

MINUTES OF THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION & TOURISM COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Senator Ben Vidricksen at 9:05 a.m. on February 23, 1999 in Room 254-E of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Hank Avila, Legislative Research Department  
Bruce Kinzie, Revisor of Statutes  
Marian F. Holeman, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Others attending: See attached list

**SB 49: Aggressive driving**

The Kansas Highway patrol provided written response to request for information on the left lane driving matter. They advised they could live with language such as set forth in the Oklahoma statutes (Attachment 1). Discussion centered on highway vs. city, roadway vs. highway, etc., driving in this issue. The Chair requested a conceptual adoption of the Oklahoma statute. Staff suggested a substitute bill, amending 8-1522 to put this in. Senator Tyson wished to have roadways changed to highways. No further action will be taken until this is written up. The second proposed amendment regarded language which highway patrol provided as a definition of aggressive driving (Attachment 2). It is true that much of this would be a "judgment" call on the part of law enforcement. Further discussion resulted in the Chair observing that apparently there is not sufficient committee support to act on aggressive driving therefore the issue will not be up for further consideration in this committee during this session.

**SB 134: An act concerning motor vehicles - re front license plates for certain vehicles**

Questions raised in February 10, 1999 hearings on this bill were addressed in a proposed amendment, see pages 2 and 4 of Attachment 3. Discussed safety now vs. cost of this legislation. Some members saw this as still being an expensive issue, questions raised regarding accuracy of the cost figures. Need to at least reimburse cost of mailing to county treasurers. Have information on another bill which needs to be heard before time runs out, so will return to **SB 134**.

**SB 305: An act re drivers licenses - driver education**

Members had requested additional information on this bill (Attachment 4). Sheila Walker advised they felt they could administer this program if it came in the same way as requests from private and public schools. Discussed materials presented by Mr. Taylor. It was pointed out that this is a brand new idea, We do not know what the curriculum entails. We do not know who will be doing the instructing.. We heard there could be many kinds of "packages" put together. We don't know what is in the videos they will be showing. It was further suggested that this idea be proposed for an interim study. We need to see what the National Safety Council has to say about it. Do not rush into something we really don't know about. Charles Taylor reported he already has people who are using this process in Kansas. Senator Harrington was ready to present a motion on the bill. Staff reminded members that **SB 305** has been "blessed" so can be worked at a later date. Staff also advised that NITSA has not done any studies on the effectiveness of the parent taught drivers education.

The Chairman reminded members of the Joint Senate and House Transportation Committee at noon today in 313-S.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

The next regularly scheduled 9:05 a.m. meeting is scheduled for February 24, 1999.



# KANSAS HIGHWAY PATROL

*Service—Courtesy—Protection*



Bill Graves  
Governor

Col. Lonnie R. McCollum  
Superintendent

February 19, 1999

Senator Ben Vidricksen  
Statehouse  
Topeka, KS 66603

Senator Vidricksen,

This letter is in response to your request for information regarding drivers who continuously travel in the left lane of multi-lane highways. The State of Oklahoma has amended the Uniform Traffic Code pertaining to lane usage (our KSA 8-1522) to include the following section.

**Oklahoma 11-309**

(c) "Upon a roadway which is divided into four or more lanes, a vehicle proceeding at less the maximum posted speed, except when reduced speed is necessary for safe operation, shall not impede the normal flow of traffic by driving in the left lane. Such vehicle shall be driven in the right-hand lane except when overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction or when preparing for a left turn at an intersection or into a private road or driveway."

This law allows for the normal flow of traffic and only regulates those vehicles traveling at less than the posted speed limit. It also includes an exception for "safe operation" which could include incimate weather and traffic congestion. While the Patrol does not support the adoption of any restrictions on traveling in the left lane we would not oppose an amendment of KSA 8-1522 which included the elements of Oklahoma 11-309(c).

Sincerely,

LONNIE R. McCOLLUM  
Superintendent

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Goodloe".

MARK GOODLOE, Captain

Assistant State Operations Commander

cc: Lt. Col. Don Brownlee  
Sgt. Eichkorn

SN TRANSPORTATION & TOURISM COMM  
February 23, 1999  
Attachment #1

122 SW SEVENTH STREET  
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66603-3847  
(913) 296-6800 FAX (913) 296-5956

1-1

# KANSAS HIGHWAY PATROL

*Service—Courtesy—Protection*



Bill Graves  
Governor

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Superintendent

February 19, 1999

Senator Ben Vidricksen  
Statehouse  
Topeka, KS 66603

Senator Vidricksen,

This letter is in response to your request for information on the aggressive driving issue. According to our research, Arizona is the only state with an aggressive driving or "road rage" law. The law Arizona has in place is very similar to the language before your committee in Senate Bill 49. Upon speaking with the Arizona Highway Patrol, they stated that due to the difficulty their officers experience in proving the elements of the aggressive driving law, they generally rely on their reckless driving statute to prosecute offenders.

In place of the current language describing the elements of aggressive driving (speed with two other moving violations and an immediate hazard to other drivers) in Senate Bill 49, we suggest the following.

**"Any person who commits three or more moving violations in a single act or series of acts in close proximity to another vehicle or vehicles is guilty of aggressive driving."**

The Patrol believes that this language would clearly define the offense and allow for meaningful prosecution of those drivers who are causing "road rage" incidents. As such, our agency will support this bill and, on request, testify in favor of it before your committee.

Sincerely,

LONNIE R. McCOLLUM  
Superintendent

MARK GOODLOE, Captain  
Assistant State Operations Commander

cc: Lt. Col. Don Brownlee  
Sgt. Eichkorn

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SN TRANSPORTATION & TOURISM COMM  
February 23, 1999  
Attachment #2

# SENATE BILL No. 134

By Committee on Transportation and Tourism

1-26

8-129,

9 AN ACT concerning motor vehicles; requiring front license plates for  
10 certain vehicles; amending K.S.A. 8-127, 8-132, 8-134, 8-145a, 8-145b,  
11 8-145c, 8-147, 8-147a, 8-148, 8-161, 8-161b, 8-162, 8-195, 8-1,126, 8-  
12 1,130, 8-1,133, 8-1,139 and 32-901 and K.S.A. 1998 Supp. 8-133, 8-  
13 135, 8-139, 8-142, 8-143, 8-145, 8-177a, 8-177c, 8-1,125, 8-1,129, 8-  
14 1,140, 8-1,142, 8-1,145, 8-1,146, 8-1567 and 66-1,109 and repealing  
15 the existing sections.

16  
17 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:*

18 Section 1. K.S.A. 8-127 is hereby amended to read as follows: 8-127.

19 (a) Every owner of a motor vehicle, motorized bicycle, trailer or semi-  
20 trailer intended to be operated upon any highway in this state, whether  
21 such owner is a resident of this state or another state, or such motor  
22 vehicle, motorized bicycle, trailer or semitrailer is based in this state or  
23 another state shall, before any such vehicle is operated in this state, apply  
24 for and obtain registration in this state under the provisions of K.S.A. 8-  
25 126 to 8-149, inclusive, and ~~acts amendatory thereof or supplemental~~  
26 *amendments* thereto, except as otherwise provided by law or by any in-  
27 terstate contract, agreement, arrangement or declaration made by the  
28 director of vehicles.

29 (b) Any truck or truck tractor bearing registration of a state other  
30 than Kansas which is engaged, in intrastate movements within this state  
31 shall have Kansas registration, except such vehicles which are registered  
32 under the provisions of K.S.A. 8-1,101 to 8-1,123, inclusive, and amend-  
33 ments thereto, and except such vehicles as are entitled to engage in in-  
34 trastate movements within this state under any interstate contract, agree-  
35 ment, consent, arrangement or declaration made by the director of  
36 vehicles.

37 (c) Whenever any person has a current motorcycle, motorized bicy-  
38 cle, passenger vehicle, truck or truck tractor registration and license plate  
39 *or plates* for a vehicle which has been sold, traded or otherwise disposed  
40 of not later than 30 days, inclusive of weekends and holidays, after ac-  
41 quiring another motorcycle, motorized bicycle, passenger vehicle, truck  
42 or truck tractor to which the registration and license plate *or plates* will  
43 be transferred and such person has complied with all of the conditions

SN TRANSPORTATION & TOURISM COMM  
February 23, 1999  
Attachment #3

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3-2

1 precedent to the transfer of the registration except having the registration  
 2 transferred in the office of the county treasurer, such person may operate  
 3 the motorcycle, motorized bicycle, passenger vehicle, truck or truck tractor  
 4 acquired for a period of not to exceed 30 days, inclusive of weekends  
 5 and holidays, after acquiring the same and pending transferral of registration  
 6 and license plate *or plates* in the office of the county treasurer by  
 7 displaying the motorcycle license plate on the motorcycle acquired, the  
 8 motorized bicycle license plate on the motorized bicycle acquired, the  
 9 passenger vehicle license plate *or plates* on the passenger vehicle acquired,  
 10 or the truck or truck tractor license plate *or plates* on the truck  
 11 or truck tractor acquired. If the acquired vehicle is a new vehicle, such  
 12 person also must carry and have in possession the assigned certificate of  
 13 title or bill of sale when operating the acquired vehicle during said thirty-  
 14 day period

Insert 1

during the second calendar year of the issuance cycle provided for in subsection (b), and for each year thereafter,

15 Sec. 2 K.S.A. 8-132 is hereby amended to read as follows: 8-132. (a)  
 16 Subject to the provisions of this section and K.S.A. 8-1,125, and amendments  
 17 thereto, the division of vehicles shall furnish to every owner whose  
 18 vehicle shall be registered one license plate for such vehicle, *except that*  
 19 *owners of passenger vehicles or trucks registered for a gross weight of*  
 20 *12,000 pounds or less shall be furnished two license plates.* Such license  
 21 plate *or plates* shall have displayed on it the registration number assigned  
 22 to the vehicle and to the owner thereof, the name of the state, which may  
 23 be abbreviated, and the year or years for which it is issued. The same  
 24 type of license plates shall be issued for passenger motor vehicles, rented  
 25 without a driver, as are issued for private passenger vehicles.

The requirement for the issuance of two license plates shall not apply to the renewal of registration of vehicles registered during the first year of the issuance cycle, except that applications for substitute license plates under K.S.A. 8-139, and amendments thereto, shall require the issuance of two license plates.

26 (b) ~~During~~ *Subject to the provisions of subsection (a), for the calendar*  
 27 ~~year 1977-2000~~ commencing on the effective date of this act, and during  
 28 every fifth calendar year thereafter, the division of vehicles, shall furnish  
 29 ~~one license plate~~ *plates* for any type of vehicle an owner registers or has  
 30 the registration thereof renewed, but during the succeeding four-year  
 31 period following calendar year ~~1977-2000~~ and during the succeeding four-  
 32 year period following every fifth calendar year subsequent to ~~1977-2000~~,  
 33 the division of vehicles shall not furnish any license plate *plates* for the  
 34 renewal of a vehicle's registration. During calendar year ~~1976-2001~~ and  
 35 during each calendar year thereafter in which a license plate *is plates* are  
 36 not issued for the renewal of registration of a vehicle, the division of  
 37 vehicles shall furnish ~~one decal~~ *two decals* for the license plate *plates*  
 38 issued for a vehicle as provided in K.S.A. 8-134, and amendments thereto,  
 39 for each registration and renewal of registration of such vehicle *except*  
 40 *that motor vehicles required to have only one license plate shall be issued*  
 41 ~~only one decal~~. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this subsection,  
 42 whenever *when*, in the discretion of the director of vehicles, it is  
 43 determined that the license plates currently being issued and displayed

2001

2002

one decal

during calendar year 2003 and during each calendar year thereafter

two license plates

two decals

are not deteriorating to the extent that their replacement is warranted, the director may adopt rules and regulations to extend the five-year issuance cycle provided for in this subsection by one year at a time, and in the same manner the director may further extend such cycle by one year at a time, successively as the director determines appropriate. If the a cycle is extended, at the expiration of the *that* extended term, new license plates shall again be issued in the manner and for the term provided in such rules and regulations.

(c) Two personalized license plates may be issued to any owner of a passenger vehicle or a truck licensed for a gross weight of not more than 16,000 pounds, who makes proper application to the division of vehicles not less than 60 days prior to such owner's renewal of registration date. Such application shall be on a form prescribed by the division and accompanied by a fee of \$40, which shall be in addition to any other fee required to renew the registration of such passenger vehicle under the laws of this state. One such personalized license plate shall be displayed on the rear of the vehicle and the other shall be displayed on the front of the vehicle. One personalized license plate may be issued to any owner of a motorcycle upon proper application in the same manner provided in this subsection (c) for passenger vehicles and trucks. Such personalized license plate shall be displayed on the rear of the motorcycle. ~~The changed provisions of this subsection (e) shall become effective for all personalized license plates issued for the year 1985 and thereafter, and the provisions of this subsection (e) which are changed shall be deemed not to be changed for license plates issued for use prior to 1985.~~ Such fee shall be paid only once during the registration period for which such license plates were *are* issued, and any subsequent renewals during the registration period shall be subject only to the registration fee prescribed by K.S.A. 8-143, and amendments thereto. The division shall design distinctive, personalized license plates to be issued ~~hereunder~~ which shall contain not more than seven letters or numbers on truck or passenger vehicle license plates and not more than five letters or numbers on motorcycle license plates, or a combination thereof, to be designated by the applicant in lieu of the letters and numbers required by K.S.A. 8-147, and amendments thereto, other than the letters required to designate the county in which such vehicle is registered. Unless the letters or numbers designated by the applicant have been assigned to another vehicle of the same type registered in the same county, or unless the letters or numbers designated by the applicant have a profane, vulgar, lewd or indecent meaning or connotation, as determined by the director of vehicles, the division shall assign such letters or numbers to the applicant's vehicle, and the letters or numbers, or combination thereof, so assigned shall be deemed the registration number of such vehicle. Subject to the foregoing provisions,

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1 all license plates issued under this section shall be manufactured in ac-  
2 cordance with K.S.A. 8-147, and amendments thereto. Such license plates  
3 shall be issued for a registration period of five years commencing in 1985  
4 and each five years thereafter.

5 The secretary of revenue shall adopt rules and regulations necessary to  
6 carry out the provisions of this act, including, without limitation, rules  
7 and regulations concerning: (1) The procedure for insuring that duplicate  
8 license plates are not issued in the same county; (2) the procedure for  
9 reserving distinctive license plates for the purpose of obtaining the same  
10 on each annual renewal of registration; (3) the procedure for allowing  
11 the transfer of personalized license plates from ~~one~~ the motor vehicle to  
12 another for which such license plates were originally issued to another  
13 motor vehicle, when the title to the original vehicle has not been trans-  
14 ferred and the name or names of the owner or owners listed on the titles  
15 to both vehicles are identical; and (4) procedures necessary to coordinate  
16 this act with other laws of this state governing registration of vehicles.  
17 The director of vehicles shall remit all moneys received by the division  
18 of vehicles under this section to the state treasurer at least monthly. Upon  
19 receipt of each such remittance, the state treasurer shall deposit the entire  
20 amount thereof in the state treasury to the credit of the state highway  
21 fund.

22 (d) In addition to any other registration fee required by statute, ve-  
23 hicles issued two license plates under subsection (a) shall also pay ~~an~~  
24 ~~annual~~ registration fee of \$2.

a

for the initial issuance of such license plate

25 Sec. 3 K.S.A. 1998 Supp. 8-133 is hereby amended to read as fol-  
26 lows: 8-133 The ~~One~~ license plate assigned to ~~the~~ a motor vehicle shall  
27 be attached to and displayed on the rear thereof and of the motor vehicle  
28 and the other shall be attached to and displayed on the front of such  
29 motor vehicle. Such license plates shall be so displayed during the current  
30 registration year or years, and no Kansas registration plate license plates  
31 for any other year shall appear on the front of the vehicle, except that the  
32 license plate issued for a truck tractor shall be attached to the front of  
33 the truck tractor and a model year license plate may be attached to the  
34 front of an antique vehicle, in accordance with K.S.A. 8-172, and amend-  
35 ments thereto. The license plate issued a vehicle required to have only  
36 one license plate shall be attached to and displayed on the rear of such  
37 vehicle. The license plate issued for a truck tractor shall be attached to  
38 the front of the truck tractor. Beginning in 1985 and thereafter two per-  
39 sonalized license plates may be issued for passenger vehicles and trucks  
40 licensed for a gross weight of not more than 16,000 pounds. One such  
41 personalized license plate shall be displayed on the rear of the vehicle  
42 and the other shall be displayed on the front of the vehicle; but no reg-  
43 istrative dual shall be issued for any plate affixed to the front of a vehicle



1 pursuant to K.S.A. 8-134, and amendments thereto. Every *Each* license  
2 plate shall at all times be securely fastened to the vehicle to which it is  
3 assigned so as to prevent the plate from swinging, and at a height not less  
4 than 12 inches from the ground, measuring from the bottom of such plate,  
5 in a place and position to be clearly visible, and shall be maintained free  
6 from foreign materials and in a condition to be clearly legible. During  
7 any period in which the construction of license plates has been suspended  
8 pursuant to the provisions of K.S.A. 8-132, and amendments thereto, the  
9 plate, tag, token, marker or sign assigned to such vehicle shall be attached  
10 to and displayed on such vehicle in such place, position, manner and  
11 condition as shall be prescribed by the director of vehicles.

12 Sec. 4. K.S.A. 8-134 is hereby amended to read as follows: 8-134. (a)  
13 Every vehicle registration under this act shall expire December 31 of each  
14 year, except passenger vehicles and vehicles provided for in K.S.A. 8-  
15 134a, and amendments thereto. The registration of vehicles to which  
16 K.S.A. 8-134a, and amendments thereto, applies shall expire in 1982 and  
17 thereafter in accordance with the provisions of subsections (b) and (c).  
18 Registration of vehicles shall be renewed annually upon application by  
19 the owner and by payment of the fees required by law. Except vehicles  
20 subject to K.S.A. 8-134a, and amendments thereto, and passenger vehi-  
21 cles, the renewal shall take effect on January 1 of each year but the owner  
22 of the vehicle shall have until and including February 15 of each year  
23 within which to make application for such renewal. Criminal sanctions  
24 provided in K.S.A. 8-142, and amendments thereto, for failure to display  
25 any license plate or plates or any registration decal required to be affixed  
26 to any such license plate or plates for the current registration year shall  
27 not be enforced until after February 15 of each year. An owner who has  
28 made proper application for renewal of registration of a vehicle prior to  
29 January 1, but who has not received the license plate or plates or decal  
30 or decals or registration card for the ensuing year, shall be entitled to  
31 operate or permit the operation of such vehicle upon the highways upon  
32 displaying thereon the license plate or plates or decal or decals issued for  
33 the preceding year for such time as the director of vehicles finds necessary  
34 for issuance of such new license plate or plates or decal or decals.

35 (b) Every passenger vehicle required by this act to be registered,  
36 except as otherwise provided, shall be registered for a period of 12 con-  
37 secutive months. The division of vehicles, in order to initiate a system of  
38 registering or reregistering passenger vehicles during any month of a cal-  
39 endar year, may register or reregister a passenger vehicle for less than a  
40 twelve-month period, prorating the annual registration fee, when in the  
41 director's opinion such proration tends to fulfill the purpose of the  
42 monthly registration system.

43 (c) Passenger vehicle registration, and the authority to legally operate,

3-5

2 in an amount equal to  $\frac{1}{12}$  of the tax due upon such motor vehicle for the  
 3 full registration year, multiplied by the number of full calendar months  
 4 remaining in such registration year. Whenever the tax imposed under this  
 5 act upon any replacement motor vehicle for the remainder of the regis-  
 6 tration year is less than the tax paid on the motor vehicle replaced for the  
 7 remainder of such registration year, the taxpayer shall be entitled to a  
 8 refund in the amount by which the tax paid upon the vehicle replaced  
 9 exceeds the tax due upon the replacement vehicle. All refunds shall be  
 10 paid by the county treasurer from the moneys received from taxes upon  
 11 motor vehicles imposed by this act which have not been distributed. No  
 12 refund shall be made under the authority of this subsection for a sum less  
 than \$5.

13 (d) Whenever the tax imposed under this act has been paid upon any  
 14 motor vehicle and the owner thereof has established residence in another  
 15 state during such vehicle's registration year, such owner shall be entitled  
 16 to a refund of such taxes in an amount equal to  $\frac{1}{12}$  of the tax paid upon  
 17 such motor vehicle for the full registration year, multiplied by the number  
 18 of full calendar months remaining in such registration year after the  
 19 month of establishing residence in another state. No such refund shall be  
 20 allowed unless and until the owner submits to the county treasurer evi-  
 21 dence of a valid driver's license and motor vehicle registration in another  
 22 state, and surrenders the Kansas license plate *or plates*. All refunds shall  
 23 be paid by the county treasurer from the moneys received from taxes  
 24 upon motor vehicles which have not been distributed. No refund shall be  
 25 made for a sum less than \$5.

26 (e) No tax shall be levied under the provisions of this act upon any  
 27 motor vehicle which is owned by a resident individual who is in the full-  
 28 time regular military service of the United States and absent from this  
 29 state solely by reason of military orders and which is maintained by such  
 30 individual outside of this state on the date of such individual's application  
 31 for registration.

32 Sec. 36. K.S.A. 8-127, 8-132, 8-134, 8-145a, 8-145b, 8-145c, 8-147,  
 33 8-147a, 8-148, 8-161, 8-161b, 8-162, 8-195, 8-1,126, 8-1,130, 8-1,133, 8-  
 34 1,139 and 32-901 and K.S.A. 1998 Supp. 8-133, 8-135, 8-139, 8-142, 8-  
 35 143, 8-145, 8-177a, 8-177c, 8-1,125, 8-1,129, 8-1,140, 8-1,142, 8-1,145,  
 36 8-1,146, 8-1567, 66-1,109 and 79-5107 are hereby repealed.

37 Sec. 37. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after  
 38 January 1, 2001, and its publication in the statute book.

8-129,

3-4

INSERT 1

Sec. 2. K.S.A. 8-129 is hereby amended to read as follows:  
8-129. (a) Applications for the registration of a vehicle required to be registered shall be made by the owner, by mail or otherwise, in the office of the county treasurer of:

(1) The county in which such owner resides; or

(2) the county in which the owner has a bona fide place of business, if such vehicle is garaged in such county for a period exceeding 90 days. Such place of business shall not be an office or facility established or maintained solely for the purpose of obtaining registration.

Such applications for registration shall be made upon appropriate forms furnished by the department and every application shall contain the name of the owner, such owner's residence address or bona fide place of business, a brief description of the vehicle to be registered and such other information as may be required by the department. If the owner is not a resident of or does not have a bona fide place of business in this state, the owner may make application for registration in any county which the department shall designate, except that in the case of members of the armed forces of the United States, the application may be signed by the owner's spouse, parent, eldest brother or sister, in the order named. If the application is made by mail it shall be accompanied by a fee of ~~\$-50~~ \$1 for postage and other expenses incidental to mailing the license plates, which fee shall be in addition to the registration fee, and the county treasurer shall deposit the sum in the special fund provided by K.S.A. 8-145, and amendments thereto, to be used for the purpose of paying the postage, necessary help and expenses. With reference to every foreign vehicle which has been registered outside of this state, the owner shall exhibit to the department the certificate of title and registration card, or other evidence of such former registration as may be in the applicant's possession or control, or such other evidence as will satisfy the department that the applicant is the lawful owner or possessor of the vehicle.

(b) The applicant for the registration of a vehicle required to be registered, upon the filing of the application, shall submit a statement certifying that such person has a certificate of title for the motor vehicle, showing the date and identification thereof, or file an application therefor, as provided in this act.

# **THE FOLLOWING STATES HAVE SOME FORM OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN DRIVER TRAINING**

**CALIFORNIA – Requirement for parents to spend 50 hours with new driver**

**NEW MEXICO – Parent Taught Training Using Approved Curriculum**

**COLORADO – Requirement for Parents to spend 50 hours with new driver**

**NEBRASKA – Parents have option to spend 50 hours with student and be approved**

**TEXAS – Parents have option to conduct driver training with full benefits**

**MINNESOTA – Requirement for parents to spend 50 hours with new driver**

**WISCONSIN – Requirement for parents to spend 50 hours with new driver**

**ILLINOIS – Requirement for parents to spend 50 hours with new driver**

**MICHIGAN – Requirement for parents to spend 50 hours with new driver**

**OHIO – Requirement for parents to spend 50 hours with new driver**

**VERMONT – Parents have option to conduct driver training with state program**

**PENNSYLVANIA – Parents can conduct correspondence course**

**VIRGINIA – Parents can conduct correspondence course**

## **PENDING LEGISLATION**

**Washington, Kansas**

## DRIVER EDUCATION DOES NOT EQUAL SAFE DRIVERS

The premise is simple. Teach teenagers to drive in a formal training program and they'll become safe drivers. Right?

Not really.

A good driver education course, emphasizing on-the-road driving, is an effective way to learn vehicle handling skills. But a new report by Daniel Mayhew and Herb Simpson of the Traffic Injury Research Foundation of Canada summarizes extensive international research showing driver education and training don't lead to lower crash involvement, compared with other ways of learning to drive.

This isn't the first study to question the merits of driver ed. Once considered a rite of passage for high school students, it began falling out of favor in the United States in the 1980s when school budgets were cut and research showed that formal instruction didn't reduce young drivers' crash risk. Some studies even showed that high school driver education had a negative impact on safety by increasing the number of licensed 16 year-olds.

Flash forward to the 1990s. In an attempt to lower young peoples' crash risk, many jurisdictions are introducing new licensing laws. These require beginners to "graduate" through stages of restricted driving before receiving unrestricted licenses (see *Status Report*, Vol. 31, No. 10, Aug. 10, 1996). And in some countries outside the United States, time spent in the graduated licensing system can be shortened by completing a driver education course.

The introduction of graduated licensing has revived questions about the effective-

ness of driver education in reducing crash risk and the role it should play in the licensing of young drivers. The Institute-sponsored Mayhew and Simpson report addresses these questions with a comprehensive review of driver ed program evaluations and recent developments in the field.

**Theory vs. Practice:** "Studies in the United States, Sweden, and Australia suggest that driver education produces no beneficial advantage in reducing collisions compared to informal training," the report

Highway Traffic Safety Administration report to the U.S. Congress, experts agree that "current novice driver education is not doing a very good job in motivating youngsters to drive safely."

**History of Driver Ed:** Driver ed became widely available in high schools in the 1950s. "Formal driver education was generally believed to be an effective means of reducing the crash risk of young drivers," the report states. "This commonly held belief was supported by early evaluations

"DeKalb data have been the object of intense scrutiny and sophisticated re-analyses over the years," the Mayhew and Simpson report states. "Taken together, the original ... study and subsequent analysis of the data show that the improved driver ed program was not associated with reliable or significant decreases in crash involvement."

As the researchers note, the conclusion that driver ed is not associated with decreases in crash involvement "has not



states. It includes motorcycle rider education and training as well as traditional driver education programs.

The value of driver education and training also was questioned in the 1980s on the grounds that they produce unexpected negative consequences. "Work supported by [the Institute] showed that the greater availability of driver ed stimulates earlier licensure among teenagers, which in turn leads to more crashes per capita," states the Mayhew and Simpson report.

Thus, the disappointing track record of driver education and training has long been known. As stated in a 1994 National

demonstrating the safety benefits of existing programs."

As a result, driver ed received federal funding in the United States, and about 80 percent of all eligible students were signed up by the late 1970s and early 1980s. But at the same time as enrollment was growing, researchers began to question the validity of the earlier, positive evaluations.

In response to growing doubts, the federal government set out to create and evaluate a state-of-the-art driver ed course — the Safe Performance Curriculum implemented in the DeKalb County, Georgia school system.

been altered by the results of evaluations of other driver education programs that have been conducted since then."

**Improving Driver Ed:** Notwithstanding the disappointing track record of driver ed, does formal training at least have the potential to be effective? "The answer to this question is speculative but some insights can be gained through a consideration of why driver instruction has not been effective and what current developments might help overcome these deficiencies," the researchers point out.

Among the possible reasons for driver ed's ineffectiveness, the report states, are

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that specific crash-reducing skills aren't taught; not enough attention is paid to the importance of motivation in applying new skills or the overconfidence that may result from skills acquisition; lifestyle factors related to risky driving and the development process aren't addressed; and young drivers are treated as a homogeneous group rather than as individuals.

The researchers note that improvements are being implemented in many of these areas, but caution that "before any of these changes are implemented on a permanent basis, it is essential that [they] be evaluated to determine if they do in fact have a positive effect on crashes."

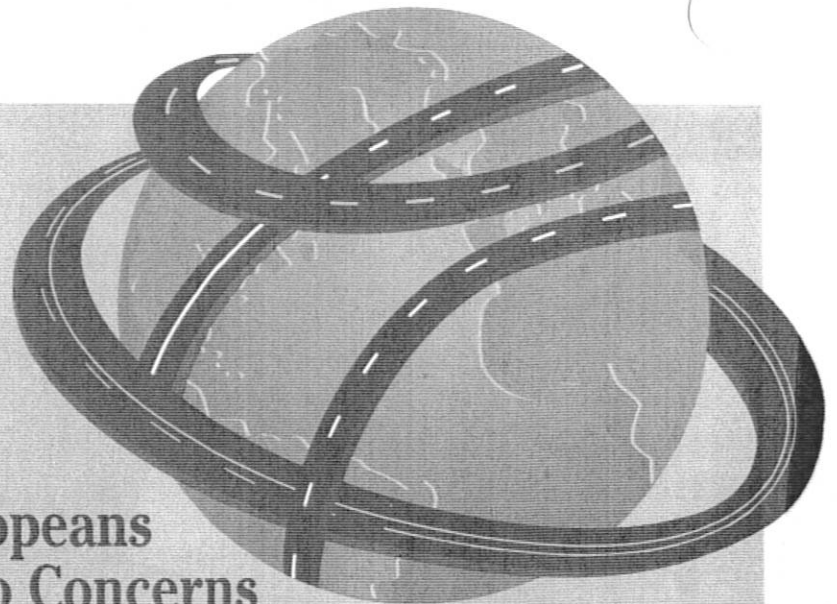
**New Role for Driver Ed:** Given the lack of demonstrable effectiveness of present-day driver education, the report advises against adding a driver ed component to new graduated licensing systems if there's no precedent for doing so.

However, the researchers acknowledge that "there is a well established precedent linking formal instruction with the licensing system" in many jurisdictions. In these cases, they recommend tailoring the driver ed program to the stages of graduated licensing.

"By definition, graduated licensing is multiphased — typically it involves a two- or three-stage licensing process that becomes progressively less restrictive as the novice moves toward full licensure," the researchers say. Yet driver ed typically is included only as part of the learner's stage in most graduated licensing systems.

"For some students, learning to drive and maintaining basic control of the vehicle are so demanding that safe driving concepts cannot be applied," the report explains. "Thus, it may be advisable to introduce more safety-oriented driver training following initial licensing and after some driving experience has been gained."

For example, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has recommended a basic driver education course during the learner stage of a graduated licensing system. Also recommended is a more advanced safety- (cont'd on p.6)



## Europeans Echo Concerns About Training Young Drivers

"What we see across the European Union are training regimes which have demonstrably failed their largest client market — the young driver," the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) says.

A recent ETSC briefing on driver training and testing reaches many of the same conclusions as the new Institute-supported report on driver education (see page 1).

"Every year, almost 15,000 15-24 year-olds are killed in traffic in European Union member states, the large majority ... in the first years after having obtained a driving license. Per distance travelled, the accident rate of young car drivers is several times higher than that of middle-aged drivers," the ETSC report states. "It is apparent that the current practice in driver training and licensing has failed in preparing youngsters to participate safely in motorised traffic."

Teenagers in European countries typically learn to drive in professional driving schools rather than in secondary schools, according to the report, but this training also is inadequate. "The goal of the training often seems to be to prepare the learner driver to pass the test in as little time as possible," the ETSC says. "The limited time available for training is insufficient for the pupil to acquire the basic skills, knowledge and procedures to deal safely with other circumstances, such as driving in bad weather conditions, during darkness and in extremely heavy traffic, conditions which will be difficult to avoid after licensing."

A variety of measures have been adopted in response to the problem. For example, there is a probationary license system in Germany and a process of "accompanied driving" or supervised practice in France, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, and Luxembourg. There also are restricted provisional licenses in Great Britain, Ireland, and Austria that resemble graduated licensing. But the report points out no comprehensive approach has been employed.

"Considering the great effort which is put into the everyday practical work of training and licensing new drivers and considering the astonishingly slight scientific basis which currently exists, funding research into the factors that are involved in learning to drive is warranted and should be encouraged by the EC.... Only when these types of issues are properly understood can there be a scientific basis for the development of effective training and testing countermeasures to the relative lack of safety experienced by young drivers."

STUDENT DRIVER

DRIVER  
Education

## Young People Still Able to Buy Alcohol From Outlets, Bars

Liquor stores and bars continue to sell alcohol to young people, a new University of Minnesota study finds.

Women older than 21 who were judged by a panel to appear younger than 21 were able to buy beer 138 times out of 300 attempts at alcohol outlets in northeastern Minnesota. The women weren't required to show proper identification.

Three purchase attempts were made at each outlet. At least one buy was made at nearly 80 percent of the retail establishments, and at 21 outlets all three attempts were successful.

Alcohol retailers have argued for many years that young people's use of false identification impedes efforts to prohibit underage purchases. This study refutes that charge, says Alexander Wagenaar, one of the Minnesota researchers who authored the study. "The prevalence of using false identification is very low," he says. "It is not as big a problem as outlets make it out to be." The real problem is "the high rate at which outlets are still selling to minors without requesting identification."

Wagenaar and associates found that bars were less likely than liquor stores to sell beer without checking first for proper identification. The researchers also found that measures such as an on-site manager and formal staff training significantly reduced the purchases.

Institute research has shown that young people's easy access to alcohol is a problem in other parts of the country as well. For example, a 1992 study found that young men 19 and 20 years old successfully purchased a six-pack of beer in 97 out of 100 attempts in Washington, D.C. (see *Status Report*, Vol. 26, No. 3, March 16, 1991).

"Characteristics, Policies and Practices of Alcohol Outlets and Sales to Underage Persons" by Mark Wolfson et al. appears in the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 57:6, 670-674 (1996).

(cont'd from p.3) oriented course in the intermediate stage of graduated licensing.

**Driver Ed and Graduated Licensing:** Michigan is first in the United States to adopt the highway safety administration's recommendation. The state recently enacted a three-stage graduated licensing system that, beginning in April, will require two stages of driver education (see *Status Report*, Vol. 31, No. 9, Nov. 9, 1996).

"The first, basic control skills segment would be required before an instructional or Level I license is issued, while the second safe driving segment would be required before a restricted or Level II license is issued," the report states. For a full-privilege license, drivers must pass a performance-based road test.

**Future Preview?** The report also reviews new driver ed programs in other countries. Developments in New Zealand may provide a testing ground for the effectiveness of integrating revamped driver ed curricula into a graduated licensing system.

Since 1987, New Zealand has offered a graduated licensing system with time discounts that cut the learning stages in half. The first 6-month period can be reduced to 3 months by completing a driver training course, and the second 18-month period can be cut to 9 months if a defensive or advanced driving course is completed.

More recently, a new driver education curriculum was developed in New Zealand. Star Driver "combines practical driving

skills training with self-management training. ... Students are given factual information on road risks, meet peers who have suffered major crash injuries, learn techniques to manage themselves and others in relation to alcohol and driving, and are oriented to seek personal challenges other than risky driving," the report states.

The program also teaches students to detect and correct in themselves key dangerous attitudes such as thrill-seeking and impulsiveness.

**No Time Discounts:** No matter how good a driver education course may be, it's no substitute for maturity and experience. The report notes there's no empirical evidence driver ed yields safety benefits equivalent to on-the-road driving experience gained under low-risk conditions, a feature of graduated licensing. Furthermore, when training leads to earlier licensure, higher crash rates can result.

While leaving open the possibility that driver ed can be improved and integrated into a graduated licensing system, the researchers "do not recommend that the length of time in the system be reduced for successful completion of the course of instruction."

For a copy of the executive summary of "Effectiveness and Role of Driver Education In a Graduated Licensing System" by D.R. Mayhew and H.M. Simpson, write: Publications, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 1005 N. Glebe Rd., Arlington, VA 22201.

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# Families Tested When Teens Start Driving

**Q** We don't think our 16-year-old son is responsible enough to start driving just yet. How do we know we can trust him for sure?

**A** How did your parents know they could hand you the keys? Recalling your own early driving record may help you relax and embrace this inevitable part of adolescence. Still, some teens can't be trusted with the family car. If there has been a pattern of disrespect toward authority (yours or others'), deceitfulness or secretiveness, drug or alcohol use in the past two years, general but pervasive irresponsibility (at school, around the house, at church, at work, etc.), then your hunch not to trust him is probably a good one. Follow it.

If you see this kind of behavior, sit him down and articulate the changes necessary before you will sign for his license or relinquish the keys. Explain that you'll need to see that change take root over the next six to nine months (yes, months) before discussing the topic again. This should be long enough to tell if he's really becoming responsible or if he's just play-acting to get the car. Stick to your guns and don't give in.

Whenever possible, give him a chance to prove himself worthy of your trust. Use this as an opportunity to remind him that being faithful in "little things" is an important prerequisite to being trusted with bigger things (discuss Matthew 25:14-30). Has he been neglecting his schoolwork? In many states, a good grade point average lowers the insurance rate. If you plan to pay his premium, pay only the "good grades" rate. If he lets his grades slip, it's up to him to pay the difference—or no insurance and no automobile.

Assuming you haven't seen any of these red flags, you can move more confidently into the adventure of "teenage driving." Practice together in parking lots. Have him attend a driver's ed program. Give him the wheel when you go places together. Establish fair curfews and rules for night driving. Require that all solo treks be preapproved, and insist that he calls you when he reaches his destination (you'll rest easier).

Remember, and remind him, that driving is a *privilege*, not a *right*. You don't owe him access to your SUV just because he turned 16. You can extend or revoke that privilege as you deem legitimately necessary.



Tim Sanford

**Q** How do I set limits and keep from giving him too much freedom behind the wheel?

**A** Together, discuss the reasons he wants to drive. While "fun" and "independence" are legitimate parts of the experience, they shouldn't be primary motivators. Is it because he wants to feel more important among his friends? To fight boredom? Many teens see their cars as a means of entertainment, which can lead to dangerous stunts or irresponsible joy-rides. Valid purposes might include helping a friend get to work, taking a buddy to youth group or helping mom taxi a sibling to soccer practice. There's nothing wrong with having fun, but don't be afraid to require a deeper purpose. The need for certain boundaries will come to light once your son's motivations for driving surface.

**Q** My daughter isn't a driver yet, but has older friends offering her rides. What kind of precautions should I take?

**A** This is your chance to build a strong foundation—a spirit of cooperation—that will serve your daughter well now and when she wants to drive herself. The two major areas of concern for most parents as they imagine their teen on the road are the implementation of good skills and sound judgment. Skills can be developed with practice and instruction, but judgment starts developing right now. Help your daughter see that you aren't being "overprotective," but that you need to see how she applies thought and caution regarding driving, even as a passenger.

When a freshman is offered a ride by a senior, it's flattering and sounds fun. This is just one of many spontaneous situations that can arise. Talk about them. Use them to gauge your daughter's maturity. Remember that she hasn't had to think through these scenarios, so extend grace and encouragement when you talk. Draw on your own experiences. Raise questions like, "What would you do if . . ." or "Who might you turn down a ride from? Why?"

If you hear sound judgment, a teachable attitude and respect for healthy boundaries, you are already building the trust required for her to get behind the wheel herself. Agree on limits that fit the current situation based on a solid understanding between you and your teen. It's the beginning of a dialogue that will last several years, growing and evolving as time goes on. Both of you will need to adjust those limits and freedoms as your teen's skill and judgment matures.



Tim Geare

Tim Sanford and Tim Geare are licensed family therapists (as well as licensed drivers). This monthly column features responses to questions commonly asked of them in their private practices and as members of Focus on the Family's counseling staff.

## For Additional Information . . .

If you want to teach your teen to drive, but could use a little assistance, you may want to check into "Help for the Teenager Who Wants to Drive," a parent-taught driver education program from National Driver Training Institute. It includes an instruction manual, seven-level student workbook, 161 exercises, traffic safety videos, driver education certification (for state and insurance), a 12-hour toll-free support line (8 a.m.-8 p.m. MT) and more. It costs \$149 with materials discounted for additional children. Mention you read about the program in *Plugged In* and receive a \$10 discount.



For more information, call National Driver Training Institute at 800-397-4788 or visit [www.nationaldrivertraining.com](http://www.nationaldrivertraining.com).

Call Focus on the Family at 800-232-6459 (in Canada, 800-661-9800) for these resources:

- *Life on the Edge*, a book by Dr. James Dobson, published by Word (BK073). Suggested donation \$20 (\$28 in Canada).
- *Give Them Wings*, a book by Carol Kuykendall, published by Focus on the Family (BF023). Suggested donation \$15 (\$21 in Canada).
- *Parenting Teenagers*, a Focus on the Family broadcast cassette with guest Dr. Jay Kesler (CS444). Suggested donation \$7 (\$8 in Canada).

# Nine Reasons to Support Parent-Taught Driver Education

**PARENTAL RIGHTS-** The right of parents to direct the education of their children is a fundamental right and should, therefore, extend to parents who wish to teach children to drive.

**GOOD PUBLIC POLICY-** The option for parents to instruct their children in drivers education allows them to be more involved with their adolescent children at a critical, developmental stage. It encourages parents to participate with the child in learning and to take more responsibility for the outcome. After all, who has more of an interest in the safety and well-being of the child, a parent or a certified driving teacher? Who is liable if that child is untrained or acts irresponsibly?

**SAFETY-** There is no statistical evidence to support the claim that certified state-mandated programs reduce crash rates. (Journal citations are available upon request.) Parents, with a good curriculum, can provide a graduated form of instruction allowing for more time behind-the-wheel. The Insurance Institute recommends just such a progressive approach. It is working in other states, such as Colorado, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Oklahoma.

**TUTORIAL-** The reason for the effectiveness of parent-taught driver education is the same as the reason for the effectiveness of home education in general. Both utilize the tutorial method with a low student-teacher ratio and individualized instruction aimed at mastery.

**ACCOUNTABILITY-** Rigorous testing of all drivers license applicants would ensure that the results of the driving instruction are adequate, regardless of the source of training. Many states are calling for a return to testing.

**LESS GOVERNMENT-** If certified instruction has no statistical effect on safety, what compelling interest does the government have in mandating it? Public and private driving schools enjoy the privileges of a government supported monopoly. This conflicts with the fundamental right of parents to direct the education of their children and free market ideals. At least half the states have no such mandated programs.

**FAIRNESS-** The rights of ALL parents must be afforded in this matter. Allowing or disallowing parents to teach their own children to drive, based on whether the children attend public or private educational institutes, is without rationale.

**MORE CHOICES-** Allowing parents to teach their own children to drive provides them an alternative to public and private driving schools. It is cost-effective, convenient, and allows for a more gradual approach to learning new skills.

**GOOD FAITH-** Law-respecting citizens become disillusioned with their government when they discover that a law is not enacted due to the influence of special groups on bureaucrats. Law makers must support safety of young drivers by not discouraging, but promoting, parent-taught driving training!

# Effectiveness of Parent-Taught Driver Education

## Preliminary Results

In 1989, Advanced Traffic Technologies, Inc, (now National Driver Training) began conducting research and development on parent-taught driver training methods. To date, there are approximately 1500 users of the parent-taught process developed by Advanced Traffic which were compared with approximately 1000 students from traditional driver training courses. After 8 years of evaluation, here are the Advanced Traffic's findings (note—an objective research study is being commissioned through the National Home Education Research Center to be conducted by Dr. Bryan Ray):

### #1. DRIVING EXAM TEST SCORES:

Upon completion of driver education, both the parent-taught and the traditional driver education students were administered the state driving test. Most tests were administered by certified Colorado 3rd Party Test Examiners and some were administered by the Colorado State Motor Vehicle Division.

The average behind-the-wheel driver examination test score from students completing traditional certified courses is 87 out of 100 possible.

The average parent-taught student test score is 94 out of 100 possible.

### #2. DRIVER SKILLS:

The most profound difference noted came from the areas of competency, confidence, attitude, proficiency, and safe driving skill.

#### Competency/Skill:

We have witnessed that an average of 8 out of 10 graduates from traditional driver education do not exhibit car control and/or the experience level which warrants the rating of competent. For this reason, terms, such as, "novice" or "young driver," have been frequented to describe teenage drivers.

By contrast, 19 out of 20 parent-taught drivers display the level of car control and experience which can be classified, by the most casual observer, as competent. Because these drivers generally experience 20 to 30 times the amount of driving time that traditional graduates do, they were able to achieve the "seasoning" necessary to demonstrate competency.

## Confidence:

Due in large part to lack of experience, traditional driver training graduates lack significant confidence in their abilities. This lack of confidence is evidenced by their indecisiveness when confronted with tasks that require focus on more than one event at a time. This primarily results from lack of exposure to varied driving situations. Traditional driver education graduates have not been allowed sufficient training time necessary to become confident.

By contrast, parent-taught graduates traditionally tend to display significantly higher confidence levels. Their extended driving experience tends to place the new driver in varied situations, forcing the teenager to make proper driving decisions for an extended period. The parent-taught course also forces young drivers to maintain a high standard of safe driving skills and discipline despite the driving patterns around them.

Often, in the face of considerable pressure from other road users, these drivers tend to establish and maintain proper driving habits regardless of the example they witness. This has also served as a shield and support when faced with peer pressure.

## #3. Attitude

This area has been demonstrated to be the most significant contrast between graduates. Our research reveals that 3 out of 10 graduates of traditional driver education courses display significant anti-social behavioral patterns which presents itself in open hostility against law and authority. This can be evidenced by the display of smoking, foul language, peer dependency, etc. This attitude generally finds its way into the driving habits of these teenagers.

As many as 8 out of 10 teenage graduates from traditional courses observed, though they may not frequently display extremely negative behavioral patterns as discussed above, will display little constitution against the effects of peer influence. These teenagers can be categorized as easily coerced into dangerous and high risk behavior.

We believe that this is the overwhelming result of lack of clearly defined rules and values, as well as, from a general absence of a close relationship with parents. This influence often finds it's way into the car when multiple teens ride together.

By clear contrast, 1 in 70 graduates from parent-taught programs display nominal anti-social behavior **AND WE HAVE YET TO OBSERVE ANY PARENT-TAUGHT STUDENT DISPLAY THE SAME LEVEL OR DEGREE OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR OF TRADITIONAL GRADUATES.**

Parent-taught graduates display a significant positive difference in their general respect for law, rules and authority. This appears to be common when parents conduct the training. Parents are the only ones who seem to be able to significantly

connect driving with overall behavior through awards and privileges, along with consequences for negative behavior.

#### #4. CRASH DATA:

We noted that 8 out of 10 graduates from traditional courses are involved in a minor collision (crash with no injuries and minor property damage) or will be cited for a moving violation within the first 18 months after licensure. 1 out of 10 are involved in severe crashes (crash with damage of over \$3000 and/or injuries resulting in hospitalization), and to date we know of zero fatalities among the traditional graduate group.

By contrast, 3 out of 10 parent-taught graduates have a minor collision within the first 18 months. 1 out of 80 are involved in severe crashes within the first 18 months after licensing. We are aware of zero fatalities from this group.

We believe that this can be attributed to the creation of a more seasoned driver upon course completion.

**CONCLUSION:** Parent-taught driver training has a profound effect on lowering crash involvement of young drivers. When utilizing a legitimate method for driver training, all the components for producing a safe-responsible driver seem to be included in parent-led methods. Conversely, traditional "certified" driver education pales by comparison in its effectiveness. State agencies might well be better off mandating that parents train their teenagers rather than highly regulating and mandating certified driver training courses.

*Charles Taylor is an author and lecturer with 17 years as a traffic safety researcher. Mr. Taylor is the principle program developer of "Help My Teenager Wants to Drive!", a home-school driver training program for parents and teens. Mr. Taylor has several years experience as a traffic accident investigator and has written for the Colorado State Patrol Magazine. He has written several articles for newspapers and appears on television and radio programs discussing the value of parent involved driver training. His research has been impetus for several law changes in many states. For more information contact Charles Taylor at 719-572-9394.*

# National Driver Training Institute

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Driver Education Certification (for State and Insurance)	Included
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<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 149.00</b>

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## Parent-Taught Driver Education: You Can Do This!

by Charles L. Taylor and Robert J. Shows

### What Are the Factors Required To Train a Safe Driver?

There are four elements which must be included in every driver training course to produce a safe, responsible driver.

**1. Maturity.** There must exist, within the construct of an effective program, a method for assessing the young driver's maturity. Since teenagers are often too immature to handle the responsibility inherent in possessing a driver's license, all driving courses must provide a method for evaluating maturity level.

Teenagers begin maturing at different ages and at different rates (several months or years). State-mandated driving courses are insufficient in length and scope to adequately assess this critical area. No one but a caring parent can effectively assess the maturity level of a young driver.

**2. Proper Attitude.** Driver training must be able to impart the proper attitude and disposition toward driving.

Parents are best equipped to transmit proper values through guidance and oversight by establishing rules, guidelines, and measuring points designed to have a long-term positive constraint on commonly displayed, high-risk juvenile behavior.

Juvenile-behavior experts continue to agree that parental involvement is the single greatest factor in reducing the potential high-risk activities and attitudes of our nation's young people—including drivers. It is simply impossible for a "certified" instructor to adequately address this critical area of driving safety.

**3. Extensive Experience.** Teenagers need extensive behind-the-wheel training before being allowed to drive solo. Studies reveal that teenagers need 50 to 300 hours, or between 8 and 24 months, of intensive training before licensing. Since the average state mandates only 6-8 hours of behind-the-wheel instruction, once again, it is the parent who will actually train the driver.

**4. Skill.** An effective evaluation process must exist to measure the student's safe-driving skills throughout the training and a requirement for passing a stringent evaluation standard should exist before a student is released from the program.

Most state driving tests can be passed with little demonstrated skill and proficiency on the part of the new driver. There-

fore, only an involved parent who is in touch with an effective evaluative process can release a proficient driver to the road.

### How Can I Teach My Child To Drive?

The first thing you must do is make that critical decision that you can, indeed, do this! Then, go for it. You have always taught your children; now it is time to teach them to drive. No one cares more for the safety and conduct of your child behind the wheel than you do.

**1. Choose a Program.** Obtain a complete driver training program which has been put into a format for parents to use. This will give you the assurance that your curriculum is complete and in the right order of progression. You don't want to find yourself with your child driving on the freeway before he has learned to turn on a blinker or shift gears!

**2. Think It Through.** Take time to mentally prepare yourself for the task at hand. Think through how you intend to conduct yourself as a driving instructor. Individualize the plan to make it most effective for your child. This is a serious business. Plan your lessons out.

**3. Schedule Regular Lessons.** Set aside time to train your new driver. Three or four sessions, 45-90 minutes a week seems to work best when you first begin.

Give your student an overview of what training will be conducted before you commence each session.

**4. Be Prepared To React Positively.** Have a plan for how to handle situations as they may arise during the course of a driving session. Calm, positive instruction is a must.

Always give reassuring feedback during the session to help build that important self-confidence factor in driving ability. If some difficulty is encountered, simply pull over as soon as it is convenient and talk about it together.

You are the best communicator available to your child; use that avenue you have developed. And above all, enjoy the time together.

More than likely your teen is very interested in learning to drive, and you are very anxious for him to become a safe, responsible driver. What a natural tie for quality time together, and your involvement in driver training may save your child's life more times than you will ever know □

### "Help for the Teenager Who Wants To Drive"

"Help for the Teenager Who Wants to Drive" is a driver training course designed for parents to teach their own teens to drive.

The program comes complete with teacher and student workbooks, free use of videos, unlimited use of a 24-hour, toll-free "help" line, insurance discount certification, and a money-back guarantee.

The course is comprised of seven phases of training with both classroom and behind-the-wheel sections. Each phase builds on the previous one.

Student and parent are safely guided through a course of driving instruction ranging from parking lots to freeways. Safe drivers are produced by imparting the proper maturity, attitude, skill, and experience to the young driver.

The program guides the parent through each step of the training and provides insightful information on the psychological make-up of young drivers, including early warnings of common errors.

Each level of training includes an objective evaluation standard that helps teens take an introspective view of their own skills. The parents have an entire section dealing with how to instruct. The guide is a constant support to the parent, while supplying objective instruction to the student.

A video catalog is included with the program. To obtain videos, parents simply call the toll-free number and request the videos they want to use in the process.

**To Order** "Help for the Teenager Who Wants to Drive," write National Driver Training LLC, Box 948, Monument CO 80132; call (800) 942-2050 or (719) 481-9700; or fax (719) 488-1771.

Cost for the complete program, including shipping and handling, is \$149. You can receive a \$10 discount by mentioning that you saw this offer in *The Teaching Home*. Materials for a second child cost \$97, and for a third child cost \$82.

*Charles L. Taylor is the principle program developer of "Help! My Teenager Wants To Drive!" with over 17 years as a traffic safety researcher.*

## Driving Rates Down

The following is the latest 9News "Driving Rates Down" survey. The quotes are based on our sample household. Where possible, at least two insurance agents were called to obtain each company's quote. Please note that the survey is based on the 6 month auto quote. The survey then expands to a 1 year auto quote for the sample household, a 1 year homeowner's quote for the sample household, and then a combined 1 year quote for both the home and autos in our survey.. Please note that in the 1 year home column, and in the 1 year home and auto column, the companies are not ranked in descending order. All you need to do is find the "best" quotes for the company you choose to work with. All quotes already include discounts of 5-25% for combining home and auto coverage with one company. **SAMPLE HOUSEHOLD: Auto: 2 cars**

- 1) Honda Accord LX 1991 No air bag, no anti-lock brakes, 2 door.
- 2) Ford Explorer Excel T 1995 4 door, 4 wheel drive, 1 air bag, no anti-lock brakes.
- Home: 80201(10), Denver 170,000 Wood frame home, composite roof, 4 BDRM, 2.5 Baths, unfinished basement, 2 car door garage, built 1976, no loss, dead bolt, no central alarm system.

Details: John & Jane Doe Both 35 years old and work 13-15 miles from home. Both have clean record-no accidents/tickets in the last 5 years. Moved from Texas, married there. Valid Colorado driver's license. 250 collision, 250 comp., rental reimbursement. \$25,000-\$50,000 bodily injury and uninsured motorist.

Company	6 Months Auto	1 year Auto	1 year Home	1 year Home & A
1. Liberty Mutual	\$ 626	\$1252	\$ 835	\$2087
2. AAA	\$ 658	\$1316	\$ 839	\$2155
3. American Family	\$ 784	\$1568	\$ 676	\$2244
4. Allstate	\$ 821	\$1642	\$ 818	\$2460
5. ITT Hartford	\$ 855	\$1710	\$ 826	\$2536



6. GEICO	\$ 879	\$1758	\$ 703	\$2461
7. Safeco	\$ 883	\$1766	\$ 769	\$2535
8. Mutual of Omaha	\$ 904	\$1808	\$ 758	\$2566
9. CNA	\$ 974	\$1948	\$1083	\$3067
10. State Farm	\$1039	\$2078	\$1007	\$3085
11. Farmers	\$1065	\$2130	\$ 942	\$3072
12. Shelter	\$1122	\$2244	\$ 670	\$2914
13. Met Life	\$1156	\$2312	\$ 989	\$3301
14. Nationwide	\$1189	\$2378	\$1057	\$3485
15. Midwest Mutual	\$1205	\$2410	\$ 738	\$3148
16. Progressive	\$1269	\$2538	\$ 684	\$3222
17. Prudential	\$1292	\$2584	\$ 879	\$3463
18. Ohio Casualty	\$1427	\$2854	\$ 751	\$3605

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The 9News I-Team reviewed files of consumer complaints filed with the Colorado Division of Insurance against car insurance companies. Last year, 3601 complaints were filed, and 1259 of those complaints were resolved in favor of the consumer.

**COMPLAINT RATIOS**

The following are complaint ratios for some of the largest car insurance carriers. The ratio compares the number of complaints to the amount of business each company does in Colorado. The figures are from 1996, the most recent year for which the analysis is available.

complaints per \$1,000,000 of business

State Farm Mutual 1.56

Mid-Century 1.73

Progressive Casualty 1.84

Farmers' Insurance 1.91

American Family Mutual 2.24

Allstate Insurance 2.36

USAA Casualty 2.44

Three smaller carriers had much higher rates of complaints:

Hartford Underwriters 4.42

Prudential Property Casualty 5.66

Providian Auto & Home 7.67

**CLAIM DELAYS**

The Division of Insurance has performed audits, known as market conduct examinations, of the larger insurance companies. The audits from 1995 showed that many companies delayed payment of Personal Injury Payments, or PIP claims. Colorado law provides that such payments are supposed to be made within 30 days, but audits have shown that some companies exceed the 30 day limit in nearly half of

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**the claims they pay.**

**The following are the percentage of filed claims for each company which were improperly delayed.**

**State Farm 4% delayed**

**Farmers' 11% delayed**

**American Family 16% delayed**

**Colorado Farm Bureau 21% delayed**

**Midwest Mutual 22% delayed**

**Prudential Property 22% delayed**

**USAA 26% delayed**

**Guaranty National 30% delayed**

**Progressive Casualty 40% delayed**

(Progressive Casualty reports it reduced its delayed payment rate to 6% in 1997 and plans to reduce it further in the future.)

**For complete reports of these examinations and a list of complaint ratios for all insurance companies, click below to link to the Division of Insurance website.**

<http://www.dora.state.co.us/insurance>

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# Title 37. PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

## Part I. TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

### Chapter 18. DRIVER EDUCATION

#### Subchapter B. PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN TAUGHT DRIVER EDUCATION

##### § 18.21 Obtaining Materials for Parent Taught Course

---

(a) Request for a Driver Education Packet. Prior to teaching a department approved course, a parent or legal guardian must send a completed Request for Driver Education Packet form with a non-refundable fee which is set by the department to satisfy the cost of preparing the materials, shipping, and applicable taxes. The request will be sent to the General Services Bureau of the Texas Department of Public Safety. Upon receipt of the request, a Driver Education Packet will be mailed to the address given on the request form. This packet will contain the following:

- (1) instructions and procedures;
- (2) a Texas Driver License application (DL-14A);
- (3) two Parental Driver Education Affidavits;
- (4) a Student Instruction Record;
- (5) a Texas Drivers Handbook;
- (6) a model curriculum guide;
- (7) a resource list; and
- (8) a list of department approved programs.

(b) The applicant will be instructed to designate the local Driver License office where tests will be administered. A numbered Texas Driver Education Certificate, form DE-964, will be forwarded to that office and will be available for the parent/instructor to complete the required sections upon completion of each phase of the training.

(c) THE PACKET SPECIFIED IN SUBSECTION (a) OF THIS SECTION DOES NOT CONTAIN ALL REQUIRED MATERIALS (i.e., TEXTBOOKS) NECESSARY TO PROVIDE THE DRIVER TRAINING COURSE. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN TO OBTAIN THESE ITEMS AS NECESSARY. POSSIBLE SOURCES WILL INCLUDE SOMEONE ON THE RESOURCE LIST, AN EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER, OR A PUBLIC LIBRARY. ANY COSTS FOR THESE ADDITIONAL MATERIALS ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN.

**Source:** The provisions of this § 18.21 adopted to be effective April 7, 1997, 22 TexReg 3113.

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# Title 37. PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

## Part I. TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

### Chapter 18. DRIVER EDUCATION

#### Subchapter B. PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN TAUGHT DRIVER EDUCATION

##### § 18.22 Classroom Instruction

---

- (a) After obtaining all necessary materials, the 32 hours of classroom instruction required in the classroom phase of a driver training program may be taught either as an entire block prior to any portion of the laboratory phase or concurrently with the laboratory phase. If taught as part of the Concurrent Program, six hours of Unit II, "Traffic Laws," and Unit IV, "Driving Procedures," are required to be the first six hours of instruction and must be taught prior to the issuance of any instruction permit or providing any of the laboratory phase of the Driver Education Course.
- (b) There are no requirements that the location used as a classroom have any particular characteristics or equipment. It is recommended that the location be comfortable and the atmosphere be conducive to the learning experience. A textbook approved by the Texas Education Agency for driver education is an integral part of driver training and is a required resource. No more than two hours of the required 32 clock hours of classroom instruction may be film or videotape. More may be used but may not be counted as part of the 32 clock hours.
- (c) Texas law provides that an applicant must be at least 14 years of age to be eligible to take the classroom phase of a driver training course. A driver training course will NOT be approved by the department if any portion of either the classroom phase or the laboratory phase was provided to an applicant younger than 14 years of age. The student must reach his 15th birthday before the classroom phase is completed. The student must be at least 15 years of age to be eligible for an instruction permit and must have the permit before taking any part of the laboratory phase of the course.
- (d) Except as noted in subsection (c) of this section, the department approved course should be taught in sequential order. It is recommended that, if the Concurrent Program is used, the behind-the-wheel classes coincide with the related classroom instruction.
- (e) Application for an Instruction Permit. An instruction permit must be obtained by the student PRIOR to beginning any portion of the behind-the-wheel phase of a driver training program. The department shall not issue any license, including an instruction permit, to any person who is under 15 years of age. The department may issue an instruction permit without photograph to any person 15 years of age or older but younger than 18 years of age who has:
- (1) satisfactorily completed and passed the classroom phase of an approved driver training course;
  - (2) obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent; or is a student enrolled in a public, home, or private school who attended school for at least 80 days in the fall or spring semester preceding the date of application; or has been enrolled for at least 45 days, and is currently enrolled in a program to prepare persons to pass the high school equivalency exam; and
  - (3) successfully passed all parts of the driver examination required in the Driver License Law other than the driving test.
- (f) When a parent or legal guardian has taught the required hours of either the block or concurrent classroom phase of a driver education program, the parent or guardian and the applicant may make

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application for an instruction permit at the Driver License office indicated on the Request for Driver Education Packet form. When making application, the following items must be presented:

- (1) a completed Texas Driver License Application (DL-14A) (included in packet);
  - (2) a completed and notarized Parental Driver Education Affidavit (included in packet);
  - (3) a fee of \$5.00;
  - (4) a high school diploma or its equivalent, or acceptable certification of high school/GED enrollment and attendance, Texas Education Agency (TEA) form GEA-043R93, or the equivalent;
  - (5) if previously licensed (including an instruction permit) in another state, the out-of-state license must be surrendered or a Department of Public Safety affidavit must be executed certifying the out of state license has been lost, stolen, or is expired;
  - (6) if the student owns a vehicle for which proof of financial responsibility is required, evidence of liability insurance must be presented;
  - (7) an original social security card or other acceptable proof of social security number;
  - (8) an original birth certificate or other acceptable proof of name, date of birth, and place of birth; and
  - (9) other information as required by the department.
- (g) A Driver License Service employee will review the items presented. If these items are satisfactory, department personnel will provide the assigned DE-964 form for completion by the parent indicating that the student has completed the classroom phase of the course or is taking the course in the concurrent mode. The remaining portion of the form will be filed in the office until completion of the course. The student will pay the required application fee and be given the vision, Class C-Road Signs, and Class C-Road Rules tests. Documentation will be returned to the applicant. If the applicant passes the tests, an instruction permit will be issued. Applicants have three opportunities to pass each test or a maximum of 90 days to successfully pass all tests. Failure to do so will result in loss of the application fee. A new fee will then be required.

**Source:** The provisions of this § 18.22 adopted to be effective April 7, 1997, 22 TexReg 3113.

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# Title 37. PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

## Part I. TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

### Chapter 18. DRIVER EDUCATION

#### Subchapter B. PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN TAUGHT DRIVER EDUCATION

##### § 18.23 Behind-the-Wheel Instruction

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(a) In-car instruction may be taught in any motor vehicle which may be legally operated with a Class C driver's license in Texas. The vehicle must have valid registration, have a currently valid motor vehicle inspection certificate, and be properly insured with proof of such liability insurance available in the vehicle. The vehicle is not required to have dual brakes but it is recommended that the vehicle have a second rear-view mirror for use of the instructor.

(b) After a student has received an instruction permit, a parent may begin in-car instruction. The curriculum must be followed and all required instruction given. Upon completion of all course material, classroom and behind-the-wheel, the parent/instructor should apply to the same Driver License office where the DE-964 form is filed. To obtain an unrestricted driver's license the student must have reached his 16th birthday and must provide the following at a Driver License office:

- (1) instruction permit or learner's license;
- (2) parental driver education affidavit;
- (3) complete student instruction record; and
- (4) TEA certificate of enrollment or equivalent.

(c) Upon acceptance of the above documentation, Driver License Service personnel will provide the form DE-964 for completion by the parent/instructor indicating successful completion of the course. The department copy and the TEA copy of the form will be surrendered to the department. The school copy and the insurance copy of the form will be given to the applicant. Once this is completed the "B" restriction will be removed.

**Source:** The provisions of this § 18.23 adopted to be effective April 7, 1997, 22 TexReg 3113.

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# Title 37. PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

## Part I. TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

### Chapter 18. DRIVER EDUCATION

#### Subchapter B. PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN TAUGHT DRIVER EDUCATION

##### § 18.24 Completion of the Texas Driver Education Certificate

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(a) The Texas Driver Education Certificate, form DE-964, is a numbered, two-part form consisting of four copies and is used to certify completion of both classroom and laboratory phases of the driver education course. The certificate is sent to the Driver License office indicated on the Request for Driver Education Packet form. The Driver License office will file the certificate upon receipt for security purposes and will remain under control of the department. When a student successfully completes the required classroom hours of instruction, a Driver License Service employee will provide the proper certificate to the parent and will assist the parent in completing the bottom portion of the certificate, FOR INSTRUCTION PERMIT ONLY, at the Driver License office. The department copy will be submitted with the driver's license application. The remainder of the certificate will be refiled at the Driver License office for later use. When the course is successfully completed, the remainder of the DE-964 will be used to certify the completion. The top portion of the certificate, FOR DRIVER'S LICENSE ONLY, will be completed and the department copy and the TEA copy of the certificate will be surrendered with all other documentation necessary for issuance of an unrestricted license. The insurance and school copies of the certificate will be given to the parent or guardian for their records.

(b) FOR INSTRUCTION PERMIT ONLY (bottom section of form). This portion of the form will be completed at the Driver License office for the issuance of an instruction permit. This is a tear-off form and only the department copy will be removed. When filling out the form, type or print firmly using black ink. Enter the following information:

- (1) check the box to indicate "Parent or Legal Guardian";
- (2) check the box to indicate "DPS-approved program" and write in the course number as indicated on the list of approved programs;
- (3) check the box to indicate "Must take vision, traffic law and traffic sign parts of the examination" (for DPS use);
- (4) enter the student's full, legal name as shown on the birth certificate or other legal document;
- (5) the parent or legal guardian will sign on the line "Signature of Driver Education Teacher";
- (6) enter the parent or guardian's driver's license number on the line "TEA Number";
- (7) enter "Home" on the line "School, ESC, College, or University";
- (8) leave blank the two lines which read "Signature ( ) Chief School Official" and "Driver Education School Number"; and
- (9) enter the date on the line "Date Issued."

(c) FOR DRIVER'S LICENSE ONLY (top of form). This portion of the certificate will be completed after the complete course, classroom and laboratory, has been successfully completed. Enter the

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following information:

- (1) check the box to indicate "Parent or Legal Guardian";
- (2) check the box to indicate "7 hours behind-the-wheel instruction and 7 hours supervised practice";
- (3) enter the student's full, legal name as shown on the birth certificate or other legal document, date of birth, and gender (male or female);
- (4) enter the student's instruction permit number, date of classroom completion, and date of laboratory (in-car) completion;
- (5) the parent or legal guardian will sign on the line "Signature of Driver Education Teacher";
- (6) enter the parent's or guardian's driver's license number on the line "TEA Number";
- (7) enter "Home" on the line "School, ESC, College or University";
- (8) leave blank the two lines which read "Signature ( ) Chief School Official" and "Driver Education School Number"; and
- (9) enter the date on the line "Date Issued."

**Source:** The provisions of this § 18.24 adopted to be effective April 7, 1997, 22 TexReg 3113.

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## California

Coming soon, National Driver Training Institute will be licensed and approved in California.



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## Colorado

The largest number of parent-certified driver trainers are in Colorado. Parents have the option of selecting parent-certified driver training, or a driving course offered by a school district or a private school. National Driver Training Institute (NDTI) is a Colorado Department of Motor Vehicle 3rd Party Testing Center. Located in Monument Colorado, state driver license testing is available 5 days a week.

### Age Requirements

At 15 years 3 months, young drivers can receive their instruction permit, provided they are enrolled in driver education including NDT's parent-certified course.

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At 15 years 6 months, a young driver may obtain an instruction permit without certified course enrollment. At 16 years of age, a young driver may obtain the driver license with no curfews or passenger restrictions.

### Licensing Requirements

License applicants under 18 must possess the instruction permit for at least 90 days prior to licenser. Successful completion of the state driving test is required for all new drivers within Colorado.



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## Connecticut



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## Delaware

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Ohio



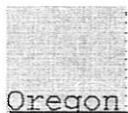
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Oklahoma



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Oregon

A large number of parent-certified driver trainers are in Oregon. Parents h  
driver training themselves, or selecting a driving course offered by a scho

Age Requirements

At 15 years of age, young drivers can receive their instruction permit upon

test. Any licensed driver over 21 may occupy the front seat while the young  
At 16 years of age, a young driver may obtain the driver license with no cu  
restrictions.

#### Licensing Requirements

Successful completion of the state driving test is required for all new dri  
permit possession waiting period for young drivers prior to drive test eval  
years of age. Upon completion of the written and driving test the license w

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Pennsylvania

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Rhode Island

 Go BackTennessee Go BackTexas

Texas was the first state to certify parent-taught driver training. National (NDT) was the first program to be approved in Texas. Young drivers now have instructions from a driving school or to be taught by their parents. When "Help! for Teenager Who Wants to Drive!!" their young driver will not be required to take a test at the Department of Public Safety (DPS).

Age Requirements

When the teenager reaches 14 years/11 months, the parent can purchase our program. Parent-taught driver training is included in the program packet. The application to the Dept of Public Safety in Austin.

At 15 years of age, a young driver is allowed to take the permit test. At 16, they receive the license.

Licensing Requirements

Any licensing applicant under 18 years of age must complete an approved driver training course. If the license will be issued. Submission of a certificate of completion for a course eliminates the requirement for performing the state driving exam.

Currently, Texas applies no driving curfews or passenger restrictions to its licensing requirements.



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Virginia



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Washington

In spite of the requirement for a new driver under 18 to complete a formal course, several parents have opted to use parent-certified driver training. DMV currently does not recognize parent-certified programs. HB 3069, sponsored by Mike Sherstad, would recognize the parental right to educate their children. Parents would then have the option of selecting instructions from a driving school or parents.

Age Requirements

A young driver must be at least 15 years of age (with proof of enrollment in





# The Battle Over Homeschool Drivers Education

by Steve Lunsford

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One issue of great interest to homeschooling families is that of securing the legal right to teach their own students a course in driver education. Because families who choose to educate their children at home are considered to be a private school according to Texas law (Texas Supreme Court No. D-2022, dated **6-15-94**, and Texas Educ. Code Ann., Sec.21.033), we believe we have the legal right to add courses of study to our students' curriculum as we deem appropriate.

In 1995, when the 74th Texas State Congress was in session, that legislative body passed a bill that supposedly confirmed, once and for all, that homeschool parents could teach a course in drivers education to their own students. However, after this legislation was passed, the wheels of government slowed to a snail's pace with regard to implementing the new law. The Texas Department of Public Safety certainly jumped through no hoops to expedite the matter. In addition, attorney general Dan Morales said he needed to study the legislation and give his stamp of approval before it could be implemented. After several months, he did approve the legislation, but he stipulated that its scope was not limited to only the homeschool community. In other words, *any* parent could teach their own child a course in driver education. Nevertheless, the implementation process continued to be stalled.

Fast forward to March 3, 1997 and the current legislative session. Texas House member Keith Oakley, chairman of the Public Safety Committee, holds a hearing to discuss his new bill, #1255, designed to repeal the parent-taught drivers education bill passed in 1995!

Because of our homeschool network, homeschoolers came forward to address Oakley's committee and speak against this legislative attempt to scuttle the previously adopted parent-taught driver education law. Tim Lambert of the Texas Home School Coalition presented data which overwhelmingly confirmed that no statistical correlation exists between "certified-led" driving instruction and lower crash rates.

That's right -- certified instruction has no statistical effect on safety. That being true, why has the State of Texas been using this expensive system? The answer is the same as in so many programs run by the government -- they concentrate on a *process* that has long been in place rather than on what is really important, the *results* of a training process.

Although other specific issues were addressed at the hearing concerning the quality and length of driver training, the worn-out cry by those in favor of repealing parent-taught driver education -- that parents simply cannot teach their own students a course in driver training as well as the "professionals" -- was overwhelmingly refuted. In fact, when it is understood that most parents have more than just an economic interest in their students, it should become more clear that few, if any, courses cannot be taught to homeschool students by their parents or through the resources of a support group.

As a result of Rep. Oakley's hearing, the homeschool community was presented a splendid forum in which to present our position on this matter. The result? An astounding victory. Oakley admitted defeat when it became apparent to him that the majority of the nine member committee would not support his bill. Furthermore, a Department of Public Safety representative assured the committee that they would take the necessary action to implement parent-taught driver education by no later than April 1, 1997!

As we have seen so many times in the past, God's timing is perfect.

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*Steve Lunsford and his wife Kathie of Allen own the L.A.M.B. Company, a supplier of home school curricula. The phone number for information is 972/390-7259.*

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# Crash Involvement of Teenaged Drivers When Driver Education Is Eliminated from High School

LEON S. ROBERTSON, PHD

**Abstract:** In 1976, Connecticut eliminated state funding for high school driver education and nine school systems dropped the courses from their high school curricula. This research examined the effect of this action on overall licensure of 16-17 year old drivers in communities that dropped the course to those in the state; it also compared the changes in licensure and crash involvement of 16-17 year old drivers in similar sized communities that retained the driver education course using local funds. Substantial reductions in the

numbers of 16-17 year olds who became licensed occurred in the communities that dropped the course. As a result, the numbers of crashes involving 16-17 year olds resident in such communities were also substantially reduced. The conclusion of previously reported research that high school driver education is a major contributor to earlier licensure and accompanying crash involvement of the 16-17 year old population is supported by this additional evidence. (*Am J Public Health* 70:599-603, 1980.)

The effect of high school driver education on crash involvement of teenaged drivers has usually been measured in terms of crashes per licensed driver. Studies comparing drivers who took the course voluntarily with drivers licensed without the course found fewer crashes per licensed driver among the former group.<sup>1</sup> However, statistical controls for miles driven, high school grades, and personality characteristics reduced the difference in crash involvement between those who did and those who did not take the course.<sup>2,3</sup> This finding suggested that the factors which influenced whether or not the students took the course also influenced how much and/or how well they drove subsequently, and that driver education had little or no effect on the subsequent crash involvement per licensed driver.

More recent research has found that high school driver education produces a net harmful effect because it leads to increased numbers of licensed teenagers, which in turn increases the total crashes for that age group. An experiment in England found no difference in subsequent crash involvement per miles driven between 16-17 year old students assigned to take the course in school and same aged students from whom the course was withheld. However, there were more subsequent crashes per person among the students who took the driver education course because more of them drove earlier than those in the control group.<sup>4</sup>

In the United States, a study of the experience of 27 states for several years found no relationship between the fatal crashes per 10,000 licensed 16-17 year old drivers in a state and the proportion of 16-17 year old licensed drivers in that state who had completed a driver education course in

Address reprint requests to Leon S. Robertson, PhD, Center for Health Studies, Institution for Social and Policy Studies, Yale University, 14A Yale Station, 89 Trumbull Street, New Haven, CT 06520. This paper, submitted to the *Journal* December 4, 1979, was revised and accepted for publication February 13, 1980.

**Editor's Note:** See also related articles pp. 625 and 627, this issue.

high school. However, the proportion of 16-17 year olds in each state that was licensed was strongly related to the proportion of the population of that age that completed a high school driver education course. In other words, more driver education was related to more licensed drivers. The net result was higher fatal crash involvement of 16-17 year old drivers per 16-17 year old population in the states with higher proportions of 16-17 year olds completing high school driver education courses.<sup>5</sup>

Critics of this latter study tended to overlook the results of the English experiment and discounted the U.S. results because they were based on correlations among fatality rates and proportions of teenagers taking driver education rather than comparisons of individuals.<sup>6</sup> However, data that allow separation of teenagers who had the course and those that did not have recently become available because of the elimination of driver education in some Connecticut high schools, making possible the work here reported.

In 1976-1977 a number of cities, towns, and regions in Connecticut eliminated driver education from their high school curricula following the state legislature's withdrawal of state funds for the program. State expenditures for driver education dropped from \$627,000 in 1975 to zero in the subsequent years.<sup>7</sup> The research reported here examines the effect of eliminating driver education in these high schools on the numbers of licensed teenagers and the crash involvement of 16-17 year olds for these communities and compares these figures with cities, town, and regions of similar size in the same state that retained driver education in their high schools.

## Materials and Methods

In Connecticut a person 16-17 years old cannot be licensed to drive unless he or she has completed high school

## MANDATED TRAINING

Though driver training did exist during the 1950's, it would be several years later before these programs would become "mandatory." Initially, drivers training was taught in high school as part of the school's curriculum. Believing that these courses actually reduced a child's crash risk, Allstate Auto Insurance was the first agency to offer premium discounts for drivers training. Shortly thereafter, other companies followed suit.

As a result, driver education courses sprang up in virtually every school district in the nation. Millions of dollars annually poured in to support these programs. By the late 1970's, several states were requiring teenagers to attend some form of formal training before receiving their drivers license. But were these mandated programs truly reducing our young drivers crash risks?

★ In 1978, Doctors Leon Robertson and Paul Zador, conducted a study of the crash involvement of teenagers after having taken driver education. This study, which was published in the American Journal of Public Health (AJPH), Oct 1978, Vol 68, No 10, concluded that, "Among 16-17 year olds, driver education was associated with a great increase in the number of licensed drivers, without a decrease in the fatal crash involvement per 10,000 licensed drivers." Dr. Robertson conducted a follow-up study which was published in AJPH in June 1980 which stated, "The conclusion of previously reported research that high school driver education is a major contributor to earlier licensure and accompanying crash involvement of the 16-17 year old population is supported by this additional evidence."

## PUBLIC COURSES NOT EFFECTIVE

Mounting evidence was being compiled which clearly showed that these "mandated" courses were not reducing young drivers crash risks. But why not?

★ First of all, as these studies indicated, high school driver education results in greater availability and earlier licensure. When driver education is easily accessible, teenagers are encouraged to get their license earlier than they otherwise would. In these programs, there is no inclusion of an assessment of the teenagers maturity level, prior to program induction. Many would admit that this responsibility rests with the parents. However, as the result of repetitive parental mind control, i.e., "Teenagers must attend a 'state approved' course," the assumption is that these programs will cover all the bases. However, with 25 to 40 (and sometimes as many as 200) teenagers in one classroom, coupled with the logistics of getting everyone trained, there will be little or no time for assessment of maturity. Besides, government and it's correlaries are never endowed with personality, only technical enforcement. This presents a serious question as to whether formal programs COULD adequately assess maturity levels, even if they wanted to.

Secondly, as time progressed, budget constraints reduced the full semester driver education courses to thirty hours of classroom and only about six hours of driving. In fact, even today, the overwhelming number of "certified" courses offer an average of only six hours of behind-the-wheel instruction. Studies show that new drivers need about 50 hours of actual hands-on instruction before they can be considered competent enough to solo.\* When one considers that only six to eight hours of actual behind-the-wheel training is what teenagers receive, IS IT ANY WONDER WHY THEIR CRASH RISK IS SO HIGH?!!

## WHAT DOES "STATE CERTIFIED" MEAN?

Driver training professionals have their fingers crossed, hoping that parents will finish what was started. Parents, on the other hand, are believing that these "certified" courses will be thorough and complete. After all, if terms such as, "certified" and "state approved" do not mean that the training will be thorough and complete, then what do they mean?

The terms "state certified" and "state approved" in the main, do not refer to results, i.e., requirements to bring the student to the desired safe skill level before they can solo. Instead, the terms, in large part, have reference to the vehicle equipment and insurance, classroom dimensions, and teacher training. The problem is that there is ample evidence which suggests that these ARE NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN REDUCING THE CRASH RISK. The most well trained instructors and the best equipment cannot compensate for lack of extended driving time (at least 50 hours of driving performed over several months) and the transferring of proper values related to responsible driving (a job which only the parent is best equipped to do).

In the 1986 Dekalb County Study, the effectiveness of what was called the Safe Performance Curriculum (SPC) on reducing the high teenage crash risk was evaluated. In describing the course, the study states, "The... (SPC) was considered to be the most advanced and thorough high school driver education program in the nation. The program was developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration over several years, and it includes approximately 32 hours of classroom instruction, 16 hours of simulation instruction, 16 hours of driving range instruction and 3 hours of instruction in evasive maneuvers. In addition, each student received 3 hours and 20 minutes of behind-the-wheel, on-road instruction (including 20 minutes at night (Weaver, 1978; Weaver, personal communication, 1985)). The total hours and behind-the-wheel experience far exceeds the typical high school driver education courses described in the National Safety Council's Driver education Status Report (1984)." Sounds pretty impressive doesn't it. If government mandated programs could effectively reduce the crash risk of our teens, this is the program that would do it. However, the conclusion of the study showed that not only did the program not decrease the crash risk, but increased the risk as compared to groups not taking driver education (more on this to follow). Nothing can compensate for extended behind-the-wheel instruction over a long period of time (versus crammed intensive training) in reducing a teenagers crash risk.

## WHAT ABOUT THE COST?

Additionally, the financial burden of meeting state mandated requirements has forced the cost of training to skyrocket. The cost of driver education varies from state to state, ranging from \$100 to \$500. Most programs cost around \$200; an amount many families simply cannot afford. Even in states where driver education is not mandatory for teens, parents are lured into spending hundreds of dollars, in an effort to obtain the insurance discount. However, in a purely financial sense, when one analyzes the cost of training and compares that to the actual discount, on most occasions, the cost of training exceeds the so-called discount. Additionally, many insurance agents also testify that, after completing formal driver education, most teens will have one citation or accident during the period they are listed on the parents policy. When this happens, penalties and rate increases eliminate any discount.

What does \$200 purchase? Because of mandates, \$200 in most states will purchase 30 hours of classroom (we can afford plenty of classroom instruction) and only 6 hours of actually hands-on, on-road, behind-the-wheel instruction.

Ironically, many school districts have dropped driver education from their high school

curriculum and many others are petitioning their state boards to have the requirement eliminated. As a result, commercial schools have sprung up all over the country. Unfortunately, commercial schools, in most cases, are driven by profit and are not likely to give more training than the state minimum, without charging extra for it. Parents on the other hand, are not likely to pay any more than the absolute minimum to meet state requirements or to receive their insurance discount. After all, when paying \$200 for these "state approved" courses, a teenager should be a safe driver—right? Nothing could be further from the truth!

### THE TRUTH ABOUT THE EFFECTS

The truth about the effects of driver education on our teenagers crash risk is shocking. To put it bluntly, studies show that formal driver education is an abysmal failure. Two studies cited above reveal this truth.

Another study published in 1986 in the Accident, Analysis, and Prevention Journal, Vol 18, conducted by Doctors Adrian Lund, Allan Williams, and Paul Zador gives us the startling facts. This study entitled "High School Driver Education: Further Evaluation of the Dekalb County Study," was sponsored by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. These doctors began by acknowledging the problem, "...there is an implicit assumption in many state laws that formal driver education provides a protective influence that justifies public financial support. However, the role of high school driver education in mitigating or exacerbating the high death and injury rate among teenage drivers has been the subject of considerable controversy. Completion of a driver education course is typically associated with better crash and violation records per licensed driver [Allgaier, 1964], and this actuarial advantage has been the basis for some automobile insurance companies offering lower premiums for teenage drivers who have taken the courses."

The abstract of the study gives us the results, "The Dekalb County, Georgia, study is the largest experimental evaluation of high school driver education to date. Detailed reanalyses of data from that study reveal that students assigned to an enhanced driver education program (Safe Performance Curriculum) were more likely to obtain drivers licenses, to be in car crashes and to have traffic violations than control students not assigned to driver education." (emphasis ours) In the last paragraph of the study we read, "...high school driver education courses do not decrease the crashes and violations among teenagers as a group."

What happens, then, when formal driver education is eliminated? The study further states, "This finding is consistent with other research showing that when high school driver education is dropped from schools, licensing and crash rates among teenagers decrease [Robertson, 1980]."

In the final sentence of the nine paged study, Doctors Lund, Williams, and Zador offers sound advise, "...high school driver education should be viewed only as a method for teaching basic driving skills and not as a strategy for reducing teenagers' involvement in crashes." Yet, our governmental and insurance institutions have continued to ignore this advise. As of this year, many states have continued to mandate formal drivers training, in spite of its demonstrated failures.

A 1992 survey of fatal motor vehicle crashes among 16-20 year olds was published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). If the premise that state mandated driver training does indeed reduce a young drivers crash risk were valid, it would be in this data, if anywhere, that this premise would be validated. However, a search of the crash data revealed no correlation between lower crash risk and mandated driver education. In fact, the highest percentage of motor vehicle fatalities for this age group, 19.4 percent (5.2 percentage points worse than the national average), came

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by the horrendous statistics related to young drivers. Essentially, these kids have half of a brain. When they go to a major car rental company and attempt to rent a car, the company will tell them that they cannot rent to them because they have half of a brain—"come back when you have a whole brain and we will gladly rent to you."

Dr. Colson, in a humorous way, uncovered the root of the problem. Since young people, until around age 25, do not assimilate information the same way older adults do, they need clearly defined expectations which are consistently re-enforced. Dr. Colson goes on to say that it is the parents responsibility to provide the "half of brain" that the young people are missing. It is parents who desire better for their children than they themselves have been able to achieve. In the same way, it is parents who strongly desire to produce safer driving skills in their teens. Even when looking at teenage crime statistics, study after study reveal that parental involvement is the key factor in reducing delinquent behavior.

In the 1970's the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration sponsored the Randy Scott study. This study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of parental involvement in the driver education process. Parents were allowed to teach their teenagers themselves using provided training materials. The results revealed that the teenagers were more skilled and prepared than their "formally trained" counterparts.

Professor Warren Quensel of Illinois State University recently published a paper entitled, "Background Information Related to Driver Safety Education and Parent Involvement," wherein he cited the critical necessity for parental inclusion in the training process. On page 6, paragraph, D, 13-14, of the paper, Prof. Quensel makes the following observation,

"13. As the focus on needed educational reform continues, there will probably be less interest and financial support for driver education in the public or private schools. Many low income families will not be able to afford commercial school programs. And, there are few commercial schools outside metropolitan areas. Therefore, many teenagers will need to depend on parents for driver training. (emphasis ours)

14. Traffic safety officials and parents must be willing to devote more time and resources to the training of our youth. Only then can teenagers become more responsible and competent users of our highway."

The report went on to say that, "There is a growing research base that affirms the impact of families on the learning process...For children to achieve better in school, they need family involvement and reinforcement at home." There is a growing number of traffic safety officials who agree with Prof. Quensels assessment.

Many experts are beginning to affirm that the best way to bridge the gap between formal training and total parental control is by allowing the parents to use a correspondence course. Pennsylvania has two such courses; one provided by Penn State University, and the other provided through a local organization sponsored by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (M.A.D.D.). Colorado has recently recognized a driving school which offers the most extensive correspondence course in the country, where the parent is the trainer from start to finish. The course has been viewed as being no less than excellent by several insurance officials.

A principal of a school on the West coast, within a state where formal driver education is mandatory, has privately stated that he believes that parents are the best source for training young drivers. He has, for years, been encouraging parents

10. The fact that the modern automobile is so mechanically simple to operate makes the job for training safe drivers more difficult because first one has to overcome the belief that there is nothing to it.
11. Driver and traffic safety education, properly taught, not only promotes greater safety on the highways, but it also provides an excellent medium for the development of self control, accurate perceptions, and social responsibility. These are more easily taught in connection with an activity that the student feels to be significant and practical.
12. The true potential of driver education (public or commercial) has never been realized. This is due to the lack of adequate standards, lack of research as to what should be taught, poorly qualified teachers, inadequate state supervision, and lack of state financial support.
13. As the focus on needed educational reform continues, there will probably be less interest and financial support for driver education in the public or private schools. Many low income families will not be able to afford commercial school programs. And, there are few commercial schools outside metropolitan areas. Therefore, many teenagers will need to depend on parents for driver training.
14. Traffic safety officials and parents must be willing to devote more time and resources to the training of our youth. Only then can teenagers become more responsible and competent users of our highway system.

#### E. THE NEED FOR EFFECTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS IN DRIVER EDUCATION

1. The results of some general studies.
  - a. There is a growing research base that affirms the impact of families on the learning process.
  - b. Children's motivation to learn and keep learning depends on attitudes they bring from home to the classroom.
  - c. For children to achieve better in school, they need family involvement and reinforcement at home.
  - d. Teachers and administrators realize more than ever that it is vital to work in partnership with parents and the community. But, only a few schools appear to be taking actions to promote such partnerships.
2. Rationale for parent involvement in driver education
  - a. Driver and traffic safety education must be considered a shared responsibility of the community, school, and home. Reaching out to parents and the community will make the work of the schools easier and more effective. It will provide for better understanding and support. Most of all, it will improve the learning opportunities and experiences for young people.
  - b. Parents probably provide one of the greatest sources of support for what is taught in the schools. Not only do parents have students who are or will be eligible for driver instruction, they also are the largest group of taxpayers. Poll after poll shows that parents want their teenagers to have formal driver training.
  - c. Teenagers, if they are to become safer drivers, must have more supervised practice driving and better instruction than they are now getting. Experts believe beginning drivers need at least fifty hours of supervised practice before they are allowed to drive solo.

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Table 105  
Percent of Persons Killed, by State and Age Group

State	Age Group (Years)											Unknown	Total Killed
	<5	5-9	10-15	16-20	21-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	>74		
AL	2.5	2.0	3.7	14.4	11.4	19.3	15.7	9.9	8.0	6.1	6.8	0.1	1,042
AK	5.1	5.1	11.0	7.6	9.3	32.2	10.2	5.1	5.1	6.8	2.5	0.0	118
AZ	2.6	1.6	4.2	13.2	9.1	21.1	15.7	8.9	6.5	6.4	10.4	0.2	801
AR	2.2	2.9	3.8	14.1	10.6	20.4	12.2	8.7	7.9	8.9	8.1	0.2	583
CA	3.0	2.6	3.6	11.9	12.0	20.6	15.5	8.8	6.6	6.3	8.6	0.5	4,163
CO	2.7	2.0	3.8	14.3	9.3	23.6	19.7	7.5	5.0	5.5	6.6	0.0	559
CT	1.8	2.3	3.2	13.5	11.4	24.3	11.4	7.6	5.8	9.6	9.1	0.0	342
DE	3.6	2.7	7.2	12.6	8.1	23.4	16.2	7.2	8.1	6.3	4.5	0.0	111
DC	1.8	1.8	5.3	8.8	8.8	15.8	14.0	10.5	14.0	3.5	14.0	1.8	57
FL	1.6	1.7	3.1	10.4	9.7	19.0	15.6	8.9	7.4	7.9	13.5	1.0	2,635
GA	2.7	2.4	3.9	13.5	10.5	19.9	15.1	8.6	8.2	7.0	7.7	0.4	1,394
HI	1.5	3.0	3.7	7.5	16.4	27.6	17.9	9.7	3.0	1.5	7.5	0.7	134
ID	2.6	3.1	5.3	15.4	10.6	17.2	16.7	10.1	4.0	6.2	7.9	0.9	227
IL	2.3	2.4	3.7	14.1	10.4	21.2	14.9	9.8	6.2	6.4	8.7	0.0	1,392
IN	2.1	2.2	3.5	15.6	9.8	20.1	14.3	9.6	6.4	7.2	9.1	0.0	889
IA	2.2	2.0	4.8	16.1	12.2	20.9	9.8	8.7	6.3	8.9	8.1	0.0	459
KS	1.6	1.2	4.2	14.0	7.9	17.8	13.1	9.8	8.2	11.0	11.2	0.0	428
KY	2.2	2.0	3.0	16.9	11.0	19.3	13.5	9.4	7.1	7.2	8.3	0.1	871
LA	2.4	2.4	4.6	15.6	10.8	22.9	15.8	8.6	5.1	5.1	6.5	0.2	879
ME	1.6	1.1	4.3	21.6	6.5	17.3	12.4	10.3	7.0	3.8	14.1	0.0	185
MD	1.5	1.4	2.7	9.9	13.5	20.9	12.2	8.7	7.7	6.9	9.2	5.4	665
MA	1.5	1.9	3.8	12.6	10.3	18.9	14.3	7.8	7.4	8.8	12.4	0.2	475
MI	1.3	2.6	4.3	12.2	11.3	19.2	15.1	9.9	6.7	7.7	9.7	0.0	1,408
MN	2.6	1.3	3.3	13.2	9.5	19.3	14.5	9.5	5.6	7.8	13.2	0.2	538
MS	3.8	1.0	4.4	12.3	10.5	21.0	16.1	8.4	7.4	7.4	6.9	0.9	813
MO	1.5	2.4	3.9	16.6	10.3	19.3	13.1	9.4	7.3	7.7	8.2	0.2	947
MT	0.0	0.5	3.6	18.5	14.9	20.0	13.8	9.2	7.2	6.2	6.2	0.0	195
NE	1.6	2.8	7.9	14.6	11.8	13.8	15.7	5.1	5.5	7.1	14.2	0.0	254
NV	1.5	2.7	3.8	7.2	12.2	17.9	14.1	8.7	10.3	12.9	8.4	0.4	263
NH	1.7	0.8	3.3	12.4	10.7	19.0	13.2	8.3	7.4	14.9	8.3	0.0	121

Table 105  
Percent of Persons Killed, by State and Age Group (Continued)

State	Age Group (Years)											Unknown	Total Killed
	<5	5-9	10-15	16-20	21-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	>74		
NJ	1.6	1.9	3.0	11.4	8.5	16.8	11.9	7.7	9.3	13.2	14.2	0.4	788
NM	2.1	1.6	2.8	14.4	12.3	24.6	14.6	10.4	6.7	4.9	5.6	0.0	431
NY	1.9	2.1	3.4	10.1	10.7	19.2	13.1	8.3	8.4	8.9	13.3	0.5	1,781
NC	2.8	2.3	3.2	14.1	12.0	18.5	14.0	9.8	6.5	8.3	8.1	0.4	1,389
ND	0.0	2.2	4.5	11.2	13.5	21.3	9.0	7.9	7.9	12.4	10.1	0.0	89
OH	2.4	1.8	3.8	17.5	10.5	18.4	13.9	9.6	7.4	6.7	7.9	0.1	1,482
OK	1.8	1.5	3.7	17.0	10.7	16.7	14.0	9.1	7.2	6.4	11.6	0.3	671
OR	2.1	1.3	4.6	13.2	9.2	17.7	15.8	11.8	6.7	8.4	9.2	0.0	524
PA	1.6	2.1	2.4	10.6	11.8	19.9	13.9	9.8	7.0	8.2	12.6	0.2	1,529
RI	0.0	0.0	2.7	5.4	12.2	24.3	16.2	10.8	9.5	9.5	9.5	0.0	74
SC	2.8	2.1	3.2	11.8	11.7	19.5	17.3	11.7	7.4	7.2	5.2	0.0	846
SD	2.9	1.4	5.7	12.9	13.6	13.6	20.0	7.9	6.4	2.9	12.9	0.0	140
TN	1.8	2.1	4.1	14.5	10.3	21.1	12.0	11.0	8.1	6.8	7.9	0.2	1,171
TX	2.7	2.3	4.3	14.0	11.8	21.3	16.2	8.4	6.1	5.4	6.9	0.6	3,037
UT	0.3	4.3	7.6	19.1	14.2	13.9	13.2	8.9	5.0	5.9	7.6	0.0	303
VT	0.9	1.8	0.9	15.5	9.1	25.5	9.1	10.9	7.3	7.3	11.8	0.0	110
VA	2.1	2.2	3.8	12.0	10.6	20.7	14.0	9.5	8.5	7.6	9.1	0.0	878
WA	2.0	1.1	4.2	18.6	12.3	18.6	14.7	9.4	5.4	5.7	7.9	0.2	661
WV	1.2	0.9	2.3	15.9	9.6	19.6	15.4	10.7	8.2	7.7	8.6	0.0	429
WI	1.4	2.5	3.8	19.9	11.5	17.8	13.4	6.7	4.6	8.3	10.1	0.0	714
WY	0.8	1.7	5.0	15.8	7.5	16.7	13.3	8.3	11.7	10.0	9.2	0.0	120
USA	2.2	2.1	3.8	13.5	10.9	19.9	14.6	9.1	7.0	7.3	9.2	0.4	40,115
PR	3.0	1.2	4.2	12.2	10.2	16.2	16.2	11.3	7.2	10.0	6.5	2.0	600

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## HIGH SCHOOL DRIVER EDUCATION: FURTHER EVALUATION OF THE DEKALB COUNTY STUDY

ADRIAN K. LUND, ALLAN F. WILLIAMS and PAUL ZADOR.

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Watergate 600, Washington, DC 20037, U.S.A.

**Abstract**—The DeKalb County, Georgia, study is the largest experimental evaluation of high school driver education to date. Detailed reanalyses of data from that study reveal that students assigned to an enhanced driver education program (Safe Performance Curriculum) were more likely to obtain drivers licenses, to be in car crashes and to have traffic violations than control students not assigned to driver education. Students assigned to a minimal program of high school driver education (Pre-Driver Licensing Curriculum) were also more likely than control students to obtain licenses, but the difference was smaller than for the enhanced program and they were not significantly more likely to be in crashes or to have violations. Students in the more limited course were less likely than those in the enhanced course to complete the course in a timely manner, which suggests that exposure differences may explain differences between the two groups. The results confirm that greater availability of driver education causes students to become licensed sooner, although the DeKalb study probably underestimates the effect. Because of this greater exposure, crashes and violations are incurred at an earlier age.

Injuries associated with motor vehicle use constitute a major public health problem for all Americans, but the threat of death and injury from motor vehicle use is disproportionately great for teenagers [Karpf and Williams, 1983; Williams and Karpf, 1983]. In the belief that there are educational strategies that can reduce the public health threat posed by teenagers driving, many states support driver education in their schools. In 1982-83, 25 states provided special financial aid for driver education in high school, and 23 states allowed teenagers to obtain drivers licenses at a younger age if they had completed driver education [National Safety Council, 1984]. In addition, two states (New York and Pennsylvania) exempt teenagers with driver education from beginning driver, nighttime driving curfews. Thus, there is an implicit assumption in many state laws that formal driver education provides a protective influence that justifies public financial support.

However, the role of high school driver education in mitigating or exacerbating the high death and injury rate among teenage drivers has been the subject of considerable controversy. Completion of a driver education course is typically associated with better crash and violation records per licensed driver [Allgaier, 1964], and this actuarial advantage has been the basis for some automobile insurance companies offering lower premiums for teenage drivers who have taken the courses. Other studies have shown, however, that this actuarial advantage is probably not the result of having taken the course but that it occurs because students who choose to take high school driver education tend to have characteristics that are associated independently with fewer crashes (for example, high intelligence or fewer driving miles). When analyses control for such factors, differences in crash rates between those with and without high school driver education are greatly reduced or eliminated [Conger *et al.*, 1966; McGuire and Kersh, 1969]. Moreover, when the effect of high school driver education is examined for teenagers as a group rather than its effect per licensed driver, it has been found to increase the number of teenagers involved in motor vehicle crashes [Robertson and Zador, 1978; Robertson, 1980; Shaoul, 1975]. This increase in per capita crash involvement is a by-product of increased licensure among teenage populations for whom driver education is readily available. If driver education has provided any additional crash avoidance skills, they have been inadequate to compensate for the licensure effect.

A large, experimental test of the effects of high school driver education reported findings that differed somewhat from those of prior studies [Stock *et al.*, 1983]. This study was undertaken to clarify the effects of high school driver education on crashes and violations and to indicate what a state-of-the-art driver education course could accomplish.

Conducted in DeKalb County, Georgia, the study recorded the licensure, violation and crash experience of more than 16,000 high school students who had been randomly assigned to one of the following three conditions:

1. The Safe Performance Curriculum (SPC) was considered to be the most advanced and thorough high school driver education program in the nation. The program was developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration over several years, and it includes approximately 32 hours of classroom instruction, 16 hours of simulation instruction, 16 hours of driving range instruction and 3 hours of instruction in evasive maneuvers. In addition, each student received 3 hours and 20 minutes of behind-the-wheel, on-road instruction (including 20 minutes at night [Weaver, 1978; Weaver, personal communication, 1985]). The total hours and behind-the-wheel experience far exceeds the typical high school driver education courses described in the National Safety Council's *Driver Education Status Report* [1984].

2. The Pre-Driver Licensing Curriculum (PDL) provides minimum training in skills required to pass a license test and includes a total of about 20 hours of classroom, driving range and simulation instruction. PDL students received only 1 hour of on-road, behind-the-wheel instruction, which was to be complemented by a planned program of supervised driving with parents [Weaver, 1978; Weaver, personal communication, 1985]. The total hours of instruction and on-road experience of PDL students was considerably less than the typical high school driver education course [National Safety Council, 1984].

3. Students assigned to the control group did not receive high school driver education and were expected to be taught to drive by their parents and/or private driver training schools.

The final report of the DeKalb study contained mixed results. On the one hand, the "final results . . . revealed no statistically significant differences among the overall accident means and overall violation means . . . of SPC, PDL and control group students." That is, in contrast to prior studies, high school driver education did not result in increased crashes per capita. On the other hand, during the first six months of licensed driving, students with driver education had fewer crashes per licensed driver than students in the control group. These results led the authors of the DeKalb report to conclude that "the driver education programs, SPC and PDL, have a desired impact of reducing accident and violation occurrence," although "the effect is short-term" and "is additionally offset or neutralized . . . by the earlier licensing of SPC and PDL group students."

Despite the mixed results and limited nature of the authors' conclusions, the report has been interpreted by some as new evidence in favor of high school driver education as a crash reduction measure [O'Parrell, 1983; McKnight, 1984]. This new evidence may be particularly persuasive because the experimental design of the DeKalb study has led many to consider it to be "the best (and probably only) controlled study of the value of driver education," as one researcher has described it [McKnight, 1984]. However, even a well-executed experimental design does not guarantee that results of the experiment have external validity (in this case, that they predict what would happen if school systems differed in the availability of driver education); nor does an overall experimental design necessarily justify analyses of subsets of the data (e.g. licensed as opposed to assigned students). Thus, it is important to consider whether even the limited conclusions of the DeKalb report are warranted by the design and analyses that were reported.

#### APPRAISAL OF THE DEKALB STUDY

The relationship of driver education to the per capita rate of teenage crash involvement is the primary concern in this appraisal of the DeKalb study. Because most previous studies reporting negative effects associated with high school driver education reached no firm conclusion in regard to its effect on the crash avoidance skills of individual drivers, the claim that driver education reduced the occurrence of crashes per licensed driver (in the short term) is not necessarily inconsistent. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that

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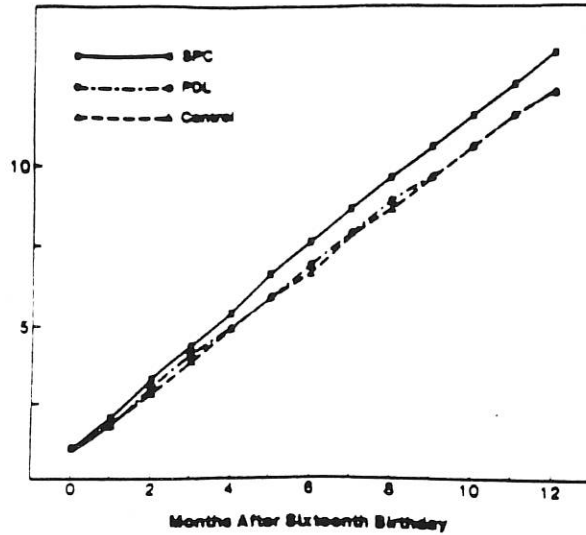


Fig. 3. Percent of students with crashes by type of driver education.

females, although the difference was much smaller (about 20% greater licensure for males).

Parental occupation was positively related to the likelihood of a crash. Compared to students whose parents were in the lowest occupational category (service and manual labor occupations), those whose parents held professional and managerial positions were over 50% more likely to be in a car crash; students whose parents were in the middle occupational category had about a 25% greater hazard of being in a crash. The increased hazard of crashes corresponded very closely to the increased hazard of traffic violations and both were apparently the result of the increased likelihood of licensure.

The variables created to control for possible changes in the DeKalb program or in state record-keeping procedures (or other unknown factors) revealed that the hazard of crashing and of accruing violations decreased from the early quarters to the middle quarters and decreased again from the middle to the late quarters. Whether this decrease reflected a real change in driving patterns or was an artifact is not knowable from these data. However, there was no change in the licensure rates over the early, middle and late quarters of the study.

Student grade point average was significantly related to all three dependent variables. Although the differences were very small, students with better grades were more likely to obtain licenses but less likely to receive traffic citations or to crash. Parental education was related only to licensure; the likelihood of licensure increased by 4% for each rise in the level of parental education. Much of the socioeconomic information contained in the parental education variable was absorbed by the more powerful variable of parental occupation; correlation of the beta estimates between these two predictors were  $-0.45$  for crashes and violations and  $-0.48$  for licensure.

Table 4. Comparison of estimated driver education effects (beta's) at six months and one year after 16th birthday

Length of Followup	Driver Ed. Group	Licensure	Violations	Crashes
6 Months	SPC	0.216	0.051*	0.098*
6 Months	PDL	0.135	-0.004*	0.022*
12 Months	SPC	0.186	0.052*	0.135
12 Months	PDL	0.125	0.016*	0.030*
Age at End of Followup	SPC	0.151	0.079	0.106
	PDL	0.092	0.039*	0.005*

\*Beta's are significant at  $p < 0.05$  unless marked by asterisk.

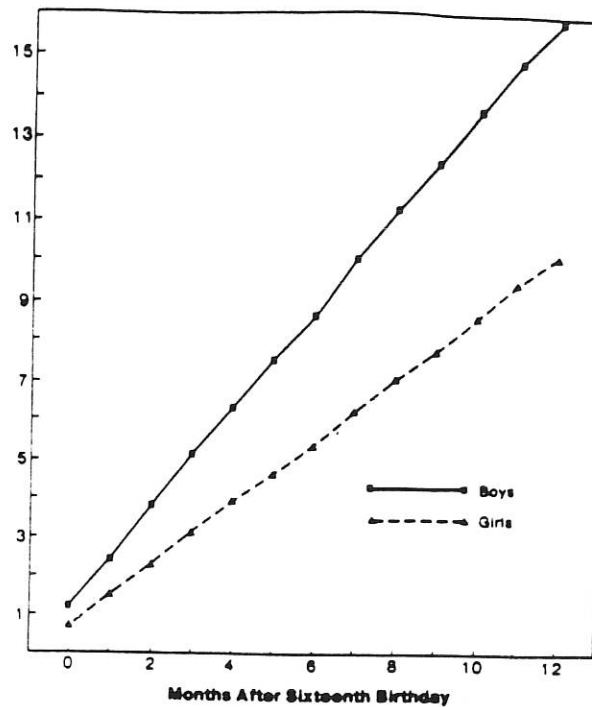


Fig. 4. Percent of students with crashes by sex of student.

#### DISCUSSION

These results lead to a different conclusion than that of Stock, *et al.*, in regard to the per capita driving risk of teenagers in the DeKalb County study. Despite the presence of factors that would constrain the licensure effect of driver education, students assigned to SPC were at significantly greater hazard of crashing and of receiving traffic violations than were comparable control students. There was no evidence that SPC (or PDL, for that matter) reduced the per capita likelihood of crashes or violations, even during the first six months of eligibility for licensure. Only when crashes and violations were analyzed per licensed driver did the results favor driver education [Stock *et al.*, 1983], and as discussed earlier, this analysis does not provide a valid test of driver education.

Although students assigned to the PDL curriculum also had a marginally greater likelihood of violations and crashes compared to control students, these differences were statistically nonsignificant (and, in the case of crashes, substantively zero). In addition, the increased likelihood of licensure due to driver education was less than half as large for PDL as for SPC. One possible explanation for the smaller effect of PDL is the efficiency with which students completed the two courses. More students assigned to SPC actually completed the course (73% vs 71%), and of those completing, more completed on time (68% vs 59%). (Students who "completed on time" are those who completed the course on the date when most other students completed the course. Currently, there is no explanation for these differences, although it is possible that SPC students were monitored more closely and guided through the course more carefully because it was an experimental curriculum.) Another possible explanation is that, compared to students receiving SPC or even more typical high school driver education courses, students in the PDL course may have finished the course with less confidence in their driving skills because of their limited behind-the-wheel instruction; this may have resulted in a slower rate of licensure and more caution during their initial periods of solo driving.

The results of the DeKalb study cannot be readily explained by criticizing the structure of SPC and PDL courses. Stock *et al.* [1983] report that SPC and PDL licensed drivers performed better on the Southern California On-Road Performance Test than did control licensed drivers, and that SPC drivers performed best of all. Thus, students assigned to

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