



# When Your Teen IS IN THE Driver's Seat



## What else should you know?

Visit [www.coteendriver.com](http://www.coteendriver.com) for up-to-date information on teen driving laws and links to other resources, such as insurance information, driving schools and where to get a driver's license.

Make sure you call your family's insurance agent to find out what kind of coverage is available while your teen is learning to drive and when he or she becomes a licensed driver. Some companies offer discounts for good grades or completing an approved driver's education course.

### TEEN DRIVER RESOURCES:

AAA Colorado	<a href="http://www.aaacolorado.com">www.aaacolorado.com</a>
Alive at 25	<a href="http://www.aliveat25.us">www.aliveat25.us</a>
Colorado Department of Transportation	<a href="http://www.coteendriver.com">www.coteendriver.com</a> <a href="http://www.dot.state.co.us">www.dot.state.co.us</a>
Colorado State Patrol	<a href="http://www.csp.state.co.us">www.csp.state.co.us</a>
Colorado Department of Revenue Division of Motor Vehicles	(303) 205-8400 <a href="http://www.revenue.state.co.us/mv_dir/home.asp">www.revenue.state.co.us/mv_dir/home.asp</a>
Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association	<a href="http://www.rmiaa.org">www.rmiaa.org</a>
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment	(303) 692-2589
Colorado Department of Human Services Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division	(303) 866-7480

## A Guide for Parents

TEEN DRIVING  
AND GRADUATED DRIVER  
LICENSING LAWS  
IN COLORADO



YOUR TEEN IS IN THE  
DRIVER'S SEAT

## What's your role?

**DID YOU KNOW?**

*Teens face the greatest risk of crashing during the first year of their restricted license. One out of every 5 licensed 16-year-olds will be in a motor vehicle crash.*

**When your teen is in the driver's seat, you're far more than just a passenger.**

Your job is to steer your teen into a lifetime of safe driving. As a team, the two of you can navigate Colorado's new laws and safety guidelines.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death and injury for teenagers because teens lack driving experience. Colorado has implemented Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) Laws to decrease this risk by introducing teenagers to driving in phases. This brochure explains those phases and suggests tips for keeping your teen safe when he or she is in the driver's seat.

**What parents should do:**

- Know the 3 Stages of Colorado's Graduated Driver Licensing Law.
- Supervise your teen's driving.
- Set family driving rules and limits by creating a Parent/Teen Contract.
- Impose consequences for violations.
- Talk to other parents.

**By doing so, you'll know:**

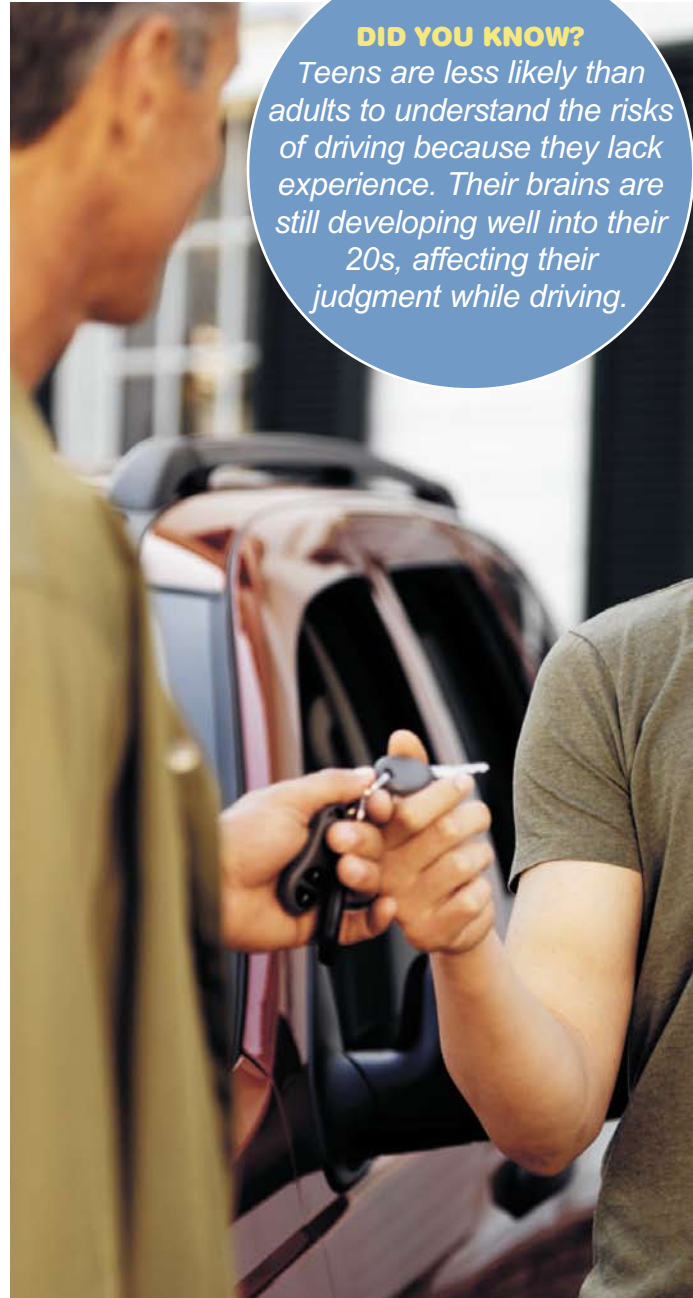
You are being a responsible parent who is keeping your teen safe in the driver's seat.

## Colorado's GDL Laws

- > INSTRUCTION PERMIT
- > RESTRICTED LICENSE
- > FULL PRIVILEGE LICENSE

**DID YOU KNOW?**

*Teens are less likely than adults to understand the risks of driving because they lack experience. Their brains are still developing well into their 20s, affecting their judgment while driving.*



## > PHASE 1

# The Instruction Permit

All new drivers under age 18 require a parent/legal guardian's signed Affidavit of Liability to get an instruction permit, which allows them to drive - with restrictions - under the supervision of a parent or guardian. Whoever signs the affidavit is responsible for any financial liability.

### How old must my teen be to get an instruction permit?

- 15-year-olds who have completed and passed the classroom portion of a state-approved driver's education course within 6 months of applying for their permit may apply.
- Teens who are 15 years and 6 months to 16 years and have completed a 4-hour driver awareness course may apply.
- All 16-year-olds may apply.

### What are the laws for teens with a permit?

- Teens under the age of 18 may not drive with anyone except their driving instructor, parent, legal guardian or a licensed adult 21 years of age or older who is authorized by the parent or legal guardian.
- Teens age 18 and older may drive with any licensed driver 21 years of age or older who holds a valid Colorado driver's license.
- The law prohibits the use of cell phones while driving with an instruction permit. That means no talking or texting.

### After my teen has a permit, what does he or she need to do before applying for a driver's license?

- Hold an instruction permit for at least one year.
- Log 50 hours of driving time with an authorized, licensed parent, legal guardian or alternate permit supervisor. Ten of those hours must be nighttime driving.
- Any minor issued a driver's education permit (the permit for minors 15 years up to 15 years and 6 months) on or after April 23, 2007, must complete behind-the-wheel training prior to applying for their driver's license. For details, go to [www.coteendriver.com](http://www.coteendriver.com) or contact your local Driver's License Office.

## > PHASE 2

# The Restricted License

After fulfilling the instruction permit requirements, teens may apply for a driver's license.

This first driver's license is a restricted license, the only type of license they may receive until they turn 18.

A restricted license means:

- **No passengers under age 21 until driver has held a driver's license for at least six months. No more than one passenger under age 21 until driver has held a driver's license for at least one year. (Siblings and passengers with medical emergencies are exceptions.)**
- All passengers with drivers under 18 must wear seatbelts. This is a primary, enforced law.
- Only one passenger may ride in the front seat.
- No driving between midnight and 5 a.m. until teen has had a driver's license for at least one year, unless accompanied by an instructor, parent or legal guardian. For exceptions, go to [www.coteendriver.com](http://www.coteendriver.com).
- No drinking and driving. Colorado has a **ZERO TOLERANCE** law for minor drivers.
- Obey all traffic laws.
- Carry proof of insurance.
- **Buckle up.** Seatbelts save lives.

### DID YOU KNOW?

*The majority of crashes happen between 9 p.m. and midnight.*

Learn more at [www.coteendriver.com](http://www.coteendriver.com)

> PHASE 3

## The Full Privilege License

Upon turning 18, the teen is issued a full privilege license and restrictions are removed.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Your teen may not need to be added to your auto insurance policy until your teen receives his or her restricted license. However, you should let your insurance company know that your teen is starting to drive.

## Supervise your teen's driving.



**Your teen is in the driver's seat. But as a parent, you still have a lot of steering to do.**

Learning to drive is a complex, ongoing process that requires patience and dedication. So is teaching someone to drive.

The law requires a minimum of 50 hours of practice driving before your teen can even apply for a license. Here are tips for making those hours productive and pleasant.

### **Practice a lot. Limit passengers.**

Practice as much as possible. It's best to practice with just you and your teen in the vehicle.

### **Get in the mood.**

Only practice when you are both ready, in good moods and have plenty of time.

### **Start simple.**

Learning to drive can be overwhelming – for your teen and for you. Begin with the basics, such as turning, parking and backing up. When you both feel comfortable, progress to more advanced skills including merging, changing lanes and parallel parking.

### **Start sunny.**

Begin practicing during the day, in good weather. As your teen improves, gradually start driving during different driving conditions, including a variety of times of day, weather and types of roads.

Learn more at [www.coteendriver.com](http://www.coteendriver.com)



# Be a good role model.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
*Practicing under supervision builds confidence, reinforces good habits and builds a foundation for safe driving.*

## **Go to class.**

Find a class that teaches parents how to drive with their teen.

## **Talk with your teen.**

Keep the lines of communication open so your teen feels comfortable talking with you. This builds trust and respect.

## **Take deep breaths.**

Remember, new drivers need a lot of practice. Making mistakes is part of learning. Remain calm and focused. Teens will show the greatest improvement in the first 1,000 to 5,000 miles of driving.

# Drive Time Log

**USE THIS LOG** to track your teen's 50 hours of practice driving - including 10 hours at night.

## **YOUR INSTRUCTION PERMIT...**

**If you are under 18, you must comply with the following requirements:**

You must be 16 years of age to be issued an instruction permit unless...

you have completed and passed the classroom portion of an approved driver's education course, then you may be issued an instruction permit at the age of 15 years. You must submit proof of completion, along with your identification, at the time you apply for the permit.

Or, if you have completed a State-approved 4-hour driver awareness course, then you may be issued a permit at 15 years/6 months. You must submit proof of completion, along with your identification, at the time you apply for the permit.

You are required to hold your first instruction permit for at least twelve months and be at least 16 years of age before you can get a driver's license in Colorado. This means that if you get your permit on your 15th birthday, you will have to hold the permit until your 16th birthday before you can apply for the license.

Before you can be issued your driver's license, you are required, by law, to complete behind-the-wheel (BTW) training if you were issued your driver's education permit on or after April 23, 2007, and you were under the age of 15/6 months at the time you were issued your permit. The BTW training can be administered two ways: you can take 6 hours with a driving instructor from a department-approved school or, if there isn't a driving school that offers BTW training at least 20 hours per week with an address that is within 30 miles of the permit holder's residence, you may complete 12 hours with a parent, guardian or alternate permit supervisor.

At the time you apply for your driver's license, you are required, **by law**, to submit a log of your driving experience. The log sheet must show a minimum total of 50 hours, with 10 hours of those 50 hours having been at night. The **Drive Time Log Sheet** is used any time you drive. The appropriate box is filled in by the parent/guardian driving with you or by the driver authorized by your parent/guardian to accompany you while you are driving. They will fill in the date, the total drive time, the amount of night driving (if any) and their initials. The **Comments** section is optional for licensing purposes, but is useful for you to track your progress. The Drive Time Log Sheet is the only log sheet acceptable as proof of the required 50 hours of driving experience, unless the log sheet you are presenting is from a state-approved Commercial Driving School, Driver Education or 3rd party testing organization. The 50-hour total may include your BTW training, if administered by your driver's ed teacher or the person who signed your Affidavit of Liability for you to get your permit. You may make photocopies of the log sheet if you need more than one to complete your 50 hours.





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
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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:			
<b>TOTALS</b>		Driving Time	Night Driving
		Minimum of 50 hours	Minimum of 10 hours

**REMINDE YOUR TEEN OF THESE TIPS FOR SAFE DRIVING:**

- **Buckle up.**
- Adjust mirrors and seats before turning on the vehicle.
- Turn on your headlights, day and night, for safety.
- Stop completely at stop signs and red lights. Brake smoothly and avoid slamming on the brakes. When stopping behind another car, stay at a distance from which you can see the tires of the vehicle in front of you.
- When proceeding from a stop: look left, right, straight ahead, then left again before moving.
- When backing up, do not rely on the rear view mirror. Always turn and look directly behind you. Check all directions to make sure the way is clear.
- Remain 15 feet away from trucks on all sides. If you can't see truck drivers in their mirrors, they can't see you either.
- Speed increases braking distance: If you double your speed, quadruple your braking distance.
- Vehicle weight increases braking distance: The greater the vehicle weight, the greater the breaking distance.

**In Winter and Wet Conditions:**

- Maintain traction: Start and stop gradually and drive at steady speeds.
- Skids: If your vehicle begins to skid, remove your foot from the accelerator or brake, and steer in the direction of the skid.
- Braking: Be gentle with brake pressure during slippery road conditions. Avoid braking on curves by driving through them at a safe, steady speed. Gear down for both uphill and downhill driving.

The verifying signature must be from one of the signers of the Affidavit of Liability and Guardianship, form DR 2460, or from the driver Education Instructor. Please check all totals prior to signing.

BY SIGNING BELOW, I certify that the above total hours of driving experience is true and accurate.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent/Guardian or Driver Education Instructor

**For more driving tips, go to**  
[www.coteendriver.com](http://www.coteendriver.com)

# Set Family Driving Rules and Limits



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
*Most families set rules around teen driving. Teens with strong family rules have fewer crashes.*

The state of Colorado has set laws for young drivers. Parents need to determine their own family rules in addition to the state laws. Make sure both sets of rules are clear from the start.

## Driving Rules for Your Family

### Create a written contract with your teen.

A Parent/Teen Contract reduces teens' exposure to the riskiest driving conditions:

- 1.) Teen passengers
- 2.) Driving at night
- 3.) Unsafe roads
- 4.) Weather conditions

**Download a Parent/Teen Contract at**  
[www.coteendriver.com](http://www.coteendriver.com)

### Choose an appropriate vehicle for your teen driver.

Mid- to full-size sedans and wagons with airbags are safest. Under certain conditions, SUVs and small trucks may be more likely to roll over than other types of vehicles.

### Require a full report.

Require information about each trip before your teen leaves, including where your teen is going, with whom and when he or she will return.

**Consider setting an earlier driving curfew,** especially for the first 6 months. Set clear expectations and ensure your teen obeys the state laws.

### Limit distractions.

New drivers need to focus. Minimize things that might draw their attention away from driving. Consider prohibiting

- cell phone usage;
- eating and drinking;
- adjusting the radio/CD player;
- passenger "horseplay."

### Don't let your teen drive when tired.

Sleep-related crashes are most common in young people. Teach your teen to recognize when he or she is too tired to drive.

### Don't let your teen drive when overly emotional.

Tell your teen not to drive when he or she is highly emotional, regardless of whether angry, happy or sad.

### Enforce the passenger restriction law.

**Prohibit riding with someone who has used alcohol or drugs.**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

*For 16 and 17-year-olds, carrying just one passenger increases the crash risk by about 50%.*

**Learn more at** [www.coteendriver.com](http://www.coteendriver.com)



# Impose Consequences for Violations

**Colorado's laws and your family's rules are meant to keep your teen driver – and everyone else on the road – safe.**

But the laws won't work unless they are enforced. Law enforcement will do its part to enforce state laws, and you must do yours to enforce consequences for violations of family rules.

## **Primary and secondary offenses.**

Law enforcement can only stop and cite you for a primary offense. If officers have pulled you over for a primary offense, they can also cite you for a secondary offense. Seatbelt violations are a primary offense for teens under 18. All other GDL violations are secondary offenses. Violations can result in fines, accumulation of points on your driver's license, community service and/or loss of your license.

## **Parent-imposed penalties**

- **Listen or lose.** Make consequences relate to losing driving privileges with the length of time dependent on the seriousness of the violation. For example, if caught with a passenger, take the car keys away for a week.
- **Make consequences known.** Set consequences for common violations before they occur so your teen knows what to expect. Some common violations: carrying a passenger under 21 years of age within the first 6 months of licensure, coming home after curfew, speeding, being untruthful about his or her whereabouts, not wearing a seatbelt.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

*Under Colorado law, parents can have their teen's license revoked.*

***Remember!***  
**Download a Parent/Teen Driving Contract at**  
**[www.coteendriver.com](http://www.coteendriver.com)**

## **Restricted License penalties for seatbelt and passenger restriction violations**

<b>Violation</b>	<b>Fine</b>	<b>Hours of Community Service</b>	<b>License Suspension Points</b>
1st Offense	Up to \$50	8 to 24	2
2nd Offense	Up to \$100	16 to 40	2
Subsequent Offense	\$150	16 to 40	2

***If a driver accumulates 6 or more points through age 18, his or her license may be revoked.***

