

# The Basics of Graduated Driver Licensing



GDL is a three-step process designed to help teens gain experience and build skill while minimizing common risks such as the use of cell phones, cell use, passenger distractions and nighttime driving.

Here's a game-winning strategy for helping teens be safe behind the wheel.

## Step 1: Instructional Permit

A teen must be at least 15 years old to obtain his/her Instruction Permit and must hold the permit for at least 9 months. During this time, the teen must have 50 hours of supervised driving practice with at least 10 hours at night. With a learner permit, teens may only drive with a licensed driver who is at least 21 years old.

## Step 2: Initial Licensing Phase

To obtain a graduated license/enter the initial licensing phase, a teen must be at least 16 years old, have held an instruction permit for at least 9 months, and have completed a state-approved driver education course. Under this initial license, teens are subject to several restrictions:

- *May not drive unsupervised with more than one unrelated passenger under 20 in the car for the first year*
- *May only operate a car unsupervised by a parent or guardian between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday and between 6 a.m. and 11 p.m. Friday-Saturday.*

## Step 3: Unrestricted License

At age 18, an California teen can obtain his or her Full License.

- *Teen drivers may not use cell phones, handheld or hands-free, while driving until the age of 19.*

*\*Other laws apply at that time in school and construction zones.*

# Why does GDL work?

GDL works by controlling exposure to the most common causes of teen crashes such as passengers, nighttime driving and cell phone use while driving. GDL helps your teen driver gain much needed driving experience in the safest environment possible. In fact, since Illinois first implemented GDL in 1999, teen driver crashes, injuries and fatalities have fallen to record lows.

### Check out these shocking statistics

- Teens are most likely to be involved in a crash in their first 6 to 12 months of driving
- Inattention is the number one cause of teen driver crashes
- While cell phone use is a distraction to all drivers, passengers significantly increase teen crash risk
  - 1 passenger = twice as likely to crash
  - 2 passengers = crash risk increases 158%
  - 3 passengers = crash risk increases 207%
- 40% of teen driver crashes occur between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Parents play a critical role in coaching their teen drivers. Teens whose parents set rules and monitor driving in a helpful, supportive way are:

- Half as likely to be in a crash
- 71% less likely to drive intoxicated
- 30% less likely to use a cell phone while driving
- 50% more likely to buckle up

GDL supports parents by helping protect teen drivers. Making the components of GDL rules in homes will provide teens with a safe environment to gain much needed experience.

While following California law is important, the National Safety Council recommends parents take it a step further:

- No passengers for the first year (includes siblings)
- No cell phone use
- No nighttime driving – have the car home by 10 p.m., earlier is better
- Safety belts are to be worn on every trip – no exceptions



