Air Brake Test Card

Pre-Trip Air Brake System Inspection Quick Reference

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TEST 1: AIR PRESSURE BUILD-UP

Purpose: Verify the air compressor can build adequate pressure

Step 1:	Start the engine
Step 2:	Observe the air pressure gauge
Step 3:	Air pressure should build from 85 to 100 psi within 3 minutes
Step 4:	Continue building until governor cuts out (120-145 psi)

✓ **PASS: Pressure builds to 85-100 psi within 3 min; governor cuts out at 120-145 psi**

✗ **FAIL: Pressure builds too slowly or governor does not cut out — DO NOT DRIVE**

TEST 2: LOW AIR PRESSURE WARNING

Purpose: Verify the low air pressure warning device activates properly

Step 1:	With engine running and air pressure built up, turn engine OFF
Step 2:	Turn key to ON position (do not start engine)
Step 3:	Repeatedly press and release brake pedal to reduce air pressure
Step 4:	Watch for low air warning light and/or buzzer

✓ **PASS: Warning light/buzzer activates BEFORE pressure drops below 60 psi**

✗ **FAIL: Warning does not activate or activates below 60 psi — DO NOT DRIVE**

TEST 3: SPRING BRAKE (PARKING BRAKE) POP-OUT

Purpose: Verify spring brakes apply automatically when air pressure is low

Step 1:	Continue from Test 2 (engine off, pumping brakes)
Step 2:	Continue pressing brake pedal to further reduce air pressure
Step 3:	Watch for parking brake valve (yellow button) to pop out
Step 4:	Note the pressure at which this occurs

✓ **PASS: Parking brake valve pops out between 20-45 psi (spring brakes apply)**

✗ **FAIL: Spring brakes do not apply or apply at wrong pressure — DO NOT DRIVE**

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TEST 4: AIR LEAKAGE TEST

Purpose: Check for air leaks in the brake system

Part A: Brakes Released

Step 1: Build air pressure to governor cut-out (engine running)

Step 2: Turn engine OFF

Step 3: Release parking brake (push in yellow valve)

Step 4: Do NOT press brake pedal — wait 1 minute

Step 5: Observe air pressure drop on gauge

Vehicle Type	Maximum Leakage Rate (Brakes Released)
Single Vehicle	Less than 2 psi per minute
Combination Vehicle	Less than 3 psi per minute

Part B: Brakes Applied

Step 1: With engine still OFF and parking brake released

Step 2: Apply firm, steady pressure to brake pedal

Step 3: Hold brake pedal down — wait 1 minute

Step 4: Observe air pressure drop on gauge

Vehicle Type	Maximum Leakage Rate (Brakes Applied)
Single Vehicle	Less than 3 psi per minute
Combination Vehicle	Less than 4 psi per minute

✓ **PASS: Air pressure loss is within limits shown above**

✗ **FAIL: Air pressure loss exceeds limits — system has leak — DO NOT DRIVE**

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TEST 5: SERVICE BRAKE TEST

Purpose: Verify service brakes stop the vehicle effectively

Step 1:	Build air pressure to normal operating range
Step 2:	Release parking brake
Step 3:	Move vehicle forward slowly (about 5 mph)
Step 4:	Apply service brakes firmly
Step 5:	Check for vehicle pulling to one side or delayed stopping

✓ **PASS: Vehicle stops promptly and straight without unusual noises or pull**

✗ **FAIL: Vehicle pulls, brakes feel spongy, or stopping is delayed — DO NOT DRIVE**

TEST 6: PARKING BRAKE TEST

Purpose: Verify parking brake holds the vehicle stationary

Step 1:	Apply parking brake (pull out yellow valve)
Step 2:	Release service brake pedal
Step 3:	Gently try to move vehicle forward against parking brake
Step 4:	Vehicle should hold firmly and not move

✓ **PASS: Parking brake holds vehicle firmly against gentle acceleration**

✗ **FAIL: Vehicle moves or parking brake does not hold — DO NOT DRIVE**

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QUICK REFERENCE SUMMARY

Test	What to Check	Pass Criteria
1. Pressure Build-up	Air compressor efficiency	85-100 psi in 3 min; cut-out 120-145 psi
2. Low Air Warning	Warning light/buzzer	Activates BEFORE 60 psi
3. Spring Brake Pop-out	Automatic brake application	Yellow valve pops at 20-45 psi
4a. Leakage (Released)	System air tightness	Single < 2 psi/min; Combo < 3 psi/min
4b. Leakage (Applied)	Brake system air tightness	Single < 3 psi/min; Combo < 4 psi/min
5. Service Brake	Stopping effectiveness	Stops straight, no pull, no delay
6. Parking Brake	Holding ability	Holds against gentle acceleration

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Never operate a vehicle with a known air brake defect
- If ANY test fails, report the defect and DO NOT DRIVE until repaired
- Air brakes require 100+ psi to operate safely — never start driving with low pressure
- Listen for air leaks during walk-around inspection (hissing sounds)
- Check brake adjustment regularly — push rod travel should not exceed limits
- Combination vehicles require additional time for air to reach trailer brakes
- Wet brakes may require additional stopping distance — test after driving through water

DRIVER CERTIFICATION

I have performed the air brake tests described above and confirm that the air brake system is functioning properly and the vehicle is safe to operate.

Vehicle #: _____ **Date:** _____

Driver Signature: _____ **Print Name:** _____

Questions about fleet compliance and insurance?
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