

A Game Plan for Talking to  
Your Student Athletes About California  
Graduated Driver Licensing

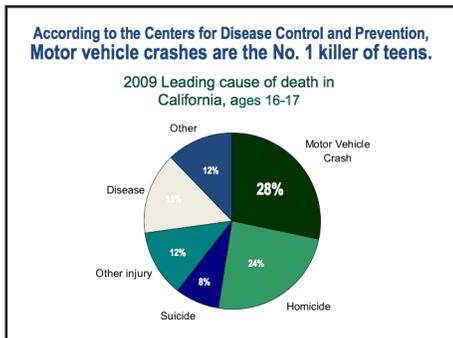
*Teen*  
**Safe Driving**



*Coalition*  
CALIFORNIA

# Driving a car,

just like participating in sports, takes practice. You don't excel without building skill. Safety is also essential. Athletes recognize how risky it is to take to the field, the court or the ice without the proper training and equipment. But when it comes to driving, do your student athletes recognize the risk and responsibility that comes with a driver's license? Are they as well versed in the rules of the road as the rules of game?



As a coach, players look up to and respect you. They trust you to provide guidance. That's why initiating a discussion about the proven principles of California's Graduated Driver License (GDL) program is sure to help them up their game. GDL helps teen drivers build skills while minimizing factors that cause them the greatest risk. And that's critical because no other age group on the road has a higher crash risk and nothing claims more teen lives than car crashes.

Including every member of your team—players, coaches, managers, parents, and even fans—in the discussion is critical for ensuring that it's not only a winning season, but a safe one.

## Here's a game plan for discussing the GDL program with everyone on your team:

- Brush up on the basics of GDL (see next page for an overview)
- Include information about adhering to GDL, in your team's code of conduct that spells out the penalties for non-compliance (see page 4 for sample text). Secure buy-in and support from your administration, and parents
- Meet with your team captains and coaches to review the basics of GDL and the expanded code of conduct. Reinforce their role not only as leaders on the field, but on the road. Make it clear that coaches and captains will be expected to serve as role models for GDL and all motor vehicle laws
- Meet with your players and managers to review GDL basics and have your team captains review the GDL section in the code of conduct
- Attend a parent/booster club meeting prior to the start of the season or as soon afterward as possible to review the basics of the GDL program stressing that their sons' and daughters' safety, both on and off the field, is your top priority. Distribute copies of the code of conduct and have your team captains review the GDL section
- Regularly remind players and parents to make provisions for transportation if there are games and/or practices that could necessitate driving between 11:00 p.m. and 5 a.m. (the GDL curfew)
- Include information about GDL and your team's commitment to teen safe driving in game programs, on field and/or gymnasium signage, and via public address announcements
- Partner with your police department to reinforce student athlete compliance with GDL and all motor vehicle laws

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# The basics of GDL

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

Here's a game-winning strategy for helping teens be safe behind the wheel. California's GDL Process involves the following three steps:

## Step 1: Learner's Permit

A teen under the age of 17 ½ must complete a DMV-approved drivers training course with a licensed instructor before taking the driving test. This course must offer at least six hours of behind-the wheel instruction (no more than two hours at a time). In addition, during the six months that you must hold a learner's permit, you're required to practice driving for an additional 50 hours with a parent or guardian supervising you from the passenger seat, 10 of which must be at night. The parent or guardian will then sign the back of your learner's permit testifying that these hours were driven.

## Step 2: Provisional License

Once a teen is at least 16 years of age and has held a permit for at least 6 months, he or she may take the behind the wheel driving test to obtain a **Provisional License**. This allows the teen to drive without supervision, but with the following provisions:

- *May not transport passengers under the age of 20*
- *May not drive between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. except for documented exemptions for school, work or medical reasons*
- *May not use a cell phone, including hands-free devices*

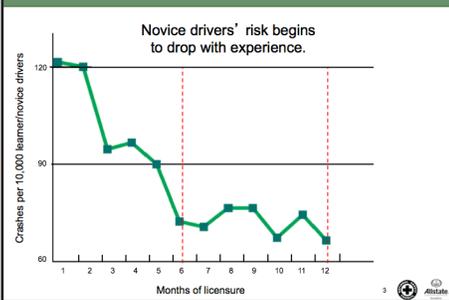
## Step 3: Unrestricted License

Once the teen is at least 17 years of age and has held a Provisional License for at least 12 months, he or she may obtain an **Unrestricted License**. Teens under the age of 18 are not allowed to use phones, including hands-free, or any electronic device.

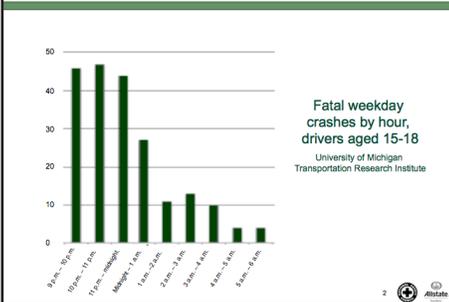


# Why does GDL work?

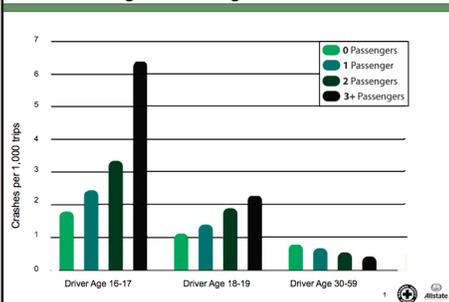
## GDL focuses on first 6 - 12 months and 1,000 miles



## Driving at night increases risk and danger



## Passengers are dangerous distractions



## Parents play a critical role

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 to protect teen drivers. Making the components of GDL rules in your home will provide your teen with a safe environment to gain much needed experience.

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 in the car at all
- 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

## Sample GDL Text for a Student-Athlete Code of Conduct

*Having reviewed the provisions of Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) with my teammates and coaches, I understand the risks and responsibilities associated with driving. Whether I am operating a motor vehicle or riding in one as a passenger, I will adhere to the provisions of GDL and all California motor vehicle laws. I also understand that if I am observed violating GDL and/or a motor vehicle law(s), thereby putting myself and others at risk, my parents will be notified and I will be suspended from play for a minimum of \_\_\_ games/days/weeks. Any subsequent violation of GDL and/or a motor vehicle law(s) will result in my suspension from play for the remainder of the season (or a specified time period).*

The following online resources can help you, your student athletes, coaches, managers, parents and fans learn more about teen safe driving and the California GDL law:

[www.nsc.org/cateensafedriving](http://www.nsc.org/cateensafedriving)  
California Teen Safe Driving Coalition

[www.allstatefoundation.org/teen-driving](http://www.allstatefoundation.org/teen-driving)  
The Allstate Foundation

[www.teendriving.nsc.org](http://www.teendriving.nsc.org)  
The National Safety Council