

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS RESOLUTION ON GRADUATED DRIVERS LICENSING

Resolution Summary

The risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among 16- to 19-year-olds than among any other age group. In fact, per miles driven, teen drivers ages 16 to 19 are four times more likely than older drivers to crash. Unfortunately, fatal crashes involving young drivers follow similar statistics. Teen drivers also have higher rates of fatal crashes caused by driver error and speeding, involving a single vehicle, and having over three occupants.

The major risk factors for teen drivers are inexperience and the presence of other passengers, especially teenage passengers, which can create distractions or encourage riskier behavior. Graduated licensing is designed to help reduce the number of motor vehicle crashes involving young new drivers by slowly introducing them to high-risk situations, such as driving at night or with passengers.

Since 1997, every state has implemented a system of graduated drivers licensing (GDL) for novice teen drivers or improved existing systems in their respective states. Today, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have some form of GDL for novice teen drivers. However, not all of the laws are comprehensive and many are missing key provisions shown to be most effective in reducing injuries and deaths of teen drivers, their passengers and other drivers. Research has shown that an optimal system for GDL involves a supervised learner's period that lasts at least six months, contains passenger restrictions, and restrictions on driving at night.

Additional Resource Information

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety: www.iihs.org

American Automobile Association: www.aaa.com

CSG Healthy States Injury Prevention:

<http://www.healthystates.csg.org/Public+Health+Issues/Injury+Prevention/>

Graduated Drivers Licensing Management Directives

- **Management Directive #1:** Create a sense of urgency concerning the need to include key provisions shown to be the most effective in GDL.
- **Management Directive #2:** Support efforts to reduce injuries and deaths caused by teen drivers.
- **Management Directive #3:** CSG staff will post approved resolution on CSG's Web site and make available through its regular communication venues at the state and local level to ensure its distribution to the state government and policy community.

**THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS
RESOLUTION ON GRADUATED DRIVERS LICENSING**

- WHEREAS,** car crashes are the leading cause of death among 15- to 20-year-olds;
- WHEREAS,** teenage drivers account for approximately 10 percent of the United States population, but comprised about 13 percent of motor-vehicle crash fatalities in 2003;
- WHEREAS,** graduated drivers licensing is a system designed to phase in full driving privileges for teens as they develop their driving skills in low-risk settings – i.e. driving with their parents, driving during the day and driving without teen passengers;
- WHEREAS,** research shows that graduated drivers licensing laws have reduced teen driver deaths and crashes;
- WHEREAS,** requiring longer learner's permit periods (6 months or more) provides more time for beginners to practice driving under the supervision of adults;
- WHEREAS,** the crash risk for teenage drivers increases incrementally with one, two, or three or more teen passengers;
- WHEREAS,** the fatal crash risk for teen drivers is about three times higher when they have teen passengers in the car than when they drive by themselves;
- WHEREAS,** passenger restrictions are an essential component of effective graduated licensing laws;
- WHEREAS,** almost two-thirds of all fatal nighttime crashes involving 16-year-old drivers occur before midnight;
- WHEREAS,** night driving restrictions that start before midnight are likely to decrease fatal nighttime crashes for teen drivers;
- WHEREAS,** research shows that nearly two out of every three people killed in teen driver crashes are people other than the teen driver;
- WHEREAS,** research shows that poorly trained, inexperienced drivers affect the safety of the road for all drivers;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that The Council of State Governments urges states to review their existing graduated drivers licensing laws to ensure that they contain the following key provisions:

- 1) A learner's permit stage or its equivalent with a mandatory holding period of six months to one year;
- 2) A probationary or intermediate license that lasts for six months to one year and includes passenger (no more than one teen passenger) and night (before midnight) restrictions;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The Council of State Governments, urges state legislators to add these key provisions to their existing laws as soon as possible.

Adopted this 10th Day of May, 2006 at the
CSG Spring National Committee and Task Force Meetings
In White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia



Governor Jim Douglas
2006 CSG President



Senate President Earl Ray Tomblin
2006 CSG Chair