



FACT SHEET

Graduated Driver Licensing Laws

Motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of American teens.¹ On average, approximately 7 teens were killed in the United States each day of 2013 as a result of motor vehicle crashes.² In 2013, crashes involving young drivers aged 15 to 20 claimed the lives of 4,333 people.³ Of those needless deaths, 1,691 were young drivers, 1,051 were passengers of young drivers, 1,128 were occupants of other vehicles and 463 were non-occupants.⁴ Additionally, the latest data available shows that in 2012 184,000 young drivers were injured in motor vehicle crashes.⁵ The estimated economic cost of police-reported crashes involving young drivers between 15 and 20 years old was \$40.8 billion (2002).⁶

Teen drivers are far more likely to be involved in fatal crashes because they lack driving experience and tend to take greater risks. Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) programs introduce teens to the driving experience gradually by phasing in full driving privileges over time and in lower risk settings. These programs have been effective in reducing teen crash deaths. Optimal GDL laws have multiple components, including a three-stage licensing process and restrictions on nighttime driving, number and age of passengers, and cell phone usage.

While all states have at least one element of a GDL program, there is not a single state that has a comprehensive GDL law that includes all seven of the optimal elements, as recommended by Advocates.

GDL Program Facts

- In states that have adopted GDL programs, studies have found overall crash reductions among teen drivers of about ten to thirty percent.⁷
- The fatal crash rate per mile driven is nearly twice as high for 16-17 year-olds as it is for 18-19 year-olds.⁸
- Compared to GDL programs without any of the seven recommended components, fatal crash involvement rates were 16 percent to 21 percent lower in GDL programs that included age requirements plus: 3 or more months of waiting before the intermediate stage, nighttime driving restriction, and either supervised driving of at least 30 hours or passenger restriction.⁹
- Teenage motor vehicle crash deaths in 2013 occurred most frequently during the periods of 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., and 9 p.m. to midnight (17 percent each). The midnight to 3 a.m. is a close fourth accounting for 15 percent of teenage motor vehicle crash deaths.¹⁰ States with nighttime driving restrictions show crash reductions of up to 60 percent during restricted hours.¹¹
- Fatal crash rates are 21 percent lower for 15 to 17 year old drivers when prohibited from having any teenage passengers in their vehicles, compared to when two or more passengers were permitted.¹²
- For 16 and 17 year-old drivers, research has identified a 15 percent reduction in fatal crash rates was associated with a limit of no more than one teen passenger for 6-months or longer, when compared to no passenger limit.¹³

- Delaying the minimum age for obtaining a learner’s permit was associated with lower fatal crash rates for 15-17 year-olds combined; a 1-year delay (e.g., from age 15 to 16) reduced the fatal crash rate by 13 percent.¹⁴
- Research has found that a minimum holding period of at least five months reduces fatal crash rates, however extending the holding period to 9 months to a year results in a 21% reduction in fatal crash rate.¹⁵
- Text messaging has become a more prominent issue when it comes to distracted teen drivers. In a 2011 study by Liberty Mutual Insurance Group and Students Against Destructive Decisions, 53 percent of high school students admitted to texting while driving, even though 59 percent rated text messaging as “the most distracting behavior while driving”.¹⁶
- A 2010 survey conducted by IIHS shows that parents favor GDL laws that are as strict or even stricter than currently exist in any state. More than half think the minimum licensing age should be 17 or older.¹⁷
- Almost three-quarters (74 percent) of teens approve of a single, comprehensive law that incorporates the key elements of GDL programs, according to a 2010 survey by the Allstate Foundation.¹⁸

¹ Centers for Disease Control And Prevention, Teen Driver: Fact Sheet, citing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [Online]. (2012). National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (producer). [Cited 2014 Sept 29], available at http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/teen_drivers/teendrivers_factsheet.html

² Teenagers: Fatality Facts: 2013, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, available at <http://www.iihs.org/iihs/topics/t/teenagers/fatalityfacts/teenagers>.

³ Data provided by NHTSA / NCSA in response to request from Advocates, results provided January 5, 2015.

⁴ Data provided by NHTSA / NCSA in response to request from Advocates, results provided January 5, 2015.

⁵ Traffic Safety Facts 2012: Young Drivers, NHTSA, DOT HS 812 019, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812019.pdf>

⁶ Traffic Safety Facts 2002: Young Drivers, NHTSA, DOT HS 809 619, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/2002ydrfacts.pdf>.

⁷ Graduated Licensing Laws and Fatal Crashes of Teenage Drivers: A National Study, Insurance Institute For Highway Safety, June 2010, available at <http://www.iihs.org/frontend/iihs/documents/masterfiledocs.ashx?id=2038>

⁸ Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Fatality Facts 2013: Teenagers website, available at <http://www.iihs.org/iihs/topics/t/teenagers/fatalityfacts/teenagers>

⁹ National Evaluation of Graduated Driver Licensing Programs, NHTSA, June 2006, DOT-HS-810-614, p. vi., available at <http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/NewDriver/GDLReport/index.html>

¹⁰ Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Fatality Facts 2013: Teenagers website, available at <http://www.iihs.org/iihs/topics/t/teenagers/fatalityfacts/teenagers>

¹¹ Traffic Safety Facts: Laws, NHTSA, January 2008, DOT-HS-810-888W, available at <http://www.nhtsa.gov/DOT/NHTSA/Communication%20&%20Consumer%20Information/Articles/Associated%20Files/810888.pdf>

¹² Graduated Licensing Laws and Fatal Crashes of Teenage Drivers: A National Study, Insurance Institute For Highway Safety, June 2010, available at <http://www.iihs.org/frontend/iihs/documents/masterfiledocs.ashx?id=2038>

¹³ Masten, S.V., Fodd, R.D., Marshall, S.W., Graduated driver licensing program component calibrations and their association with fatal crash involvement, *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, V. 57, Aug. 2013, pp. 105-113.

¹⁴ Graduated Licensing Laws and Fatal Crashes of Teenage Drivers: A National Study, Insurance Institute For Highway Safety, June 2010, available at <http://www.iihs.org/frontend/iihs/documents/masterfiledocs.ashx?id=2038>

¹⁵ Masten, S.V., Fodd, R.D., Marshall, S.W., Graduated driver licensing program component calibrations and their association with fatal crash involvement, *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, V. 57, Aug. 2013, pp. 105-113.

¹⁶ Liberty Mutual Press Release “Liberty Mutual and SADD Study Finds Texting While Driving by Teens Not Affected by Their Awareness of the Dangers, Text Conversations with Mom and Dad on the Rise”, October 19, 2011, available at http://www.libertymutualgroup.com/omapps/ContentServer?c=cms_asset&pagename=LMGroup%2FViews%2FImgView98&cid=1240005688166

¹⁷ Williams, A.F; Braitman, K.A.; and McCartt, A.T. 2010. Views of parents of teenagers about licensing policies: a national survey. Arlington, VA: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

¹⁸ Teen Safe Driving: Teen Licensing Survey, Allstate Foundation, available at http://www.allstatefoundation.org/pdf/TSDreport_teen_licensing_survey.pdf