reducing load weight and effective tire contact
- C. Advisory speeds are only valid for vehicles with air brakes; hydraulic tankers need a 25% reduction
- D. Engine braking shifts more weight to the steering axle, reducing rear traction in the curve

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28. A driver hauling fuel oil in an unbaffled tanker must navigate a cloverleaf interchange. The driver reduces speed to 15 mph below the posted advisory. A traffic engineer who designed the interchange says that is sufficient for a standard semi. Why might it STILL be insufficient for this tanker?

- A. Fuel oil is classified as a hazardous material requiring a 30 mph reduction, not 15
- B. The 15 mph reduction only applies when the tank is below 25% capacity
- C. Unbaffled tanks allow liquid to build rotational momentum through the continuous curve, so the surge effect compounds over the arc of a cloverleaf in a way a straight curve does not
- D. Cloverleaf curves are banked the wrong direction for heavy vehicles, negating any speed reduction

29. Two identical tankers carry milk. Tanker A is 30% full; Tanker B is 90% full. Both take the same curve at the same speed. Tanker A rolls over; Tanker B does not. Which explanation is most consistent with CDL manual principles?

- A. Tanker A's lower gross weight reduced its momentum, causing the suspension to rebound sharply into a roll
- B. Tanker A experienced brake fade because lighter loads generate less regenerative braking force
- C. Tanker A had a large free liquid surface that surged violently to the outside of the curve, shifting the center of gravity beyond the tipping point, while Tanker B's near-full load had minimal room for liquid movement
- D. Tanker B benefited from a lower posted speed limit that applies only to vehicles over 80,000 lbs



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30. During pre-trip inspection a driver discovers that one of the baffles inside the tanker is broken and has shifted to one side. Why is this a rollover-relevant safety defect beyond just a structural issue?

- A. A displaced baffle unbalances axle weights, causing the front axle to exceed legal limits on curves
- B. A displaced baffle creates an uneven internal division, meaning liquid can surge more freely on one side of the tank than the other, producing an asymmetric lateral shift in the center of gravity during turns
- C. A displaced baffle reflects a manufacturing defect that voids the vehicle's CDL operating permit
- D. A broken baffle increases tank pressure, which can blow a hatch and spill liquid



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Answer Key & Explanations

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1. D — Front-to-back liquid surge is shifting weight toward the front of the vehicle

When decelerating, unbaffled or partially filled liquid surges forward, adding momentum to the front of the vehicle and making it harder to stop — a phenomenon the CDL manual calls front-to-back surge.

2. D — Bulkheaded tank

Bulkheads are solid dividers that completely separate a tank into independent compartments so liquid cannot flow between them, unlike baffles which have openings to allow limited flow.

3. B — Food-grade liquids such as milk or juice

The CDL manual notes that smooth-bore tanks without internal baffles are typically used for food products because baffles are difficult to sanitize and can harbor bacteria.

4. C — Baffles reduce front-to-back surge but do little to control side-to-side surge on curves

The CDL manual states that baffles control front-to-back surge but do NOT fully control side-to-side surge; a driver must still manage speed on curves to prevent rollover.

5. B — The moving liquid creates a forward surge force that adds to stopping distance

Even at high fill levels there is enough free space for liquid to surge; the forward momentum of the liquid pushes against the direction of braking and extends stopping distance, as the CDL manual warns.

6. B — Around 50% full

The CDL manual warns that a tank that is about half full produces the greatest surge because there is both maximum free space for movement and a large mass of liquid that can accelerate within the tank.

7. C — Liquid shifts fully to one side without restriction, creating severe side-to-side surge and increasing rollover risk

Without baffles or bulkheads to slow lateral flow, a smooth-bore tank allows all free liquid to rush unimpeded to the outward side of a turn, dramatically raising the center of gravity and rollover risk.

8. C — Rearward surge shifts weight to the back, reducing front-axle traction and steering control

During rapid acceleration, liquid surges toward the rear of the tank; this weight shift reduces load on the front axle, causing reduced steering effectiveness — a key hazard the CDL manual identifies.

9. D — To allow liquid to expand as temperature increases without overpressurizing or overflowing the tank

The CDL manual explains that outage is the space left unfilled so that liquid can expand with heat without rupturing the tank or spilling through vents.

10. C — Surge within each compartment is independent and smaller in magnitude, but multiple compartments can still produce additive handling forces

Each bulkheaded compartment contains its own smaller surge, but the CDL manual notes drivers must still manage speed because multiple simultaneous surges across compartments can combine to challenge



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vehicle stability.

11. A — If the brakes fade, the liquid's forward momentum from sustained deceleration suddenly adds to the vehicle's speed, extending stopping distance dramatically

The CDL manual warns that brake fade on downgrades is especially dangerous in tankers because the unstopped vehicle carries the added forward momentum of surging liquid, making it much harder to regain control.

12. B — Lateral surge to the left plus grade-induced rearward surge reduce front-axle load, while the elevated center of gravity increases rollover risk

On a right curve, liquid surges left (outward); the ascending grade simultaneously causes rearward surge; together these shift weight off the front steering axle and elevate the center of gravity, compounding rollover and steering loss risk per CDL manual guidance.

13. D — Liquid cargo shifts laterally during a turn, raising the effective center of gravity above what the static weight distribution suggests, reducing the rollover threshold

The CDL manual explains that lateral surge raises the center of gravity dynamically during cornering, meaning the actual rollover threshold in a turn is lower than a simple static weight calculation would predict.

14. A — The free liquid surges laterally toward the new lane direction, compounding the lateral force from the steering input and greatly increasing rollover risk

An abrupt lane change causes lateral surge toward the direction of the turn; this surge amplifies the centrifugal force already acting on the vehicle, pushing the center of gravity outward and sharply increasing the chance of rollover, as the CDL manual warns.

15. B — Expanding liquid fills the outage space, may pressurize or overflow the tank, and could cause the vehicle to exceed legal weight limits if product is retained in the vents

The CDL manual states that insufficient outage allows thermal expansion to build pressure, potentially opening vents and spilling product or stressing the tank structure; since weight was already at the legal limit, any retained product exacerbates overweight violations.

16. C — The compromised baffle allows liquid to pass more freely, increasing front-to-back surge beyond what an intact baffled tank would exhibit, approaching the behavior of a smooth-bore tank

A fractured baffle can no longer restrict liquid flow effectively; the CDL manual's principle that baffles slow front-to-back surge depends on their structural integrity, so a cracked baffle means the tank behaves more like an unbaffled vessel with greater surge forces.

17. A — Their center of gravity is higher, making them more top-heavy and unstable

Tankers carry liquid loads high off the ground, raising the center of gravity and making the vehicle inherently unstable during turns or sudden maneuvers compared to lower-profile vehicles.

18. A — Slow well below the posted advisory speed, since the rating does not account for high-CG vehicles

Advisory speeds on ramps and curves are set for passenger vehicles; tankers with a high center of gravity must travel significantly slower than posted advisory speeds to avoid rollover.

19. A — Partial load with free liquid movement, high speed, sharp curve

A partial load allows liquid to surge side-to-side, and combining that surge with high speed and a sharp curve dramatically shifts the center of gravity outward, greatly increasing rollover risk.



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20. D — Drive considerably slower than 40 mph to account for the high center of gravity and liquid surge

Advisory speed signs are calibrated for passenger cars, not high-CG tankers; a partially filled tanker faces both elevated center-of-gravity and surge forces, requiring a speed well below the posted advisory.

21. D — A 50% load creates a large free liquid surface that can surge laterally, destabilizing the vehicle

A half-filled tank has the largest free liquid surface, allowing the load to shift violently to one side during a turn, creating a lateral force that raises rollover risk beyond what a near-full or near-empty tank would produce.

22. A — Ease off the accelerator and steer smoothly, avoiding abrupt corrections

When a tanker begins to lean, the driver should gently reduce speed and make smooth steering inputs; sudden corrections or acceleration can cause liquid surge that worsens the lean and leads to rollover.

23. A — Low-viscosity liquids flow faster inside the tank, amplifying lateral surge forces during the curve

Low-viscosity liquids like water move quickly and freely, so they surge rapidly toward the outside of a curve, creating a strong lateral shift in the center of gravity that the posted advisory speed — designed for passenger cars — does not account for.

24. D — Experience greater side-to-side surge during the curve because there are no baffles to slow liquid movement

Smooth-bore tanks have no internal baffles, so liquid can sweep freely from side to side during a curve, creating larger and faster lateral shifts in the center of gravity than would occur in a baffled tank.

25. C — The crowned road raises the inside wheels, effectively tilting the vehicle toward the outside of the curve

A crowned road slopes downward from the center, so a vehicle in a curve is tilted toward the outside; combined with the tanker's already high center of gravity, this increases the effective lean angle and rollover risk.

26. B — The partially loaded tanker, because free liquid can surge to the outside and shift the center of gravity

A partially loaded tanker has a large free liquid surface that surges laterally in a curve, dynamically shifting the center of gravity outward; a fully loaded tank has little room for liquid movement, so the load remains more stable.

27. A — The downhill approach means the driver enters the curve with greater kinetic energy, and the high CG multiplies the overturning moment beyond what the flat-road advisory speed anticipates

Advisory speeds are calculated for level conditions; a downhill approach adds kinetic energy that is harder to scrub off, and the tanker's elevated center of gravity produces a larger overturning moment at that speed than a low-profile vehicle would experience.

28. C — Unbaffled tanks allow liquid to build rotational momentum through the continuous curve, so the surge effect compounds over the arc of a cloverleaf in a way a straight curve does not

A cloverleaf is a sustained curve; in an unbaffled tank, liquid can gain lateral momentum progressively through the arc, building a larger and larger side force than a single short curve would produce, making the needed speed reduction greater than for a brief curve.



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29. C — Tanker A had a large free liquid surface that surged violently to the outside of the curve, shifting the center of gravity beyond the tipping point, while Tanker B's near-full load had minimal room for liquid movement

The CDL manual specifically warns that partial loads are dangerous precisely because free liquid can surge; a 30% fill level allows a large free-surface effect that can shift the center of gravity beyond the tipping point even at speeds that a near-full load handles safely.

30. B — A displaced baffle creates an uneven internal division, meaning liquid can surge more freely on one side of the tank than the other, producing an asymmetric lateral shift in the center of gravity during turns

Baffles are designed to slow liquid movement symmetrically; a broken or displaced baffle leaves one section of the tank with a larger free liquid surface, allowing faster and greater lateral surge on that side, which creates an unpredictable and asymmetric shift in the center of gravity that raises rollover risk.



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