CDL MODERNIZATION FAQ'S

Q: Will jurisdictions need to change to the modernized version of the test?
A: No. The current version (2014/2017) of the test system will remain valid. Jurisdictions can offer the current version, the modernized version or both. Both are FMCSA approved test systems.

Q: Can a jurisdiction do parts from both tests?
A: Only one complete version of a test system can be offered. Test systems cannot be mixed or combined.

Q: When the new manual(s) comes out, will it have both the current and the modernized test systems?
A: Yes. California will incorporate the addendum into the manuals.

Q: Is the modernized test easier?
A: No. A third-party research entity evaluated the modernized test, it was found to be as effective as the current version in assessing the abilities of a novice commercial driver. Much of the modernized test is the same as the current version.

Q: For the Modernized Basic Control Skills (BCS) test, what is the area required?
A: The BCS testing area is a minimum of 260 ft. long by 40 ft. wide to accommodate most combination vehicles with trailers up to 53 ft. in length. Longer combination vehicles will require additional length.

Q: Are there time restrictions for finishing Vehicle Inspection (VI) and BCS?
A: No. Neither AAMVA versions stipulates a time restriction, time restrictions are up to the jurisdictions.

Q: Does driver still need to sound horn at end of each maneuver?
A: Yes. They must still set their parking brake, shift to neutral and sound the horn.

Q: What is the passing score for VI?
A: The maximum number of incorrect responses varies depending upon the vehicle type and configuration.

Q: For lighting, what does an applicant need to do to pass?
A: The criteria for all lighting (e.g., lighting indicators, lights operation) is contained in the CDL addendum.

Q: Is the VI scoring different?
A: The VI scoring is very similar, rather than adding up to the number correct, add the number missed to determine the applicant's score. Making it easier to total the points and determine pass/fail.

Q: Was there a time difference needed to conduct the new VI?
A: New Hampshire reported longer test times during initial implementation, but eventually test times were equal to or less than the current randomized test once applicants became accustomed to the modernized VI.

Q: Will CSTIMS have the modernized test?
A: Yes. It is currently in progress.

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Q: How was the modernized VI checklist developed?
A: The modernized VI test and driver checklists more closely align with industry practices and focuses on safety critical items.

Q: To get credit for a component on the VI, will the applicant need to provide a rationale?
A: No. Providing the rationale is not required. The applicant needs to name, touch or point to the item(s), and fully explain what they are inspecting each safety critical item for. The process is the same as the current test.

Q: Can applicants use a check list for the VI?
A: Yes. AAMVA has developed checklist(s) for applicant use. Applicants will need to use the checklist to realize any time savings.

Q: Is the modernized vehicle inspection easier?
A: No. It is a bit shorter but equal in level of difficulty to the current version.

Q: Will the new electric vehicles/autonomous vehicles be held to the same testing standards?
A: Yes. The driver/vehicle will still be held to the same testing standards. The existing CDL VI test provides instructions regarding how to handle situations where equipment on a Commercial vehicle that is to be inspected does not exist. In those situations, the applicant is to be given credit for missing items. The electric and autonomous vehicles would be handled the same way. The applicant would receive credit for any inspectable item the is not on the electric or autonomous vehicle.

Q. Will a new CDL applicant be tested on the current 2005 test model?
A: It depends on which CDL site location the CDL applicant goes to take the test. CA DMV will be converting 22 out of 25 CDL sites to the modernized testing model.

Q. When renewing a CDL, will the applicant be tested on the current 2005 test model or the modernized test model?
A: It depends on which CDL site location the CDL applicant goes to take the test. CA DMV will be converting 22 out of 25 CDL sites to the modernized testing model. This applies to applicants requiring a classification upgrade or adding an endorsement requiring CDL skills testing.