

# What are GDL Programs?

Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) programs are designed to minimize the highest risk situations for a new driver while they safely gain crucial experience behind the wheel. GDL programs introduce young drivers to the road slowly with a gradual, staged approach to earning a driver license.

## GDL LAWS SAVE LIVES

Car crashes are the number one killer of teens, taking almost 4,000 young lives annually. These crashes are not just sad accidents—they are preventable crashes.

Since the inception of GDL laws, teen fatalities and serious injuries have been reduced by up to 40%.

**50%** of teens killed in car crashes were passengers driven by another teen

## THREE STAGES OF THE GDL LAW:

- 1 Instruction Permit
- 2 Provisional/Intermediate License
- 3 Full Driver License

It's simple. Read on to understand the different licensing stages and guidelines.

## WHAT CAN TEENS, PARENTS, AND GUARDIANS DO?

By understanding, following, and enforcing GDL laws, teens, parents, and guardians can minimize the risk of a car crash and keep the roads safer for everyone.



Visit [ImpactTeenDrivers.org/California](https://ImpactTeenDrivers.org/California) for more information and to take the online Parent-Teen GDL Module.



OTS CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY



Teen Safe Driving Coalition

California State PTA

# Understanding GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSING LAWS

California



**Impact**  
Teen Drivers



## STAGE 1

### INSTRUCTION PERMIT

The Instruction Permit stage is the time to gain driving experience.

This stage can begin at age 15½. Teens must register for an approved integrated driver education training program and obtain a certificate of enrollment to bring to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Once a teen has studied the state's Driver Handbook, they should head to the DMV to take the written driver exam. Once they pass the exam, they become the proud holder of an Instruction Permit. The Instruction Permit needs to be signed by the driver education instructor to be valid.

Teens need a minimum of 50 hours of behind-the-wheel supervised driving time with a licensed parent or guardian (over 25 years old). Ten of those hours must be at night and an additional six hours must be with a driving instructor. They will hold their Instruction Permit for a minimum of six months before taking the DMV driving test for a Provisional License.

## STAGE 2

### PROVISIONAL/INTERMEDIATE LICENSE

Once a teen passes the behind-the-wheel driving test at the DMV, they will receive their Provisional License.

A Provisional License allows the teen driver to drive ALONE. However, they must follow these driving restrictions while in the Provisional License stage:

- No *passengers* less than 20 years old (unless accompanied by a licensed driver age 25 or older)
- No driving between *11 p.m. and 5 a.m.*
- *Seat belts* are mandatory for all people in the car
- No *electronic device* use while driving, hands-free or not

Teens will have a Provisional License for one full year or until they turn 18, whichever comes first.



## STAGE 3

### FULL DRIVER LICENSE

After one year of safe driving, the *passenger* and *nighttime* GDL restrictions are lifted. Once a teen turns 18 years of age, the *electronic device* restriction is lifted. Remember, hands-free is not distraction-free. Seat belts remain mandatory for all occupants of a vehicle under California law.

With full driver license privileges, teens can participate in all of the privileges, responsibilities, and enjoyments that come with driving. But remember, driving is a privilege, not a right, and it is important to drive safely at all times no matter age or experience.

Congrats!

