

Michigan Graduated Driver Licensing and Driver Education Requirements



Michigan Department of State

The big decision to begin driving

Getting a license is an important milestone for teens and their parents/legal guardians but being a beginning driver carries risks - *Traffic crashes are one of the leading causes of death for teens*. Parents/legal guardians are in the best position to determine when their teen is ready to begin driver education, progress to independent driving, and have increased driving privileges. Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws are minimums for young drivers. Parents/legal guardians need to determine their own additional family rules.

A teen's first year behind the wheel is critical. GDL is designed to limit teens to safer driving environments while they build their skills and gain driving experience with the goal of reducing traffic crashes.

Be a good role model

Teens mimic their parents'/legal guardians' driving behaviors. Therefore, obey all traffic laws, correct any unsafe driving habits, and refrain from using electronic devices while driving.

Monitor your teen's driving

It takes 3-5 years for novice drivers to be exposed to the myriad of situations they will encounter. Parents/legal guardians who control access to the vehicle keys and ride along with them throughout their driving experience are in a better position to monitor their teen's driving. Various types of monitoring devices and electronic programs are available that flag risky behaviors.

Tips for parents/legal guardians

This resource provides an outline for the GDL and driver education process and is intended for parents/legal guardians to keep and refer to as their teen progresses through the steps. Parents/legal guardians are strongly encouraged to attend driver education meetings when available and take advantage of the resources available at Michigan.gov/NewDrivers.

Segment 1 Driver Education

The course is held over a minimum of three weeks and includes at least 24 classroom hours, six hours of driving, four hours of observation driving time, and a written examination. It is important for parents/legal guardians to communicate with their teen's driver education instructor to receive feedback on their teen's progress.

Requirements

- ☐ Must be at least age 14 and eight months

Level 1 Learner's License

Requirements

- ☐ Must be at least age 14 and nine months
- ☐ Successfully complete Segment 1 Driver Education

Visit a Secretary of State office

- ☐ Parent/legal guardian must accompany teen and sign the application form
- ☐ Pass a vision and health screening
- ☐ Present required documentation:
 - ☐ Michigan Driver Education Segment 1 Certificate of Completion

Proof of:

- ☐ A valid Social Security number or proof of ineligibility
- ☐ Legal presence in the U.S.
- ☐ Identity
- ☐ Michigan residency (2 documents)

For acceptable documentation, see *Applying for a License or ID Card? (SOS-428)* at Michigan.gov/SOS.

Driving restrictions

- Teens must be supervised at all times by a parent, legal guardian, or designated licensed driver age 21 or older
- No cell phones
- No texting

- Seat belts are required for everyone in the front seat and everyone under age 16 in the vehicle. Supervising adult is encouraged to require seat belts for all occupants.

Emergency Medical Card

In an emergency, having the correct medical information on hand can save lives. A Medical Alert check box is located on the back of Michigan driver's licenses and IDs to alert emergency medical responders that you are carrying a separate Emergency Medical Card. Check the box on your license or ID, complete an Emergency Medical Card, and always keep it with you.

Required supervised drive time

The major reason for crashes among newly licensed drivers is inexperience. Driver education introduces teens to the mechanics of driving, but it is just the beginning of the learning process. After receiving a Level 1 Learner's License, teens are required to continue practicing with a parent, legal guardian, or designated licensed driver age 21 or older while they gain experience in all types of situations and conditions to reduce their risk of crashing.

Requirements

- ☐ Complete a minimum of 50 hours of supervised driving time including 10 hours at night
- ☐ Complete a driving log

Segment 2 Driver Education

Segment 2 Driver Education includes a minimum of six classroom hours and a written exam.

Requirements

- ☐ Hold a Level 1 Learner's License for at least three months
- ☐ Complete a minimum of 30 hours of the minimum 50 hours of supervised driving time, including two of the ten hours required at night

Driving skills test

The driving skills test includes a vehicle inspection, basic control skills test, and an on-road driving test. It is administered by independent testing organizations approved by the Secretary of State. To prepare for the test, teens should review the Driving Skills Test Study Guide available at Michigan.gov/NewDrivers. Test fees charged by organizations vary – ask about fees before scheduling a test.

Requirements

- ☐ Successfully complete Segment 2 Driver Education
- ☐ Hold a Level 1 Learner's License for at least six months
- ☐ Complete the minimum 50 hours of supervised driving time, including 10 hours at night
- ☐ Present required documentation to test examiner:
 - ☐ Michigan Driver Education Segment 2 Certificate of Completion
 - ☐ Completed driving log

Level 2 Intermediate License

Teens will automatically progress to a Level 2 Intermediate License when the below requirements are met – no trip to a Secretary of State office is needed.

Requirements

- ☐ Successfully pass a driving skills test
- ☐ Minimum age 16
- ☐ 90 days at-fault crash and violation-free

Driving restrictions

- No more than one passenger under age 21 except for immediate family members
- No driving between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.
- No cell phones
- No texting
- Seat belts are required for everyone in the front seat and everyone under age 16 in the vehicle.

Passenger and nighttime restrictions are exempted: when driving to or from, or in the course of employment; while going to or from an authorized activity; or when accompanied by a licensed driver age 21 years or older. See MCL 257.310e for authorized activity details.

Parent or Legal Guardian and Teen Safe Driving Contract

Crash rates peak during the first six months that teens drive without supervision, making this an essential time for parents/legal guardians to provide guidance, oversight, and set limits. Parents/legal guardians who do this have teens who are less likely to receive traffic tickets or be involved in traffic crashes. Inexperience and immaturity combine to make young drivers especially at risk at night, after drinking alcohol, with passengers, when unbelted, and when using cellphones. Parents/legal guardians are strongly encouraged to create a personalized Parent-teen Driving Agreement available at YoungDriverParenting.org. Recommended family rules: No passengers, no nighttime driving, no electronic communication or entertainment devices, and require seat belts by all in the vehicle – regardless of age.

Level 3 License

Teens will progress to a Level 3 License when the below requirements are met. An automated confirmation letter will be sent from the Secretary of State. Teens don't need to visit an office for this step.

A parent/legal guardian may request that their teen remain at Level 2. No cell phone use except in emergencies or in compliance with the law regarding use of a hands-free or voice-operated phone or system.

Requirements

- ☐ Minimum age 17
- ☐ Hold a Level 2 Intermediate License minimum of six months
- ☐ 12 consecutive months violation and at-fault crash-free