



National Association of County & City Health Officials

04-09

STATEMENT OF POLICY

GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSING

Policy

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) supports legislation in all states that supports and promotes graduated driver's licensing laws. NACCHO urges state legislatures to enact such legislation.

NACCHO encourages local public health officials to work with law enforcement agencies, the medical community, the media and others to educate the community about the benefits of graduated driver's licensing laws and to urge the enforcement of state laws.

Justification

Motor vehicle-related injuries are a major health threat to teenagers in the United States, accounting for two of every five deaths among teens ages 16 to 19. The risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among 16- to 19-year-olds than among any other age group. In fact, per mile driven, teen drivers ages 16 to 19 are four times more likely than older drivers to crash.¹ Sixty-one percent of teenage passenger deaths in 2005 occurred in crashes in which another teenager was driving.¹ Population-based death rates among drivers aged 16-19 peaked at age 18-19 for males (25 per 100,000 people) and at age 18 for females (11 per 100,000 people).¹ In 2003, the latest year for which data are available, motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of death among 13-19-year-old males and females in the United States.¹

Studies indicate the high crash rate among beginning drivers is due to their limited driving experience, immaturity, and risk taking behavior, including speeding, passing inappropriately, following too closely, and driving without seatbelts.² A growing body of evidence indicates graduated driver licensing is an effective means of reducing the crash risk of novice drivers.³ The three stages of a graduated licensing system include specific components and restrictions to introduce driving privileges gradually to beginning drivers. A graduated license system allows young drivers to acquire safe driving practices and attitudes as they progress through a process of licensure, which develops skills over an extended period of time, increases time in supervised behind-the-wheel training, and motivates teens to practice safe driving skills and behaviors by requiring a crash-free/conviction free driving performance prior to full licensure.

Record of Action

*Proposed by NACCHO Injury Prevention Subcommittee and
Community Health and Prevention Advisory Committee*

Adopted by NACCHO Board of Directors

November 7, 2004

Updated April 26, 2007

1 Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. *Fatality Facts: Teenagers*. Arlington (VA):
The Institute; 2005. Available from: URL:

http://www.iihs.org/research/fatality_facts/teenagers.html

2 U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Graduated Driver Licensing Brochure. Available from URL: www.nhtsa.dot.gov

3 McKnight A J, Peck R C. Graduated Driver Licensing: What Works? *Injury Prevention*
2002, 8(Suppl II):ii32-ii38.