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COLORADO  
Department of  
Transportation

## Teaching Your Teen to Drive

A guide for parents and teenagers on the  
Colorado Graduated Drivers License System



# Teaching Your Teen to Drive

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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.

Parents need to play a key role in teaching teens to drive. The teenage brain is not yet fully developed according to the National Institute of Mental Health. Teenagers have a lower perception of risks. 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 Smart!

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# Colorado Laws for Drivers under Age 18:

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## When can a teen get a learner's permit (also called an instruction permit)?

Minors 15 years of age or older must have completed and passed the 30-hour classroom portion of an approved driver education program within 6 months of applying for their permit.

Minors 15 ½ to 16 must complete either the 4-Hour Driver Awareness course, or complete and pass the 30-hour classroom portion of an approved driver's education course within 6 months of applying for their permit. Minors 16 and older have no driver's education requirement.

## How to get a permit:

Visit: <https://www.codot.gov/safety/colorado-teen-drivers> for more information.

## What is a DR 2460 – Affidavit of Liability and Guardianship?

This form is required for anyone under 18 years of age applying for a permit or license and is used by parents/guardians who agree to take legal responsibility for a minor's actions as a driver. The form must be signed by one or both parents in front of a Drivers License employee or a notary public.

The DR 2460 form stays on file with the Department of Revenue until the minor turns eighteen (18) years of age. If at any time, the parent(s) feel that the minor is not operating any vehicle in a safe manner, the parent(s) may go to any Drivers License Office and request to withdraw their signature(s) from the original form and the minor in question will have their driving privileges withdrawn and no longer be legally able to operate a vehicle.

## 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 licensed driver over the age of 21 **who has been appointed by the holder of the Affidavit of Liability**. Ten of those supervised hours must be nighttime driving.
- Minors must have either 6-hours behind-the-wheel (BTW) with a driving instructor, or an additional 30 hours of BTW training with their parent/guardian/alternate permit supervisor prior to applying for their license. The 30 hour provision is an option only if there is no approved driving school within 30 miles of the permit holder's residence that offers classes at least 30 hours a week. **An additional DR2460 would be required if the parent/guardian/alternate permit supervisor provided the behind the wheel training. The 6 or 12-hour provision is an additional requirement to the required log sheet.**
- All minors under the age of 18 may drive only with a licensed driver over the age of 21 **who has been appointed by the holder of the Affidavit of Liability**. (For example: The parent or guardian may give permission to the grandparent or aunt/uncle to drive the teen.)

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

- After holding a valid driver's license for at least six months **no more than one passenger under the age of 21 until after holding the license for a full 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 18, and the number of passengers in the back seat must not exceed the number of seat belts. All passengers with drivers under eighteen 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.
- No cell phones while driving.

### 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 when 911 must be dialed
  - Driver is an emancipated minor
- No drinking and driving
- Obey all traffic Laws
- Carry proof of insurance

# Colorado Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL)

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## 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 drivers 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.

In 2007, the Graduated Drivers Licensing Laws were again amended. Now minors must complete and pass the drivers education classroom portion of a state-approved driver's education course within 6 months of applying for their permit. S/he must also have either the 6-hour behind-the-wheel (BTW) with their driving instructor, or an additional 12 hours of BTW training with their parent/guardian/alternate permit supervisor prior to applying for their license. The 12-hour provision is an option only if there is no approved school within 30 miles of the permit holder's residence which offers drivers training at least 30 hours a week from a permanent location. An additional DR2460 is required if the parent/guardian/alternate permit supervisor provided the behind the wheel training. The 6 or 12-hour provision is an additional requirement to the required log sheet.

## Teen driving statistics

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for young people between ages 15 and 24.
- In 2013, 2,163 teens in the United States ages 16–19 were killed and 243,243 were treated in emergency departments for injuries suffered in motor vehicle crashes. That means that six teens ages 16–19 died every day from motor vehicle injuries.
- 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. (Journal of Adolescent Health 2015)
- The risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among 16-19-year-olds than among any other age group. In fact, per mile driven, teen drivers ages 16 to 19 are nearly three times more likely than drivers aged 20 and older to be in a fatal crash. (IIHS 2013)

## Among teen drivers, those at especially high risk for motor vehicle crashes are:

- Males: In 2013, the motor vehicle death rate for male drivers and passengers ages 16 to 19 was almost two times that of their female counterparts. (CDC 2013)
- Teens driving with teen passengers: The presence of teen passengers increases the crash risk of unsupervised teen drivers. This risk increases with the number of teen passengers.
- Newly licensed teens: Crash risk is particularly high during the first months of licensure.
- 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.
- Even a small amount of alcohol causes impairment. Young drivers are about 1.5 times more likely to have a fatal crash after having one or two drinks and about three times more likely after three drinks.

# Risks of Teen Driving

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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. All teen drivers and passengers with the teen driver are required to wear a seat belt.

## **Distracted Driving**

- Cell Phones, Stereos, etc. cause teens to be inattentive. It is illegal for a teen to use a cell phone while driving in ANY manner. To use a cell phone you must be stopped OUT OF A LANE OF TRAFFIC. This means you can't use a cell phone while stopped at a stop sign. (The exception would be a legitimate emergency where the driver must call 911.)
- 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 percent (It has been estimated that 18 hours awake can cause a person to drive as if they had a BAC of 0.08% according to DrowsyDriving.org)
- 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

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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; 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 of 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 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.

## Language

- Be clear and concise when giving your teen directions.
- When giving your teen feedback, it should be precise and immediate.
- 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 9 and 3 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

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The most important tip for driving in any adverse weather condition such as snow, ice, wind, or rain is to **SLOW DOWN!** 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

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

# Lesson Plans

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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, and 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.

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 first, before demonstrating to your teen

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

# Lesson Plan #1

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## 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 and explain the 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.

## 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 .

# 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 Weld County – Lesson Plan #1

1. Any large, quiet, and mostly empty parking lot will do!
2. Shopping centers at slow times or in an unused area of the lot
3. Church parking lots on days and times without activities
4. School parking lots on weekends or days without school or school 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. 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
- The teen should be scanning about 15-20 seconds ahead of where they are

**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.

### 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.

- 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 Weld 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)

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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.
- 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.

# 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 Weld County – Lesson Plan #3

- This lesson plan should take you on a route that involves roads unfamiliar to your teenager. Choose a quiet local neighborhood and a parking lot with marked parking. (Church parking lots on days other than Sunday can be good spots.)
- 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.
- Have your teenager practice driving on some streets with curves, such as 16<sup>th</sup> Street between 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 47<sup>th</sup> Street, 22<sup>nd</sup> Street between Reservoir Road and 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and F Street all in Greeley.
- Another skill to practice is the double turn lane. There are some of these in downtown Greeley, the corner of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 10<sup>th</sup> Street, and Highway 34 and 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

# Lesson Plan #4

## Expressway/Highway/Interstate Driving

### (10-12 Hours Total Time)

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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 Weld County – Lesson Plan #4

- Fortunately for this lesson plan, Weld County has many examples of highways and interstates. Highway 34 (going either direction) would be a great place to practice. Also, Highway 85 north of Ault would be a good, low traffic road.
- Remember, variety of experience, skill, and time of day are key! Practicing now will eliminate some frustration later.
- Your teenager should practice getting on and off the interstate safely at least 5 times.
- Mountain driving is an important skill in Colorado. Schedule a half-day to have your teenager drive up the Big Thompson canyon west of Loveland with its narrow winding roads.

# Lesson Plan #5

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

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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 key to practice in a variety of settings during the required 50 hours of driving.

- 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 Weld 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 Greeley 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 Greeley, you may want to check out: <http://greeley-gov.com/government/gis>

# Strategies for Teaching the Clutch and Use of a Standard Transmission for Teen Drivers

Published by The Driving Skills Institute

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Teaching the coordination of a clutch and the engagement of a standard transmission is typically one of the most frustrating learning experiences for both the teen driver and parents. The coordination of psychomotor skills to control the accelerator, clutch and brake pedals must become a subconscious activity as quickly as possible. It is a very complex psychomotor activity; the biggest difficulty is trying to coordinate the release of the clutch with a reciprocal movement of depressing the accelerator pedal. This is too much to do at the conscious level, and the brain simply overloads.

We have developed an effective learning strategy for the new driver to learn the operation of the clutch with as little frustration, yelling, screaming and crying as possible (for both the teen and parents). It creates less wear and tear on the clutch than the typical leaning process. It also creates less blood pressure and therefore results in fewer strokes and heart attacks than the typical process of learning to use the clutch.

First, it is important for the parents to remember...while learning to operate the clutch, your child is operating totally at the conscious level because there is NO programming in the brain for that psychomotor skill. It is a lot like an adult visiting England or Australia for the first time and renting a car to drive around. Since everything is on the "wrong" side of the road, and you even drive from the "wrong" side of the car, you have to do everything at the conscious level. It becomes very difficult for even the most experienced driver. Please remember this as you start the process.

The most effective way to learn (program into the subconscious) any psychomotor activity is to take the activity to the smallest denominator. As the smallest pieces of activity are learned, they can then be put together into a "CHUNK" of activity. The objective is to be able to perform the activity without even thinking about it.

**PRELIMINARY:** Find a flat, empty parking lot with as few landscape dividers as possible, and with as little traffic as possible. Do not use your driveway at your house, a public street, etc.

**Step 1.** With the engine running, car in neutral, and emergency brake on, have the student sit behind the steering wheel with both hands on the wheel in a 9:00 and 3:00 position. It is very important for the teen to begin to develop a habit of good hand positions.

Ask the students to depress the clutch pedal, with the left leg, all the way to the floor, and then release the clutch at a slow and smooth pace. Be sure to watch for any "jerkiness" on the release. The objective is to achieve muscle memory for the left leg to release the clutch smoothly and automatically. This should take about 3-4 seconds each time, and should be done 80-100 times. Don't cut corners here, or everyone will pay for it later. The left leg is learning what you want it to do at the subconscious level. If you have a clutch that is very tight or requires heavy pressure, the teen may need a break to relax the left leg.

**Step 2.** Have the student depress the accelerator pedal to approximately 2,000 rpm's (or one quarter throttle if you do not have a tachometer), hold for 2-3 seconds and then release. It is VERY IMPORTANT for the students to hold at approximately 2,000 rpm's for the 2-3 seconds, and not just "jab" at the throttle. It should be a squeezing type of motion with the foot. The objective is to get the throttle control of the engine to the subconscious (automatic) level. Repeat 80-100 times. Again, do not cut corners here.

Although 2,000 rpm's is slightly more than what is necessary for the typical vehicle to start from a static position, the teen will tend to give the engine too few rpm's, or let off the accelerator entirely. This is what causes the "bucking" back and forth of the vehicle when the clutch is released.



**Step 3.** With the engine running, release the emergency brake. This is the first step in which you will begin to move. Have the students depress the clutch pedal, and put the transmission into first gear. Now take the engine to approximately 2,000 rpm's with the right foot, and begin to slowly release the clutch.

(NOW IS THE KEY TO THE ENTIRE PROCESS!! USUALLY WHEN THE NEW DRIVER STARTS TO RELEASE THE CLUTCH, THE CAR STARTS TO MOVE AND THE DRIVER PANICS, JERKS OUT THE CLUTCH AND RELEASES THE ACCELERATOR PEDAL. THIS RESULTS IN A "BUCKING" MOTION OF THE VEHICLE.)

As the clutch starts to release and the vehicle just begins to move forward a few inches, have the student depress (push in) the clutch to the floor (rather than release the clutch). After several repetitions, this will give the foot the programming it needs to automatically realize the release point of the clutch. Repeat this step 35 to 40 times. If the student has problems with this step, go back and repeat steps 1 and 2 a few additional times.

**Step 4a.** After several repetitions of step 3, and after achieving a consistent pattern of success, have the student release the clutch fully and accelerate up slightly in speed, while in first gear, for 50-70 feet. Then slow the car, depress the clutch, and stop. Repeat this several times until the movement becomes automatic.

**Step 4b.** The student should then start from standing still in first gear, accelerate up slightly in speed, depress the clutch, shift to second gear, and release the clutch smoothly while simultaneously accelerating. It is better to repeat several repetitions from first gear to second gear, combining a downshift to first gear while still moving and releasing the clutch smoothly. This will probably result in several little "jerks", but this normally happens while the student is learning to incorporate all these movements into the subconscious level.

**ADVANCED TECHNIQUES:** The student needs to learn how to handle a start from an up-slope condition in a safe place. DO NOT try to teach this on the street. This is a situation which can cause a lot of anxiety, and can create a very high stress situation!

On steeper hills, the student should learn to activate the emergency/parking brake, take the engine to 2,000 rpm's, release the clutch slowly, and as the transmission begins to engage, slowly release the handbrake. This technique also works with the foot operated emergency/parking brake. It is, however, a more complicated maneuver for some people.

\*The Driving Skills Institute (DSI), a Colorado not-for-profit corporation, was founded in 1987 by Ronn Langford. All material contained herein is copyright 1993 by DSI.

# Parent/Teen Driving Agreement

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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 more strict than the GDL. For example, according to Colorado law, drivers under the age of 18 may not drive between midnight and 5 am. 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

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

## Teen Agreement

## Parent Agreement

<b>I agree to abide by all restrictions that apply to my driver's license.</b>	<b>As a parent or guardian for my teen, I agree to:</b>
Only drive the family car when I have permission	Drive you to and from places after 9p.m.
Respect other drivers and not drive aggressively.	Avoid distractions while driving such as eating, changing the radio, or using a cell phone.
Always wear my seat belt.	Always wear my seat belt.
No more than 1 passenger with me at any time, and they must wear their seat belt.	
No cell phone use or texting while driving	No cell phone use while driving
<b>Consequences For:</b>	
Moving Violation, Speeding Ticket 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: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

# Auto Insurance

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As parents, you want to help prepare your teen to be on their own and to be able to handle life's choices and responsibilities. As we teach our teens to drive, we also need to make sure they understand the liability issue and how the risk pertains to them and you as the policyholder.

Everyone knows that the driver is responsible for his/her actions behind the wheel. How many are aware that the owner of the vehicle is also responsible? I have many parents that come to me and ask if they can have a policy in their teen's name. Unfortunately, in most cases that is not feasible. When a teen applies for his/her permit, the "legally responsible person(s)" also signs stating that s/he will be responsible financially for the teen's driving. With most companies, there is not a rate increase for the teen as long as s/he holds a permit and resides in your household; however, you will need to add him/her as soon as s/he holds a valid license. In most cases the vehicle is listed in the parent's name. Even if both the teen and the parent hold the title, the owner of the vehicle and the policyholder are legally responsible for whoever operates the vehicle. If the parent still claims the child on his/her tax return, claiming they financially support that child (college students as well), then they are liable. Therefore, the parents can be sued as well. Colorado has a TORT law in effect for auto insurance claims. This means that the "at fault" party is now responsible for the medical expenses, lost wages, and pain and suffering of the injured parties, even those in the at fault vehicle (as long as the party is not a resident of the insured's household).

I would encourage all parents and teen drivers to meet with their insurance agent to go over the policy's coverage, as well as the costs. Even if the parent(s) pays the full premium for adding a teen and possibly another vehicle, the teen will know the amount of money being paid for their driving privilege, and hopefully appreciate it.

## **Below are a few questions that are commonly asked:**

### **1. Are there discounts available when adding a young driver?**

With most companies there are three discounts available:

- a. Good Student Discount - requires a 3.0 or the equivalent grade point average.
- b. Driver's Education Discount - verify approved courses with insurance company.
- c. Safe Driver - driving incident, even with a permit, can increase your premium.

### **2. Am I covered if I drive someone else's car?**

In most states, you would be covered through the vehicle owner's policy-if s/he gave you permission to use the car. Your own policy may also cover you once the vehicle owner's coverage is exhausted. Both policy premiums could be impacted.

### **3. What if someone else is driving my car and has a crash?**

The other operator would be covered as long as you insured the car and the other person was driving it with your permission. Again, both policy premiums could be affected.

### **4. Why not just purchase the cheapest insurance I can find?**

Finding an attractive rate is important, but you also want to be sure you understand the amounts and types of coverage you're getting for your money. An inexpensive rate could mean lower limits and narrower coverage.

Coverage and discounts are subject to availability and qualifications. Please contact your local agent/company for specifics.

Sue Helfrich, Allstate Insurance Company

# 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
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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:			
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 \_\_\_\_\_