TEACHING YOUR TEEN TO DRIVE

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
SAFETY · SERVICE · PROTECTION

www.publicsafety.ohio.gov

DTO 0171 8/16 [760-1282]

Before a temporary instruction permit holder under age 18 can apply for an Ohio driver license, a parent or legal guardian must certify that the permit holder received at least 50 hours of behind-the-wheel experience, including at least 10 hours of nighttime driving. This is in addition to the driver education course teenagers are required to take through a high school or private driver training school.

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 with your teen's driver training program.

Keep a log with the date, time and lesson accomplishments. You will have to complete and sign a Fifty Hour Affidavit verifying completion of the 50 hours of training. This form, which also must be notarized, is provided by the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles and can be obtained at www.ohiobmv.gov or at any driver license exam station or deputy registrar.

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

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

Develop a teen driver contract. We've included a sample contract, but feel free to compose one that works for you. Some rules and responsibilities to consider include:

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

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

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. I will drive as cautiously as I can, knowing that I may be legally responsible for my acts.
2. I recognize that a car is a machine that has the power to kill and injure.
3. I will not drive faster than the posted legal speed limits.
4. I will not allow the car to be driven by anyone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, including myself.
5. I will slow down and look both ways when necessary, especially in school zones and at crosswalks. I will pay attention to signals at railroad crossings.
6. I will adhere to all curfews and restricted driving hours, and will always call home if I expect to be late.
7. I will not street race.
8. I will not attempt to drive if I am feeling sleepy.
9. I will obey traffic laws, street and highway signs, traffic lights, and stop signs.
10. I will always wear my seat belt, make sure all passengers are belted and keep the car doors locked.
11. I will not use my cell phone while driving. I will pull over to a safe place to use my cell phone. I will not allow myself to be distracted from driving.
12. I will limit the number of passengers to the number of seat belts in the car. (Under Ohio law, for the first 12 months of being licensed, drivers are limited to one non-family 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 understand that I am not permitted to drive unless accompanied by a licensed driver age 21 or older. (Permit holders under age 16 must drive accompanied by a parent, legal guardian or certified driving instructor.)

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 _____ X _____

Teen Signature Date Parent or Guardian Signature

Lesson #11: Night Driving
Set the stage by covering how to drive with 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, try to incorporate various weather and road conditions during this time.

Lesson #12: Inclement–Weather Driving
As your teen driver becomes experienced, start to practice driving in conditions such as heavy rain, fog, snow and ice. Consider revisiting that vacant parking lot where your lessons began. 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. Make sure your teen understands how to properly apply the brakes. For example, you engage anti-lock brakes differently than conventional brakes on icy surfaces.

Lesson #13: Tricky and Treacherous Driving Situations
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.

Lesson #14: Handling Emergencies and Crashes
Cover what to do in case of a crash, location of insurance information and location of the car's emergency kit. Knowing how to change a flat tire might also come in handy.

Call your insurance company or agent. Some insurers will want your teen driver added to your policy as soon as he or she obtains a temporary permit. Others require teens to be added once they reach the licensing stage.

PARENTS, GET SET...

Your best bet is to locate a vacant parking lot for the first lesson or two. Using an open area enables your new driver to get a feel for the vehicle and how it responds.

Provide simple and accurate instructions in advance so your teen has time to understand and prepare.

Avoid 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 interstates with higher speeds. This will help your new driver become familiar with the driving experience while you adjust to your role as a driving teacher.

Provide solid cues such as: "Let off the gas and begin to brake," instead of panic-ridden versions such as: "Slow down! Slow down!"

Stay calm, and try not to laugh at inappropriate times. New drivers are likely to make mistakes and may be sensitive to parental evaluation.

Start and end each session on a positive note. If you need to correct mistakes, take notes and pull over to discuss them without yelling. Reinforce good safety habits with comments 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 through it."

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

PARENTS, IT'S TIME TO GO...

Start with a vehicle check, including a review of the car owner's manual. Before your teen turns on the ignition:

- Check inside the vehicle for objects that may block the driver's view (i.e. items hanging from rearview mirror and objects in the rear window.)
- Check around the car to make sure there is nothing in the car's path.
- After the seat is properly adjusted, check all mirrors.
- Every few lessons, check the car's tires and fluid levels.
- Know how to work all lights and signals and how to adjust seat belts.
- Adjust the steering wheel column, if necessary.
- Locate the car horn and remind your teen to use it sparingly.
- Review how to work dashboard systems including cruise control, hazard lights, wipers, heat and air conditioning, stereo system, etc.
- Before each session, consider reviewing what your teen is learning in his/her driving training course.

SUGGESTED LESSON GUIDE

Lesson #1: Starting and Braking
Practice starting and stopping at different speeds in a parking lot. Many newer vehicles have anti-lock 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 the brakes in all weather conditions.

Lesson #2: The Art of Parking
Angle, straight in, backing in and parallel parking.

Lesson #3: Review Laws
Review state and local traffic laws by asking your teen driver to go through them in traffic conditions such as:

- What to do when an emergency vehicle approaches,
- What to do when you see a yield sign,
- How to approach a school bus that is letting off and/or loading passengers.

Lesson #4: Lightly Traveled Residential/Rural Roads
Drive on rural or lightly traveled roads. Avoid heavy residential areas at first. 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 routes and build in more complex situations as you and your new driver are ready.

Lesson #5: Practice Scanning Techniques
Your new driver should prepare for what's ahead and know where the car will be in 8-12 seconds. This is known as scanning and includes awareness of objects and other vehicles. Its purpose is to allow time to react to changing situations and conditions.

Lesson #6: Stop Lights/Signs
Practice stopping distances and looking in all directions before proceeding at a traffic light or stop sign.

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 (have your new driver pump and pay for the gas).

Lesson #8: Multiple-Lane Highway Driving Situations
Review proper passing procedures, changing lanes and merging traffic patterns. At this point, only practice passing on four-lane roads.

Lesson #9: City Driving
Pick areas that provide different situations, speeds and traffic flow. Practice left and right 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 exhausting for both parent and teen, so allow for multiple sessions. Schedule lessons at different times of the day so your new driver understands how traffic conditions can vary. Add errands to help reduce monotony or stress.

Lesson #10: Highway Driving
When you feel your new driver is ready, it's time to add 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 with 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. Be sure to address the proper methods of entering and exiting a highway and the importance of maintaining the speed limit.