



# Teen Driving

## Graduated Licensing Information

Traffic crashes are the leading killer of Minnesota teens. To minimize risks of injury or death, new laws limiting teen passengers and nighttime driving will help teens hone driving skills during the first year of licensure and reduce exposure to high-risk situations. Violating these laws is a misdemeanor.

### Nighttime Driving Limitation — Effective August 1, 2008

For the first six months of licensure: Driving is prohibited midnight – 5 a.m.

**Exemptions:** Driving when accompanied by a licensed driver age 25 or older; driving between home and place of employment; driving to/from home and a school event for which the school has not provided transportation; driving for employment purposes

The nighttime limitation is lifted after the first six months of licensure.

### Teen Passenger Limitations — Effective August 1, 2008

For the first six-months of licensure: Only one passenger under the age of 20 is permitted, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.

For the second six-months of licensure: No more than three passengers under the age of 20 are permitted, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.

**Exemption:** Passengers under age 20 who are members of the immediate family are permitted. *These provisions also apply to teens licensed before August 1, 2008. For example, a teen licensed on July 1 has five months and a subsequent six months of limitation requirements, rather than starting the limitation time periods anew on August 1.*

### Seat Belt Use

Drivers and passengers under age 18 must wear a seat belt or be properly secured in a child restraint.

### Cell Phone and Texting Restrictions

It is illegal for drivers under age 18 to use a cellular/wireless phone, whether hand-held or hands-free — except to call 911 in an emergency. A new law has made it illegal for drivers of all ages to compose, read, or send text messages or access the internet on a wireless device while on the road.




## Drinking and Driving

It is illegal for a person under age 21 to drive after consuming any amount of alcohol. Consequences for underage drinking and driving are loss of license for at least 30 days and court fines. Teen drivers with a provisional license whose driving privileges are revoked from a crash or alcohol/controlled substance-related violation cannot regain a license until age 18.

### Driving Regulations by License Status

- Stage 1. Instructional Permit  
Statute Number 171.05
- Stage 2. Under 18 Provisional Driver's License  
Statute Number 171.055
- Stage 3. Under 21 Standard Driver's License  
Statute Number 171.02
- Stage 4. Standard Drivers License  
Statute Number 171.02




To view these State Statutes and other transportation related Statutes, visit:  
<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?view=part&start=160&close=174A>

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| <p><b>Teens were asked... 'What is most disturbing when trying to pay attention while driving?'</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instant or text messaging while driving - <b>37 percent</b></li> <li>[The teen driver's] emotional state - <b>20 percent</b></li> <li>Having several friends in the car - <b>19 percent</b></li> <li>Talking on a cell phone - <b>14 percent</b></li> <li>Eating or drinking - <b>7 percent</b></li> <li>Having a friend in the car - <b>5 percent</b></li> <li>Listening to music - <b>4 percent</b></li> </ul> | <p><b>Are Graduated Licensing Laws the answer to improving teen safety?</b></p> <p>Graduated licensing laws are effective at reducing teen crashes, but they don't replace the need for sound parenting. Stressing to your child the importance of these laws helps, but one of the most important influences parents can have is to set their own driving rules for their beginning driver regardless of how strong the law is. The most effective rules for parents to enforce may be the toughest, especially for parents hoping to end their role as chauffeur. Especially during a teen's first year of driving, parents should institute restrictions to keep their teen out of the most dangerous situations.</p> |
|  <p style="text-align: center;">Keeping our community safe!</p>  | <p><b>Parents' Role in Developing Safe Teen Drivers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforce these teen driving laws and follow through with your own consequences if violations occur.</li> <li>• Monitor and train teen drivers — even after licensure. Teens need supervised exposure in a variety of driving conditions and environments.</li> <li>• Be a positive role model: buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention, and don't drive aggressively.</li> </ul>  |

Although these laws are a step in the right direction, Safe Communities of Wright County urges parents to consider if these restrictions are enough for their teen drivers. While limiting nighttime driving from midnight to 5 a.m. is a start, parents should know that the peak of night time driving crashes for teens is from 9 p.m. to midnight. Well before the restriction goes into place. Safe Communities of Wright County recommends a 9 p.m. driving curfew for the first few months until driving skills are more fully developed.



Likewise with the teen passenger limitation, the law is a start, but Safe Communities of Wright County would recommend stronger parental restrictions. According to a John Hopkins Study, the addition of just one passenger along with a teen driver increases crash risk by 39%. The addition of 3 passengers increases crash risk increases by nearly 200%. Parents of teen drivers are encouraged to totally restrict any passengers for the first few months of driving until their driving skills can be more fully developed. Then, slowly add passengers as teens gain experience behind the wheel.

| Additional Resources  |   |
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| <br><b>Minnesota Office of Traffic Safety</b>  |  |
| <br>MN Law Enforcement Guide to Teen Driving   | <b>Mn.driveinfo.org</b>   |
| <a href="http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/">http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/</a>                                 |  |
| <a href="http://www.safecommunitiesofwrightcounty.com/default.aspx">http://www.safecommunitiesofwrightcounty.com/default.aspx</a> |   |