

The Basics of Graduated Driver Licensing



GDL is a three-step process designed to help teens gain experience and build skill while minimizing common risks such as cell phones, passenger distractions and nighttime driving.

Here's a game-winning strategy for helping teens be safe behind the wheel.

Step 1: Learner's License

A teen must be at least 15 years old and have completed or be enrolled in the classroom instructional phase of a state-approved driver education program to apply for a **Learner's License**, and must hold the license for at least 6 months. During this time, the teen must have 30 hours of driving practice with at least 10 hours at night. With a learner license, the teen may only drive with a licensed driver who is at least 21 years old and have at least one year of experience.

Step 2: Provisional License

To obtain a **Provisional License**, teens must be at least 16, and have held the learner license for at least 6 months, and have completed both the classroom and in-car instructional phases of a state-approved driver education program. Under the provisional license, teens are subject to several restrictions:

- May not drive with more than one passenger in the car under the age of 21 who is not a family member until age 18
- May not operate a car unsupervised between 12 a.m. and 5 a.m. unless driving is necessary for employment or school

Step 3: Full License

At age 18, a Texas teen can obtain his or her Full License, however; teen drivers may not use cell phones (this includes no texting), handheld or hands-free, while driving until the age of 18.

Why does GDL work?

Parents play a critical role

Teens whose parents set rules and monitor driving in a helpful, supportive way are:

- Half as likely to be in a crash
- 71% less likely to drive intoxicated
- 30% less likely to use a cell phone while driving
- 50% more likely to buckle up

GDL supports parents by helping to protect teen drivers. Making the components of GDL rules in your home will provide your teen with a safe environment to gain much needed experience.

Following Texas law is important, the National Safety Council recommends parents take it a step further:

- No passengers for the first year (includes siblings)
- No cell phone use – handheld or hands-free – while driving
- No nighttime driving – have the car home by 10 p.m., earlier is better
- Safety belts are to be worn on every trip – no exceptions



