Basic Control Skills Test

This section covers:
• Scoring the Basic Control Test
• Exercises
• Grounds for Automatic Disqualification

The Basic Control Test is used to evaluate your skill at controlling your vehicle while backing, and your ability to judge your vehicle’s position in relation to other objects. This test is scored separate, and prior to taking your Road Test. You cannot get a CDL until you successfully complete this part of the test.

The judgment and skills these exercises require are used in many different driving situations and are essential to the safe control of your vehicle.

If you disqualify on the Basic Control Test, you must wait at least three days to retest:

If retesting is required, you must successfully complete each backing exercise regardless of how well you performed each exercise during a prior test attempt.

12.1 – The Basic Control Test
During this test, you must perform three separate exercises, which includes:
• Straight-line backing.
• Offset back to the right.
• Alley dock at a 90-degree angle.
Backing boundaries are lined with cones. Treat the inside base of each cone as a vertical wall projecting upward. When any part of your vehicle (excluding mirrors) crosses over the base of a cone or between cones, it will be scored as an error.

To back safely, you must always check that the backing area is clear before you move your vehicle. Generally, you can do this by getting out of the vehicle to make sure the way is clear.

**12.2 – Scoring the Basic Control Test**

- Crossing boundaries (encroachments)
- Pull-ups
- Vehicle exits (looks)
- Final position

The examiner will score the following:

**Encroachments:** You will be scored with an encroachment error each time any portion of your vehicle touches or crosses over a backing exercise boundary. Each encroachment is scored as a two point error.

**Pull-ups:** When you stop and reverse direction to get a better position, it “may” be scored as a pull-up. You will not be penalized for initial pull-ups. However, each excessive pull-up will count as a one point error.

**Looks:** You are allowed to stop and exit the vehicle to check the position of the rear of your vehicle (look) during each exercise. You are allowed one look for the Straight Line backing exercise and no more than two looks each for the Offset to the Right and Alley Dock exercises.

When using a look, you must place the vehicle in neutral, or park if equipped with an automatic transmission and set the parking brake. When exiting and reentering a truck or tractor, you must do so safely by facing the vehicle and maintaining a three point of contact method with the vehicle at all times.

When exiting and reentering a bus, maintain a firm grasp on the entryway handrail at all times. If you do not safely secure the vehicle, or if you exit the vehicle in an unsafe manner, you may be disqualified.

**Final position:** It is important that you finish each exercise exactly as the examiner has instructed. If you do not fully place the rear of your vehicle into the final docking boundary or the front and back of your vehicle is not relatively straight as described by the examiner, you will be penalized 10 points and could disqualify on the backing exercises.
You must have a passing score of 12 points or less as a combined score for all three backing exercises. If more than 12 points/errors are scored, the test will be stopped and you will not pass the Basic Control Test.

12.3 – Exercises

Straight Line Backing
You will be instructed to back your vehicle in a straight line between two rows of cones without touching or crossing over the exercise course marked by cones. If you encroach on or through any cones the examiner will stop you and you must return back into bounds.

Set your parking brake and tap the horn when you have completed the exercise.

If the back of your vehicle is not within the final docking boundary, you have not successfully completed the exercise and a position error will be scored. See Figure 12-1 at the end of this section.

Offset Backing to the Right
You will drive straight forward and then back your vehicle into the lane to the right, without touching or crossing over the exercise course marked by cones. The examiner will stop you and instruct you to return back into bounds if you encroach on or through any cones.

If a pull-up is needed, you must first back so that the entire rear of your vehicle crosses over the exercise’s center boundary line (middle cone between both lanes) before a pull-up is allowed. Set your parking brake and tap the horn when you have completed the exercise. After completing the exercise, your entire vehicle must be relatively straight.

If the back of your vehicle is not within the final docking boundary or the front of your vehicle is positioned to the left or right (in front of the row of cones) of the backing lane, you have not successfully completed the exercise and a position error will be scored. See Figure 12-2 at the end of this section, for examples of the center line the vehicle must cross before making a pull-up and where the vehicle should be positioned after completing this exercise.

Alley Dock
You will be instructed to set your vehicle up at a 90 degree angle and back your vehicle (sight side) into an alley dock. You must put the back of your vehicle inside the final docking boundary. The examiner will stop you and instruct you to return back into bounds if you encroach on or through any cones.
After completing this exercise, set your parking brake and tap the horn. Your entire vehicle must be relatively straight.

If the back of your vehicle is not within the final docking boundary or the front of your vehicle is positioned to the left or right (in front of the row of cones) of the backing lane, you have not successfully completed the exercise and a position error will be scored. See Figures 12-3a and 12-3b at the end of this section, for examples of the vehicle ending the exercise out of position.

12.4 – Grounds for Automatic Disqualification
You will be automatically disqualified for any of the following:

**Dangerous action:**
- Anytime the examiner has to intervene and stop you from striking any fixed object.
- Applies to other dangerous situations while positioning the vehicle or completing the backing exercises.
- When you fail to put the vehicle in neutral/park and set the vehicle’s parking brake, before exiting the vehicle to perform a “look.”
- Repeated instances of exiting the vehicle in an unsafe manner while performing a “look.”

**Accident:**
- An accident, however slight. This includes contact with any fixed object.
  - Striking exercise boundary cones is not scored as an accident.

**Failure to perform:**
- When you cannot comprehend or respond to instructions given during any part of the Basic Control Test.
- Applies to the inability to perform any of the backing exercises.
Figure 12.1
Straight line backing

Front of base to front of base

Docking Boundary

10'
3'
12'
Figure 12.2
Offset backing to the right

- Off-Set Backing Course
  - 40' from front of course to barrier on 'A' combination vehicles
  - 100' from front of course to barrier on 'B/C' single vehicles
  - Docking Boundary
    - Entire rear of vehicle needs to cross center line before a pull-up is allowed
    - Minimum 3'
    - Center line
  - Entire rear of vehicle needs to cross center line before a pull-up is allowed
  - 12'
  - 33'
  - 33'
  - 140' from front of course to barrier on 'A' combination vehicles

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Figure 12.3a
Alley dock–'A' vehicles
Figure 12.3b
Alley dock—’B/C’ vehicles