

TRUCK LEASE 5-QUESTION CHECKLIST

Answer all five in writing before you sign a semi truck lease or lease-purchase. If you can't get a straight answer to one of them, that's your answer.

1 WHAT IS MY TOTAL COST?

- ☐ Monthly payment _____ × months
- ☐ + Down payment and all fees
- ☐ + Buyout / balloon at the end
- ☐ = Total cost
- ☐ Fair market value of the truck (comparable listings, same year, make, model, miles)
- ☐ Ask the lessor to break down the gap: interest, fees, escrow, maintenance

2 WHAT IS MY BREAK-EVEN PER MILE?

- ☐ Lease + insurance + fuel + maintenance + tires + permits + everything else, per month
- ☐ ÷ miles per month
- ☐ = Break-even per mile
- ☐ Rates you can realistically book in your lanes
- ☐ Fuel = current diesel price ÷ your MPG (EIA updates weekly)

3 WHAT IF I MISS A PAYMENT?

- ☐ Late fee and grace period
- ☐ When does repossession start?
- ☐ What happens to my down payment and escrow if I fall behind?
- ☐ Is there a hardship or deferral option, in writing?

4 MILEAGE LIMITS & OVERAGE FEES

- ☐ Annual mileage cap
- ☐ Your expected miles plus a buffer for extra loads and deadhead
- ☐ Overage fee per mile
- ☐ Wear-and-tear and return inspection standards

5 WHAT'S MY EXIT?

- ☐ Can I buy the truck at the end? Price: _____
- ☐ Early termination cost
- ☐ Can I transfer the lease?
- ☐ What will the truck be worth vs. what I'll have paid?

LEASING ONTO A CARRIER? CHECK THESE

- ☐ Federal truth-in-leasing rules (49 CFR 376.12) require the carrier's lease to:
- ☐ State your pay clearly, on the lease or an attached addendum
- ☐ List every charge-back and how each one is calculated
- ☐ Say you aren't required to buy or rent products or services from the carrier
- ☐ Spell out escrow: amount, what it covers, accounting, and return within 45 days of termination
- ☐ Be signed by both parties, with a copy for you

RUN THE PAYMENT THROUGH YOUR NUMBERS

The Owner-Operator P&L Playbook: a break-even calculator, a monthly P&L, and 12-month cash flow. Up to 10 trucks, 28 expense lines, and 1,455 formulas. Plug in the lease payment and see the cost per mile before you sign. \$29.99. 30-Day Money-Back Guarantee.

[See the Playbook →](#)

Sources (checked October 7, 2026): 49 CFR 376.12, lease requirements (ecfr.gov); diesel prices: EIA weekly U.S. on-highway diesel (eia.gov/petroleum/gasdiesel).

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