

Graduated Driver Licensing System Planning Guide



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Centers for Disease
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National Center for Injury
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Overview



Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among teenagers. Graduated Driver Licensing systems (GDL) give beginning teen drivers experience driving under lower-risk driving conditions, while allowing them time to acquire the skills, maturity, and experience necessary for full licensure. National and state-wide evaluations indicate that GDL reduces fatal crashes among newly licensed teen drivers. Importantly, the more comprehensive GDLs are associated with the greatest benefits.

GDL consists of three stages:

Stage 1. Learners Permit: Teens can drive only under the supervision of a licensed, adult driver.

Stage 2. Intermediate License (also called provisional license): Teens can drive without supervision under lower risk driving conditions. Two common restrictions include limits on nighttime driving and driving with teen passengers.

Stage 3. Unrestricted License: Teens can drive independently and previous restrictions are lifted.

Currently all 50 states and the District of Columbia have implemented all or some of the components of a 3-stage Graduated Driver Licensing systems but specific components and timelines for progressing through the GDL stages vary from state-to-state.

To reduce crash deaths and injuries involving teen drivers, state partners can assess their states' motor vehicle-related injury and crash burden among teens, their passengers, and others who share the road with teens; assess the risk and protective factors for teens in their state; develop actionable plans to reduce crashes involving teen drivers; and build and leverage partnerships with diverse stakeholders. To assist states with assessment, planning, and implementation of strategies to reduce teen driver crashes, CDC developed the Graduated Driver Licensing System Planning Guide.

This planning guide is designed to assist states to assess, develop, and implement actionable plans to strengthen graduated driver licensing practices. The guide may be used by individuals or groups within a state working to improve GDL. The guide includes five sections that address:



1. Background information on GDL



2. Data and their use in planning for GDL improvements



3. Partnerships and their role in supporting efforts to improve GDL



4. Communication



5. Strategy development to improve GDL

The first four sections of the guide contain a series of questions that states can use to assess strengths and opportunities in teen driving safety, and help identify action steps for developing an overall plan to improve teen driver safety and improve GDL. The last section of the guide presents a framework for synthesizing the information into a comprehensive strategy for improving GDL including goals, timelines, and responsibilities.

The planning guide was designed to be adapted to accommodate particular needs among different states and communities. For example, states may prefer to give more or less attention to some sections of the guide or may find it beneficial to complete the sections in a different order. States may also consider

whether there are issues relevant to their local context that are not addressed in this guide. For states and communities that have little or no experience with community assessment on transportation issues, consultation with an expert facilitator is recommended.

This guide reflects the experiences and insight of national and state GDL experts and partners, including some from states that have improved their GDL. As part of the process of developing this guide, CDC solicited individual feedback and opinions of traffic safety and public health practitioners and researchers. Their names are listed at the end of this document and their contributions to creating this planning guide were invaluable.

I. Background

Introduction

Gathering background information about your state's current GDL system is an important part of preparing your plan. This section of the planning guide provides questions that, when answered, will help you understand your state's unique needs and opportunities. If you are unfamiliar with how your state's GDL system was established, this is a good opportunity to learn about the history of GDL in your state.

Details of each state's GDL are available from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (<http://www.iihs.org/iihs/topics/laws/graduatedlicenseintro?topicName=teenagers>) and the Governors Highway Safety Association (http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/license_laws.html).

Assessment

1. What are the features of your state's current GDL?

- What is the minimum age to acquire a learner's permit?
- What is the minimum length of time a learner's permit must be held before getting an intermediate license?
- What is the length of the intermediate license stage?
- At what age are all restrictions lifted?
- Are there nighttime driving restrictions? If yes, at what time do they begin and end? How many months during the intermediate licensing stage do they last?
- Are there passenger restrictions? If yes, what are they? How many months during the intermediate licensing stage do they last?

- Are there exceptions for any of the above restrictions (e.g., family exemptions for passenger limits, night driving exemptions for school and/or work trips, shorter mandatory holding periods for driver education graduates)?
- Is enforcement of GDL primary or secondary in your state?
- How much law enforcement activity is there for night, passenger, and other restrictions?
- Are there other important features of your GDL not captured by the answers to the questions above?

2. When was your state's GDL first established and have there been any updates?

- When was GDL first established in your state (provide date)?
- What stakeholders were involved in your state's past GDL efforts?
- Has your GDL been revised since then?
 - » If Yes, what changes have been made?
 - » If No, does your current GDL have gaps compared to current evidence?

3. What effect has GDL had in your state?

- Has GDL been evaluated for safety benefits in your state? If so, what were the results?
- Are there any studies about awareness of GDL among parents and/or teens in your state, or studies of compliance among teens? If so, what have these studies found?
- How have parents, teens, and other stakeholders in your state reacted to GDL? Are there any sound scientific data to document public reaction?

Action Step 1: Background

Based on this section of the planning guide, what should you do to gather background information about GDL in your state? Write your ideas below and then continue on to the next section. After completing the four action steps (one at the end of each section), you will have an opportunity to synthesize the ideas from each action step and create an overall strategy in the last section of the planning guide.

II. Data

Introduction

Data play an important part in any planning process. Data on young driver crashes may reveal patterns related to driver age, crash type, nighttime driving, and presence of passengers, thereby helping identify ways in which GDL could be more effective in saving lives in your state. Data are important to identify, monitor, and evaluate evidence-based strategies that can be utilized to save lives. In addition to national data sources such as National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA's) Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) (<https://www.nhtsa.gov/research-data/fatality-analysis-reporting-system-fars>) and Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) (<http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/>), fatal and non-fatal crash data may be available locally from your state Department of Transportation, health department, state police/patrol, hospital emergency departments, and other sources. Surveys to help understand parental perceptions and knowledge of the risks of teen driving and the effectiveness of strategies, such as GDL, can help states and local communities target those strategies that are likely to fit the needs of the community.

Assessment

1. What data have you used to examine young driver crashes in your state?

- What have you learned from these data?
- How have you used this information?
- What do these data suggest as possible improvements to GDL in your state?

2. What are the most important unanswered questions about young driver safety in your state?

- What data are needed to answer these questions?
- How can you access existing data and/or collect the data you need?

3. Do neighboring states have data that could be helpful to you?

- Do any neighboring states have more comprehensive GDL with data to document effectiveness?

4. Have survey data on GDL already been collected in your state?

- What did you learn from these data?
- How have you used this information?
- How can you collect public perception data on teen driver safety and GDL if you don't already have it?

Action Step 2: Data

Based on this section of the planning guide, what should you do to use data for planning GDL improvements in your state? What data sources do you need and are they readily available? Write your ideas below and then continue on to the next section. After completing the four action steps (one at the end of each section), you will have an opportunity to synthesize the ideas from each action step and create an overall strategy in the last section of the planning guide.

III. Partnerships to Improve Teen Driver Safety



Introduction

Efforts to improve GDL require strong partnerships with diverse groups including state and local agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and citizens with expertise in traffic safety, communication, social and print media, outreach and education, funding, data collection and analysis. Creating these partnerships is an important step in the planning process. Features of a successful partnership include strong leadership, a core working group responsible for implementing strategies on behalf of the partnership, and someone who can devote a significant amount of time to the day-to-day management of this effort. The Partnership Matrix (pages 8 and 9) can be used to help create a new partnership or assess the strengths and needs of an existing group.

Assessment

1. Does a partnership already exist in your state that can focus on GDL?

- What stakeholders are currently represented?

- What additional stakeholders need to be recruited?
- What will be the roles of partnership members?
- What core group will be primarily responsible for doing the work?
- Who will lead and who will staff the effort?

2. If a partnership does not already exist, how can you form this group?

- What stakeholders need to be recruited?
- What will be the roles of partnership members?
- What core group will be primarily responsible for doing the work?
- Who will lead and who will staff the effort?

3. Does your partnership have the expertise, resources, and other capabilities it may need?

- What capabilities does the group already have?
- What additional capabilities may be needed?
- How can these be acquired?

Action Step 3: Partnership

Based on this section of the planning guide, what should you do to improve your current partnership or form a new partnership to support GDL in your state? Write your ideas below and then continue on to the next section. After completing the four action steps (one at the end of each section), you will have an opportunity to synthesize the ideas from each action step and create an overall strategy in the last section of the planning guide.

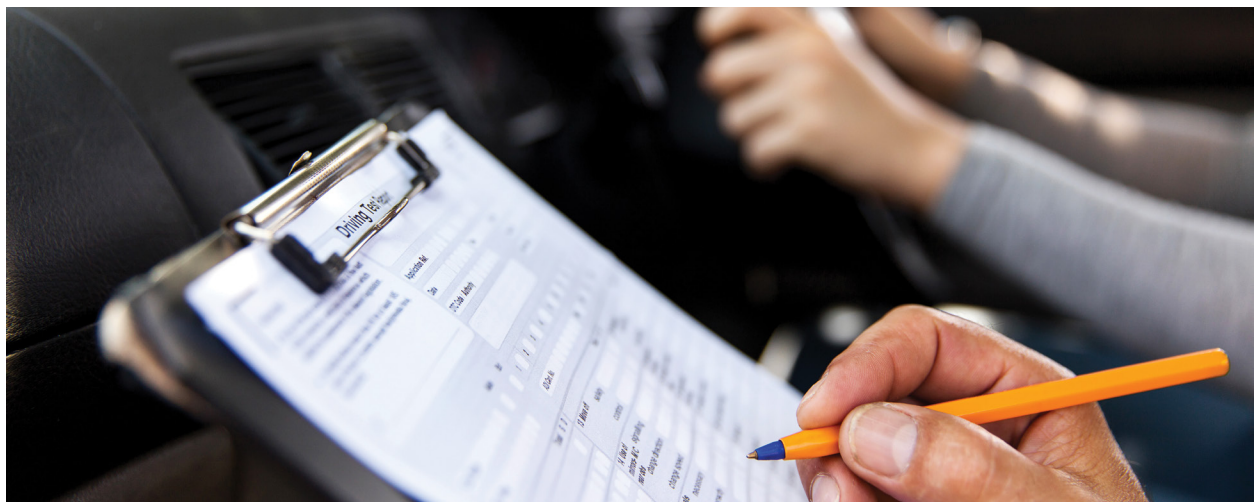


GDL Partnership Matrix

This matrix can be used to help create a new GDL partnership or assess the strengths and needs of an existing group. The top row lists capabilities your group may need. The left column lists many possible partnership members. Please remember that partnerships **do not** necessarily require all of these members. This list is intended only as a stimulus for you to consider which stakeholders may be appropriate for your group. First, place a check in the cells of the matrix to inventory your current partnership’s members and capabilities. Then consider which additional members you want to recruit to create the strongest possible partnership.

Partnership Members	Partnership Capabilities							
	Collecting data	Analyzing interpreting data	Creating print materials	Working with the media	Educating decision makers	Working with key stakeholders	Managing partnership meetings	Contributing resources
Government								
State and local elected officials								
State Highway Safety Office								
State Department of Transportation								
Department of Motor Vehicles								
Departments of Health (state and local)								
Other:								
Traffic Safety Organizations								
Community Traffic Safety Groups								
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety								
National Safety Council								
AAA								
Safe Kids								
MADD								
SADD								
Teen crash survivors and families								
Other:								
Law Enforcement								
Police association								
Police department								
State police / highway patrol								
Sheriff's department								
Other:								
Health Care								
American Academy of Pediatrics								
Hospitals								
Doctors								
Nurses								
Emergency Departments								
Trauma Centers								
Other:								

Partnership Members	Partnership Capabilities							
	Collecting data	Analyzing interpreting data	Creating print materials	Working with the media	Educating decision makers	Working with key stakeholders	Managing partnership meetings	Contributing resources
Emergency Response								
EMS								
Fire safety								
First responders								
Other:								
Researchers								
Universities								
Research institutes								
Other:								
Businesses								
Chamber of commerce								
Driver education								
Insurance industry								
Alcoholic beverage industry								
Newspaper, radio, and TV								
Automobile dealers								
Youth-serving business								
Other:								
Schools								
Parent-teacher association								
Student groups								
School board members								
Principals								
Superintendents								
Other:								
Other								



IV. Communication



Introduction

A communication plan can be developed for how the partnership will share their findings with key audiences about the safety benefits of improving GDL. Your communication plan may include steps for developing print materials, working with media outlets, creating and posting on social media, and identifying parents, teens, health care providers, and other community members who can provide personal stories of their experience with GDL and the importance of teen driver safety. Framing, a communication strategy for influencing, understanding and building support for evidence-based solutions, may be particularly useful in communication planning.

Assessment

1. How can “framing” of messages be used to enhance understanding and support for improving teen driver safety?

- How have others used framing in messaging to improve understanding and support for traffic injury prevention initiatives? How can you learn more about this approach and/or acquire expert assistance in this area of communication science?
- What do various audiences currently think about the status of teen driver safety in

your state and about who is responsible for addressing this issue?

- How can you frame the discourse about GDL as a proven strategy to improve teen driver safety?

2. How will you educate those in your state and community about the strength of the evidence for specific GDL components to save lives?

- What educational materials will you need? (e.g., print materials, PSAs, podcasts, social media posts, blog posts, etc.)
- What specific audiences do you want to reach? (e.g., parents, decision makers, teen drivers/passengers, law enforcement, media, educators, etc.)
- What state, local, and non-traditional media channels can you use to reach your audience? (e.g., newspapers, radio, television news, newsletters, school newspapers, blogs, social media outlets, listservs, etc.)
- Have there been any recent high profile events you can use to bring more attention to the continued need to protect young drivers? (e.g., teen crash, updated GDL legislation in neighboring states, new data, etc.)

Action Step 4: Communication

Based on this section of the planning guide, what can you do to educate decision makers, opinion leaders, and the general public about how improvements to GDL could improve teen driver safety in your state? Write your ideas below and then continue on to the next section. After completing the four action steps, you will have an opportunity to synthesize the ideas from each action step (one at the end of each section) and create an overall strategy in the last section of the planning guide.

V. Strategy

Introduction

It is time to formulate your strategy! Your plan should incorporate action steps identified during the earlier sections of this guide and include additional tasks necessary to develop a comprehensive strategy. The table below provides a basic framework to begin

developing your plan. Please adapt this framework to meet your needs. You may find it easiest to complete this chart in electronic form to facilitate adding additional steps and detail.

What changes are needed to improve the GDL program in your state?

What steps are needed to implement changes identified and listed in the box above?

Who will you engage and when will this be complete?

What are the main steps your partnership will undertake?	Who will do this?	By when will this be done?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

How will you monitor progress to ensure you are on track with your plan and make mid-course adjustments when needed?

Attachment:

CDC thanks the traffic safety and public health practitioners and researchers for their invaluable contributions to creating this planning guide. Contributors' affiliations at the time that they provided input (2008) are listed below.

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