

Oklahoma

State

Legislative Brief

Senate

June 1999

Graduated Driver Licensing System

Issue Background

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among teens in Oklahoma. Sixteen year-old drivers have more crashes than any other age group. Surviving the first few crucial months of driving isn't easy - 25% of new drivers have a crash or receive a ticket in their first driving year. In 1998 there were 140,000 drivers involved in crashes. 18,450 of the drivers were between the ages of 15 and 18 years of age, which represents 13% of the total drivers involved in crashes. There were 769 fatalities of which 490 of the fatalities were the drivers. Of the 490 drivers killed, 43 were drivers between the ages of 15-18. This age group represents 8.8% of the drivers killed. *Traffic collisions are the leading cause of death for 16 year-olds!*

Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) works. GDL phases in driving privileges as the new driver gains experience behind the wheel. Easing young drivers into the traffic environment through more controlled exposure to progressively more difficult driving experiences can reduce their traffic crashes.

Summary of Actions

In response to the disproportionately high incidence of motor vehicle crashes involving youthful motorists and the need to develop a graduated licensing system, Oklahoma became the 33rd state in the nation to pass legislation to safeguard the lives of novice teen drivers. SB 413, the Graduated Driver Licensing bill, was signed by Governor Keating on May 17. It takes effect August 15, 2000. This bill, which only affects those students who live in school districts which offer driver education but encourages all persons to take a driver education course, provides for both restricted and unrestricted driver licenses for those persons 16 years or age or older.

States With Graduated Driver Licensing



SB 413 Graduated Driver License Provisions

- Age 15 Students may drive but only with driver education instructor sitting next to the students on the front seat of the vehicle. No permit or license required.
- Age 15 ½ Students in a driver education class or under parent's supervision (certified by sworn affidavit through the Department of Public Safety) may take a written test and receive a learner's permit. Students may then drive, but only with a licensed driver at least 21 years of age in the front seat with the student driver.
- Age 16 Driver Education students may take written/driving tests and obtain full-unrestricted license.

Non-driver education students may take written/driving tests and obtain a restricted license. They can then drive during daylight hours - and also at night, but only to and from school, school functions, work and church-related activities. One passenger is permitted. Family members are also permitted. More non-family members are permitted if a parent or guardian is a passenger in the front seat.

- Age 16 ¹/₂ Those who have been issued a restricted license and have not been cited for any moving violations may take a driving test and obtain a full-unrestricted license.
- Age 17 Those passing written and driving tests may obtain a full-unrestricted license, assuming these tests have not already been passed in connection with obtaining a restricted license.
- **Note:** 1. Those at least 16 years of age who attend a school where driver education is not available may take written and driving tests and obtain a full unrestricted license.
 - 2. Current law regarding motorcycle licensure is unaffected.
 - 3. Students are in no way required to take driver education, nor are schools required to offer driver education.

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