

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 comprehensive graduated driver licensing laws (GDL). GDL should be part of a comprehensive motor vehicle safety strategy that includes efforts to address distracted driving, primary seat belt use, and driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

NACCHO supports the robust GDL policies for all newly licensed drivers recommended by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators¹ and National Highway Safety Administration.^{1, 2} These recommendations include:

1. Supervised learner permit period of at least six months that provides at least weekly opportunities for the novice driver to accumulate a minimum of 50 hours of supervised practice driving in a wide variety of increasingly challenging circumstances.^{1, 2, 7}
2. A requirement that the driver be accompanied by a supervising licensed driver, that is at least 21 years of age and who has been fully licensed for at least one year.^{1, 5}
3. A requirement that the applicant pass a vision screening and knowledge test on general rules of the road, with parental consent if applicant is under the age of 18.¹
4. An intermediate stage of licensing with a minimum entry age of at least 16 years and 7 months, lasting 18 months or until at least 18 years of age.^{1, 7}
5. A nighttime driving restriction for intermediate license holders, beginning no later than 10:00 pm.^{1, 5, 7}
6. Driving restriction allowing no more than one teenage passenger.^{1, 7}
7. A minimum age of 18 years for full licensure.^{1, 7}
8. A requirement for “conviction-free” driving in order to graduate to a full license.¹
9. Ongoing funding and research to test, refine, and redefine the best practices for the ideal state driver education and training program.^{1, 2}
10. Inclusion, incorporation, or integration of driver education and training that meets or exceeds current nationally accepted content standards and benchmarks.²
11. Driver education and training that requires core driver educational hours (a minimum of 45 hours of classroom/theory, a minimum of 10 hours of behind the wheel instruction; 10 hours in-car observation) that focus on the driving task and safe driving practices sufficient to meet the criteria established by the end-of-course examination.²

NACCHO draws attention to the important role local health departments play in working with law enforcement agencies, the medical community, the media, schools, parents/legal guardians, driving instructors, and other stakeholders to monitor teen motor vehicle safety data, to educate



the public about GDL laws, and to support the enforcement of GDL and other motor vehicle safety laws.

Justification

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens.³ Every year, over 2,000 teens lose their lives in motor vehicle crashes.⁴ Among teen drivers, those most at risk of motor vehicle crashes are males, teens driving with teen passengers, and newly licensed teens.³ Driver inexperience and risk-taking behavior (e.g., speeding, allowing shorter headways, and drinking alcohol) put teens at a heightened risk for crashes. Additionally, compared to older drivers, teens are less likely to recognize dangerous or hazardous situations and less likely to wear seat belts.³

GDL includes three stages: learner's permit, intermediate license, and full or unrestricted license.⁵ The learner's permit stage provides the opportunity to practice basic driving skills and safe driving practices under supervised conditions. The intermediate license stage provides behind-the-wheel practice under restricted conditions, and exposes the driver to more demanding situations. The final stage, full or unrestricted license, allows the driver unlimited driving privileges.

GDL programs are associated with reductions in fatal and injury crashes. Comprehensive GDL programs provide longer practice periods, limits driving under high risk conditions, and requires greater participation of parents/legal guardians in their teens' learning to drive.³ GDL programs are associated with reductions of approximately 20% in 16-year-old drivers' fatal crash involvement rates.⁶ Programs that include age requirements, a waiting period of at least three months, nighttime driving restriction, and 30 or more hours of supervised driving or passenger restriction.

GDL laws vary by state; 38 states and D.C. ban all cell phone use by novice drivers, 48 states and D.C. restrict nighttime driving during the intermediate stage, and 46 states and D.C. restrict the number of passengers during the intermediate stage.⁷ Local health departments must work to strengthen GDL laws in order to prevent crashes and safeguard new drivers and other drivers from preventable injuries and deaths.

References

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2. U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Safety Administration. Novice Teen Driver Education and Training Administrative Standards. Retrieved from: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/pdf/TeenDriverETAS-1.pdf> on November 30, 2015.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). Teen Drivers: Get the Facts. Retrieved from: http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/teen_drivers/teendrivers_factsheet.html on November 30, 2015.
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5. American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators. Three Stages of Graduated Driver Licensing. Retrieved from http://www.aamva.org/uploadedFiles/MainSite/Content/DriverLicensingIdentification/At_Risk_Drivers/Three%20Stages%20of%20Graduated%20Driver%20Licensing.pdf on December 1, 2015.

6. Chen, L.H., Baker, S.P., Li G. (2006). Graduated Driver Licensing Programs and Fatal Crashes of 16-Year-Old Drivers: A National Evaluation. *Pediatrics*, 118(1), 56-62. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1542/peds.2005-2281>.
7. Governors Highway Safety Association. (2015). Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) Laws. Retrieved from http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/license_laws.html on December 1, 2015.

Record of Action

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