

# Teaching Your Teen to Drive



## A Guide for Parents of Teenagers on the Colorado Graduated Drivers License System

Sponsored by The Mesa County Health Department  
&  
The Colorado Department of Transportation



# Teaching Your Teen To Drive

Welcome! We are glad that you have chosen this guide to help teach your teen to drive!

The purpose of this guide is to assist you, the parent or guardian of teenagers. It is our hope that with the assistance of this guide, teaching your teen to drive will be a rewarding and safe experience. We recommend that you use this guide as a supplement to the Colorado Driver Handbook.

As you are probably aware by now, it is Colorado law that you spend 50 hours (10 of which must be at night) in the car with your teenager before they may reach the next stage of the Graduated Driver's License; applying for a license. This guide has a complete description of the Colorado Graduated Drivers License Law.

Teen driving is risky. This guide offers some statistics related to teen driving that are specific to Colorado. We want to help decrease the chance that your teen will be involved in a crash by offering you tools, tips, lesson plans, and a driving guide to use while you are teaching your teen to drive. If you find that you need more information or tools than are included here, please feel free to use the contact information located at the end of this guide.

Parents need to play a key role in teaching teens to drive. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, the teenage brain is not yet fully developed and will not be until approximately age 25. Because of this, teenagers have a lower perception of risks which increase with age. For example, teens think "It won't happen to me", even though they know that teen driving is risky. It is up to parents to put restrictions on the risky behaviors associated with driving. This is important in decreasing fatalities, injuries, and traffic violations.

Lastly, we will offer resources that you may use to get more information. An example of a parent/teen driving agreement is located at the end of the guide.

Good Luck and Drive Safe!

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# Colorado Laws for Drivers under Age 18:

## ***When can a teen get a learner's permit?***

- Minimum age 15, if the teen has completed and passed the classroom portion of a state-approved driver's education course within 6 months of applying for their permit.
- Minimum age 15 ½ after successfully completing a 4-hour driver awareness course.
- Minimum age 16 if none of the above.
- All new drivers under age 18 require a parent/legal guardian's signed affidavit to obtain a learner's permit.

## ***How to get a permit:***

Visit: [http://www.revenue.state.co.us/mv\\_dir/wrap.asp?incl=faqdrli/faqdrli15](http://www.revenue.state.co.us/mv_dir/wrap.asp?incl=faqdrli/faqdrli15) for more information from the Colorado Department of Revenue.

## ***What does a teen under 18 with a learner's permit need to do before applying for a driver's license?***

- Hold a learner's permit for at least one year.
- 50 logged hours of driving time with a responsible, licensed adult prior to obtaining a license. 10 of those supervised hours must be nighttime driving.
- A teen under age 16 with a learner's permit may not drive with anyone except their driving instructor, parent, or legal guardian.
- Teens age 16 and older with learners' permits may drive with any licensed driver 21 years of age and older.
- Any minor issued a driver's education permit between the ages of 15 years and 15 years, 6 months must complete 6 hours behind-the-wheel training prior to applying for their driver's license.
- No cell phones while driving.

## ***What rules apply to licensed drivers under age 18?***

- No passengers under age 21 until the driver holds a valid driver's license for at least six months (siblings and passengers with medical emergencies excepted).
- No more than one passenger under age 21 until the driver holds a valid driver's license for at least one year (siblings and passengers with medical emergencies excepted).
- No more than one passenger in the front seat of a vehicle driven by a person under age 17, and the number of passengers in the back seat must not exceed the number of seat belts. All passengers with drivers under seventeen must wear seatbelts.
- No driving between midnight and 5 a.m. until the driver holds a valid driver's license for at least one year, unless accompanied by a parent/legal guardian.

### **Exceptions:**

- Driving to a school or school-authorized activity and the school does not provide transportation (signed statement from school required).
- Driving to/from work (signed statement from employer required).
- Medical emergency
- Driver is an emancipated minor
- No drinking and driving
- Obey all traffic laws
- Carry proof of insurance

**\*\* New \*\* Beginning December 1, 2009 – No one under the age of 18 may use a cellular device while operating a motor vehicle \*\*\***

# Colorado Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) (Colorado Teen Driving Law)

## What's New?

The Governor and Colorado Legislators have added important features to Colorado's graduated licensing laws by limiting the number of young passengers a new teen driver may carry, having a curfew through the first year of a new driver's license, and prohibiting cell phone use while driving with a learner's permit. Each of these factors limits dangerous situations and distractions, allowing new teen drivers to focus on the task at hand: Driving safely between point A and point B.

## Background

Graduated Drivers Licensing (GDL) laws are designed to give young, novice drivers more experience behind the wheel and limit driving in high-risk situations while they are in the learning stages. States began enacting GDL laws in the 1990s. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, effective GDL laws require a learner's permit stage of at least six months with 30-50 hours of supervised driving, and an intermediate stage with limits on night driving and passenger restrictions.

Colorado's graduated driver's licensing went into effect July 1, 1999. The law required teens to drive supervised a minimum of six months with their instructional permits, log 50 hours of driving time with parents or driving instructors (including 10 nighttime hours), no driving for drivers under age 17 between midnight and 5 a.m., and young licensed drivers had to limit passengers to the number of seatbelts in the car.

In 2004, Colorado strengthened the law by raising the minimum learner's permit age to 16 unless a driver takes a driver's education course at age 15, or passes 4-hour driver awareness course at 15 years 6 months. The new law also lengthened the permit period to 12 months.

## Teen driving statistics

- In 2004, 96 16-20 year-olds died on Colorado roadways; Of those, 44 were 16-17 years old.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2004, 65.6% of Colorado teens killed in car crashes did not wear seat belts. <sup>1</sup>
- In 2004, nearly 80% of teen passengers who died in car crashes were riding with teen drivers. <sup>1</sup>
- As of December 31, 2004, there were 218,581 licensed teen drivers ages 16-20 in Colorado. Teen drivers represent nearly seven percent of the licensed drivers in Colorado. <sup>1</sup>
- 16 year-olds have higher crash rates than drivers of any other age, and are three times more likely to die in motor vehicle crashes than other drivers. <sup>2</sup>
- A study released by the National Institute of Health in 2005 found that the part of the brain that controls risk-taking and impulsive behavior is not fully developed until age 25.
- In Grand Junction for 2004, teen drivers represented 21% of crashes, the highest number of crashes for the city. <sup>3</sup>

1) Colorado Dept. of Transportation 2) U.S. Dept. of Transportation 3) City of Grand Junction

For more information, please visit <http://www.coteendriver.com>

## Risks of Teen Driving

The following statistics show the top six driving risk factors for teenagers while driving. Many of these issues are addressed with the Colorado Graduated Drivers License (GDL) Law, and it is important that you, the parent/guardian, reinforce them with your teenager.

- **Failure to wear a seat belt**
  - Seat belts reduce the risk of death by 50%
  - Wearing a seat belt is Colorado Law
- **Inattentiveness**
  - Cell Phones, Stereos, etc. cause teens to be inattentive
  - Distractions are the most common contributing factor in multiple vehicle crashes
- **Excessive Speed**
  - Speed is the most common contributing factor in single vehicle crashes
  - Remember, your teen is watching and modeling after your driving behaviors, so obey the speed limit!
- **Fatigue**
  - A person who has been awake for 24 hours experiences impairment nearly equal to a blood alcohol concentration of 0.10%
  - Teens often do not get enough sleep
- **Driving at Night**
  - Teens are three times more likely to be involved in a fatal car crash at night than during the day
  - Colorado GDL restricts the nighttime driving of teenagers
- **Driving with Other Teens**
  - The presence of teen passengers strongly increases the risk of crashing. The more passengers, the greater the risk
  - Driving with passengers is restricted by Colorado GDL

Keep in mind that this is not an exhaustive list of teen driving risks. Know what your teen is doing, how they are driving, where they are, and who they are with. Set limits and have expectations of your new driver. The family of the teen driver is in the best position to have a sustained effect on minimizing risks faced by inexperienced drivers and encouraging responsible behavior.

## Tips for the Road

Driving is a complex skill that takes years to master. Skills improve with time and practice. Think of it like learning a sport or how to play a musical instrument in that it takes time and practice. However, an error behind the wheel can have negative and even deadly consequences. Parents who are teaching their teen to drive need to be patient – think back to when you were learning to drive. This section of the guide will offer tips for parents on how to teach your teen.

### Learning a new skill

As with any person new to any task, there are certain tendencies about which you should be aware.

Beginning drivers may become so anxious and grip the steering wheel so hard that they cannot steer properly.

Due to nervousness and inexperience, new drivers often position their hands incorrectly on the steering wheel and forget that a car with an automatic transmission “creeps” while in drive or reverse. Teens have a tendency to forget which way the car wheels are pointed when pulling out of a parking space or when stopped in traffic. They commonly make errors to the right, since that side of the car is farther away from them than the left side.

Please be patient as your teen is learning the basics of driving. Do not take them out where there is a lot of traffic or many obstacles. We recommend beginning on a quiet street or in an empty parking lot. If possible, your teen should learn the basics of driving in a car with an automatic transmission and progress to a manual transmission after they have mastered the basics.

### Parenting Tips for In the Car

- Enjoy this experience! Teaching your teen to drive can be a great bonding experience. We recommend that you focus on driving skills, not issues that may be happening within your family.
- When you are doing the driving, be sure to set a good example! Your teen will be watching and will model after how you drive. Make certain that you come to a complete stop at stop signs, do not speed, slow for yellow lights, etc.
- Wear your seat belt and require your teen to do so as well.
- Keep the radio/stereo turned off during practice sessions.

## Tips for the Road Continued...

### Language

- Be clear and concise when giving your teen directions.
- When giving your teen feedback, it should be precise and immediate. Remember to praise those things your teen has done correctly!
- The term “right” should be used only for the direction of a turn.
- Be sure to give your teen enough notice when you want them to change lanes, make a turn, or come to a stop. When giving directions to your teen, tell them “where” first, and then give them the “action” you would like them to perform. For example, say “At the next light, turn right” instead of “Turn right at the next light.” Telling an inexperienced teenager to “stop” will cause them to stop suddenly. Instead say “Bring the car to a stop” or “At the intersection, slowly bring the car to a stop.”

### Other Tips

- Follow Colorado law by making sure that your teen has a driver’s permit, and that they have the proper insurance card and vehicle registration with them when they drive.
- Hands should be placed at 8 and 4 o’clock on the steering wheel to avoid injury from a deployed air bag.
- When you are in the passenger seat, practice being able to shift or place your hand on the steering wheel with your left hand. It may also be helpful to use the mirror on the sun visor of the passenger seat as a rear view mirror.
- If your teen is in real trouble, shift the car out of gear quickly, take the wheel, and guide the vehicle safely to the side.
- Remind your teen that the driver doesn’t always have to have a foot on the gas pedal for the vehicle to move. This “creep” can help the driver move slowly through traffic, get in and out of parking spaces, start from a dead stop, or drive through tight quarters.
- Play the “what if” game with your teen. Give them scenarios and ask them what they would do.
- Encourage your teen to say out loud what his/her next move will be. For example, when your teen changes speed, your child may say: “Red light, mirror, ease foot off of accelerator and brake.”
- Eventually, expose your teen to different driving conditions including wet roads, snow, highways, rural, and metro. Practice on roads unfamiliar to the teen.
- ***Have patience, praise your teen, and instead of criticizing, offer a better way!***

## Driving in Adverse Conditions

This section goes into driving in adverse conditions such as glare, snow, ice, wind, rain, etc. The most important tip for driving in any adverse weather condition is to drive SLOWLY! Most car crashes are caused by driving too fast for conditions.

It is important that your teenager practice driving in adverse conditions in the permit stage of graduated licensing. This way, when they are on their own, they will have had prior experience and will not be surprised, scared, or frustrated.

Here are some more tips from the experts at the Colorado Department of Transportation:

- Use your low-beam headlights in bad weather, especially where snow is falling heavily or blowing
- Do not use your cruise control in slippery road conditions
- Remove ice and snow from windows, mirrors, and vehicle lights, both front and rear, as often as necessary
- Always wear your seat belt
- Leave extra room between your vehicle and the one ahead of you in poor visibility and slippery conditions
- Your safest place in bad weather is a safe distance behind a snowplow, where you will find the clearest road and the best traction
- If possible, avoid driving at all in bad weather conditions
- A road that has been treated with liquid de-icer may be wet and slippery

For more information, download the "Slick Tips" brochure at:  
<http://www.dot.state.co.us/Publications/Brochures/NewSlickTips.pdf>

Information on driving in bad weather is also located in the Colorado Driver Handbook.

## Lesson Plans

The following section of this guide is to give you an idea of how to spend the required 50 hours (10 at night) with your teenager in an effective, orderly manner. Please remember that this is only a guide! Feel free to modify if your teenager is advanced in some areas, or if your teen needs more help in a particular area please spend more time on that task before proceeding to new lesson plans.

We have included 5 lesson plans that start out with very basic skills, which increase in complexity and speed. Each lesson plan varies in the amount of time that should be spent on the particular skills. Safety experts recommend spending 30 to 60 minutes at a time teaching your teen to drive. Some of the lesson plans suggest spending a total of 15-20 hours total on driving skills, and this should be broken down to 10-15 sessions.

We will not be going into specifics on every driving skill. Again, utilize the Colorado Driver Handbook or resources found at the end of this guide if you find that you need more information on a specific skill.

( <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/Revenue-MV/RMV/1196845313325> )

A checklist will follow each lesson plan to help you organize areas that your teen may need more time to practice or to gain confidence.

Prepare where you and your teen will go ahead of time. For example, when practicing with multiple turn lanes, think about where these intersections are in your area before heading out. This is a good system to reduce frustration during your practice sessions. You may want to practice the skills yourself first before demonstrating them to your teen.

Our goal is to help you organize your practice sessions and to make this time more efficient.

## Lesson Plan #1

### Getting Ready/Basic Actions (2-3 Hours Total Time)



This lesson plan should be conducted in a large, level, and quiet parking lot. Speed during this lesson plan should be at or below 15mph.

#### Pre-Entry Check

- Before getting into the vehicle, the teen should check for obstacles such as small children and pets, broken glass, fluid leaks, etc.
- Check tire pressure, engine oil, and other fluid levels – check your vehicle owner’s manual for details

#### Locating Gauges

- Enter the vehicle and show your teen all of the gauges and controls of your vehicle
- Explain how to start the vehicle (e.g., transmission should be in park) - Start the vehicle
- Have your teen operate all gauges and controls; explaining their purpose and when they should be used

#### Adjusting everything to your body

- After getting into the vehicle, teach your teen how to adjust the seat, the steering wheel, side view mirrors, and rear view mirror
- It is safest to sit 10 inches away from the steering wheel/airbag – this can be measured by placing a piece of paper between the driver and the airbag. In addition, the top of the steering wheel should be no higher than the top of the driver’s shoulders.
- Feet should be able to reach pedals with ease
- Mirrors should be adjusted to view entire rear window, reduce glare, and reduce size of blind spot

Activity Idea – “Learning About Blind Spots”: While your teen is sitting in the driver’s seat with the engine off, get out of the car and stand close to the front bumper facing your teen. Begin taking steps backward and ask your teen to tap the horn when he or she can see your feet. Place a cone or cup in that spot. This is area in front of the vehicle that cannot be seen when looking out of the windshield. Ask the driver to use the inside mirror and/or to look over the right shoulder, and repeat this process to the rear of the vehicle. Walk backwards from the passenger doors on the left and right sides of the vehicle and place cups or cones to mark the side areas visible to the driver.

## Lesson Plan #1 Continued...

### Seat Belt/Head Restraint

- The head restraint (padding behind the head) should be adjusted middle of the back of the head for safest position during a crash
- Lap and shoulder belts should always be worn and the driver should remind all passengers to buckle-up

### Moving the vehicle – Forward/ Turning/Backward/ Steering/Stopping

- First, practice shifting through all of the gears with foot on the brake
- Shift to Drive, and practice moving to different points in the parking lot
- Focus should be on smooth acceleration and braking

Parenting Tip: When you want your teen to come to a smooth stop, say “Slow to a stop” instead of “Stop”, which will cause the teen to suddenly and forcefully slam on the brakes.

- At this point, your teen should not be going any faster than 10-15 mph (speeds will increase gradually with each lesson plan)
- Now, practice turning – start with wide smooth turns
- Your teen should be looking both ways, in all mirrors, signaling, and should be communicating to you what his/her next move will be
- Once going forward and turning become easier for your teen, practice going in reverse a short distance. Remind the teen to use mirrors and to look over his/her shoulder. Ensure that the area behind the vehicle is clear, as going in reverse can be confusing at first!
- Give your teen a specific parking space to back into. With practice, they should be able to fit within the painted lines of the space.
- Moving the vehicle forward, turning, and going in reverse require having different hand positions on the steering wheel, and even having only one hand on the wheel. These will all be new experiences to the teen and will require practice.

### Turning the vehicle off/Securing the Vehicle

- Place the car in Park, turn off lights if necessary
- Instruct the teen on securing your vehicle

Activity Idea – “Who’s the Teacher?”: After instructing your teen on “Getting Ready” to drive, have them practice by telling you what to do! The teen’s job is to instruct you, step-by-step, about what to do to get started. For example, after they tell you to “Check behind the vehicle for obstacles, look for fluid leaks, etc.,” get into the driver’s seat with your young driver sitting on the passenger side. They then instruct you how to check mirrors, gauges, put on seatbelt, etc.

## Checklist for Lesson Plan #1

### Getting Ready/Basic Actions

Bring this checklist with you on your practice session. Take notes and make comments to discuss with your teenager!

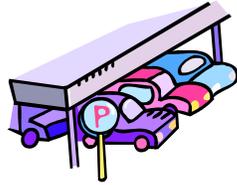
Skill	Pass	Needs Practice	Comments
Pre-Entry Check			
Locating Gauges			
Gauge Function			
Adjusting seat/head restraint			
Adjusting mirrors			
Wears seat belt			
Moving forward			
Turning			
Backing			
Steering			
Stopping			
Turning vehicle off			
Securing Vehicle			

### Sample Practice Areas in Mesa County – Lesson Plan #1

- Any large, quiet, and mostly empty parking lot will do!
- Shopping centers at slow times or in an unused area of the lot
- Church parking lots on days and times without activities
- School parking lots on weekends or days without school or school activities
- Mesa County Fairgrounds parking area at times/days without activities

## Lesson Plan #2

### Parking the Car/Driving in Familiar and Light Traffic Areas (8-10 Hours Total Time)



This lesson should be conducted in your neighborhood or areas close to where your teen attends school. These roadways should be familiar to your teen. The speed limit during this lesson plan should not exceed 35 mph.

Review info from Lesson Plan #1 – All information from the first lesson plan should be fresh as it will all be utilized in this plan and all future lesson plans. Please do not proceed with Lesson Plan #2 until you are comfortable with your teen's ability in Lesson Plan #1.

Parent and Teen should review the information in the Colorado Driver Handbook related to traffic signals, traffic signs, pavement markings, lane controls, right of way, and speed.

#### Visual Search

- Scanning is an important skill to learn at this point

Activity Idea: Have your teen ride in the passenger side while you drive. Encourage your son/daughter to look in all mirrors, paying attention to motion on sidewalks, crosswalks, noticing what other cars are doing, and looking for "hidden" motions, such as a dog running out of a bush. Again, have your teen say aloud what they are noticing, and what their actions are. Once you are confident that your teen understands scanning, they can practice behind the wheel.

- The teen should be scanning about 15-20 seconds ahead of where they are

#### Entering Traffic

During this plan, have your teen recheck the traffic in all directions. Be aware that in residential areas about 90% of drivers fail to obey stop signs.

## Lesson Plan #2 Continued...

- From side of street, teen will need to signal, and look for traffic, bicycles, pedestrians, children, and animals in mirrors and over shoulder. Your teen should be accelerating smoothly
- From stop sign, teen should signal if necessary, follow right of way, and accelerate gradually to speed at or below speed limit, or a speed that the teen will feel most comfortable

With residential driving comes the opportunity for your teen to learn to always be on the lookout for pedestrians, bicycles, children, and animals. Review this information in the Colorado Driver Handbook. Yield to all!

- When entering traffic from a turn, signal, be aware of traffic, and control the steering wheel in a smooth manner. For new drivers, selecting a gap in traffic will take practice. After the turn, smoothly let the steering wheel recover.
- Have student turn into closest lane
- Practice both Left and Right turns
- When you are ready for your teen to leave traffic, they should signal, decelerate, and smoothly pull to the side.
- Smooth stopping is key to all driving
- Parking at an angled space – Teen should signal, use all mirrors, have one hand on the steering wheel and should brake and steer in a smooth, controlled manner
- Parking on side of street involves many of the skills from other types of parking. Your teen may have trouble judging the distance from the curb or other vehicles. Practicing with cones or cups might be easier at first.
- Roundabouts – Teen should signal into and out of the roundabout. Discuss how roundabouts work before heading into one with your teen behind the wheel

## Checklist for Lesson Plan #2

### Parking the Car/Driving in Familiar and Light Traffic Areas

Bring this checklist with you on your practice session. Take notes and make comments to discuss with your teenager!

Skill	Pass	Needs Practice	Comments
Scanning			
Entering Traffic			
Noticing Pedestrians/Bicycles/ Children and Animals			
Entering Traffic from a turn			
Left turns			
Right turns			
Leaving traffic			
Smooth stopping			
Parking – angled space			
Parking – side of street			
Roundabouts			
Speeds up to 35 mph			

### Sample Practice Areas in Mesa County – Lesson Plan #2

- This lesson plan should take place close to your home
- Practice in areas familiar to you and your teen
- Practice around the area where your teen attends school
- Be sure to plan your route ahead of time to ensure that you do not encounter roads that may have high speed limits or that involve complex skills!

## Lesson Plan #3

### Increased Traffic and Unfamiliar Roads/Parallel Parking (15-17 Hours Total Time)



Review information from Lesson Plan #1 and #2

*Please do not proceed until skills from previous plans have been mastered.*

At this point, your teen should be fairly comfortable behind the wheel. It is now time to go into areas with more traffic and even roads unfamiliar to your teen. Speed during this lesson plan should not exceed 50 mph. Plan your route ahead of time!

- Backing and Parking require some similar skills. Your teen should always signal, utilize all mirrors in the vehicle, and should look over his/her shoulder for both parking and backing.
- Practice both backing straight and backing and turning
- When your teen has parked in a space, have them get out of the car to judge how well they did. They should be 3-6 inches from the curb or parking space lines. Have them practice parking in a straight space, angled spaces, on side streets and parallel parking.
- Parallel parking can be a challenging maneuver for new drivers. At first, practice this skill without obstacles (cars) close by. Use cups or cones to determine parking area for the first few tries. Be sure to practice both entering and exiting parking spaces.
- Turning is also an important skill to master as a new driver. Different types of turns include: Turning right and left at busier intersections, multiple turn lanes, U-Turns, and turns with various turn signals (arrows, no arrows, etc.)
- When you are ready for your teen to change lanes, talk to him/her about good reasons for changing lanes (destination, construction area, etc.). They should signal, look for a gap in traffic in mirror and over shoulder.
- Maintaining higher speeds (35-50 mph) – This will be the fastest your teen has driven. They should be smooth and have control over the pedals and the steering wheel.

## Lesson Plan #3 Continued...

- Curving roads is another skill to practice. This usually requires braking and steering simultaneously.
- Being passed can be frustrating! Talk to your teen about defensive driving and tell them to relax, being passed is okay.

Activity Idea – “Critique other drivers”: Find a safe place to park your car where you can watch traffic with your teen. For example, a busy intersection such as Rimrock Drive & Highway 6 (Sam’s/Wal-Mart area) might be interesting. In a 15 minute period, both you and your teen jot down driving errors you see. Compare your lists and discuss what you observed.

## Checklist for Lesson Plan #3

### Increased Traffic and Unfamiliar Roads/Parallel Parking

Bring this checklist with you on your practice session. Take notes and make comments to discuss with your teenager!

Skill	Pass	Needs Practice	Comments
Backing			
Backing and turning			
Parking – Parallel			
Turning – U-turn			
Turning – multiple turn lanes			
Turning – various			
Changing lanes			
Curving roads			
Being passed			
Speeds up to 50 mph			

### Sample Practice Areas in Mesa County – Lesson Plan #3

- This lesson plan should take you on a route that involves roads unfamiliar to your teenager
- Practice backing, backing and turning, and parallel parking in a quiet, large, and flat parking lot – perhaps the location you used for the first lesson plan
- Start with simple turns, and then head toward busy intersections with various turning lanes and signals
- Remember – it is extremely important to include a large variety of skills and various locations to ensure your teen will be ready to drive on their own
- Examples of streets specific to Mesa County where you may want to practice are: North Avenue, Patterson Road, Broadway, and Unaweep. You may want to make your session fun, and head to an area of the county where you normally don't travel such as Loma, Mack, Orchard Mesa, and Palisade. Relax, and try to have some fun!
- A great example of a curving road in Mesa County is the road (either entrance) to the Monument or up to Glade Park or up to the Grand Mesa. Also, these are examples of unfamiliar roads for your teenager.

## Lesson Plan #4

### Expressway/Highway/Interstate Driving (10-12 Hours Total Time)



Once again, be sure that skills and conditions from previous plans have been mastered before moving on!

Plan your trips ahead of time!

This lesson plan should be conducted on Interstates and Highways with speeds from 50 – 75 mph. Be sure to review lane and sign information in the Colorado Driver Handbook before heading for the interstate.

- Entering the highway/interstate: Obey ramp speed limit, signal intent to enter, use mirror and look over shoulder for gap in traffic. Once on the roadway, maintain speed. Driving on a highway/interstate requires constant scanning.

**Colorado Left Lane Law: 42-4-1013 (1) - Passing Lane** " A person shall not drive a motor vehicle in the passing lane of a highway if the speed limit is sixty-five miles per hour or more unless such person is passing other motor vehicles that are in a non-passing lane or turning left, or unless the volume of traffic does not permit the motor vehicle to safely merge into a non-passing lane." For more information, visit: <http://www.csp.state.co.us/Upload/leftlanebrochure.pdf>

- Being Passed: Hopefully, your teen has been passed at this point on smaller roadways. Some tips for this are: Don't panic, relax, and let them pass!
- Passing: Again, talk to your teen about good reasons for passing someone (not out of frustration or anger); teach them to signal, check mirrors and blind spots. Use the headlights of the car you are passing as a guide in the rear view mirror to know it is safe to go back in the original lane.
- Maintaining higher speeds (50-75 mph) – Teach your teen to have control over the brake, accelerator, and the steering wheel. Constant scanning and anticipation are key!
- Exiting: Signal intent to exit, obey speed limit of exit ramp. Decrease speed immediately.

## Checklist for Lesson Plan #4

### Expressway/Highway/Interstate Driving

Bring this checklist with you on your practice session. Take notes and make comments to discuss with your teenager!

Skill	Pass	Needs Practice	Comments
Entering			
Left lane law			
Being passed			
Passing			
Exiting			
Speeds up to 75 mph			

### Sample Practice Areas in Mesa County – Lesson Plan #4

- Fortunately for this lesson plan, Mesa County has many examples of highways and interstates. Interstate 70 (going either direction) would be a great place to practice. Also, the US 50 going toward Delta would be a good, low traffic road.
- Remember, variety of experience, skill, and time of day is key! Practicing now will eliminate some frustration later.

## Lesson Plan #5

### Driving in Complex Environments/Nighttime Driving (15-17 Hours Total Time)



This lesson plan will include various skills not covered in previous plans. Nighttime driving should be addressed at this point, as you are required to spend at least 10 of the 50 hours driving at night.

Speed should be varied during this lesson plan, as well as conditions and roads. Focus should be on areas where your teen needs the most work.

In environments and roadways that are complex, your teen should give their full attention and should be driving defensively with anticipation. It is important to practice in a variety of settings during the required 50 hours of dr

- If you have not already discussed defensive driving, now is the time to do so. Talk about avoiding crashes by steering to avoid, braking to avoid, and constant scanning and anticipating what other drivers will do next.
- As stated previously, the Colorado GDL Law requires that 10 of your 50 hours of driving at night. Reduced visibility and greater following distance are two areas to discuss.
- Limited visibility due to adverse weather conditions, glare, dusk, dawn, etc. are all types of conditions that your teen should practice with you in the car. Giving them a variety of experience will help to keep them safer when they're on their own.
- Bicycles/Pedestrians/Animals: Again, discuss these "obstacles" with your teen, and be sure they have had experience avoiding and watching out for everyone who is sharing the roadways.
- Complex environments such as driving during rush hour, driving in construction zones, on one-way roads, school zones, and railroad crossings should be practiced during these 50 hours. Your teen will face these settings when they are on their own, ensure that they will have the skills to be successful and safe.



## Checklist for Lesson Plan #5

### Driving in Complex Environments/Nighttime Driving

Bring this checklist with you on your practice session. Take notes and make comments to discuss with your teenager!

Skill	Pass	Needs Practice	Comments
Defensive driving			
Adverse weather			
Glare			
Dusk			
Dawn			
Rush hour			
Construction zones			
One-way roads			
School zones			
Railroad crossings			
Various speeds			
10 hours of nighttime driving			

### Sample Practice Areas in Mesa County – Lesson Plan #5

- This lesson plan should involve the most variety of all parts of driving
- Pay particular attention to roads/environments that your teen has had a difficult time with so far, while also practicing on roads that your teen will use the most.
- Downtown Grand Junction has plenty of one-way roads – again, be sure to plan ahead so at least you will know what to expect.
- For practicing driving through a construction zone in Grand Junction, you may want to check out:  
<http://www.gjcity.org/CityDeptWebPages/Administration/PublicInformation/PublicWorksProjects.htm> for a list of projects in the city. This list is updated weekly.

## Parent/Teen Driving Agreement

A parent/teen driving agreement is a clear and concise way of agreeing to conditions and knowing what the consequences will be if they are not followed. It is also important to review the agreement on a periodic basis.

Research shows that parents can have a great amount of impact on high-risk driving conditions of their teens such as number of passengers, excessive speed, nighttime driving, adverse weather, alcohol/drug use, and seat belt use. It is important to have a conversation with your teen regarding these issues and others that may be important for your family. Putting your conversation down in writing is a sure way to be able to follow through with consequences if inappropriate high-risk conditions arise. When parents place limits and restrictions on teen driving, teens will have fewer traffic violations, fewer crashes, and will be involved in less risky driving behaviors.

When determining the rules you will implement with your teenager, keep in mind that your rules can be stricter than the GDL. For example, according to Colorado law, drivers under the age of 18 may not drive between midnight and 5a.m. You as the parent may decide that you do not want your teen driving after 9 pm when they first get their license.

The following pages offer an example of a parent/teen driving agreement and one for your use. We highly recommend utilizing this type of agreement after the permit stage of the GDL, when your teen receives his/her driver's license.

# Sample Parent/Teen Driving Agreement

## Teen Agreement

## Parent Agreement

I agree to abide by all restrictions that apply to my driver's license.	As a parent or guardian for my teen, I agree to:
<b>FAILURE TO WEAR A SEAT BELT</b> <i>Always wear my seat belt. Always insist passengers wear seat belts.</i>	<i>Always wear my seat belt.</i>
<b>INATTENTIVENESS</b> <i>Eat before I drive, pull over to use cell phone, set and leave the stereo.</i>	<i>Avoid distractions while driving like eating, changing the radio, or using a cell phone.</i>
<b>EXCESSIVE SPEED</b> <i>Respect other drivers, not drive aggressively &amp; obey the speed limit</i>	<i>Stay at or under the speed limit and drive defensively.</i>
<b>FATIGUE</b> <i>Strive to maintain healthy lifestyle, including minimum of 8 hours of sleep per night.</i>	<i>Provide nutritious meals and environment supportive of healthy living.</i>
<b>DRIVING AT NIGHT</b> <i>Plan activities to be home before dark.</i>	<i>Drive you to and from places after 9p.m.</i>
<b>DRIVING WITH OTHER TEENS</b> <i>Show respect for my family by following rules about passengers</i>	<i>Be available to help chauffeur when needed</i>
<b>FAMILY RESPECT</b> <i>Only drive the family car when I have permission</i>	<i>Listen and be a good learning-to-drive partner</i>

### Consequences For:

Moving Violation or Crash/Property Damage	Teen pays any fines/insurance increases. No driving 2 weeks.
Alcohol or other drug use	Driving privileges taken away for 2 months
Curfew Violation	No passengers for one week
Violating Passenger Restrictions	Driving privileges taken away for 1 week
Failure to call if you are more than 30 minutes late	No passengers for one week
Other irresponsible behavior	

Teen Signature: Anna Smith Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: Linda Smith Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of original agreement: \_\_\_\_\_ Review this agreement on: April 2007

# Parent/Teen Driving Agreement

## Teen Agreement

## Parent Agreement

Date of Initial Agreement: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to abide by all restrictions that apply to my driver's license.	As a parent or guardian for my teen, I agree to:

### Consequences For:

Moving Violation or Crash/Property Damage	
Alcohol or other drug use	
Curfew Violation	
Violating Passenger Restrictions	
Failure to call if you are more than 30 minutes late	
Other irresponsible behavior	

Teen Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Review this agreement on: \_\_\_\_\_

## Resource List for Parents of New Drivers in Colorado

Mesa County Health Department  
(970) 683-6602

Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)  
<http://www.coteedriver.com/>

Colorado Department of Revenue – Motor Vehicle Division  
[http://www.revenue.state.co.us/mv\\_dir/home.asp](http://www.revenue.state.co.us/mv_dir/home.asp)  
Colorado Driver Handbook may be downloaded at:  
[http://www.revenue.state.co.us/mv\\_dir/wrap.asp?incl=handbooks](http://www.revenue.state.co.us/mv_dir/wrap.asp?incl=handbooks)

Alive at 25 – Colorado State Patrol Program  
1-866-605-3900  
<http://www.alive-at-25.org/>

Mesa County Drivers License  
222 S. 6<sup>th</sup> Grand Junction, Colorado 81501  
(970) 248-7128

Driving Instruction in Mesa County

**Note: We are not endorsing any program; this is listed for informational purposes only!!!**

A-1 Driving School: (970) 523-7680

Drive Quest: (970)242-9312

Western Slope Driving Institute: (970)254-1294

Colorado Driving Institute: (800) 604-6741 [coloradodrivinginstitute.com](http://coloradodrivinginstitute.com)

National Drivers Training (800) 942-2050 [nationaldrivertraining.com](http://nationaldrivertraining.com)

## DRIVE TIME LOG SHEET

**Student's Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Permit Number** \_\_\_\_\_  
 DR 2324 (07/06/05)  
**COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE**

Date	Verifier's Initials	Driving Time	Night Driving
Comments:			
Date	Verifier's Initials	Driving Time	Night Driving
Comments:			
Date	Verifier's Initials	Driving Time	Night Driving
Comments:			
Date	Verifier's Initials	Driving Time	Night Driving
Comments:			
Date	Verifier's Initials	Driving Time	Night Driving
Comments:			
Date	Verifier's Initials	Driving Time	Night Driving
Comments:			
Date	Verifier's Initials	Driving Time	Night Driving
Comments:			
Date	Verifier's Initials	Driving Time	Night Driving
Comments:			
Date	Verifier's Initials	Driving Time	Night Driving
Comments:			
Date	Verifier's Initials	Driving Time	Night Driving
Comments:			
Date	Verifier's Initials	Driving Time	Night Driving
Comments:			
Date	Verifier's Initials	Driving Time	Night Driving
Comments:			
Date	Verifier's Initials	Driving Time	Night Driving
Comments:			
Totals:	Driving Time Minimum of 50 Hours	Night Driving Minimum of 10 Hours	

By signing below, I certify that the above total hours of driving experience is true and accurate.  
**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## How did we do?

Please take the time to answer a few questions regarding your use and opinion of this guide. This information is extremely valuable to us and to parents who will use this guide in the future.

How did you receive this guide?

What specific information in this guide was helpful?

How could we make this information more helpful to parents? Is there information we should include in future printings?

Should we continue to provide this guide to parents?

Other comments?

Thank you so much for your comments!

Please mail/email/fax this page to:

Mesa County Health Department  
Occupant Protection Program  
PO Box 20000  
Grand Junction, CO 81502-5033

Fax: (970) 683-6621

E-Mail: [TeenDriving@mesacounty.us](mailto:TeenDriving@mesacounty.us)

## **Special Thanks To...**

Virginia Department of Education  
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration  
Colorado Department of Transportation  
Mesa County Health Department

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