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Practice Questions

Try all 30 first, then check the answer key at the back.

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1. During a pre-trip inspection, which tire condition would most likely cause a vehicle to be placed out of service?

A. Minor sidewall weather checking
B. Valve stem caps missing
C. Tire pressure 5 PSI above recommendation
D. Tread depth below 2/32 inch on steering tires

2. What is the proper method for checking brake adjustment on a commercial vehicle?

A. Listen for air leaks when parked
B. Count the number of brake pedal pumps needed
C. Measure the pushrod travel when brakes are applied
D. Observe brake fluid color

3. Which of the following is NOT a required item to check during a steering component inspection?

A. Power steering fluid level
B. Navigation system functionality
C. Steering box mounting bolts
D. Steering shaft for excessive play

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4. When inspecting air brake slack adjusters, what is the maximum allowable free play for most commercial vehicles?

A. 1/4 inch
B. 1 inch
C. 1/2 inch
D. 2 inches

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5. Which emergency equipment item is NOT typically required to be carried on a commercial motor vehicle?

A. Fire extinguisher
B. Warning triangles or reflective triangles
C. Spare fuses
D. First aid kit

6. What condition would make headlights fail inspection?

A. Headlights are aimed slightly low
B. Headlight covers have minor scratches
C. Different colored headlights
D. Both headlights work correctly

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7. During a cargo securement inspection, which of the following would indicate a violation?

A. Tie-downs properly tensioned
B. Cargo shifting more than 1 inch in any direction
C. Cargo secured with appropriate tie-downs
D. Weight distributed evenly across the trailer

8. What is the minimum tread depth requirement for non-steering tires on a commercial vehicle?

A. 1/32 inch
B. 2/32 inch
C. 4/32 inch
D. 6/32 inch

9. What should you check on windshield wipers during a pre-trip inspection?

A. Manufacturing date
B. Brand name
C. Color coordination with vehicle
D. Proper tension against the windshield

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10. When inspecting a vehicle's suspension system, which of the following would be considered a critical defect?

A. Slight dampness around shock absorbers
B. Dust on suspension components
C. Cracked or broken leaf spring
D. Minor surface rust on springs

11. What should be verified when inspecting the fifth wheel coupling device?

A. Fifth wheel matches the trailer brand
B. Locking jaws are fully engaged around the kingpin
C. Fifth wheel is painted the same color as the tractor
D. Manufacturing date is visible

12. When inspecting the vehicle's exhaust system, which condition would require immediate attention?

A. Exhaust leaks near seams or connections
B. Normal condensation from the exhaust pipe
C. Minor surface rust on the muffler
D. Standard exhaust coloration from normal use

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13. Which of the following is NOT part of a proper fuel system inspection?

A. Inspecting for fuel leaks
B. Ensuring fuel tanks are securely mounted
C. Verifying fuel cap is properly sealed
D. Checking the vehicle's fuel economy

14. What is the proper way to check for steering wheel free play during a pre-trip inspection?

A. Measure the steering wheel diameter
B. Count the number of turns from lock to lock
C. Turn the steering wheel gently until resistance is felt and measure the movement
D. Rock the steering wheel vigorously side to side

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15. During a brake inspection, what would indicate a brake drum is out of service?

A. Expected wear patterns
B. Visible cracks extending to the edge of the drum
C. Normal heat checking
D. Light surface rust

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16. What should you verify when checking the vehicle's reflectors?

A. Present, clean, and proper color
B. Manufactured by an approved vendor
C. Made of a specific material
D. Have the DOT number stamped on them

17. Which of the following would be considered an unsafe condition when inspecting wheel rims?

A. Factory-installed valve stems
B. Normal oxidation on steel rims
C. Properly mounted valve stem caps
D. Welding repairs on aluminum wheels

18. What should be verified when inspecting a vehicle's frame?

A. Frame was manufactured recently
B. Frame has a glossy finish
C. No cracks or bends in the frame
D. Frame is a specific brand

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19. What is the purpose of checking the vehicle's marker lights during inspection?

A. To determine the electrical system voltage
B. To ensure they indicate the vehicle's size and dimensions to other drivers
C. To verify the vehicle's model year
D. To authenticate the vehicle manufacturer

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20. When inspecting air brake hoses, which condition would indicate an immediate safety concern?

A. Audible air leaks from hoses or connections
B. Hoses that are properly secured with appropriate clamps
C. Hoses with standard manufacturer markings
D. Hoses with normal wear marks from routine movement

21. What is the minimum air pressure required in the tanks for safe operation of air brakes?

A. 60 psi
B. 120 psi
C. 50 psi
D. 90 psi

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22. At what pressure should the low air warning device activate?

A. 30-40 psi
B. 100-110 psi
C. 55-60 psi
D. 80-85 psi

23. What is the maximum allowable air pressure loss in a single vehicle during the static leakage test?

A. 8 psi per minute
B. 2 psi per minute
C. 5 psi per minute
D. 3 psi per minute

24. What is the maximum allowable air pressure loss in a combination vehicle during the applied leakage test?

A. 3 psi per minute
B. 8 psi per minute
C. 5 psi per minute
D. 10 psi per minute

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25. What is the primary purpose of the air brake system's governor?

A. To release excess pressure from the system
B. To apply the emergency brakes automatically
C. To measure air flow to individual brake chambers
D. To control when the air compressor pumps air

26. How often should air tanks be drained to remove moisture and oil?

A. Monthly
B. Only during regular maintenance intervals
C. Daily
D. Weekly

27. What happens to spring brakes when air pressure is lost?

A. They become inoperable
B. They automatically apply
C. They remain released
D. They must be manually applied

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28. What component in the air brake system helps remove moisture?

A. Air dryer
B. Pressure relief valve
C. Safety valve
D. Check valve

29. How long should it take for air pressure to build from 85 to 100 psi at idle speed?

A. 2 minutes or less
B. 30 seconds or less
C. 1 minute or less
D. 45 seconds or less

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30. What is the purpose of the supply pressure gauge in an air brake system?

A. To indicate air temperature
B. To show engine oil pressure
C. To show the pressure available in the air tanks
D. To measure brake application force

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Answer Key & Explanations

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1. D — Tread depth below 2/32 inch on steering tires
Tread depth below 2/32 inch on steering tires is a critical safety violation that would place a commercial vehicle out of service, as it significantly increases the risk of blowouts and loss of vehicle control.

2. C — Measure the pushrod travel when brakes are applied
The correct method for checking brake adjustment is to measure the pushrod travel when brakes are applied, which determines if the brakes are properly adjusted for optimal stopping performance.

3. B — Navigation system functionality
While steering components must be thoroughly inspected, the vehicle's navigation system is not part of the required steering component inspection as it doesn't affect the mechanical operation of the steering system.

4. A — 1/4 inch
The maximum allowable free play for most commercial vehicle slack adjusters is 1/4 inch, beyond which brake performance would be compromised and could result in an out-of-service violation.

5. D — First aid kit
While fire extinguishers, warning triangles, and spare fuses are required emergency equipment items, a first aid kit is not federally mandated equipment for all commercial motor vehicles (though it is recommended).

6. C — Different colored headlights
Different colored headlights would fail inspection as they violate regulations requiring matched, properly colored lights for visibility and to avoid confusing other drivers.

7. B — Cargo shifting more than 1 inch in any direction
Cargo shifting more than 1 inch in any direction indicates inadequate securement, which violates safety regulations and creates a serious hazard for safe vehicle operation.

8. A — 1/32 inch
The minimum legal tread depth for non-steering tires on a commercial vehicle is 1/32 inch, though many safety experts recommend more than the minimum for optimal safety.

9. D — Proper tension against the windshield
During a pre-trip inspection, you should check that windshield wipers have proper tension against the windshield to ensure they can effectively clear precipitation for safe visibility.

10. C — Cracked or broken leaf spring
A cracked or broken leaf spring is considered a critical defect during suspension inspection as it can lead to complete suspension failure, loss of vehicle control, and potentially serious accidents.

11. B — Locking jaws are fully engaged around the kingpin
When inspecting the fifth wheel coupling device, you must verify that all locking jaws are fully engaged around the kingpin to ensure secure attachment between the tractor and trailer.

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12. A — Exhaust leaks near seams or connections
Exhaust leaks near seams or connections require immediate attention because they could allow harmful gases to enter the cab, posing a serious health hazard to the driver.

13. D — Checking the vehicle's fuel economy
Checking the vehicle's fuel economy is not part of a proper fuel system inspection. Fuel system inspections focus on safety issues like leaks, secure mounting, and proper cap sealing.

14. C — Turn the steering wheel gently until resistance is felt and measure the movement
The proper way to check for steering wheel free play is to turn the steering wheel gently until resistance is felt and measure the movement before the front wheels begin to pivot, which should not exceed 10 degrees (about 2 inches on a 20-inch steering wheel).

15. B — Visible cracks extending to the edge of the drum
A brake drum with visible cracks extending to the edge is out of service as these cracks can lead to catastrophic brake failure under load or heat.

16. A — Present, clean, and proper color
When checking reflectors, you should verify they are present, clean, and the proper color (red on rear, amber on sides) to ensure the vehicle is visible to other drivers in low light conditions.

17. D — Welding repairs on aluminum wheels
Welding repairs on aluminum wheels are considered unsafe and illegal as they compromise the structural integrity of the wheel, potentially leading to catastrophic failure.

18. C — No cracks or bends in the frame
When inspecting a vehicle's frame, you should verify there are no cracks or bends, as these structural issues can compromise the vehicle's integrity and lead to catastrophic failure.

19. B — To ensure they indicate the vehicle's size and dimensions to other drivers
The purpose of checking marker lights is to ensure they are functional and properly indicate the vehicle's size and dimensions to other drivers, especially in low visibility conditions.

20. A — Audible air leaks from hoses or connections
Audible air leaks from hoses or connections indicate an immediate safety concern as they can lead to loss of air pressure, reduced braking capability, and potential brake failure.

21. D — 90 psi
Commercial vehicles with air brakes must maintain at least 90 psi (pounds per square inch) in the air tanks for safe operation. Below this pressure, the braking capability becomes compromised.

22. C — 55-60 psi
Federal regulations require the low air warning device to activate when air pressure drops below 60 psi, giving the driver time to stop safely before brake function is compromised.

23. B — 2 psi per minute
For a single vehicle with air brakes, the maximum allowable air pressure loss during a static leakage test (brake pedal not applied) is 2 psi in one minute.

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24. A — 3 psi per minute
For a combination vehicle with air brakes, the maximum allowable air pressure loss during an applied leakage test (brake pedal applied) is 3 psi in one minute.

25. D — To control when the air compressor pumps air
The governor controls when the air compressor pumps air into the storage tanks, typically cutting in around 100 psi and cutting out around 125 psi, maintaining proper system pressure.

26. C — Daily
Air tanks should be drained daily to prevent moisture and oil accumulation that can freeze in cold weather or contaminate the system, leading to brake failure.

27. B — They automatically apply
Spring brakes automatically apply when air pressure drops too low, serving as an emergency braking system when normal air pressure is lost.

28. A — Air dryer
The air dryer removes moisture from compressed air before it enters the system, helping prevent corrosion and freezing issues in the air tanks and lines.

29. D — 45 seconds or less
At idle speed, it should take no more than 45 seconds for air pressure to build from 85 to 100 psi. This tests the air compressor's ability to replenish air supply.

30. C — To show the pressure available in the air tanks
The supply pressure gauge shows the pressure available in the air tanks, allowing the driver to monitor if sufficient air pressure is available for safe braking.

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