

Air Brake Pre-Trip Script Card

Say it out loud. Do it as you say it. Name it, point to it or touch it, and tell the examiner why. Numbers are from the Virginia CDL manual (AAMVA 2026) and 49 CFR 393.

#	DO	SAY
1	Parking brake on. Chock wheels if required. Start engine.	"My air gauge works. I build air to governor cut-out: about 125 psi (gauge may read 120 to 140). I check my truck's own number."
2	Engine off. Fully charged. Release parking brake. Watch gauge 1 minute.	"Brakes released. I must lose less than 2 psi in 1 minute (single) or less than 3 psi (combination)."
3	Key ON. Combination: release tractor protection valve. Foot brake fully on. Wait for gauge to settle. Hold 1 minute.	"Brake applied. I must lose no more than 3 psi in 1 minute (single) or no more than 4 psi (combination)."
4	Key ON, engine off. Fan the pedal on and off. Watch gauge. Listen.	"Low air warning comes on before 55 psi . I see the light, hear the buzzer (and flag). It came on at ____ psi."
5	Keep fanning. Watch the valves.	"Parking brake valve pops out between 20 and 45 psi . It popped at ____ psi. Spring brakes are on." Combination: trailer and tractor protection valves close at the same time or before the truck valve.
6	Start engine. Time the rise. Let it cut out. Fan down with engine idling.	"Dual air build up: 85 to 100 psi within 45 seconds . It cuts out, then cuts in at about 100 psi . Primary and secondary both above 100 psi before I drive."
7	Parking brake set, low gear, gently pull. Then release and roll about 5 mph. Press service brake.	"Parking brake holds. At about 5 mph, the service brake stops me straight, no pull, no delay."

Quick numbers	
Governor cut-out / cut-in	about 125 psi / about 100 psi
Leak, brakes released (1 min)	under 2 psi single, under 3 psi combination
Leak, brake applied (1 min)	at most 3 psi single, 4 psi combination
Low air warning	before 55 psi
Spring brake pop-out	20 to 45 psi
Build up, dual system	85 to 100 psi in 45 seconds

3 ways to fail this check

1. Skip or botch any of the 4 parts (gauge and governor, leak, warning, pop-out). The skills sheet says automatic fail.
 2. Do it silently or without your truck's numbers. No credit unless you name it and explain why.
 3. Unsafe act or ignoring the examiner, like forgetting the parking brake. May be an automatic fail.
- Keep the key ON for the leak and warning tests.

Check your state's CDL manual for your exact numbers. Your truck's maker numbers come first. The words above are ours, not an official script. Not affiliated with any DMV or FMCSA.

firsttrycdl.com Free CDL practice and the full guide: firsttrycdl.com/guides/air-brake-pre-trip-script/