One of the most common maintenance violations are for problems with Brakes, due to a leak in the air system, an ABS check on or for brakes being out of adjustment. It is imperative that you do a proper pre-trip inspection that includes a thorough brake inspection such as the C.O.L.A. test and that you test your brakes in mandatory brake check areas. Truck brake check areas are a safety measure that allows truckers to pull safely off the road, normally just before a long steep downgrade to check the operation of their air brake systems. Some brake check areas are mandatory and failure to stop in these designated areas is a violation of the law. Make sure you also log it in your logbook.

In order to do a C.O.L.A. 4 Point brake test you must follow a series of steps:

C – Governor Cut in
I need a full tank of air for this test.
I am going to test the Governor Cut In.
Governor should cut in between 85-110 psi
Pump brakes…. Watch needle for upward movement.
The governor cut in at ____ psi

O – Governor Cut out
I am going to test the Governor Cut Out.
Governor should cut out between 110 – 130 psi
Rev engine up and build pressure until governor cuts out
The governor cut out at ____ psi

L – Low Air Warning Light
I am going to test the low air warning light.
The light should come on between 55 – 75 psi
Pump brakes…. Watch for light and buzzer.
The low air warning light came on at ____ psi

A – Applied Pressure
I need a full tank of air for this test and to chock my wheels.
Rev engine until governor cuts out.
Shift truck into gear and turn truck off.
I’m going to begin by stabilizing my tractor and trailer brakes.
Push both tractor and trailer valves. Wait for air to release.
I should lose no more than 4 psi in 1 minute:

Push FIRMLY on the service brake pedal and hold for 1 minute.
Before letting foot off brake:
1. Pull red and yellow out
2. Brake off
3. Clutch in
4. Neutral
I lost no more than 4 psi of air pressure.