



## What is Graduated Driver Licensing?



The National Safety Council is a leader in promoting Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL).

GDL is a novice driver licensing system that is proven effective at reducing teen drivers' high crash risk by 20-40%. States with stronger, comprehensive GDL systems see a higher reduction in teen crashes. GDL reduces teen driver exposure to high crash risk situations, such as nighttime driving and teen passengers. This allows new drivers to build experience and skills in lower-risk conditions.

### GDL systems have three stages of licensure:

1. A learner's permit that allows driving only while supervised by a fully licensed driver
2. An intermediate (sometimes called provisional) license that allows unsupervised driving under certain restrictions including nighttime and passenger limits
3. A full license

### Reduce risk

All new drivers can make incorrect decisions behind the wheel. However, teens bring to the road a unique mix of inexperience, distraction, peer pressure and a tendency to underestimate risk.

Most Americans learn to drive during the teen years, when the brain is not fully mature. Recent research is beginning to give us insight into why many teens have difficulty regulating risk-taking behavior:

- The area of the brain that weighs consequences, suppresses impulses and organizes thoughts does not fully mature until about age 25.
- Hormones are more active in teens, which influence the brain's neurochemicals that regulate excitability and mood. The result can be thrill-seeking behavior and experiences that create intense feelings.

Learning to regulate driving behavior comes with time and practice. Defensive Driving Course-Alive at 25® offers a balanced approach to help teens not only regulate their own driving behavior, but also help them deal with the actual issues that can influence their driving behavior.

### Develop Skills

Driver education programs play a role in preparing teens to drive, but should not be viewed as the end of the learning-to-drive process. In order to develop safe driving skills, inexperienced drivers need opportunities to improve through gradual exposure to increasingly-challenging driving tasks. Teens become safer drivers with more driving experience.

In some states, the completion of driver education qualifies a teen for full driving privileges. The National Safety Council believes this is not a wise approach. Research shows that significant hours of behind-the-wheel experience are

necessary to reduce crash risk. Parent involvement and Graduated Driver Licensing play important roles in developing skills.