

Ohio Public Safety



Resource Sheet

Freeway Lessons

Graduated Driver License Law - The Ohio Graduated Driver License Law (GDL) mandates that a young driver receive a minimum of 24 clock hours of classroom instruction and eight hours of behind-the-wheel instruction in driver training through a licensed driving school. In addition to this requirement, they must receive at least 50 hours of in-car practice (10 of these at night) with a parent or legal guardian.

How can you make this as meaningful, educational and argument-free as possible? Develop a plan on what you want to accomplish before each driving practice session. Review the brochure "Teaching Your Teen to Drive" on the Web at <http://www.drivertraining.ohio.gov/parentsteens.htm>. There are 14 lessons outlined in this brochure for your use.

Also, communicate with your driving school instructor or Training Manager. Ideally, coordinating the parents 50 hours of practice driving with the driving school classroom and behind-the-wheel lessons will provide your teenager with the best results. The Ohio Driver Training Curriculum includes 24 hours of classroom instruction in which many important driving concepts and information are introduced. The 8 hours of behind-the-wheel instruction includes basic operation skills and much more. Because each student learns at different rates, and each county has different types of roadways available in the area, not every student in Ohio will have the opportunity to receive freeway driving, night driving, foul weather, or handling of emergencies with a licensed instructor.

These are critical skills for the teenage driver to experience with supervision prior to being allowed to drive under these situations without adult supervision. Be sure to consult with the driver training school at the beginning of the classroom training to ensure that your teenager receives a freeway driving lesson with the school, and if possible, the night time lesson. The weather and emergencies cannot be planned for every student; it is the parent's responsibility to supervise the driving for Lessons #12-14.

- Lesson #10 – Highway Driving (freeway driving or controlled access highways is a required curriculum activity for the driving school to provide)
- Lesson #11 – Night Driving (schools are required to provide this training in the car when possible)
- Lesson #12 – Foul weather driving
- Lesson #13 – Tricky and Treacherous Driving Situations
- Lesson #14 - Handling Emergencies and Crashes

Myth: Freeway driving is dangerous.

While all types of driving involve risks, freeway driving is among the safest type of driving we do. Although speeds are higher on freeways, there are no issues such as cross streets, oncoming vehicles, and other conflicts that cause increased risks that are found on two lane roads.

Are schools required to provide freeway training to students?

The Ohio Administrative Code says, "The training program will be based on the principles of and cover, at a minimum, the body of knowledge contained in the "Ohio Driver Training Curriculum" prepared August, 2002." The Ohio Driver Training Curriculum In-car Lesson Six is a lesson on controlled access highways. So the answer is yes.

What if my school is located more than an hour from a freeway?

Controlled access highways also serve this function. If the in-car lesson originates from a point that it is geographically impossible to get to a freeway or a controlled access highway within the allotted lesson time, the school would not have to provide that training. The Ohio Administrative Code states, "No more than two students may be in a vehicle while behind-the-wheel instruction is being given. No credit for the hours of required behind-the-wheel instruction shall be given to a student who not is driving."

By taking two students at one time, a lesson could be extended to four hours, allowing plenty of time to reach a freeway or controlled access highway that is suitable for instruction. Each student can only receive two hours of credit for driving, but students would be afforded the opportunity for freeway instruction. Observation time is valuable for one student to learn from another and to benefit from the information and coaching provided by the instructor.

What if a student doesn't have enough experience to be safe on the freeway?

Ohio Administrative Code 4501-7-10 (B) (4) All required classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel training shall be made available to the student by the driver training enterprise within six months after the date the training begins. Parents, use this time to your teenager's advantage. Spread out the lessons to give your teen the best chances to practice, gain skill, improve confidence, and prepare for the next lessons.

Parents, students, and schools, all must realize that learning to drive takes longer than eight hours. The role of drivers' training is to form a foundation for safe driving practices. Sometimes, it may be necessary to delay training so that a student can get more practice before attempting freeway driving. Parents and students should not expect unreasonable goals to be obtained and schools must take time in the beginning to explain what goals are reasonable. Each student learns at a different rate, so each student's progress must be measured on its own merit.

What if the student is fearful of the freeway?

Spending additional practice time with that student on roads in which the speed limit is 45-55 mph can help the student gain confidence and skill in maintaining speed control and lane control. Practicing on multi-lane roads or one-way streets with multi-lanes is a good building block for freeway driving. The student can practice making safe lane changes that will help the student develop consistency in making mirror and blind spot checks and adjusting speed and lane positions. These are the skills needed for getting on and off the freeway as well as learning and executing passes. Freeway driving is an important skill for every driving to have. Participating in this training with a licensed instructor is valuable.

To best prepare your teenager for this lesson, make sure you are scheduling four, two hour lessons or eight, one hour lessons with the school. In between each lesson that the school provides, provide at least three to five hours of supervised practice driving with the teenager so they are well prepared to participate in the next two hour lesson. After three to four hours of lessons with the school, assess your teenager's progress with the school personnel. If your teenager is not yet ready for the freeway lesson, delay scheduling the next lesson with the school. More supervised practice under your guidance is critical.

OAC 4501-7-10(B)(5): No student shall be given more than four hours of classroom or behind-the-wheel instruction in one day. While the rules allow for two, four hour lessons, this is often not in the teenager's best interest. For best results, schedule one to two hour lessons and allow several weeks in between for practice and preparation under your supervision. Work cooperatively with the school so that your teenager receives all the training time and activities provided in the Ohio Driver Training Curriculum. Discourage the practice of the school giving your child four-hour driving lessons.

It should be a rare situation in which a teenager is not able to progress with their skills so that they are able to participate in the freeway or controlled access highway training. The skill of moving on and off the freeway or in and out of traffic safely is essential for driving in this day and age.

Are there any other rules pertaining to freeway driving?

No instructor shall permit a beginning driver to operate a motor vehicle on an interstate highway until the beginning driver first receives at least two hours of behind-the-wheel instruction on a roadway that is not an interstate highway.

Freeway driving is an important issue for all drivers, regardless of where they reside. Proper training, patience, and practice are the keys.

Many additional items for parents use are available on the Web page at:
<http://www.drivertraining.ohio.gov/parentsteens.htm>

