

**Graduated Licensing:  
A Blueprint for North America**

August 2004

**INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY**

Contact: Allan F. Williams  
1005 N. Glebe Road  
Arlington, VA 22201  
Phone: 703/247-1500  
Fax: 703/247-1678  
email: [awilliams@iihs.org](mailto:awilliams@iihs.org)

**TRAFFIC INJURY RESEARCH FOUNDATION**

Contact: Daniel R. Mayhew  
171 Nepean Street, Suite 200  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada K2P 0B4  
Phone: 613/238-5235  
Fax: 613/238-5292  
email: [danm@trafficinjuryresearch.com](mailto:danm@trafficinjuryresearch.com)

Many jurisdictions in the United States and Canada have adopted graduated licensing, an increasingly popular approach to reducing new drivers' risk of collisions, and many more are considering it. Such an approach is needed because of the extremely high crash rates among new drivers, especially young ones. In the United States, 16 year-olds have almost 10 times the crash risk of drivers ages 30-59 and almost 3 times the risk of older teenagers.<sup>1</sup>

Jurisdictions traditionally have allowed quick and easy paths to full-privilege licensure at an early age, which contributes to the high crash rate of young drivers. Graduated licensing offers a more sensible and less risky way for new drivers to begin. Although many North American systems are too new for formal evaluation, impressive crash and injury reductions have been reported thus far in California, Florida, Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec.<sup>2-9</sup> Fifty-eight jurisdictions (District of Columbia, 47 U.S. states, 9 Canadian provinces, and 1 Canadian territory) have enacted one or more elements of graduated licensing, all but a few of which were enacted since 1994. There is tremendous variation in the programs that have been introduced. To assist other jurisdictions where graduated licensing is being contemplated or where further changes are being considered, this document provides recommendations for the structure and characteristics of such systems. Recommendations are based on scientific research where available and on what graduated systems are intended to accomplish.

## **WHAT IS GRADUATED LICENSING?**

Graduated licensing is a system for phasing in on-road driving, allowing beginners to get their initial experience under conditions that involve lower risk and introducing them in stages to more complex driving situations. Essentially an apprentice system, graduated licensing involves three stages. The first is a supervised learner's period, lasting a minimum of 6 months in optimal systems, then an intermediate licensing phase that permits unsupervised driving only in less risky situations, and finally a full-privilege license becomes available when conditions of the first two stages have been met.

Within this framework, substantial variation is possible in terms of the provisions of the stages and their duration. This variation often has created difficulty for jurisdictions that are constructing a graduated system. Policymakers need to know what features their system should include and what the characteristics should be.

## **GENERAL FEATURES**

**Who should be covered?** A graduated system is designed to address driving inexperience, so there is some justification for applying it to beginners of all ages. This is the approach taken in Canada, where a significant number of new drivers are not young.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, the graduated systems in all U.S.

states except Maryland and New Jersey apply only to young drivers — specifically those younger than 18, the legal age of adulthood in the United States. If a driver is 18 or older when first licensed, graduated licensing does not apply; if 18 is reached while in the system, graduation is automatic.

Young drivers have been the focus of U.S. systems primarily because they constitute the largest group of beginners and have the highest crash risk.<sup>1</sup> Regardless of driver age, inexperience increases crash risk, and inexperience combined with immaturity magnifies this risk. It is possible that some states have significant numbers of older beginners, although this has not been adequately determined.

**Recommendation:** Consider the age distribution of the beginning driver population in deciding whether to apply graduated licensing to all beginners or only young beginners, who are the primary targets.

**How many stages?** A complete graduated licensing system includes all three stages — the supervised learner’s period, the intermediate license that permits some unsupervised driving, and full-privilege licensure. It is important to include both of the first two stages, but 20 of the 58 jurisdictions with elements of graduated licensing have not done so. Nine programs include only the learner’s stage, and three include only a night driving prohibition in the intermediate licensing stage; sacrificing either of these elements likely limits program effectiveness.

**Recommendation:** Implement three-stage licensing systems.

## **LEARNER’S PHASE: KEY FEATURES**

Under traditional licensing systems, most jurisdictions allow for a learning period prior to full licensure. However, in many cases a learner’s permit is optional; when it is required, its minimum holding period either is not specified or is short, typically 30 days. In a graduated system, an extended learner’s period is essential to provide the opportunity for extensive supervised on-road practice in a variety of conditions. Research shows that supervised driving is a relatively safe activity.<sup>11</sup>

**When should the licensing process start?** Jurisdictions that recently have adopted graduated licensing or components of it generally have maintained the starting ages in effect under their prior licensing systems, which range from 14 to 16 years. There are six exceptions. Colorado’s minimum permit age went from 15, 3 months to 15; Idaho’s from 15 to 14, 6 months; Newfoundland from 17 to 16; Ohio lowered the permit age from 16 to 15, 6 months but allows driving only while supervised by a parent or driving instructor before age 16. Virginia initially lowered the permit age from 15, 8 months to 15 and has subsequently raised it to 15, 6 months. Michigan’s permit age was moved back from 15 to 14,

9 months. Hawaii raised the permit age from 15 to 15, 6 months. The rationale for lowering the starting age is to allow more time for supervised driving before continuing to the intermediate license. However, because this allows driving at an even younger age, it may encourage younger people to drive unsupervised as well as supervised, and may also result in more 16 year-olds being licensed at an earlier age. A study of fatal crashes of 15 year-olds in states where permits are allowed at this age found that three of four beginners were driving illegally.<sup>11</sup> The effect of a younger permit age has not been established yet, but policymakers should consider that lowering the permit age might increase rather than decrease risk. Raising the starting age to 16 would have safety benefits. In a few systems the starting age is 16, but no jurisdiction has raised the minimum permit age as graduated licensing has been introduced.

**Recommendation:** Maintain the starting age at 16, or raise it to 16.

**What driving restrictions should be imposed?** A critical aspect of the learner's phase is to require adult supervision of all driving — i.e., supervision by a fully licensed driver at least age 21. Some jurisdictions leave the kind of driving to the discretion of the supervisor, some impose restrictions such as barring nighttime driving, and other jurisdictions require some practice driving at night. North Carolina phases in driving during the 12-month learner's stage, disallowing nighttime driving during the first 6 months.

**Recommendation:** Require adult supervision and restrict driving at the discretion of the supervisor. It is acceptable to phase in more difficult driving, as in North Carolina.

**Should a minimum amount of practice driving be required?** Requiring parents to certify that a certain number of hours have been driven under supervision facilitates the goal of the learner's stage. It also protects against the possibility that beginners will stay off the roads to avoid crashes or traffic violations that may delay graduation to the next stage. Thirty-four of the 58 jurisdictions with elements of graduated licensing impose this requirement; 15 require driving 50 hours, and the others require 12-40 hours. In some of these, a portion of the driving hours has to be accumulated at night.

**Recommendation:** Require 30-50 hours of certified driving, some of which should be allocated to nighttime driving.

**At a minimum, how long should permits be held?** Under the licensing systems that preceded graduated licensing, a few jurisdictions specified a minimum stay in the learner's phase. In other

jurisdictions, required holding periods did not exist, or they were determined by the age at which a permit was obtained if the jurisdiction allowed a permit at a younger age (e.g., 15, 6 months) than the minimum age for licensure (e.g., 16). No research has addressed the appropriate amount of time for a learner's phase. The range among the 58 jurisdictions with elements of graduated licensing is broad, from 30 days to a year. The developing consensus is that a minimum of 6 months is reasonable (33 jurisdictions require 6 months, and 8 require 1 year).

**Recommendation:** Establish a minimum 6-month learner's phase.

### **INTERMEDIATE STAGE: KEY FEATURES**

The highest risk for beginning drivers is when they first get their licenses and can drive unsupervised, with the first few months being particularly risky.<sup>12</sup> Thus key features of graduated licensing include establishing an appropriate minimum age for unsupervised driving and initially restricting some kinds of unsupervised driving. Some jurisdictions do impose a stage after the learner's period during which beginners are subject to tougher penalties on an accelerated schedule; but this is not the same as the intermediate stage under graduated licensing, which restricts when and where beginners are allowed to drive. The goal is to keep initial license holders out of high-risk situations as they continue to accumulate driving experience.

**What should the starting age be?** If the learner's phase starts at the recommended age of 16 and lasts for at least 6 months, the earliest age at which the intermediate stage would begin is 16, 6 months. However, in most jurisdictions the starting ages for learners and/or the minimum holding periods allow advancement at an earlier age.

**Recommendation:** Do not permit any unsupervised driving before age 16, 6 months.

**How should nighttime driving be limited?** For drivers of all ages, crash risk is higher at night than during the day. Night driving is especially risky for young beginners,<sup>13</sup> which is why unsupervised nighttime driving has been restricted in a few states for many years. Research has established that such restrictions are effective in reducing crashes and strongly endorsed by parents. Young people also adapt to night driving restrictions.<sup>13-18</sup>

Licensure laws in 39 jurisdictions include night driving restrictions, but starting times vary widely. One jurisdiction specifies a 6 p.m. start, one at sunset, one at 8 p.m., three at 9 p.m., one at 10 p.m., eight at 11 p.m., eighteen at midnight, one at 12:30 a.m., and five at 1 a.m. Among the states with 11 p.m. starting times, three start later on weekend nights, and one has a later starting time for 17

year-olds. In the United States, about three-quarters of the nighttime crashes of 16 and 17 year-olds occur before midnight (9-11:59 p.m.). Night driving restrictions that begin both early and late effectively reduce crashes during the restricted hours, but those restrictions that start earlier reduce a greater number of crashes because more drivers are affected.<sup>14</sup> Also, parents prefer an early start.<sup>15</sup>

Night driving is allowed under adult supervision, and jurisdictions typically allow some unsupervised driving during restricted hours. Work-related driving generally is allowed, and many jurisdictions allow driving to and from school-related activities. A variety of other exemptions also may apply — e.g., for religious events or volunteer fireman duties. The intention is not to deny essential driving at night but to limit high-risk recreational driving.

**Recommendation:** Restrict unsupervised night driving by newly licensed drivers. Examine the pattern of nighttime crashes in the age group to which graduated licensing will apply to decide when this restriction should begin; optimal starting times are 9 or 10 p.m. Exempt appropriate activities from the night driving restriction.

**Should teenage passengers be restricted?** Research shows that unsupervised driving with teenage passengers increases crash risk compared with driving alone; the more passengers the greater the risk.<sup>19-21</sup> The presence of teenage passengers increases crash risk both day and night,<sup>19</sup> so night driving restrictions alone do not adequately address this problem.

California was the first North American jurisdiction to ban teenage passengers. The ban applies during the first 6 months of a 12-month intermediate licensing phase unless an adult is present in the car. Early research indicates that this measure has reduced the number of teenage passengers injured when riding with 16-year-old drivers.<sup>2</sup> Twenty-five other jurisdictions also limit passengers. Requirements vary as to whether this restriction applies to all passengers or to teenagers only, how many passengers are allowed, and whether family members are exempt. A few jurisdictions specify no more passengers than there are seat belts, but this is not effective because it allows four or more teenage passengers.

Research indicates that New Zealand’s passenger restriction is effective, although more young people were found to violate this rule than the one that restricts driving at night.<sup>22, 23</sup> Many parents support teenage passenger restrictions, but the support is less than for nighttime restrictions.<sup>15</sup>

**Recommendation:** Limit teenage passengers to none or just one during some or all of the intermediate phase, absent adult supervision.

**How long should the intermediate phase last? When should full privileges be allowed?** The specified minimum length of time is 1 year in Newfoundland; 1 year, 3 months in Manitoba; 1 year, 6 months in the Yukon; and 2 years in Nova Scotia. In Canada, the age of graduation from the system is not an issue because this is not linked to driver age.

In the United States, 42 systems allow full-privilege driving before age 18. Only 9 states hold young people in the system until age 18; this can be accomplished by raising the starting age, setting the duration of the stages so it is impossible to graduate before age 18, or requiring beginners to remain in the intermediate stage until age 18 even though they may have completed the time requirements at a younger age.

The actual time spent in the intermediate stage can vary widely from state to state, depending on the age a young driver enters the system. For those who obtain an intermediate license at the earliest possible age, the time ranges from 6 months to 2 years. But teenagers who start the process later and reach age 18 before or soon after they start the intermediate phase spend less time in this stage. Such situations could be avoided by applying graduated licensing to all beginners regardless of age, but then policymakers would have to revisit the wisdom of night driving and passenger restrictions. Maryland, for example, drops the night driving restriction for beginners who are older than 18. New Jersey waives night and passenger restrictions for all new drivers 21 and older.

**Recommendation:** Hold beginning drivers in the intermediate stage until at least age 18. Both inexperience and immaturity contribute to the high crash rate of young drivers, and graduated systems can address both by delaying the age of full-privilege driving until 18.

**Should a test be required before full-privilege licensure?** Requiring drivers to pass an exit test that is more difficult than the initial on-road licensing test in order to graduate to full-privilege driving could motivate beginners to develop their skills and weed out drivers who have not practiced enough to become proficient. Such tests have been introduced in Ontario and British Columbia but are not part of any U.S. system.

**Recommendation:** Consider an exit test to ensure competence prior to full-privilege licensure.

## **OTHER ISSUES**

**Should driver education be required?** Traditional driver education has not reduced crashes,<sup>24</sup> although it can be a superior way to learn basic driving skills. The on-road training it involves also can

contribute to a beginner's driving experience. How to integrate driver education with a graduated licensing system has been the subject of much general discussion and extensive consideration in a recent report.<sup>25</sup> With a few exceptions, jurisdictions merely have carried over the driver education requirements of prior licensing systems. The driver education requirement in Maine now applies to drivers younger than age 18, rather than 17. New Jersey and South Carolina added a driver education requirement. Michigan changed its driver education format to a two-phase system, as recommended by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, to correspond to the phases of graduated licensing.<sup>24</sup> In Canada, six provinces grant a "time discount" to beginners who take driver education, allowing them to graduate sooner. This has been found to be counterproductive.<sup>8</sup>

**Recommendation:** Graduated licensing works with or without driver education. In jurisdictions that do not already require driver education, the graduated system need not include any such provisions. In jurisdictions that do require driver education, the training should be integrated to complement graduated licensing. Ways should be explored to harmonize the delivery of driver education lessons with multistage graduated licensing requirements.<sup>25</sup> However, there is no justification for time discounts.

**What about penalty provisions?** In practice, graduated systems are largely self-enforcing, with parents playing a major role. All jurisdictions penalize drivers in graduated systems who do not comply with driving restrictions or who are involved in traffic violations or at-fault crashes. Almost all jurisdictions delay or prohibit graduation from the system if there is evidence of a poor driving record. In Nova Scotia, for example, sufficient violations incurred during the two-year intermediate stage start the clock over so that drivers with such records who entered the system at age 16 could remain under a midnight driving restriction until well beyond age 18. The threat of such a penalty can provide strong motivation for safe driving.

**Recommendation:** Include penalty provisions that delay graduation for beginners with poor driving records.

## OVERALL ASSESSMENT

In the 58 North American jurisdictions where versions of graduated licensing have been enacted, significant reductions in collisions and injuries are anticipated. However, even more substantial reductions would be possible if jurisdictions met all the recommendations for a graduated system. In an optimal

system, young beginners would not start until age 16, spend at least 6 months in a learner's stage with parents having to certify at least 30-50 hours of practice, enter an initial license stage with restrictions on unsupervised nighttime driving starting at 9 or 10 p.m. and transporting teenage passengers, both lasting for at least 6 months, and graduation to an unrestricted license should not be permitted until at least age 18.

To assist jurisdictions that are considering changes in their licensing systems, all novice driver licensing programs in North America are rated according to the degree to which they meet these optimal requirements. No jurisdiction approaches this ideal although some have elements of it. The jurisdictions are rated below as good, fair, marginal, or poor. These ratings are intended to reflect the strength and likely effectiveness of the systems in reducing injuries. The most important component of a graduated system is restricting high-risk driving once an initial license is obtained. This is when crash rates are the highest and when the biggest effects can be seen. The tougher the restrictions and the longer they last beyond the 16th birthday, the higher the rating. A lengthy learner's period of supervised driving is also important and is taken into account in the ratings. The criteria are indicated below, and in the rating of jurisdictions, the licensing system elements that produced the rating are indicated. Full details of the licensing system components for North American jurisdictions can be found at the Institute's website, [www.highwaysafety.org](http://www.highwaysafety.org).

**Good:** minimum 6-month learner's phase for young beginners; once licensed, beginners are subject to nighttime restrictions beginning at 10 p.m. or earlier and extending to 5 a.m. and/or a restriction that allows no more than one passenger when driving unsupervised; and beginners must wait until age 17 for their unrestricted licenses

**Fair:** law includes the late evening/night driving or passenger restriction listed above, and beginners must wait until 17 for their unrestricted licenses; or law includes a minimum learner's phase (any length) plus some restrictions on driving hours and/or passengers, and beginners must wait until age 16, 6 months for their unrestricted licenses

**Marginal:** law includes a minimum learner's phase (any length) plus some restrictions on driving hours and/or passengers when initially licensed, or law includes only a learner's phase lasting a minimum of 6 months; or law includes only restrictions on driving hours and/or passengers once a beginner is licensed

**Poor:** no minimum learner's phase and no nighttime or passenger restrictions; or minimum learner's phase shorter than 6 months

## REFERENCES

1. Williams, A.F. 1996. Magnitude and characteristics of the young driver crash problem in the United States. *New to the Road: Reducing the Risks for Young Motorists. Proceedings of the First Annual International Symposium of the Youth Enhancement Service* (ed. H.M. Simpson), 19-25. Los Angeles, CA: University of California.
2. Automobile Club of Southern California. 2000. California teen passenger deaths and injuries drop as graduated driver license law marks second anniversary. Los Angeles, CA.
3. Ulmer, R.G.; Preusser, D.F.; Williams, A.F.; Ferguson, S.A.; and Farmer, C.M. 2000. Effect of Florida's graduated licensing program on the crashes of teenage drivers. *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 32:527-532.
4. Kidd, P. and Pigman, J. 1999. Policy brief: graduated drivers' license for youth program. Lexington, KY: Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center and the Kentucky Transportation Center.
5. Shope, J.T.; Molnar, L.J.; Elliott, M.R.; and Waller, P.F. 2001. Graduated driver licensing in Michigan. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 286:1593-98.
6. Foss, R.D.; Feaganes, J.R.; and Rodgman, E.A. 2001. Initial effects of graduated driver licensing on 16-year-old driver crashes in North Carolina. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 286:1588-92.
7. Mayhew, D.R.; Simpson, H.M.; des Groseilliers, M.; and Williams, A.F. 2001. Impact of the graduated licensing program in Nova Scotia. *Journal of Crash Prevention and Injury Control* 2:179-92.
8. Boase, P. and Tasca, L. 1998. Graduated licensing system evaluation: interim report '98. Toronto, Ontario: Safety Policy Branch, Ministry of Transportation of Ontario.
9. Bouchard, J.; Dussault, C.; Simard, R.; Gendreau, M.; and Lemire, A.M. 2000. The Quebec graduated licensing system for novice drivers: a two-year evaluation of the 1997 reform. *Proceedings of the 15th International Conference on Alcohol, Drugs, and Traffic Safety (CD ROM). Borlänge, Sweden: Swedish National Road Administration.*
10. Mayhew, D.R. and Simpson, H.M. 1990. New to the road: young drivers and novice drivers, similar problems and solutions? Ottawa, Ontario: Traffic Injury Research Foundation.
11. Williams, A.F.; Preusser, D.F.; Ferguson, S.A.; and Ulmer, R.G. 1997. Analysis of the fatal crash involvements of 15-year-old drivers. *Journal of Safety Research* 28:49-54.
12. Mayhew, D.R.; Simpson, H.M.; Pak, A. 2000. Changes in collision rates among novice drivers during the first months of driving. Arlington, VA: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.
13. Williams, A.F. and Preusser, D.F. 1997. Night driving restrictions for youthful drivers: a literature review and commentary. *Journal of Public Health Policy* 18:334-45.
14. Preusser, D.F.; Williams, A.F.; Zador, P.L.; and Blomberg, R.D. 1984. The effect of curfew laws on motor vehicle crashes. *Law and Policy* 6:115-28.

15. Williams, A.F.; Ferguson, S.A.; Leaf, W.A.; and Preusser, D.F. 1998. Views of parents of teenagers about graduated licensing systems. *Journal of Safety Research* 29:1-7.
16. Begg, D.J.; Langley, J.D.; Reeder, A.I.; and Chalmers, D.J. 1995. The New Zealand graduated driver licensing system: teenagers' attitudes towards and experiences with this car driver licensing system. *Injury Prevention* 1:177-81.
17. Mayhew, D.R.; Simpson, H.M.; Ferguson, S.A.; and Williams, A.F. 1999. Graduated licensing in Ontario: a survey of parents. *Journal of Traffic Medicine* 27:71-80.
18. Mayhew, D.R.; Simpson, H.M.; Ferguson, S.A.; and Williams, A.F. 1998. Graduated licensing in Nova Scotia: a survey of teenagers and parents. *Journal of Traffic Medicine* 26:37-44.
19. Preusser, D.F.; Ferguson, S.A.; and Williams, A.F. 1998. The effect of teenage passengers on the fatal crash risk of teenage drivers. *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 30:217-22.
20. Doherty, S.T.; Andrey, J.C.; and MacGregor, C. 1998. The situational risks of young drivers: the influence of passengers, time of day, and day of week on accident rates. *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 30:45-54.
21. Chen, L.; Baker, S.P.; Braver, E.R.; and Li, G. 2000. Carrying passengers as a risk factor for crashes fatal to 16- and 17-year-old drivers. *Journal of American Medical Association* 283:1578-82.
22. Frith, W.J. and Perkins, W.A. 1992. The New Zealand graduated licensing system. *National Road Safety Seminar* 2:256-78. Wellington, New Zealand: Land Transport.
23. Harre, N.; Field, J.; and Kirkwood, B. 1996. Gender differences and areas of common concern in the driving behaviors and attitudes of adolescents. *Journal of Safety Research* 27:163-73.
24. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. 1994. Research agenda for an improved novice driver education program. Report to Congress. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation.
25. Mayhew, D.R.; Simpson, H.M.; Williams, A.F.; and Ferguson, S.A. 1998. Effectiveness and role of driver education and training in a graduated licensing system. *Journal of Public Health Policy* 19:51-67.

## U.S. LICENSING SYSTEMS FOR YOUNG DRIVERS

Laws as of January 2005

New drivers have elevated crash rates. This is particularly true for drivers younger than 18. Young novice drivers are at significant risk on the road because they lack both the judgment that comes with maturity and the skill that comes with experience. Graduated licensing is a system designed to delay full licensure while allowing beginners to obtain their initial experience under lower risk conditions. There are three stages: a minimum supervised learner's period, an intermediate license (once the driving test is passed) that limits unsupervised driving in high-risk situations, and a full-privilege driver's license available after completion of the first two stages. Beginners must remain in each of the first two stages for set minimum time periods. Forty-one jurisdictions (40 states and the District of Columbia) currently have all three stages, but the systems vary in strength.

In an optimal system, the minimum age for a learner's permit is 16; the learner stage lasts at least 6 months, during which parents must certify at least 30-50 hours of supervised driving; and the intermediate stage lasts until at least age 18 and includes both a night driving restriction starting at 9 or 10 p.m. and a strict teenage passenger restriction allowing no teenage passengers, or no more than one teenage passenger (see "Graduated Licensing: A Blueprint for North America" by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and Traffic Injury Research Foundation).

The table beginning on page 3 lists licensing requirements for the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. During the 1990s, many states moved toward graduated licensing. Some have enacted virtually all the elements of graduated licensing, while others have enacted only parts. Another area in which the laws differ is enforcement. Some states prohibit police from stopping young drivers solely for night driving violations or passenger restrictions (secondary enforcement). The Institute has evaluated the states' licensing systems using criteria designed to estimate the strength and likely effectiveness of the systems in reducing injuries. In particular, strong or optimal restrictions on the initial license phase and how long the restrictions last beyond the 16th birthday are credited. No state has an optimal graduated licensing system.

Points were assigned for the key components of graduated licensing. Good systems scored 6 or more points; fair systems scored 4 or 5; marginal systems 2 or 3; and poor ones scored less than 2 points. Regardless of point totals, no state was rated above "marginal" if learner's permit holders could be younger than 15 or if it allowed unrestricted driving before 16, 6 months. The following schedule was used to assign points.

Learner's entry age	1 point for learner's entry age of 16
Learner's holding period	2 points for $\geq 6$ mo.; 1 point for 3-5 mo.; none for $< 3$ mo.
Practice driving certification	1 point for $\geq 30$ hrs.; none for less than 30 hrs.
Night driving restriction	2 points for 9 or 10 p.m. 1 point for after 10 p.m.
Passenger restriction	2 points for $\leq 1$ underage passenger; 1 for 2 passengers; none for 3
Driver education	Where completion of driver education changed a requirement, point values were determined for the driver education track.

Duration of restrictions 1 point if difference between minimum unrestricted license age and minimum intermediate license age is 12 or more months; night driving and passenger restrictions were valued independently

Jurisdiction/ Evaluation	Learner Stage			Intermediate Stage			Minimum Age at Which Restrictions May Be Lifted	
	Minimum Entry Age	Mandatory Holding Period	Minimum Amount of Supervised Driving	Minimum Age	Unsupervised Driving Prohibited	Passenger Restriction	Nighttime Restriction	Passenger Restriction
Optimal provisions	16	6 mo.	30–50 hr.	16, 6 mo.	9/10 p.m.–5 a.m.	No more than 1 teenage passenger*	Until age 18	
Alabama / <b>F</b>	15 <sup>1</sup>	6 mo.	30 hr. <sup>1</sup>	16	Midnight–6 a.m.	No more than 3 passengers (parents and guardians excepted)	17 <sup>1</sup>	17 <sup>1</sup>
Alaska / <b>M</b>	14	6 mo.	40 hr., 10 of which must be at night or in inclement weather (eff. 01/01/05)	16	1 a.m.–5 a.m. (eff. 01/01/05)	First 6 mo.: No passengers unless supervised by 21-year-old driver (family members excepted) (eff. 01/01/05)	16, 6 mo. (eff. 01/01/05)	16, 6 mo. (eff. 01/01/05)
Arizona / <b>P</b>	15, 7 mo. <sup>2</sup>	5 mo.	25 hr., 5 of which must be at night <sup>2</sup>	There is no intermediate stage. The minimum license age is 16.			—	—
Arkansas / <b>M</b>	14	6 mo. <sup>3</sup>	None	Intermediate stage has no passenger or night driving restriction. <sup>3</sup>			—	—
California / <b>G</b>	15, 6 mo. <sup>4</sup>	6 mo.	50 hr., 10 of which must be at night	16	Midnight–5 a.m. <b>S</b>	First 6 mo.: No passengers younger than 20 unless supervised by 25-year-old driver (immediate family members excepted under limited circumstances) <b>S</b>	17	16, 6 mo.
Colorado / <b>F</b>	15 <sup>5</sup>	12 mo.	50 hr., 10 of which must be at night	16	Midnight–5 a.m.	None	17	—
Connecticut / <b>F</b>	16 <sup>6</sup>	6 mo. (4 mo. with driver education) <sup>6</sup>	None <sup>6</sup>	16, 4 mo. <sup>6</sup>	None <sup>6</sup>	First 3 mo.: No passengers <sup>6</sup> Second 3 mo.: No passengers (family members excepted)	—	16, 10 mo. <sup>6</sup>
Delaware / <b>F</b>	15, 10 mo.	6 mo. <sup>7</sup>	None	16, 4 mo. <sup>7</sup>	10 p.m.–6 a.m. <sup>7</sup>	No more than 2 passengers <sup>7</sup>	16, 10 mo.	16, 10 mo.
District of Columbia / <b>G</b>	16	6 mo. <sup>8</sup>	40 hr. in learner's stage; 10 hr. at night in intermediate stage	16, 6 mo.	September–June: 11 p.m.–6 a.m. Su–Th, 12:01 a.m.–6 a.m. Sa–Su; July–August: 12:01 a.m.–6 a.m. <sup>8</sup>	First 6 mo.: No passengers unless supervised by 21-year-old driver (family members excepted); Thereafter, no more than 2 passengers (family members excepted)	18 <sup>8</sup>	18
Cell phones: A driver may not operate a cell phone in the learner stage.								
Florida <sup>9</sup> / <b>F</b>	15	12 mo.	50 hr., 10 of which must be at night	16	11 p.m.–6 a.m. (age 16), 1 a.m.–5 a.m. (age 17)	None	18	—
Georgia / <b>G</b>	15	12 mo.	40 hr., 6 of which must be at night (20 hr., 6 of which must be at night, with driver education)	16	Midnight–6 a.m. <b>S</b>	First 6 mo.: No passengers (family members excepted); Thereafter, no more than 3 passengers younger than 21 (family members excepted) <b>S</b>	18	18
Hawaii / <b>P</b>	15, 6 mo.	3 mo.	None	There is no intermediate stage. The minimum license age is 16. <sup>10</sup>			—	—

**Key: G=good, F=fair, M=marginal, P=poor; S=secondary enforcement**

cont'd

Jurisdiction/ Evaluation	Learner Stage			Intermediate Stage			Minimum Age at Which Restrictions May Be Lifted	
	Minimum Entry Age	Mandatory Holding Period	Minimum Amount of Supervised Driving	Minimum Age	Unsupervised Driving Prohibited	Passenger Restriction	Nighttime Restriction	Passenger Restriction
Optimal provisions	16	6 mo.	30–50 hr.	16, 6 mo.	9/10 p.m.–5 a.m.	No more than 1 teenage passenger*	Until age 18	
Idaho / <b>M</b>	14, 6 mo.	4 mo.	50 hr., 10 of which must be at night	15 <sup>11</sup>	Sunset to sunrise	None	16 <sup>11</sup>	—
Illinois / <b>F</b>	15 <sup>12</sup>	3 mo.	25 hr.	16 <sup>12</sup>	11 p.m.–6 a.m. Su–Th, 12:01 a.m.–6 a.m. Sa–Su	First 6 mo.: No more than 1 passenger younger than 20 (family members excepted)	17 <sup>12</sup>	16, 6 mo.
Indiana / <b>F</b>	15 <sup>13</sup>	2 mo.	None	16, 1 mo. <sup>13</sup>	11 p.m.–5 a.m. Su–F, 1 a.m.–5 a.m. Sa–Su,	First 90 days: No passengers unless supervised by 21-year-old driver	18	16, 4 mo.
Iowa / <b>M</b>	14	6 mo.	20 hr., 2 of which must be at night	16 <sup>14</sup>	12:30 a.m.–5 a.m.	None	17 <sup>14</sup>	—
Kansas <sup>15</sup> / <b>P</b>	14	None	50 hr., 10 of which must be at night	There is no intermediate stage. The minimum license age is 16.			—	—
Kentucky / <b>M</b>	16	6 mo.	None	There is no intermediate stage. The minimum license age is 16, 6 mo. <sup>16</sup>			—	—
Louisiana / <b>F</b>	15 <sup>17</sup>	6 mo. (eff. 09/01/04)	None	16 <sup>17</sup>	11 p.m.–5 a.m. <sup>17</sup>	None	17 <sup>17</sup>	—
Maine / <b>G</b>	15 <sup>18</sup>	6 mo. <sup>18</sup>	35 hr., 5 of which <sup>18</sup> must be at night	16 <sup>18</sup>	Midnight–5 a.m.	First 180 days: No passengers unless supervised by 20-year-old driver (family members excepted)	16, 6 mo. <sup>18</sup>	16, 6 mo. <sup>18</sup>
Cell phones: A driver may not operate a cell phone in the learner and intermediate stages.								
Maryland / <b>F</b>	15, 9 mo.	4 mo.	40 hr.	16, 1 mo.	Midnight–5 a.m. <sup>19</sup>	None	17, 7 mo.	—
Massachusetts / <b>G</b>	16	6 mo.	12 hr.	16, 6 mo.	Midnight–5 a.m. <sup>20</sup> <b>S</b>	First 6 mo.: No passengers younger than 18 unless supervised by 21-year-old driver (family members excepted)	18	17
Michigan / <b>M</b>	14, 9 mo. <sup>21</sup>	6 mo.	50 hr., 10 of which must be at night	16 <sup>21</sup>	Midnight–5 a.m.	None	17 <sup>21</sup>	—
Minnesota / <b>M</b>	15 <sup>22</sup>	6 mo. <sup>22</sup>	30 hr., 10 of which must be at night	A provisional license may be granted at 16. There are no passenger or nighttime restrictions; however, a provisional driver may not operate a vehicle if a passenger under the age of 18 is unbelted. The minimum full license age is 17. <sup>22</sup>			—	—
Mississippi / <b>M</b>	15	6 mo. <sup>23</sup>	None	15, 6 mo. <sup>23</sup>	10 p.m.–6 a.m. <sup>23</sup>	None	16	—
Missouri / <b>F</b>	15	6 mo.	20 hr.	16	1 a.m.–5 a.m.	None	18	—
Montana / <b>P</b>	14, 6 mo.	None	None	There is no intermediate stage. The minimum license age is 15. <sup>24</sup>			—	—
Nebraska / <b>M</b>	15 <sup>25</sup>	None	50 hr. (none with driver education)	16	Midnight–6 a.m.	None	17	—

Key: **G**=good, **F**=fair, **M**=marginal, **P**=poor; **S**=secondary enforcement

cont'd

Jurisdiction/ Evaluation	Learner Stage			Intermediate Stage			Minimum Age at Which Restrictions May Be Lifted	
	Minimum Entry Age	Mandatory Holding Period	Minimum Amount of Supervised Driving	Minimum Age	Unsupervised Driving Prohibited	Passenger Restriction	Nighttime Restriction	Passenger Restriction
Optimal provisions	16	6 mo.	30–50 hr.	16, 6 mo.	9/10 p.m.–5 a.m.	No more than 1 teenage passenger*	Until age 18	
Nevada / <b>M</b>	15, 6 mo.	90 days <sup>26</sup>	50 hr.	15, 9 mo. <sup>26</sup>	None	If younger than 16: first 90 days: no passengers younger than 18 (family members excepted)  If between 16 and 17: first 60 days: no passengers younger than 18 (family members excepted)  If between 17 and 18: first 30 days: no passengers younger than 18 (family members excepted)	—	16
New Hampshire / <b>F</b>	15, 6 mo. <sup>27</sup>	None	20 hr.	16	1 a.m.–5 a.m.	First 6 mo.: No more than 1 passenger younger than 25 unless supervised by a 25-year-old driver (family members excepted)	17, 1 mo.	16, 6 mo.
New Jersey / <b>G</b>	16 <sup>28</sup>	6 mo. <sup>28</sup>	None	17 <sup>28</sup>	Midnight–5 a.m.	No more than 1 passenger unless supervised by 21-year-old driver (household members excepted)	18	18
Cell phones: A driver may not operate a cell phone in the learner and intermediate stages.								
New Mexico / <b>G</b>	15	6 mo.	50 hr., 10 of which must be at night	15, 6 mo.	Midnight–5 a.m.	No more than 1 passenger younger than 21 (family members excepted)	16, 6 mo. <sup>29</sup>	16, 6 mo. <sup>29</sup>
New York / <b>G</b>	16 <sup>30</sup>	up to 6 mo. <sup>30</sup>	20 hr.	16, 6 mo. <sup>30</sup>	9 p.m.–5 a.m.	No more than 2 passengers younger than 21 unless supervised by 21-year-old driver (family members excepted) <sup>30</sup>	17 (18 without driver education) <sup>30</sup>	17 (18 without driver education) <sup>30</sup>
North Carolina / <b>G</b>	15	12 mo.	None	16	9 p.m.–5 a.m. <sup>31</sup>	No more than 1 passenger younger than 21 (family members exempted); if a family member younger than 21 is already a passenger then no other passengers younger than 21 who are not family members	16, 6 mo.	16, 6 mo.
North Dakota / <b>M</b>	14	6 mo.	None	There is no intermediate stage.		The minimum license age is 16.	—	—
Ohio / <b>F</b>	15, 6 mo.	6 mo.	50 hr., 10 of which must be at night	16 <sup>32</sup>	1 a.m.–5 a.m. <b>S</b>	None	17 <sup>32</sup>	—
Oklahoma / <b>M</b>	15, 6 mo. <sup>33</sup>	6 mo. (eff. 11/1/04)	36 hr. (none with driver education)	There is no intermediate stage.		The minimum license age is 16. <sup>33</sup>	—	—

**Key: G=good, F=fair, M=marginal, P=poor; S=secondary enforcement**

cont'd

Jurisdiction/ Evaluation	Learner Stage			Intermediate Stage			Minimum Age at Which Restrictions May Be Lifted	
	Minimum Entry Age	Mandatory Holding Period	Minimum Amount of Supervised Driving	Minimum Age	Unsupervised Driving Prohibited	Passenger Restriction	Nighttime Restriction	Passenger Restriction
Optimal provisions	16	6 mo.	30–50 hr.	16, 6 mo.	9/10 p.m.–5 a.m.	No more than 1 teenage passenger*	Until age 18	
Oregon / <b>G</b>	15	6 mo.	50 hr. <sup>32</sup> (100 hr. without driver education)	16	Midnight–5 a.m.	First 6 mo.: No passengers younger than 20 (family members excepted);  Second 6 mo.: No more than 3 passengers younger than 20 (family members excepted)	17	17
Pennsylvania / <b>G</b>	16	6 mo.	50 hr.	16, 6 mo.	11 p.m.–5 a.m.	None	17 (18 without driver education)	—
Rhode Island / <b>G</b>	16 <sup>34</sup>	6 mo.	50 hr., 10 of which must be at night	16, 6 mo.	1 a.m.–5 a.m.	None	17, 6 mo. <sup>34</sup>	—
South Carolina / <b>G</b>	15	6 mo.	40 hr., 10 of which must be at night	15, 6 mo.	6 p.m.–6 a.m. EST, <sup>35</sup> 8 p.m.–6 a.m. EDT	No more than 2 passengers younger than 21 unless supervised by 21-year-old driver (family members excepted and driving students to and from school excepted)	16, 6 mo.	16, 6 mo.
South Dakota <sup>36</sup> / <b>M</b>	14	6 mo. (3 mo. with driver education)	None	14, 6 mo. (14, 3 mo. with driver education)	10 p.m.–6 a.m.	None	16	—
Tennessee / <b>G</b>	15	6 mo. <sup>37</sup>	50 hr., 10 of which must be at night	16	11 p.m.–6 a.m. <sup>37</sup>	No more than 1 passenger unless supervised by 21-year-old driver (family members excepted)	17	17
Texas / <b>F</b>	15 <sup>38</sup>	6 mo.	None	16	Midnight–5 a.m. <b>S</b>	No more than 1 passenger younger than 21 (family members excepted) <b>S</b>	16, 6 mo.	16, 6 mo.
Utah / <b>F</b>	15, 6 mo. <sup>39</sup>	None	40 hr., 10 of which must be at night <sup>39</sup>	16 <sup>39</sup>	Midnight–5 a.m.	First 6 mo.: No passengers unless supervised by 21-year-old driver (family members excepted) <b>S</b>	17	16, 6 mo. <sup>39</sup>

Key: **G**=good, **F**=fair, **M**=marginal, **P**=poor; **S**=secondary enforcement

cont'd

Jurisdiction/ Evaluation	Learner Stage			Intermediate Stage			Minimum Age at Which Restrictions May Be Lifted	
	Minimum Entry Age	Mandatory Holding Period	Minimum Amount of Supervised Driving	Minimum Age	Unsupervised Driving Prohibited	Passenger Restriction	Nighttime Restriction	Passenger Restriction
Optimal provisions	16	6 mo.	30–50 hr.	16, 6 mo.	9/10 p.m.–5 a.m.	No more than 1 teenage passenger*	Until age 18	
Vermont / <b>F</b>	15	1 yr.	40 hr., 10 of which must be at night	16	None	First 3 mo.: No passengers unless supervised by a licensed parent/ guardian, driving instructor, or licensed 25 year-old driver;  Second 3 mo.: Same as first 3 mo. (family members excepted) <b>S</b>	—	16, 6 mo. <sup>40</sup>
Virginia / <b>G</b>	15, 6 mo.	9 mo.	40 hr., 10 of which must be at night	16, 3 mo.	Midnight–4 a.m. <sup>41</sup> <b>S</b>	First 12 mo.: No more than 1 passenger younger than 18; Until 18: No more than 3 passengers younger than 18 (family members excepted) <sup>41</sup> <b>S</b>	18	18
Washington / <b>G</b>	15 <sup>42</sup>	6 mo.	50 hr., 10 of which must be at night	16	1 a.m.–5 a.m. <b>S</b>	First 6 mo.: No passengers younger than 20 (family members excepted);  Second 6 mo.: No more than 3 passengers younger than 20 <b>S</b>	17 <sup>42</sup>	17 <sup>42</sup>
West Virginia / <b>F</b>	15	6 mo.	30 hr.; none if driver education course completed	16	11 p.m.–5 a.m. <sup>43</sup>	No more than 3 passengers younger than 19 (family members excepted) <sup>43</sup>	17	17
Wisconsin / <b>G</b>	15, 6 mo. <sup>44</sup>	6 mo.	30 hr., 10 of which must be at night	16	Midnight–5 a.m.	No more than 1 passenger (family members excepted)	16, 9 mo. <sup>44</sup>	16, 9 mo. <sup>44</sup>
Wyoming / <b>P</b>	15	10 days	None	There is no intermediate stage. The minimum license age is 16.			—	—

**Key: G=good, F=fair, M=marginal, P=poor; S=secondary enforcement**

\* Passenger restrictions vary with regard to their durations, the ages of passengers to whom they apply, and the availability of exceptions. Most states have exceptions for passengers who are related to the driver or are members of the driver's household, and there are exceptions when a supervising driver is in the vehicle.

<sup>1</sup> The supervising driver in Alabama must be a parent, guardian, or driving instructor. At age 16, permit holders may drive while supervised by any licensed driver. Certification waived for applicants who have completed driver education. Restrictions end after holding the intermediate license for at least 6 months and reaching age 17.

<sup>2</sup> A driver education instructor in Arizona can authorize a student enrolled in driver education who is age 15 to drive only while supervised by the authorizing instructor. Certification waived for applicants who have completed driver education.

<sup>3</sup> In Arkansas, people age 14 can drive with an instruction permit after passing a written test; after 30 days and after passing a road test, they are eligible for a restricted license. Unsupervised driving is not permitted by holders of either the instruction permit or restricted license. The combined holding period for the permit and restricted license is 6 months. An intermediate phase for licensees younger than 18 prohibits drivers from transporting passengers who are unrestrained. Applicants for an intermediate license must be 16 and must be crash/ violation free for 6 months.

- <sup>4</sup> Students enrolled in driver education in California may drive while supervised by an instructor. License applicants who do not take driver education must wait until age 18 for a license. They are not required to go through an intermediate license stage.
- <sup>5</sup> In Colorado, the minimum permit age varies. Fifteen-year-olds who are enrolled in driver education may apply for an instruction permit. Their supervising driver must be a parent, stepparent, guardian, or driving instructor. A person age 15, 6 months, may apply for an instruction permit which allows driving while supervised by a parent, stepparent or guardian. Although driver education is not required at this age, applicants for this permit must have completed a 4-hour driver awareness program. At 16, young drivers may apply for a permit that allows driving while supervised by a licensed driver age 21 or older.
- <sup>6</sup> Either driver education or home training is required for license applicants younger than 18 in Connecticut.
- <sup>7</sup> In Delaware, a driver education student does not need a permit to drive with a driver education instructor. After completing the on-road requirements of driver education, a driver education student who is at least age 15 years, 10 months may apply for a Driver Education Learner's Permit, which allows the student to drive while supervised by an experienced driver. Upon completion of driver education, and if the student passes both the road and written tests, the student receives a Level 1 permit that for the first 6 months allows driving only while supervised. There also is a passenger restriction during the first 6 months of the Level 1 permit. No more than 2 passengers (family members excepted) are permitted in addition to the supervising driver. The Level 1 permit for the second 6 months is the equivalent of an intermediate license. During that period, holders may drive unsupervised between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. and may only carry 2 passengers. Applicants for a driver's license who are younger than 18 must have held a Driver Education Learner's Permit and/or a Level 1 permit for at least 12 months. Driver education is required for all license applicants younger than 18.
- <sup>8</sup> The learner's stage in the District of Columbia is mandatory for all license applicants, regardless of age. A nighttime restriction (9 p.m.–6 a.m.) applies in the learner stage. License applicants younger than 21 must go through the intermediate stage until they have completed it or until age 21.
- <sup>9</sup> In Florida, learner's permit holders may not for the first 3 months drive after sunset and thereafter may not drive after 10 p.m.
- <sup>10</sup> License applicants younger than 18 must have completed driver education in Hawaii.
- <sup>11</sup> In Idaho, license applicants younger than 17 must have completed driver education. There are three classes of learner's permits: a training instruction permit for persons 14, 6 months taking driver education; a supervised instruction permit for practice driving with a nonprofessional supervisor; and an instruction permit for persons younger than 17 who have completed driver education and supervised driving or for persons 17 and older without either driver education or supervised driving.
- <sup>12</sup> Enrollment in driver education is required for permit applicants age 15 in Illinois; without driver education, a permit applicant must be age 17, 9 months. License applicants 18 and older are not required to have driver education or to go through an intermediate license stage.
- <sup>13</sup> Driver education determines the minimum age for permits and the intermediate license in Indiana. People enrolled in or who have completed driver education must be age 15 to have a permit; otherwise, they must be age 16. The minimum age for an intermediate license is 16, 1 month with driver education; age 16, 6 months, without.
- <sup>14</sup> In addition to the certification in the learner stage, Iowa requires a certification of 10 hours of supervised driving, 2 of which must be at night during the intermediate stage. Driver education is required for an intermediate license and for an unrestricted license if applicant is younger than 18. Restrictions end after holding an intermediate license for at least 1 year and reaching age 17.
- <sup>15</sup> In Kansas, restricted license holders may not drive unless supervised other than to and from school or work via the most direct route and may not carry minor passengers other than siblings. To get a restricted license, applicants must have driven at least 25 of the 50 hours required for a full license and must have held an instruction permit for 6 months.
- <sup>16</sup> The Kentucky law prohibits learner's permit holders from driving between midnight and 6 a.m. There is no nighttime driving restriction for other license holders. License holders younger than 18 must complete a 4-hour course on safe driving within 1 year of receiving a license.
- <sup>17</sup> Driver education is required in Louisiana for a permit and an intermediate license if the applicant is younger than 17. People 17 and older must have completed an educational program that does not require a behind-the-wheel component.
- <sup>18</sup> In Maine, driver education is required for a permit and a license if the applicant is younger than 18. The learner's permit holding period and the certification of practice driving applies to license applicants younger than 21.
- <sup>19</sup> In Maryland, 15 year-olds may drive without a permit if supervised by a driver education instructor. Driver education and the certification of practice driving applies to all initial license applicants. The nighttime driving restriction, however, only applies to intermediate license holders younger than 18.
- <sup>20</sup> The night driving restriction in Massachusetts also applies to permit holders younger than 18, unless accompanied by a licensed parent or guardian. Driver education is required of license applicants younger than 18.
- <sup>21</sup> Permit applicants younger than 18 in Michigan must have completed the first segment of driver education; license applicants younger than 18 must have completed the second segment of driver education. Neither driver education nor an intermediate license is required for license applicants 18 and older.

- <sup>22</sup> In Minnesota, permit applicants younger than 18 must be enrolled in driver education; license applicants younger than 18 must have completed driver education. The permit holding period applies to license applicants 18 and older unless they have completed driver education. Provisional license holders must be crash free to qualify for a full license.
- <sup>23</sup> In Mississippi, license applicants 17 and older are exempt from the 6-month learner's permit holding period and the requirement to get an intermediate license.
- <sup>24</sup> Enrollment in or completion of driver education is required for permit applicants younger than 15 in Montana; license applicants younger than 16 must have completed driver education.
- <sup>25</sup> In Nebraska, 14 year-olds who live 1.5 miles or more from school and who either live outside or attend school outside a metropolitan area may be issued a learner's permit (called an "LPE permit") and a limited license (called a "school permit"). The LPE permit authorizes supervised driving for the purpose of preparing for the school permit, which allows driving to and from school or anyplace while supervised by a parent or guardian.
- <sup>26</sup> If license applicant is 16 then mandatory holding period in learner stage is 60 days. If license applicant is 17 then mandatory holding period in learner stage is 30 days. License applicants younger than 18 must have completed driver education if it is available in the public school in Nevada or, if it is unavailable, must complete 50 hours of supervised driving in addition to that required in the learner stage.
- <sup>27</sup> New Hampshire does not issue learner's permits. At age 15, 6 months, a person can drive while supervised by a licensed driver 25 or older.
- <sup>28</sup> In New Jersey, the permit becomes an intermediate license after 6 months. The graduated licensing law applies to adults, except that the night driving and passenger restrictions are waived for new drivers 21 and older. If the applicant has not completed driver education, the minimum permit age is 17 and the minimum intermediate license age is 17, 6 months. Learner's permit holders may not drive between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. and may not carry more than 1 passenger in addition to the supervising driver.
- <sup>29</sup> Permit applicants younger than 18 must be enrolled in driver education in New Mexico; license applicants younger than 18 must have completed driver education.
- <sup>30</sup> Currently, New York law does not have a minimum holding period for the learner's permit. The minimum age for an unrestricted driver's license is 18 (17 if the applicant has completed driver education). The exception is New York City where driving is prohibited unless the driver is 18 or older. Effective, September 1, 2003, New York has enacted a passenger restriction that applies to permit holders and license holders younger than 18 (17 if the applicant has completed driver education). The law also created a new class of license, the limited DJ license. Permit holders who pass a road test and certify 20 or more hours of practice driving may be given a limited DJ license which allows unsupervised driving to and from school, school activities, work, medical appointments, and day care for family members. The night driving and passenger restrictions apply to this license. Permit holders may apply for the limited DJ license at any time. There is, however, a six month holding period for the regular DJ license which allows unsupervised driving anywhere but retains the night driving and passenger restrictions. For the purpose of determining if the six month holding period has passed, both the time spent in the learner's permit phase and the time a person spends in the limited DJ phase is counted.
- <sup>31</sup> In North Carolina, learner's permit holders may not drive between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. for the first 6 months. Driver education is required for permit and license applicants younger than 18.
- <sup>32</sup> Driver education is required of license applicants younger than 18 in Ohio and Oregon. However, it is waived in Oregon for applicants who certify an additional 50 hours of supervised driving.
- <sup>33</sup> Fifteen year-olds may drive in Oklahoma, but only while supervised by an instructor. A restricted license is available to 16 year-olds who have not completed driver education, which allows unsupervised daytime driving only with exceptions for driving to and from work, school or church activities, and imposes a passenger restriction of no more than one passenger unless supervised by a parent/ guardian (household members excepted).
- <sup>34</sup> Driver education is required of permit and license applicants younger than 18 in Rhode Island.
- <sup>35</sup> In South Carolina, licensees in the learner stage may not drive between midnight and 6 a.m. unless supervised by a licensed parent or guardian. Fifteen year-olds who are enrolled in driver education do not need a permit to drive with an instructor. License applicants younger than 17 who have not completed driver education may not get a license to drive unsupervised after daylight.
- <sup>36</sup> In South Dakota, learner's permit holders may not drive between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. unless under the supervision of their parent or guardian who is occupying a seat beside them (effective 7/1/04).
- <sup>37</sup> Learner's permit holders in Tennessee may not drive from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.
- <sup>38</sup> In Texas, the minimum permit age is 15 for applicants who are enrolled in driver education. The minimum license age is 18 for applicants who have not completed driver education.
- <sup>39</sup> Regardless of age, permit applicants in Utah must be enrolled in driver education, and license applicants must have completed driver education. Supervised driving in the learner stage may include up to 5 hours in a driving simulator. Passenger restrictions in Utah end when a driver has been licensed for 6 months or when the driver turns 18, whichever occurs first.
- <sup>40</sup> Driver education is required for license applicants younger than 18 in Vermont.
- <sup>41</sup> In Virginia, driver education is required for license applicants younger than 19 (18 if holds valid license from another state). Initial license applicants 19 and older must either complete driver education or hold a learner's permit at least 30 days. The night driving restriction and passenger restriction (no more than 1 passenger younger than 18) apply to learner's permit holders.
- <sup>42</sup> Permit applicants in Washington must be enrolled in driver education; otherwise the minimum permit age is 15, 6 months. Driver education is required for license applicants younger than 18. Intermediate license holders with a crash or violation history are ineligible for an unrestricted license until age 18.

<sup>43</sup> In West Virginia, learner's permit holders younger than 18 may not drive 11 p.m.–5 a.m. and may not carry more than 2 passengers in addition to the supervising driver.

<sup>44</sup> Enrollment in driver education is required in Wisconsin for permit applicants younger than 18. Driver education is required for license applicants younger than 18. During the learner's stage, licensees may carry 3 passengers if supervised by a driving instructor in a dual-control vehicle or if at least 16, may carry 1 passenger 25 or older who has been licensed at least 2 years.

## CANADIAN LICENSING SYSTEMS FOR YOUNG DRIVERS

Laws as of January 2005

New drivers have elevated crash rates. This is particularly true for drivers younger than 18. Young novice drivers are at significant risk on the road because they lack both the judgment that comes with maturity and the skill that comes with experience. Graduated licensing is a system designed to delay full licensure while allowing beginners to obtain their initial experience under lower risk conditions. There are three stages: a minimum supervised learner's period, an intermediate license (once the driving test is passed) that limits unsupervised driving in high-risk situations, and a full-privilege driver's license available after completion of the first two stages. Beginners must remain in each of the first two stages for set minimum time periods. Five jurisdictions (four provinces and one territory) currently have all three stages, but the systems vary in strength.

In an optimal system, the minimum age for a learner's permit is 16; the learner stage lasts at least 6 months, during which parents must certify at least 30-50 hours of supervised driving; and the intermediate stage lasts until at least age 18 and includes both a night driving restriction starting at 9 or 10 p.m. and a strict teenage passenger restriction allowing no teenage passengers, or no more than one teenage passenger (see "Graduated Licensing: A Blueprint for North America" by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and Traffic Injury Research Foundation).

The table beginning on page 3 lists licensing requirements for the ten provinces and three territories of Canada. Some jurisdictions have enacted many of the elements of graduated licensing, while others have enacted only parts. The Institute has evaluated the Canadian licensing systems using criteria designed to estimate the strength and likely effectiveness of the systems in reducing injuries. In particular, strong or optimal restrictions on the initial license phase and how long the restrictions last beyond the 16th birthday are credited. No province or territory has an optimal graduated licensing system.

Points were assigned for the key components of graduated licensing. Good systems scored 6 or more points; fair systems scored 4 or 5; marginal systems 2 or 3; and poor ones scored less than 2 points. Regardless of point totals, no state was rated above "marginal" if learner's permit holders could be younger than 15 or if it allowed unrestricted driving before 16, 6 months. The following schedule was used to assign points.

Learner's entry age	1 point for learner's entry age of 16
Learner's holding period	2 points for $\geq 6$ mo.; 1 point for 3-5 mo.; none for $< 3$ mo.
Practice driving certification	1 point for $\geq 30$ hrs.; none for less than 30 hrs.
Night driving restriction	2 points for 9 or 10 p.m. 1 point for after 10 p.m.
Passenger restriction	2 points for $\leq 1$ underage passenger; 1 for 2 passengers; none for 3
Driver education	Where completion of driver education changed a requirement, point values were determined for the driver education track.

Duration of restrictions 1 point if difference between minimum unrestricted license age and minimum intermediate license age is 12 or more months; night driving and passenger restrictions were valued independently

Jurisdiction/ Evaluation	Learner Stage			Intermediate Stage			Minimum Age at Which Restrictions May Be Lifted	
	Minimum Entry Age	Mandatory Holding Period	Minimum Amount of Supervised Driving	Minimum Age	Unsupervised Driving Prohibited	Passenger Restriction when Driving Unsupervised	Nighttime Restriction	Passenger Restriction
Optimal provisions	16	6 mo.	30–50 hr.	16, 6 mo.	9/10 p.m.–5 a.m.	No more than 1 teenage passenger	Until age 18	
Alberta / <b>M</b>	14	1 yr.	None	There is no intermediate stage. A license may be issued at age 16. The only restriction is zero percent blood alcohol concentration while driving. After 2 years the driver may take an advanced road test for full licensure.				
British Columbia / <b>G</b>	16	12 mo. (9 mo. with driver education)	None <sup>1</sup>	16, 9 mo.	None	No more than 1 passenger	—	18, 9 mo.
Manitoba / <b>F</b>	15, 6 mo. <sup>2</sup>	9 mo. (effective date: 4/1/2002)	None	16, 3 mo. <sup>2</sup>	None	Between midnight and 5 a.m.: 1 passenger unless supervised, then as many in back as there are belts.		17, 6 mo. <sup>2</sup>
New Brunswick / <b>M</b>	16	12 mo. (4 mo. with driver education)	None <sup>3</sup>	There is no intermediate stage. A stage two license may be issued at age 16, 4 mo. The only restriction is a zero percent blood alcohol concentration while driving. A full license may be issued 24 months after receipt of the stage one learner's permit and after completing 12 months in stage two.			—	—
Newfoundland and Labrador / <b>F</b>	16	12 mo. (8 mo. with driver education) <sup>4</sup>	None	16, 8 mo.	Midnight–5 a.m.	None	17, 8 mo.	—
Northwest Territories / <b>P</b>	15	30 day <sup>5</sup>	None	There is no intermediate stage. The minimum license age is 16.			—	—
Nova Scotia / <b>F</b>	16 <sup>6</sup>	6 mo. (3 mo. with driver education)	None <sup>6</sup>	16, 3 mo. <sup>6</sup>	Midnight–5 a.m. <sup>6</sup>	None	18, 3 mo.	
Nunavut / <b>P</b>	15	None	None	There is no intermediate stage. The minimum license age is 16.				
Ontario / <b>M</b>	16	12 mo. (8 mo. with driver education)	None <sup>7</sup>	There is no intermediate stage. A probationary license may be issued at age 16, 8 mo. The only restriction on a probationary license is zero percent blood alcohol concentration while driving. After 12 mo. the driver may take an advanced road test for full licensure.				
Price Edward Island / <b>M</b>	15, 6 mo.	180 days	None	16	None	3 passengers		17
Quebec / <b>M</b>	16	12 mo. (8 mo. with driver education)	None)	There is no intermediate stage. A license may be issued at age 16, 8 mo. The only restriction is zero percent blood alcohol concentration while driving. A full license may be issued at age 18, 8 mo.				
Saskatchewan / <b>M</b>	15	6 mo.	None <sup>8</sup>	There is no intermediate stage. The minimum license age is 16.				

Key: G=good, F=fair, M=marginal, P=poor

cont'd

Jurisdiction/ Evaluation	Learner Stage			Intermediate Stage			Minimum Age at Which Restrictions May Be Lifted	
	Minimum Entry Age	Mandatory Holding Period	Minimum Amount of Supervised Driving	Minimum Age	Unsupervised Driving Prohibited	Passenger Restriction when Driving Unsupervised	Nighttime Restriction	Passenger Restriction
Optimal provisions	16	6 mo.	30–50 hr.	16, 6 mo.	9/10 p.m.–5 a.m.	No more than 1 teenage passenger	Until age 18	
Yukon / <b>G</b>	15 <sup>9</sup>	6 mo.	50 hr., including at least 10 hr. in darkness and 10 hr. in winter conditions <sup>9</sup>	16 <sup>9</sup>	Midnight–5 a.m. <sup>9</sup>	No more than 1 passenger 12 or younger and 1 passenger 12 through 20, unless a supervisor older than 20 is present.	17, 6 mo.	17, 6 mo.

**Key: G=good, F=fair, M=marginal, P=poor**

- <sup>1</sup> A driver in the learner stage may only carry 2 passengers, including the supervisor. Also, a driver in the learner stage may not drive between midnight and 5 a.m. During all times, a driver in the learner stage must have a sign with an “L” on the vehicle.
- <sup>2</sup> A driver in the learner stage, intermediate stage, and first year of full licensure must maintain a zero percent blood alcohol concentration while driving.
- <sup>3</sup> A driver in the learner stage may carry no passengers other than a supervisor.
- <sup>4</sup> A driver in the learner stage may not drive between midnight and 5 a.m. A driver in the learner and intermediate stage must maintain a zero percent blood alcohol concentration while driving. Also the accompanying supervisor must maintain a blood alcohol concentration of no more than 0.05 percent while supervising a driver in the learner or intermediate stage.
- <sup>5</sup> The 30 day holding period is not by statute; it is only policy.
- <sup>6</sup> A driver in the learner stage may carry no passengers other than a supervisor. A driver in the learner and intermediate stage must maintain a zero percent blood alcohol concentration while driving.
- <sup>7</sup> A driver in the learner stage is subject to a nighttime driving restriction of midnight to 5 a.m. After attaining a full license, there is a probationary period of 12 months when the driver can have no more passengers than seat belts and the driver must maintain a zero percent blood alcohol concentration while driving.
- <sup>8</sup> To graduate from the learner stage, a driver must have either a driver education certificate or 4 hours with licensed driving instructor.
- <sup>9</sup> A driver in the learner stage is subject to a nighttime driving restriction of midnight to 5 a.m. and is restricted to 1 passenger other than a supervisor. A driver and the driver’s supervisor in the learner and intermediate stage must maintain a zero percent blood alcohol concentration and be drug free while driving.