



DRIVER TRAINING:
Developing Skills For A
LIFETIME

TEACHING YOUR TEEN TO DRIVE

Helping your teen become a safer, more knowledgeable and experienced driver takes time and plenty of patience. With parents and guardians playing more of a role than ever before, this guide can serve as a starting point.

In Ohio, a parent or legal guardian must certify that their teenager received at least 50 hours of behind-the-wheel experience, including at least 10 hours of nighttime driving during the temporary permit stage. This is in addition to the driver education course that teenagers are still required to take through a high school or a private driver training school.

So what should be accomplished during the 50 hours you spend with your new driver? How can you make this meaningful, educational and as argument-free as possible? How can you avoid some of the driving disasters that perhaps you personally experienced when starting out as a new driver? For answers to these and many other concerns, read on!

Parents, Are You Ready?

Develop a plan on what you want to accomplish before each lesson. Limit each lesson to no more than an hour, at least until your driver can perform all driving fundamentals. When possible, coordinate your sessions based on the driver training program that your teen is enrolled in.

Keep a log with date, time and lesson accomplishments. Keep the log handy; inside the glove compartment works best. It's going to be virtually impossible to keep this information straight without writing it down, because you will need to account for 50 hours of supervised driver training. There's a form that the parent/guardian will have to sign, verifying completion of the 50 hours of training, which will also need to be notarized. This form is part of the temporary license packet provided by the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

Start with the basics, and don't assume anything.

Practice good driving habits. It's important that you project safe techniques to the household's newest driver.

Develop a parent and teen driver contract. You don't need to be a lawyer to draft such a document.

We've included a sample contract, but feel free to compose one that works for you. It's necessary to talk about and agree on each point. Some of the rules and responsibilities to consider include:

- Guidelines for conduct during the practice sessions
- The importance of safety (speed, cell phone use, safety belts)
- Driving ground rules, including the number of passengers
- Rules for using the car

Help your teen become a safer, more knowledgeable and experienced driver.



Shop for a quality driver training school. Information for various driver training schools is available at: www.drivertraining.ohio.gov.

Call your insurance company or agent. Some insurers will want your new teen driver added to your insurance policy as soon as he/she obtains a temporary permit. Others require teens to be added once they reach the licensing stage. Either way, be prepared for an increase in your insurance premiums.

Parents, Get Set...

Your best bet is to locate a vacant parking lot for the first lesson or two. Using an open area provides you with a comfort level and enables your new driver to get a feel for the vehicle and how it responds. You might want to drive to this designated location for the first lesson or so, and then incorporate driving to the location into the practice time for your teen.

Be sure to provide simple and accurate instructions far enough in advance so that your driver understands and can prepare with ample response time. For example: “Go to the next stop sign and turn left” is easier to understand than “We’ll want to head west when you get to the next stop sign.”

Avoid information overload by teaching too much too soon. After all, you have 50 hours.

Build upon experience. Start in no traffic (vacant parking lot), then light traffic, then heavy traffic. Start on two-lane roads at low speeds before hitting multi-lane highways or the interstate with higher-speed traffic. This is not only to help your new driver become familiar with the whole driving experience, but it also provides you with a chance to warm up to your new role as a driving teacher.

Provide solid cues such as: “Let off of the gas and begin to brake” instead of panic-ridden versions such as: “Slow down! Slow down!” and “Hit that brake before you hit something else!”

Stay calm, and try not to laugh at inappropriate times. New drivers are likely to make mistakes and are very sensitive to the additional parental demands that you’re exerting.

Remain positive by starting and ending each session on a positive note. If you find yourself needing to correct mistakes, take notes and pull over to discuss them without yelling. Reinforce those actions that are good safety habits such as: “I liked how you slowed down and looked both ways before proceeding at that railroad crossing,” or “I’m glad that you slowed down and then stopped at that yellow light instead of trying to speed your way through it.”



Develop a plan on what you want to accomplish before each lesson.

General Rules of the Road

Lecturing is not a favorite pastime of either parents or teens, but the fact is that there are major dangers that should be emphasized regarding driving under the influence, including losing the right to drive. Also, a tired driver can pose a major danger. These points should be covered in the parent/teen driver contract.

Safety feature: For parents who choose, a passenger brake may be available for rental through your local driving school.

Parents, it's Time to Go...

- Start with a vehicle check, including a review of the car's owner's manual. Who knows, you might learn something about that car of yours too! Before your teen turns on the ignition:
- Check around the car to make sure there is nothing in the car's path.
 - Check all mirrors after the seat is properly adjusted.
 - Every few lessons, check the tires and car's fluid levels.
 - Know how to work all lights and signals and the adjustments for seat belts.
 - Adjust the steering wheel column if necessary.
 - Locate the car horn and remind them to use it sparingly.
 - Review the owner's manual on

how to work all other dashboard systems, including cruise control, hazard lights, wipers, heat and air conditioning, stereo system, etc.

- It might also be a good idea before each session to review what your teen driver is learning in his/her driving training course.

Lesson Guide and Log (repeat or prolong as necessary)

- Lesson #1: Starting and Braking**
Practice starting and stopping at different speeds in a parking lot. Many newer vehicles have antilock braking systems which perform differently than power or standard brakes. Make sure you know what braking system your car is equipped with and how to properly use them in all types of weather conditions.
Date: _____
Length of Lesson: _____
Comments: _____

- Lesson #2: The Art of Parking**
Angle, straight in, backing in and parallel parking.
Date: _____
Length of Lesson: _____
Comments: _____

- Lesson #3: Review Laws**
Review state and local traffic laws by asking your teen driver to go through them in such traffic conditions as:
 - What to do when an emergency

Help your new driver become familiar with the whole driving experience.



vehicle approaches

- What to do when you see a yield sign
- How to approach an unloading school bus

Date: _____

Length of Lesson: _____

Comments: _____

Lesson #4: Lightly Traveled Residential/Rural Roads

Drive on rural or lightly traveled roads. Avoid heavy residential areas at first, where kids and other distractions could impair the new driver's initial judgment and car handling. Keep to roads with traffic speeds lower than 45 mph until you and your new driver feel comfortable. This should take more than one lesson to master. Vary your traffic routes and build in more complex situations as you and your new driver are ready.

Date: _____

Length of Lesson: _____

Comments: _____

Lesson #5: Practice Scanning Techniques

Practice scanning techniques in traffic situations. Your new driver should always be prepared for what's ahead and knowing where the car will be 8-12 seconds from now. That's called scanning. This includes awareness of objects and other vehicles that are around the car too. Its purpose is to build a cushion of safety around your car so that you can react in ample time to changing situations and conditions.

Date: _____

Length of Lesson: _____

Comments: _____

Lesson #6: Stop Lights/Signs

Practice stopping distances and looking in all directions before proceeding at a stop light or stop sign. Make sure your new driver understands the importance of these.

Date: _____

Length of Lesson: _____

Comments: _____

Lesson #7: Light Traffic Road Trip

Have your teen plan a 30-minute road trip in light traffic, perhaps to a shopping center for parking experience.

Add errands during your trips as you feel comfortable, including a trip to the gas station (perhaps have your new driver pump and pay for the gas).

Date: _____

Length of Lesson: _____

Comments: _____

Lesson #8: Multiple-Lane Highway Driving Situations

Make sure to review proper passing procedures, lane changing and merging traffic patterns. Only practice passing on four-lane roads at this point.

Date: _____

Length of Lesson: _____

Comments: _____

Lesson #9: City Driving

Pick areas that provide different types of situations, speeds and traffic flows. Practice left and right-hand turns, parking on the street and then pulling into traffic, crossing busy intersections, school zones, center turn lane situations, one-way street patterns, and narrow and wide streets. This can be an exhausting experience for both parent and teen, so take this in several doses (lessons). Try this at different times of the day so that your new driver understands how traffic conditions can vary. Add errands to break up the monotony or stress build-up.

Date: _____

Length of Lesson: _____

Comments: _____

- Lesson #10: Highway Driving**
When you feel your new driver is ready, it's time to add one of the most dreadful ingredients—speed. Highway driving is extremely diverse and, once again, requires several sessions. There are two-way rural highways, multi-lane highways, expressways and interstates. Incorporate them all through the help of a state or local map. One of these sessions should include a long highway drive, perhaps to visit a relative or friend, or even tied into a family vacation. But don't plan a trip to Florida just to meet the 50-hour requirement. Addressing the proper methods of entering and exiting a highway and the importance of maintaining the speed limit are also suggested.

Date: _____
Length of Lesson: _____
Comments: _____

- Lesson #11: Night Driving**
Set the stage by covering how to drive with your headlights, how to turn on low and high beams and when to use them, and the proper setting adjustment of the rearview mirror. Night vision adjustments might not come easy. Suggest that your driver look slightly to the right side of the road if oncoming car lights seem too bright. Since you will have at least 10 hours of nighttime driving with your teen, it's suggested that you build in various weather and road conditions during this time as you both become more comfortable.

Date: _____
Length of Lesson: _____
Comments: _____

- Lesson #12: Foul-Weather Driving**
Only when your teen driver becomes experienced should you start to practice driving in such conditions as heavy rain, fog, snow and ice. Since it's almost like relearning how to drive, perhaps it's time to revisit that vacant parking lot where your lessons

all began. Be sure to stress that under hazardous road conditions, it's important to slow down and use windshield wipers and headlights. Occasionally checking the wear on tires and wiper blades should also be stressed. In addition, make sure your teen understands how to properly apply the brakes. (For instance, you engage antilock brakes differently than conventional brakes on icy surfaces.)

Date: _____
Length of Lesson: _____
Comments: _____

- Lesson #13: Tricky and Treacherous Driving Situations**

For example, driving in the hilly country can be fun but also dangerous. There are a number of signs posted on winding roads that a new driver should become familiar with.

Date: _____
Length of Lesson: _____
Comments: _____

- Lesson #14: Handling Emergencies and Crashes**

Unfortunately, the fact is that both of these situations do happen. Cover procedures regarding what to do in case of a crash, location of the insurance identification card in case law enforcement asks to see it, and location of the car's emergency kit. Knowing how to change a flat tire might also come in handy.

Date: _____
Length of Lesson: _____
Comments: _____



A Family Agreement Between Parent/Guardian and Teen Driver

I, _____ being a licensed driver, do hereby agree with my parent(s) or guardian to the following responsibilities when I drive:

1. That I will drive any car as carefully and as cautiously as I can, knowing that I may be legally responsible for my acts.
2. That I fully recognize that a car is not a toy, but a machine that has the power to kill and injure.
3. That I will not drive above the legal speed limits posted, nor will I attempt to impress others by disobeying speed limits.
4. That, because I am fully aware of the risks involved in drinking and driving, I will not allow the car to be driven by anyone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, including myself.
5. That I will always slow down and look both ways at intersections, especially in school zones and at crosswalks, and that I will pay attention to signals at all railroad crossings.
6. That I will adhere to all curfews and restricted driving hours, and will always call home if I expect to be late.
7. That I will not street race, regardless of how much of a temptation it might be to do so.
8. That I will not attempt to drive if I am feeling sleepy.
9. That I will obey all street and highway signs, traffic lights, stop signs and traffic laws.
10. That I will always wear my seat belt, make sure all passengers are belted and keep the car doors locked.
11. That I will pull over to a safe place to use my cell phone. I will not allow myself to be distracted from driving.
12. That I will limit the number of passengers to the number of seat belts in the car. (Under Ohio law, 16-year-old drivers are limited to one unrelated passenger unless the driver's parent or guardian is also in the car.)
13. As a temporary permit holder, I will be a patient student driver when I am out practicing with my family/guardian/instructor. I also understand that I am not permitted to drive unless accompanied by a licensed driver age 21 or older.

Should I fail to heed this agreement, I understand the consequences, including the possibility of losing all driving privileges and being prosecuted for causing harm to myself and others. I could also place my family in serious financial jeopardy if I am careless behind the wheel of the car.

I am signing this family agreement of my own free will.

X

Teen Signature

Date

X

Parent or Guardian Signature

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have just reached an important milestone with your teenager; one that you will hopefully continue to build on in the years to come. We encourage you to share your knowledge and experience as your teen driver encounters new challenges and responsibilities.



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WWW.PUBLICSAFETY.OHIO.GOV

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
P.O. BOX 182081
COLUMBUS, OH 43218-2081

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