

● TEXAS DPS CDL CLASS B

Passenger & School Bus Endorsements

An 8-page condensed study companion to the official
Texas Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers Handbook

CDLSchoolBus.com

The Basics Every CDL Driver Must Know

License Classes

Class A	Combination vehicles, GCWR 26,001+ lbs, towed unit over 10,000 lbs
Class B	Single vehicle 26,001+ lbs GVWR, or any bus built for 24+ passengers
Class C	Smaller vehicle hauling hazmat placards, or built for 16–23 passengers

Endorsements You're Working Toward

- **P — Passenger:** required to drive any bus carrying 16+ passengers
- **S — School Bus:** required on top of P to drive a school bus specifically
- Both require a knowledge test **and** a skills test in a vehicle of that type

The 7-Step Vehicle Inspection Method

- 1. Vehicle overview — walk up, look for leaning, leaks, damage
- 2. Check engine compartment — fluids, belts, hoses, leaks
- 3. Start engine, check cab — gauges, controls, mirrors, emergency gear
- 4. Turn off engine, check lights — low beam, high beam, four-way
- 5. Walk-around inspection — every zone, every light, every tire
- 6. Check signal lights — turn signals and brake lights confirmed
- 7. Start engine, check brakes — air/hydraulic test, parking brake tug test

Stopping Distance = Perception + Reaction + Braking

At 55 mph on dry pavement, total stopping distance runs roughly 400+ feet — nearly a football field and a half. Double your speed and impact force quadruples; triple it and impact is nine times greater.

Following Distance Rule

1 second of following distance for every 10 feet of vehicle length, under 40 mph. Add 1 more second if you're driving over 40 mph.

Pre-Trip Walk-Around, Zone by Zone

What Examiners Want to Hear

Point to or touch every item you name, and say out loud what you're checking and why it matters. Silence gets no credit, even if you're looking right at it.

The 6 Zones

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Front of bus — windshield, wipers, crossing mirrors, headlights, tires |
| 2 | Engine compartment — fluids, belts, hoses, battery, leaks |
| 3 | Driver side — tires, lug nuts, stop arm, side marker lights |
| 4 | Rear of bus — rear door, tail lights, reflectors, roof hatch |
| 5 | Passenger side — body panels, reflectors, side markers, rear tires |
| 6 | Inside the bus — seats, emergency exits, aisle, driver controls |

Tire & Wheel Red Flags

- Tread depth minimum 4/32" on steer tires, 2/32" on others
- Rust trails around lug nuts = possible looseness, check with a wrench
- No mixing radial and bias-ply tires on the same axle
- No cuts, bulges, or exposed cord — any of these is an automatic defect

Entrance Door & Stepwell (easy to forget)

- Door opens/closes fully under driver control, no binding
- Grab handle securely mounted, no sharp edges
- Stepwell tread non-slip and dry, handrail secure, step light works

Emergency Equipment Kit

- Fire extinguisher — charged/green gauge, mounted, tag current
- Spare fuses (correct amperage) or breaker panel identified
- 3 reflective triangles, undamaged
- First aid kit and body fluid cleanup kit, sealed and stocked

The 4-Part Test — Memorize These Numbers

Almost every school bus runs air brakes, so this section is required. Fail any of the 4 parts below and you fail the whole air brake check — no partial credit.

Part 1 — Build-Up

Engine running: air should build from 50 to 90 psi within 3 minutes, then climb to a governor cut-out around **120–140 psi**. Know your bus's exact number and say it out loud.

Part 2 — Leak Rate Test

Engine off, key on, brakes released. Apply firm, steady pressure to the foot brake and hold for 1 full minute. Loss must be **3 psi or less** for a single vehicle in that minute.

Part 3 — Low Air Warning

Continue fanning the brake pedal with the engine off to bleed air down. The warning buzzer/light must trigger **before air drops below 60 psi** (confirm your bus's exact spec).

Part 4 — Spring Brake Pop-Out

Keep bleeding air down. Spring brakes (parking brakes) should mechanically pop out somewhere between **20–45 psi**. State the exact psi where it happens on your bus.

Parking Brake Tug Test & Service Brake Road Test

- Rebuild full air pressure, set the parking brake, shift to a low/drive gear, and gently tug forward — it should hold, no creeping
- Release, roll forward to about 5 mph, and apply the foot brake firmly — the bus should stop straight, no pulling, pedal doesn't sink to the floor

Rules for Carrying People Safely

Before You Move

- Every passenger seated or otherwise secured before the bus moves
- Aisle and stepwell clear of standing passengers before departure
- Know your bus's rated standing/seating capacity — don't exceed it

Emergency Exits

- Know the location of every emergency exit before your first trip
- Brief passengers on emergency exit use for longer or charter routes
- Keep aisles and emergency exits clear of baggage at all times

Evacuation Priorities

If evacuation is ever necessary: move passengers away from traffic and the vehicle, account for every passenger, and don't let anyone return to the bus for belongings.

Prohibited While Driving

- No standees forward of the standee line (if your bus has one)
- No smoking on the bus, ever — driver or passengers
- No fueling with passengers aboard unless absolutely unavoidable, and if so, no one may smoke and exit doors must stay usable

Railroad Crossings

Buses carrying passengers must stop at all railroad crossings unless it's a marked exempt crossing. Look and listen both directions, open your window to listen, and don't shift gears while crossing the tracks.

Speed & Turns

Passenger vehicles have a higher center of gravity than most drivers expect — slow well below the posted curve speed, especially with a full or top-heavy load.

Everything Above, Plus Kids on Board

Loading & Unloading

- Activate warning lights well before the stop, per your district's timing
- Come to a complete stop, extend the stop arm, confirm traffic has stopped
- Scan mirrors continuously while children board or exit
- Never move until every child is safely clear of the danger zone

The Danger Zone

The 10-foot zone around all sides of the bus where a child is at highest risk of not being seen by the driver — especially directly in front of the bus. This is why mirrors and the crossing arm exist.

Railroad Crossings — School Bus Specific

- Always stop, regardless of exempt-crossing signage, when carrying students
- Open the door and window, look and listen both ways before proceeding
- Never shift gears while crossing the tracks

Discipline & Safety on Board

- Never leave your seat or the bus unattended while students are aboard
- Handle discipline issues without compromising safe driving attention
- Report any student left on the bus immediately, per district protocol

Post-Trip Child Check

Walk the full length of the bus, seat by seat, every single time it's emptied — not just at the end of the day. This is the single most important habit in the entire job.

State-Specific Rules to Know

CLP Basics

- Commercial Learner Permit (CLP) must be held at least 14 days before the skills test
- CLP is valid for 180 days, renewable once, 30 days before expiration
- A CLP holder must always have a qualified CDL holder, 21+, in the seat next to them

Knowledge Test Order (Texas)

Texas Commercial Rules → General Knowledge → Combination (if needed) → Air Brakes (if needed) → Passenger → School Bus → Tanker/HazMat (if needed). Each section requires 80% or higher to pass.

Skills Test Order

- 1. Pre-trip Vehicle Inspection — must pass to move on
- 2. Basic Vehicle Control — forward stop, straight-line backing, offset tracking
- 3. On-Road Driving Test

Vehicle Requirements Before Testing

- Valid Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR) or Certificate (VIC)
- Current liability insurance and registration
- All required lamps, mirrors, horn, wipers, safety belt, and brakes functional

Reasons for an Automatic Fail on the Skills Test

- Any crash during the test, however minor
- Dangerous driving — speeding, reckless lane changes, endangering others
- Uncooperative behavior or refusal to follow the examiner's instructions
- Running a red light or stop sign

The Numbers You Cannot Afford to Blank On

120–140 psi	Air governor cut-out (build-up complete)
≤ 3 psi / min	Max allowable air leak, single vehicle, 1-minute test
~60 psi	Low air warning buzzer/light should trigger
20–45 psi	Spring brakes should mechanically pop out
4/32" tread	Minimum tread depth, steer tires
2/32" tread	Minimum tread depth, all other tires
10°	Max acceptable steering wheel play (~2" at rim)
80%	Minimum passing score on each knowledge test section
14 days	Minimum time CLP must be held before skills test
180 days	CLP validity period

Morning-Of Reminders

- Point to and name every item — never inspect silently
- Say the exact psi numbers out loud as you find them, don't just nod
- Walk the same order every time so you never skip a zone under pressure
- If you're unsure on any item, describe what a safe condition looks like anyway — partial knowledge still earns partial credit

This is a condensed study companion, not a substitute for the official Texas Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers Handbook (Texas DPS). Always verify exact figures against your specific vehicle's manufacturer spec before test day.

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