# Florida Drivers Guide for Parents and Teens

**DRIVEwithCARE**

# WHAT IS GRADUATED LICENSING?

## 15 YEARS OLD

- MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENT FOR LEARNER'S LICENSE
- DRIVERS MUST ALWAYS HAVE A LICENSED DRIVER 21 YEARS OR OLDER IN THE CLOSEST SEAT TO THE RIGHT OF THE DRIVER.
- FOR THE FIRST THREE MONTHS, DRIVING IS LIMITED TO DAYLIGHT HOURS ONLY.
- AFTER THREE MONTHS, HOURS ARE EXTENDED TO 10 PM.
- TEEN MUST HOLD LEARNER'S LICENSE FOR 12 MONTHS CONVICTION-FREE.

## 16&17 YEARS OLD

- ONCE TEENS RECEIVE AN OPERATOR'S LICENSE, DRIVING HOURS ARE BASED ON THEIR AGE.

A. 16 YEARS OLD - DRIVING IS ALLOWED BETWEEN 6 AM & 11 PM.*

B. 17 YEARS OLD - DRIVING IS ALLOWED BETWEEN 5 AM & 1 AM.*

* AT ANY OTHER TIME, 16 AND 17 YEAR OLD DRIVERS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A LICENSED DRIVER AT LEAST 21 YEARS OF AGE IN THE CLOSEST SEAT TO THE RIGHT, OR BE TRAVELING TO OR FROM WORK.

A SAFER FLORIDA

## 18 YEARS OLD

**THERE ARE NO RESTRICTIONS ON DRIVING HOURS.**

DRIVE WITH CARE

WWW.FLHSMV.GOV/TEENS

# Drive with CARE

## Florida Drivers Guide for Parents and Teens

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This booklet was produced by The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.
Funding provided by the Florida Department of Transportation.

# Dear Parent:

Your teen has finally arrived at a time he or she has been looking forward to - learning to drive! This will be a memorable experience for both of you. This guide has been developed to help both of you accomplish this very important life-long skill.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death and injury for teenagers because they lack driving experience. Florida has implemented Graduated Driver Licensing Laws to decrease this risk by introducing teenagers to driving in phases to help them gradually - and safely - build their skills and experience behind the wheel. Your teen becomes better able to handle high-risk conditions as he or she gains driving experience and maturity.

As role model and coach, your teen driver will be watching what you do and will look to you for your guidance and expertise. Some important aspects of your job include:

- Knowing and enforcing the driving laws.
- Knowing the 3 stages of Florida's Graduated Licensing: Learner's License, Intermediate License, Full Privilege License.
- Supervising your teen's driving.
- Certifying that your teen has completed at least 50 hours of supervised driving.
- Setting family driving rules and limits.
- Imposing consequences for violations.
- Talking to other parents.
- Choosing a safe vehicle for your teen.

This booklet was designed as a teaching tool and should be kept in the car you use to teach your teen to drive. It contains valuable advice, checklists, a driving log, a sample driving contract, and a driving certification form to help you teach your teen to be a safe and confident driver. Please take the time to read and use this valuable resource.

Sincerely,
Clayton Boyd Walden, Director
Division of Motorist Services

# Dear Florida Teen:

Congratulations on earning your Learner's License! Learning to drive is not a simple activity because there are so many things you have to be aware of as you drive. Start out slowly and listen to those teaching you.

Driving is a privilege. I urge you to Drive with CARE – Courtesy, Attention, Responsibility and Experience. This booklet contains valuable tools to assist you in mastering critical driving skills. Be sure to practice all the skills on the checklists.

Pay close attention to the driving restrictions and requirements for obtaining your operator's license. You are in the first phase of your graduated driver license. Until you obtain your intermediate operator's license you must always have a licensed driver over 21 years of age in the closest seat to your right when you are driving. Until you are 18 years old your driving hours are limited. As you get older and gain more driving experience the restrictions will change.

A driving log is provided for recording your supervised driving. Under Florida law, you must have at least 50 hours of behind the wheel driving experience. Ten of those hours must be at night.

Be sure to visit our website for more driving and licensing information at www.flhsmv.gov/teens.

Sincerely,
Clayton Boyd Walden, Director
Division of Motorist Services

# What it Means to Drive with CARE

## Courtesy

- Being polite
- Being patient
- Leaving adequate room between cars
- Passing only on the left
- Yielding to pedestrians
- Allowing cars space to merge

## Attention

- Using side and rear view mirrors
- Scanning the road ahead
- Minimizing distractions
- Keeping both hands on the steering wheel
- Listening for sirens
- Paying attention to traffic signs and signals

## Responsibility

- Driving sober
- Following traffic rules
- Wearing safety belt and requiring all passengers to buckle up
- Keeping the car in good working condition
- Keeping automobile insurance current
- Maintaining a calm demeanor

## Experience

- Learning to drive with safe, seasoned drivers
- Asking questions of experts

# Supervising Your Teen's Driving

Learning to drive is a complex, ongoing process that requires patience and dedication. So is teaching someone to drive.

Florida law requires a minimum of 50 hours of practice driving, of which 10 hours must be at night, before your teen can even apply for an Intermediate License. Use the checklists provided in this booklet to help you with teaching your teen important driving skills and exposing them to a variety of driving experiences. Below are tips for making those hours productive and pleasant.

**Model safe driving.**
Teens learn what they observe. Be a good role model and follow the rules of the road.

**Practice.**
Practice as much as possible. You and your teen should be the only people in the vehicle.

**Get in the mood.**
Only practice when you are both ready, in good moods and have plenty of time.

**Start simple.**
Learning to drive can be overwhelming - for your teen and for you. Begin with the basics, such as turning, parking and backing up. When you both feel comfortable, progress to more advanced skills to include merging, changing lanes and parallel parking.

**Start sunny.**
Begin practicing during the day, in good weather. As your teen improves, gradually start driving in different driving conditions to include various times of day, weather and types of roads.

**Don't rush into rush hour.**
Start with safe, low-risk driving conditions, such as empty parking lots and quiet rural roads. Gradually progress to neighborhood streets with little traffic, then on to busier roads and highways.

**Go to class or do research.**
Find a class or consult materials that teach parents how to drive with their teen. This guide is a good beginning. Check with your insurance agent, too. Many companies and organizations provide additional materials that can help you with the responsibility.

**Talk with your teen.**
Keep the lines of communication open so your teen feels comfortable talking with you. This builds trust and respect.

**Take deep breaths.**
Remember, new drivers need a lot of practice. Making mistakes is part of learning. Remain calm and focused. Teens will show the greatest improvement in the first 1,000 to 5,000 miles of driving.

Keep driving rules in place and continue to monitor and coach their driving by taking occasional rides with them after they have obtained the Intermediate License. If your teen complains about your continued involvement, remind him or her that having a license doesn't mean that a person is a perfect driver. It just means he or she meets the minimum requirements for a driver license.

# Teen Driving Facts

- Driving is the most dangerous daily activity we can undertake.
- Car crashes are the #1 cause of death among American teenagers.
- The per-mile fatality rate for 16-19 year-olds is four times that of adults.
- Teenagers make up 10% of the U.S. population, but account for 14% of all vehicular fatalities and 20% of all reported crashes.
- Nearly half of all fatal car crashes involving teen drivers are single-car crashes. Teens are more likely than any other age group to be involved in a single-car crash.
- One-third of all fatal crashes involving teen drivers are caused by speed.
- The accident rate among teen drivers doubles when the number of passengers in the car increases from two to three.
- The first 1,000 hours behind the wheel are the most dangerous for teenagers.

## Common Driving Mistakes

- Failing to pay attention
- Distractions inside the vehicle
- Driving while drowsy
- Failing to adjust to weather conditions
- Driving aggressively
- Making assumptions about another driver's intentions
- Speeding
- Changing lanes without checking blind spots and mirrors
- Driving while upset
- Drinking and driving
- Swerving
- Not wearing a safety belt
- Overcorrecting
- Failing to yield the right of way
- Tailgating; not leaving enough room between vehicles
- Not allowing enough time or space to merge, exit a roadway or change lanes
- Ignoring essential auto maintenance

# Getting to Know the Car Checklist

- ☐ Lock and unlock the doors
- ☐ Open and close the trunk
- ☐ Operate the air conditioner and heater
- ☐ Operate the windshield wipers and wash windshield
- ☐ Open and close the hood
- ☐ Check the oil
- ☐ Check the water
- ☐ Operate the horn
- ☐ Operate lights and adjust beams
- ☐ Operate the emergency flasher / hazard lights
- ☐ Operate the emergency brake
- ☐ Operate the turn signals
- ☐ Locate the gas tank; open and close cap
- ☐ Put gas in car
- ☐ Locate the car jack and spare tire
- ☐ Read the gauges on the dashboard
- ☐ Operate the radio, music system
- ☐ Locate the owner's manual

## Pre-start Checklist

- ☐ Walk around car to look for any obstacles
- ☐ Check the tires for wear and air
- ☐ Adjust the seat
- ☐ Put on safety belt
- ☐ Adjust the mirrors
- ☐ Adjust the temperature in the vehicle
- ☐ Adjust the stereo volume

# Driving Practice Checklist

## Driving Skills

- ☐ Start vehicle
- ☐ Observe street signs
- ☐ Observe stop signs
- ☐ Observe traffic lights
- ☐ Make left turns
- ☐ Make right turns
- ☐ Make three-point turn
- ☐ Drive in reverse
- ☐ Change lanes
- ☐ Use turn lanes
- ☐ Use turn signals
- ☐ Navigate a 4-way stop
- ☐ Merge into traffic
- ☐ Parallel park

## Driving Environments

- ☐ Parking lots
- ☐ Neighborhoods
- ☐ Industrial areas
- ☐ Country roads
- ☐ Dirt roads
- ☐ Interstates
- ☐ In-town/city traffic
- ☐ Expressways
- ☐ 4-lane highways
- ☐ Parking garages

## Driving Conditions

- ☐ Sunny weather
- ☐ Rainy weather
- ☐ Wet roads
- ☐ Windy
- ☐ Pre-dawn
- ☐ Early morning
- ☐ Mid-day
- ☐ Afternoon
- ☐ Heavy traffic
- ☐ Dusk
- ☐ Nighttime
- ☐ Foggy

# Driving Log

Use this log to record driving sessions. A teen must have a minimum of 50 hours of supervised driving before applying for an intermediate operator's license.

| Driving conditions - check all that apply | Amount of time | Parent /Adult's initials |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ day ☐ night ☐ heavy traffic ☐ light traffic ☐ rainy ☐ dry ☐ foggy | | |
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# Driving Rules and Contract

While your teen has a learner's license, we recommend that you begin discussing your expectations for when he/she gets an intermediate license. Most families have rules regarding teen driving to help teens stay safe as they begin to drive on their own. Explain that the rules are meant to help them make safe choices, especially when a friend might try to get him/her to do something that is unsafe. Breaking your rules should have consequences, which may become less restrictive as the teen obeys the rules and his/her driving skills develop. Review the contract every three months for adjustments.

## Key contract components:

■ **Driving hours:** Remember that until the age of 18, driving hours are limited in accordance with the graduated licensing law. You may decide to further restrict these hours.

■ **Passenger restrictions:** We strongly encourage you to limit teen passengers. The facts are clear that the more teen passengers, the greater the chance for crashes to occur.

■ **Driving violations/tickets:** Teens are expected to obey all traffic laws. If they don't, who will pay the ticket? What other consequences will there be? Many parents remove all driving privileges for a period of time, determined in part by the severity of the offense.

■ **Safety belts:** Law requires safety belt usage. Make your teen responsible for requiring everyone in the vehicle to buckle up. There should never be more passengers in the car than there are safety belts.

■ **Vehicle responsibilities:** If teens are driving a family car (which we recommend for at least a while) will they help pay for maintenance and gas? If they damage the car, will they be responsible for repairs? What other consequences will there be? How will these issues be handled if they occur in the teen's vehicle?

■ **Unacceptable driving behaviors/activities:** These include any activity where the driver takes his/her eyes off the road and/or takes one or both hands off the steering wheel when the car is not in park or turned off. Common distracted behaviors include: talking and texting on a cell phone, eating, applying makeup, reading and any type of horseplay.

■ **Weather conditions:** In Florida we can't always avoid a thunderstorm, but teens (really all drivers) should avoid driving in any severe weather. It is best to wait until the storm passes. As a teen begins to learn to drive, you may want to only allow driving during dry conditions.

■ **Trip plan:** Teens should drive with a purpose in mind and not to just go for a ride. We strongly suggest that you require your teen driver to check in each time they drive and give you detailed information about where they are going, when they will return and who they are with.

■ **Other issues** you may wish to include in the contract could include grades and family responsibilities such as picking up a sibling from after school activities.

# Sample Contract

## ITEM 1: Driving hours

Agreement:

Consequence:

---

## ITEM 2: Passengers

Agreement:

Consequence:

---

## ITEM 3: Driving Violations/tickets

Agreement:

Consequence:

---

## ITEM 4: Safety belts

Agreement:

Consequence:

---

## ITEM 5: Vehicle Responsibilities

Agreement:

Consequence:

---

## ITEM 6: Unacceptable driving behaviors/activities

Agreement:

Consequence:

---

# Sample Contract

## ITEM 7: Weather conditions

Agreement:

Consequence:

---

## ITEM 8: Trip Plan

Agreement:

Consequence:

---

## ITEM 9: Other

Agreement:

Consequence:

---

Signature of Teen

Signature of Parent Date

# STATE OF FLORIDA
# DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAY SAFETY AND MOTOR VEHICLES
# CERTIFICATION OF DRIVING EXPERIENCE OF A MINOR

I do hereby consent that_____, a minor,
First Middle Last

date of birth _____ has driven a minimum of 50 hours during the past 12 months, of which 10 hours of driving were at night per Section 322.05(3), Florida Statutes.

_____ _____
Signature of Parent, Legal Guardian or Responsible Adult

Print Name

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF _____

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me this _____day of _____, 20_____,

by _____ who is personally known to me or produced identification

_____ as proof of identification.
(Identification type and number)

_____
Notary Public or Driver License Examiner-Signature

_____
Print, Type or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. One parent, legal guardian or other responsible adult over 21 years of age must sign this form.
2. All signatures must be notarized or witnessed by an examiner.

HSMV 71022B (0706)

# Driving is a Privilege

Driving is not a right, it is a privilege. Like all privileges, driving can be taken away or restricted when rules and laws are not followed. The following are behaviors teens, less than 18 years of age, need to avoid if they want to keep their driving privileges:

- Obtaining a traffic conviction while on a learner's license extends the learner's license period for one-year from the date of the conviction or until the teen turns 18, whichever happens first.
- Getting six points on a driving record within a 12-month period will restrict driving to "business purposes only" for 12 months or until the driver turns 18, whichever happens first. The restriction will extend 90 days for each additional point during the restriction period.
- Having a blood alcohol level of .02 or higher will result in administrative suspension for six months on the first offense. A second offense results in a one-year suspension. This applies to anyone under 21 years of age.
- Refusing to submit to alcohol testing results in an administrative suspension for 12 months. A second offense results in an 18 month suspension.
- School truancy may result in a student's license being suspended until the student provides proof of school attendance for 30 consecutive days.
- Tobacco products possession convictions are punishable by revoking the teen's license from six months to a year.

## Points are assessed on a person's driving record when convicted of a traffic violation as follows:

- Speeding less than 15 miles over the speed limit = **3 points**
- Speeding more than 15 or more miles over the speed limit = **4 points**
- Speeding that results in a crash = **6 points**
- Driving during restricted hours = **3 points**
- Moving violation = **3 points**
- Moving violation resulting in a crash = **4 points**
- Reckless driving = **4 points**
- Improper lane change = **3 points**

# Florida Drivers Guide for Parents and Teens
# 2012 Version

Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles
2900 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

www.flhsmv.gov