



OREGON LEGISLATIVE POLICY, RESEARCH, & COMMITTEE SERVICES

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ISSUE BRIEF: Oregon's New Graduated Drivers License Program

- What is graduated licensing?* The term graduated licensing refers to drivers license systems that require young drivers to progress through two or more restricted permits or licenses to gain experience before qualifying for a full drivers license. Oregon has had a "provisional license" system since 1989. It included increased testing and additional sanctions for violators under the age of 18, but had no restrictions on night driving or carrying passengers. In the past few years many states have instituted various restrictions on younger drivers.
- What does Oregon's new program do?* The new licensing program enacted by the 1999 Oregon Legislature as House Bill 2440 places additional training requirements, as well as passenger and late-night driving restrictions, on drivers under the age of 18.
- What are the new requirements for licensing?* The new requirements for 16 and 17-year-olds applying for a drivers license include:
- Having an instruction driver permit (learner's permit) for at least six months prior to application.
 - Completing at least 50 hours of driving supervised by an adult who has had a license for at least three years.
 - Completing an approved driver-training course or having an additional 50 hours of supervised driving.
- What are the new restrictions on the license?* The new provisions restrict the number of passengers and late-night driving hours for 16 and 17-year-old drivers.
- Passenger restrictions
- First six months of the license – prohibits carrying any passengers under the age of 20, unless they are an immediate family member
 - Second six months of the license - no more than three passengers under the age of 20, unless they are an immediate family member
- Late night driving restrictions
- First year of the license - prohibits driving between 12 midnight and 5 a.m.
 - Exceptions to the late-night driving restrictions are provided for driving:
 - between home and a job
 - home from a school activity when no other transportation is available
 - for employment purposes
 - accompanied by a licensed driver at least 25 years old.
- When do the new requirements take effect?* The new training requirements apply to 16 and 17-year-olds applying for licenses on or after March 1, 2000.

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When do the new restrictions take effect? The new restrictions on the license (passenger and late-night driving) apply on or after March 1, 2000 to 16 and 17-year-olds who obtain their license on or after that date. The restrictions will not apply to 16 and 17-year-olds even after March 1, 2000 if they had their licenses before that date.

What are the penalties for violating these restrictions? Violations of the passenger or night driving restrictions are classified as "operating in violation of license restrictions", a Class B traffic violation. The ticket amount for such a violation would be \$175. Traffic fines increase under certain circumstances: if the violation contributed to an accident, the fine would increase to \$235, and if it occurred in a school zone or highway work zone it would be \$295.

Why were the new provisions enacted? Traffic safety experts at the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Oregon State Police regard early license restrictions as a way to reduce the over-representation of teenagers in crash statistics. Novice drivers benefit from the extended period of supervised driving and from delaying the onset of higher-risk types of driving. Nationwide, traffic crashes are the leading cause of death among 15 to 20-year-olds. In Oregon and nationally, accident rates involving teenage drivers increase significantly as the number of passengers increase. This is not the case for older drivers. And although the number of accidents are higher during the day, late-night accidents are generally more severe and are more likely to be related to alcohol and speeding violations.

Will enough driver training courses be available? Many school districts, as well as some Educational Service Districts and Community Colleges, offer driver training. The state Student Driver Training Fund and the school district pay for part of the costs, but there is typically a charge to the student as well. Private driver training courses can also fill the requirement if they meet standards set by the state. For individuals without access to courses, the law provides that additional supervised driving may be substituted for the driver-training course.

Additional reading Adkins, J. and Filsinger, C. *Basics on Graduated or Provisional Driver Licensing*. Oregon Legislative Policy, Research, and Committee Services Office, September 1998.

Reed, J. et al, *State Legislative Progress in Improving Traffic Safety, 1997*, National Conference of State Legislatures Transportation Series, Jan. 1998.

Goehring, J., *Graduated Licensing for Teens, National Conference of State Legislatures Legisbrief*, February 1998.

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety World Wide Web Page (www.hwysafety.org).

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration World Wide Web Page (www.nhtsa.dot.gov)

Jones, B, *Effectiveness of High School Driver Training in Oregon: Results of a Pilot Program in Two Oregon High Schools*, Oregon Department of Transportation, January 1995.