# Miles Community College logo RevUp Montana logo

# [Description: Description: Start Here... Go Anywhere.](http://www.milescc.edu/)

# MILES COMMUNITY COLLEGE CDL PROGRAM

# TEACHING TIPS

All CDL students begin their classes with introductions of faculty and students. It is important to get to know the students and understand the reasons they want to get their CDL. This help the instructor and career placement staff direct the student early on, to patterns which will help them succeed in their goals.

Students are made aware of the Federal requirements in relation to differences between Montana’s Class D license and a Montana CDL, which carries more stringent regulation than that of a Class D license. Some of these regulations are related to mostly drug and alcohol related limits (such as a 0.04 BAC being the limit for a DUI, as opposed to a 0.08 BAC, and the fact that even though Montana recognizes the use of authorized medical marijuana, the Federal DOT does not), and heavier penalty for railroad crossing violations. Students are also exposed to random drug and alcohol testing requirements.

After orientation, students are shown a few videos relating to basic safety, braking systems, speed and space management, and emergency driving / response. Discussions of the videos are conducted during the after the presentations. Handouts and or thumb drives including the Montana CDL manual, pre-trip inspection checklist, various General Knowledge / Air Brakes / Combination Vehicle sample question and answer documents, notated photos of the College truck and trailer (noting pertinent pre-trip inspection items and their proper names), and a pre-trip inspection video conducted on the College’s tractor / trailer are given to the students with instructions that these items may be used for home study.

Students are then immersed in a software package which simulates, the Montana MVD written tests that students are required to take in order to get their CDL permits. This is a licensed software package that has served our students well, but requires instructor interaction with the students when uncertainty arises at the student’s understanding of a certain question or “concept”. It is imperative that students understand the answer to a question, but more importantly, “why” the answer is correct, rather than memorizing the answer to a particular question. The question and answer choices at the MVD will very likely be phrased differently than on the software we use for study. This is why the instructor **must** be certain the student understands the concept or process of the question, so when asked in a different format, the student can use critical thinking to answer correctly. Instructors need to be aware that very often, during the field testing and pre-trip inspection test process, the Driver’s Examiners will ask a student random questions about an area of the vehicle that may not have been previously studied. If the student has a good basic understanding of the vehicle and its operation, he / she can usually answer the examiners question adequately.

Students are given an overview of Hours of Service (HOS) regulations and sample log book pages are viewed and discussed. If time allows during the course, students are given a sample trip and instructed to plan their trip using MapQuest or Google Maps, then log the trip as if they actually drove it. Log books are then checked for any violations of the hours of service rules and any violations are discussed, with recommendations for improvement made.

**Resources used are:**

[CDL Pass Software by Dauntless Driving Academy](http://www.cdlpass.com/)

J.J. Keller’s Basic Training DVD’s including Backing, Accidents and Breakdowns, Speed and Space Management

[J.J. Keller’s Hours of Service DVD](http://www.jjkeller.com/shop/Product/Hours-of-Service-Driver-Training-Program-DVD-Training)

[J.J. Keller’s Air Brakes DVD](http://www.jjkeller.com/shop/Product/Master-Driver-Air-Brakes-DVD-Training)

[YouTube video “S Cam Air Brakes”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mrUMTP4thI)

**Added Bonus:**

Jerry Forman the CDL Instructor for Miles Community College has created a 4 part series on Pre-trip inspections. They are located out on You Tube in the Miles Community College channel.

[Pre-trip Part I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0IVPGRkGa8)

[Pre-trip Part 2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=beNE2WjApVY)

[Pre-trip Part 3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FINr95tra8)

[Pre-trip Part 4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elnQNfjAHVs)

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