



ABC

## Know the language before you hit the yard.

This quick guide breaks down common CDL, safety, inspection, HOS, and compliance terms in plain language.

Student Resource

### General CDL Terms

<b>CDL</b>	Commercial Driver's License - a license required to operate certain commercial motor vehicles.
<b>DOT</b>	Department of Transportation - the agency framework that oversees transportation safety rules and programs.
<b>FMCSA</b>	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration - the federal agency that regulates commercial motor vehicle safety.
<b>ELDT</b>	Entry-Level Driver Training - required training for first-time Class A or B CDL applicants and certain endorsements.
<b>ELD</b>	Electronic Logging Device - a system used to record a driver's hours-of-service activity.

### Hours of Service (HOS) Terms

<b>11-Hour Rule</b>	The maximum driving time allowed during a qualifying duty period.
<b>14-Hour Rule</b>	The duty window that limits when driving may occur after coming on duty.
<b>34-Hour Restart</b>	A reset period used to restart the weekly on-duty calculation.
<b>Sleeper Berth</b>	Off-duty rest time taken in the sleeper area of a commercial vehicle.
<b>On-Duty vs. Off-Duty</b>	On-duty means working or responsible for the vehicle; off-duty means relieved from work duties.

### Vehicle & Inspection Terms

<b>Pre-Trip Inspection</b>	A required safety inspection completed before operating the vehicle.
<b>Post-Trip Inspection</b>	A vehicle check after driving to identify defects or safety concerns.
<b>Air Brakes</b>	A braking system that uses compressed air; applicants must understand inspections and warning devices.
<b>Coupling &amp; Uncoupling</b>	Connecting or disconnecting the tractor and trailer safely and in proper sequence.
<b>Tandems</b>	A set of trailer axles that can slide to help balance weight distribution.



# CDL Essentials

Popular Terms Every Driver Should Know

## CDL success starts with understanding the words used in training, inspections, and enforcement.

Review these terms before permit study, pre-trip practice, and skills test preparation.

### Safety & Road Terms

<b>Following Distance</b>	The space needed between vehicles to allow safe stopping and reaction time.
<b>Blind Spot / No-Zone</b>	Areas around a truck where other drivers may not be visible to the truck driver.
<b>GVWR</b>	Gross Vehicle Weight Rating - the maximum loaded weight rating assigned by the manufacturer.
<b>PSI</b>	Pounds per square inch - often used when checking tire pressure or air brake pressure.
<b>Jackknife</b>	A loss-of-control event where the trailer swings toward the tractor at an angle.

### Compliance & Enforcement Terms

<b>CSA Score</b>	Compliance, Safety, Accountability data used to evaluate motor carrier safety performance.
<b>Out-of-Service (OOS)</b>	A status that bars a driver or vehicle from operating until a violation is corrected.
<b>Drug &amp; Alcohol Clearinghouse</b>	FMCSA database for commercial driver drug and alcohol program violations and return-to-duty status.
<b>Logbook</b>	A record of a driver's hours; today this is often maintained electronically through an ELD.
<b>Medical Card</b>	Proof that a driver has completed a DOT medical exam and is medically qualified to drive.



### Quick Study Move

Do not just memorize the term - say the meaning out loud and connect it to a real truck, inspection, or driving scenario.

**That is how knowledge turns into confidence.**

## Ready to keep moving?

Start with ELDT theory training, CDL readiness, or pathway guidance.

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