

BLUEARROW PRE-TRIP SCRIPT - MEMORIZE AND PASS

Written by Charles Moeller, Owner-Operator, on March 21, 2026, the day I passed my CDL test, thus written by a student for students.

The objective of the examiner is to ascertain that you are able to properly inspect a bus for possible damage prior to operating it to ensure the safety of everyone.

The examiner will fail you if they ascertain that you are not able to safely operate a bus, which would put lives at risk, which the examiner cannot allow.

At BlueArrow, we must ascertain that our trainees will be able to pass the examination prior to allowing you to take your test, as a result our instructors will be far stricter with you than any actual examiner will be because we want to make sure that you pass and we would rather make your training a nightmare than for you to fail the exam.

For The Exam: You Must Bring Your Driver's License, Commercial Learner's Permit, and Non-Expired Medical Card.

Before your test begins, you must use 3 points of contact to enter the vehicle, release the parking brake to make sure the vehicle does not roll before resetting the parking brake, then you will lower your air at below 90 PSI, fasten your seat belt, have the parking brake set with transmission in neutral, you can have a watch and checklist with you but you CANNOT have this script with you or that will be considered cheating which is an AUTOMATIC FAIL.

The examiner will board the bus, sit in the front seat closest to you and will tell you that you may begin, they will have a checklist of their own, NOTE THAT MARKINGS THEY MAKE DOES NOT MEAN THERE IS ANYTHING WRONG.

You MUST demonstrate EVERYTHING you say to the examiner as you say it.

In-Vehicle/Engine Start

Air Brake Check - AUTOMATIC FAIL IF NOT PERFORMED CORRECTLY

- **My air pressure gauge is below 90 PSI, I will build my air until my governor cuts out between 120 and 140 PSI**
- **The ABS light on my dash came on and went out, Regen indicator light is off, DEF gauge is above 1/8 of a tank**
- **I'm going to perform a safety start, parking brake set, transmission in neutral, starting now**
- **The air gauge is working and the air governor cut out at () PSI**

- **Engine off, key on, release parking brake, I'm going to perform an air leak test, my vehicle must not lose more than 3 PSI in one minute**
- **My air pressure is at () PSI and my time starts now.**
- **My air pressure is at () PSI and my vehicle did not lose more than 3 PSI**
- **I'm going to check my low air warning device, it should activate before air pressure drops below 55 PSI**
- **My low air warning device came on at () PSI**

Parking & Service Brake

- **I'm going to perform a safety start, parking brake set, transmission in neutral, starting now**
- **I will check my parking brake, it held.**
- **I will check my service brake, service brake works not pulling from side to side**

Lighting Indicators

- **Left Turn Signal, Right Turn Signal, Four Way Flashers, High Beam Indicator**

Emergency Equipment

- **Fire extinguisher is properly charged and securely mounted**
- **3 red reflective triangles, spare fuses are present**

Windshield and Traffic Monitoring Devices

- **Windshield is clean with no damage such as cracks or flaws, there are no obstructions except for inspection stickers**
- **Mirrors are clean, properly adjusted**

Wipers and Washers

- **Wiper arms, blades, and washers are operating smoothly, they are securely mounted and not damaged.**

Heater/Defroster

- **Fan/Heater/Defroster and Temperature are working.**

Horn(s)

- **Horn Works**

Passenger Entry & Lift

- **The passenger entry door opens and closes securely, it is operating smoothly and it is not damaged, handrails are securely mounted, steplight is working.**
- **Steps have no obstructions and the tread is not worn or loose.**
- **The lift/ramp is not leaking, damaged, or missing any parts, to operate I will ensure the door is fully opened and securely open, then I will activate the lift button (or remote), the lift will be fully retracted and latched, with doors closed securely before moving.**

Emergency Exits

- **Emergency exits are labeled, not damaged, working properly, and open and close securely from the inside.**

Passenger Seating

- **Seat frames are securely mounted to the floor, not broken or damaged, cushions are securely mounted to the seat frames.**

Passenger Monitoring Device

- **The passenger monitoring mirror is securely mounted, clean, properly adjusted, not damaged, bent, or missing any parts.**

When you are done with the In-Vehicle portion of the exam, you can ask the examiner to step out of the vehicle to confirm that your lights work, note that if the examiner says anything to the effect of “Is there anything else you want to tell me”, they are telling you that you have missed something, in which case you will want to look at your checklist and confirm that all in-vehicle items have been completed and remember that the passenger components of the list are all in-vehicle, I actually missed this on my test and I was deducted points for it.

Light Operations Check

FRONT

- **Left turn signal**
- **Right turn signal**

- 4 way flashers
- Headlights, clearance lights
- High beams

SIDE

- Left turn signal
- 4 way flashers
- Clearance lights

REAR

- Left turn signal
- Right turn signal
- 4 way flashers
- Brake Lights
- Tail lights, clearance lights

When you have completed this, you must turn all lights off, turn the key off, verify the parking brake is set and the transmission is in neutral before leaving the vehicle.

NOTE: Failure to set the parking brake and/or leave the transmission in neutral prior to exiting a vehicle is a serious safety violation, BOTH must be set prior to exiting the vehicle.

Front of Vehicle/Engine Area

Lenses

- Headlights are clean, not missing or broken and are clear in color
- Turn signals and clearance lights are clean, not missing or broken and amber in color

Fluid Levels

- Coolant level is between add and full marks
- Oil level is between add and full marks
- Power steering fluid level is between add and full marks

Fluid and Air Leaks

- Hoses and air lines are in good condition, not leaking
- No dripping fluids around or on the underside of engine or transmission, and there are no puddles on the ground

Steering Systems

- **Steering hoses and connections are not cracked, worn or leaking**
- **Steering box is securely mounted and not leaking**
- **No missing nuts, bolts or cotter pins**
- **Arms, Links and Rods from steering box to the wheel are not cracked or worn**
- **Joints and sockets are not worn or loose**

Steering Axle

Tires

- **Sidewall has no bumps or bulges**
- **Sidewall and tread have no cuts or damage exposing body plies**
- **Tread depth is checked with a tread depth gauge**
- **Tread depth is at least 4/32 of an inch on steer and at least 2/32 of an inch on all other tires**
- **There are no mismatched diameters on dual tires**
- **The valve stem is accessible, check for proper inflation by using a tire gauge**
- **The valve stem cap is not missing and the valve stem is not broken or damaged.**

Rims

- **The rim has no welds. It is not bent, cracked or damaged**
- **There are no missing nuts or bolts**
- **Bolt holes are not elongated**

Lug Nuts

- **Lug nuts are present and not loose**
- **There are no rust trails or shining threads indicating looseness**
- **Studs are not broken**

Springs/Mounts/Air Bags/Shocks

- **Leaf springs are not cracked, broken, shifted or missing**
- **Mounts are not cracked, broken or missing any parts**
- **Shock absorbers are securely mounted, not damaged or leaking**
- **Vehicle is sitting level front to back and side to side**

Brake Lines/Hoses & Leaks

- **Fittings are secure and not leaking**
- **Hoses are not cracked, worn, frayed or leaking, hoses can supply air**

Brake Contaminates

- **There are no signs of contaminates such as grease or oil on brake linings or drums**

HINT: GOLD (Grease or Oil on Linings or Drums)

Side of Vehicle

Lenses & Reflectors

- **Lights and reflectors are clean, not missing or broken and amber in the front and red in the rear**

Traffic Monitoring Devices

- **Mirrors are clean and not cracked, brackets are securely mounted, not bent or missing any parts**

Battery

- **Battery box and cover are secure and not accessible, electric lines and cables are secure and not cracked or worn**

Fuel Tank/DEF Tank

- **Cap is tight, not leaking, tank and lines are secure and not leaking**

Frame(s)

- **Frame is not cracked or damaged, no broken welds or holes**

Rear of Vehicle

Lenses and Reflectors

- **Lights and reflectors are clean, not missing or broken and red in color**
- **Reflective tape is present and securely affixed**

You can then say “This concludes my pre-trip inspection”.

You will most likely pass if you did not fail immediately with the Air Brake Test, the only other reason you could fail is if you used improper terminology too many times, causing too many deductions.

Once you're done, the examiner will guide you through 4 backing exercises, should you pass that the examiner will then say something to the effect of "lets go on the road", you will then get in the vehicle, fasten your seat belt, and start the vehicle.

The examiner will sit in the passenger seat closest to you, DO NOT tell the examiner to fasten their seat belt (if equipped), some examiners will and some will not, just like passengers.

You must treat the examiner as a passenger who is giving you directions, if you are familiar with ride share, treat their instructions like that, focus on driving.

The examiner will tell you to pull forward to the gate where you will make a full stop before going on the public road, from there you will drive straight unless instructed otherwise.

The examiner will NEVER tell you to do anything dangerous or illegal, you MUST follow directions given by the examiner.

On the public road, you maintain the appropriate speed, which is at or no less than 5 miles under the speed limit, for example if the speed limit on a given road is 35, you are allowed to go between 31 and 35 miles per hour. If your vehicle is at 33 MPH, hold that speed, watch the speedometer.

NOTE: Please remember not to be literal in this situation because you must travel what the conditions will allow and examiners know this, for example, if there is traffic and you can only go 20 miles per hour because of traffic, go the speed of the traffic.

You will most likely only be failed if you are speeding or travelling too slow for the conditions, as an example, I failed my first road test (for a car) because I went 39 in a 25 MPH zone, this is because the examiner has to feel that you are able to maintain control of the vehicle by following the posted speed limit.

You can also be failed for travelling too slow because that can be seen as a hazard that can impede traffic, that said, remember that it can take more time to build speed in a bus than in a car and the examiner knows this, they will not fail you for building speed, only for travelling over the speed limit or travelling too slow for the conditions because this can create a hazard for public safety.

Examiner directions will usually be communicated to the effect of:

(Examples)

- "At the light make a right"
- "At the next light make a right"
- "At the corner turn left"
- "Get into the left lane when it is safe to do so"
- "Pull over at the corner"

You are not likely to hear anything else during your test, and at the end of the test, you will return to the location of the test site.

You will stop the vehicle, put the transmission in neutral and set the parking brake, you can open the front door as well.

The examiner will then tell you if you passed or failed.

If you pass, the examiner will put your information in the official database and you will be able to obtain your Commercial Drivers' License in the next few days.

If you fail, you can schedule another test 3 or more days later.

You must wait at least 3 days before taking the test again, and you only have to retake the portion that you failed or missed.

Common reasons for failing are as follows:

Pre-Trip

- Air Brake Test, specifically failing to identify correct PSI numbers
- Too many deductions during pre-trip (e.g. not using correct language)

Backing

- Hitting a cone
- Pulling up too far in maneuver 1
- Going too wide in maneuver 3
- Going too far in maneuver 4

Road Test

- Speeding
- Travelling too slow for the conditions
- Violation of a law (e.g. failing to stop at a stop sign, running a red light)
- Taking a dangerous action (e.g. a sudden turn cutting a vehicle off)
- Any accident
- Any action requiring an examiner to take verbal control of the vehicle to prevent an accident (e.g. yelling "STOP")
- Any action requiring an examiner to take physical control of the vehicle to prevent an accident (e.g. grabbing the steering wheel or instructing you to exit the drivers' seat)
- Too many deductions (e.g. failure to check mirrors, failure to maintain lane control)
- Any failure or refusal to follow a direction made by the examiner

They Think Like This: Is There 1) Danger Potential, 2) Lack of Skill, 3) Congestion Potential

If they think so, you failed, if they don't think so, you passed. The examiner is ultimately responsible for authorizing you to legally operate a commercial motor vehicle and they must accurately judge your ability to perform independently and responsibly with 60+ passengers who will be complaining or worse if you do anything listed above.

If you did fail, think of it not as a bad thing, but as a protection of you and many others against potential danger.

I'll be honest with you as the founder and a commercial driver myself, it's an inherently dangerous job that requires a lot of concentration, ability to multitask, and the ability to make clear decisions in very high stress situations.

Yes, I make it look super easy, but that's because that's how I feel, that is not the factual reality of the profession.

The simple truth is that bus driving is not for everyone, and it shouldn't be.

Never mind what I think, never mind what others think, the reality of the profession is:

Handling difficult situations while calculating and analysing risks while operating a 50,000+ pound machine moving at 60 miles per hour with lots of people trusting and judging you at the same time.

Is that you? Can you do that?

If the answer is no, don't do this, there are many other professions that will be better suited for your qualities and characteristics, there absolutely are.

If the answer is yes, seriously consider the ramifications of this before jumping into this profession, give it serious thought and then decide on your own terms that this is what you want.

I'll be honest with you, the reason I've given this out is because I dreamed of doing this profession for my entire life, but nothing ever gave me a realistic picture of the profession. Even so, I'm happy I'm pursuing this profession but that would not be the case for everyone without a realistic picture of what to expect.

If you do want to pursue this profession, come to our office, have an interview, and fill out an application, the interview will start with the very question I just outlined:

Can you handle difficult situations while calculating and analysing risks while operating a 50,000+ pound machine moving at 60 miles per hour with lots of people trusting and judging you at the same time.

If the answer is no, the interview is over.

The interviewer will explain what I wrote on this PDF and will wish you success in another profession.

If the answer is yes, or you "have to think about it", the interviewer will discuss the profession with you further. Our goal is not to give you a "Yes" or "No", it is for you to determine if this profession is for you.