

# Ohio Public Safety

## Fact Sheet



## Selecting a Driver Training School

**The state of Ohio requires you to complete driver training in order to apply for your driver's license prior to your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. But how do you select a driver training school?**

**Consider these factors when making your selection:**

- ↴ Be cost conscious and quality conscious. Driver training and obtaining a driver's license has lifelong benefits and potential consequences. Shop for the highest quality training that you can afford. Ask the school to show you a copy of the Driver Training School Rules (Ohio Administrative Code 4501-7) under which the school operates. Ask what company provides the school's required performance bond and insurance policies.
- ↴ Choose only schools and instructors that are state-certified. The school and instructor licenses must be posted at the school in a public location. Check to be sure they are licensed for the current year. Ask how long the school has been in business. Ask about the instructors experience in the classroom and behind-the-wheel. Ask if you will have the same instructor for each lesson. Ask if the instructor has any history of crashes occurring during driver training lessons. Ask when the training will be completed and if there are any reasons that the training would not be completed in a timely manner.
- ↴ Ask to see the curriculum including lessons and materials. Ask how much classroom time is spent reviewing videos (should be no less than three and no more than nine hours). Ask if part of the eight hours behind-the-wheel will include night driving, highway driving, interstate driving, and practice for the state skill test (about 30 minutes is appropriate). Check school vehicles. Cars used for training should be in safe, clean condition. Ask what year and kind of cars are used and what their maintenance schedule is like. Will they allow use of the school vehicle for your teenager to take the state skill test and if so, what is the fee?
- ↴ Visit the school and interview the instructor. Ask when each lesson will be completed and what the route will be. What follow-up will the instructor give the parent after each lesson?
- ↴ Check class size and structure (student/teacher ratio) Ask how many students will be in the classroom (more than 30 can be challenging to manage for learning). Ask how many students will be in the car for driving lessons (one or two is acceptable, but only actual driving time counts toward the eight hours of required driving time).
- ↴ Check with friends and relatives for recommendations. Ask for a list of previous students to call as references.
- ↴ As you would in picking any business, you can check with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) to see if any previous customers filed complaints against the school. Ask BBB if the school ranks in good standing.
- ↴ Finally, before you commit to a school, review the written agreement carefully to be sure your expectations will be met and understood. Read rule 10 about training, 12 about agreements, and 13 about records in the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) to understand the rules under which the schools must operate. These are posted on the driver training Web page at <http://www.drivertraining.ohio.gov/laws.htm>
- ↴ Keep a copy of the Certificate of Completion before giving it to the exam station. Provide a copy to your local insurance agent for a possible insurance discount.
- ↴ Keep a copy of all paperwork from the school until

## Selecting a Driver Training School continued

your teenager has obtained an Ohio driver's license and you are satisfied with the experience. Keep a log of all discussions with the school including dates and times, topics, and school staff with which you dealt. Written documentation is needed if the service does not meet your expectations.

### **Commercial schools licensed by the Department of Public Safety must:**

- ↴ Comply with the Driver Training rules identified in Ohio Administrative Code 4501-7.
- ↴ Complete an annual renewal process. Each year the school must pass an inspection of the training facilities, vehicles, curriculum, insurance, and review of student records. Each school must show proof of the required insurance and a performance bond.
- ↴ Each instructor must submit a current driving abstract each year and his/her driving record must meet minimum standards for licensing.
- ↴ Each instructor must complete a current criminal background check that meets minimum standards for licensing. This criminal background check is required only for first time applicants or for instructors whose license has lapsed for more than a year. It is not an annual requirement.
- ↴ Each instructor must complete at least 40-hours of training which must be renewed every ten years.
- ↴ First time instructor applicants must provide a satisfactory physical exam. After that, annually the instructor must sign that they are physically and mentally fit for the job.

### **Potential Issues or Discussion Points with the School**

- ↴ Scheduling or cancellation issues. What is the procedure and possible fees for the student or parent to cancel or re-schedule a lesson? What is the procedure if the instructor or school has to cancel or re-schedule a lesson due to unforeseen circumstances (instructor ill, vehicle flat tire or other repair issues, weather conditions, etc.)? Are there fees assessed for cancellations, re-schedules, or not showing up for a lesson?
- ↴ What is the refund policy? Are there any conditions for which a school will provide a refund?
- ↴ What can you do if the instructor does not provide the full amount of time for the lesson? Or if the instructor runs personal errands (bank, post office, groceries, etc.) during instructional time? If you have a complaint about inappropriate stories, comments, language or other unexpected situations what should you do?
- ↴ The driver training rules (OAC 4501-7) require the student to start and finish their training with the same school. Ask all of your questions and gather as much information as you can to help ensure a positive experience.

