

# Contents



Starting from an early age our nation's desire to drive has developed into a symbol of freedom. It is the goal of the Alberta Motor Association, with this guide, to provide new drivers with the proper foundation to ensure that their future privileges remain intact.

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For more information about AMA Driver Education, call, come in, or visit our website.

**1-800-642-3810 | [AMADriverEducation.ca](http://AMADriverEducation.ca)**



# Introduction

Independence. New drivers, especially teens, anticipate it eagerly, but parents have mixed feelings when it comes to seeing their own teen driving. There is something about handing your keys over to your teen for the first time that can inspire fear in even the most stoic of us for obvious reasons. Road crashes are the leading cause of death among young people, beating suicide and other accidents.

(Traffic Injury Research Foundation, 2008)

For teenagers and new drivers, driving promises freedom, independence, status and pleasure. Perhaps you are looking forward to your teen learning to drive for the same reasons. It is a relief when you are finally able to relinquish the role of “taxi driver” and gain more independence and freedom from your driving obligations.

# Introduction continued

However, it is important that your eagerness to have your teen drive does not unduly influence your decision to allow them on the road. Are they ready to handle the responsibilities and manage the risks of driving?

Every stage of your teen's development has a readiness component. By now you have probably realized that rushing them through a stage doesn't make it happen any faster. When your teen is ready, they will more easily grasp the concepts of driving easier and use better judgement than if they had been pushed along before their time.

As a coach, you play a critical role in helping new drivers to become responsible proactive drivers. As a parent, even though you may have enrolled your teen in driver education, you still play a major role in helping your teen become a proficient driver. Knowing how to approach the new role of "driving coach" has an impact on how well the information is received. With this in mind, we want to help you and your teen to work together to make the road safe for everyone.

## The focus of this guide is to:

- help you assess the real risks associated with new drivers
- help you know when your teen is ready to drive
- provide information on what to consider when handing over the keys to your teen
- give practical suggestions on how to take an active role in the coaching of your new driver
- maximize your teen's chance of survival behind the wheel during an extremely high risk period.



# New driver risk factors – stats & causes

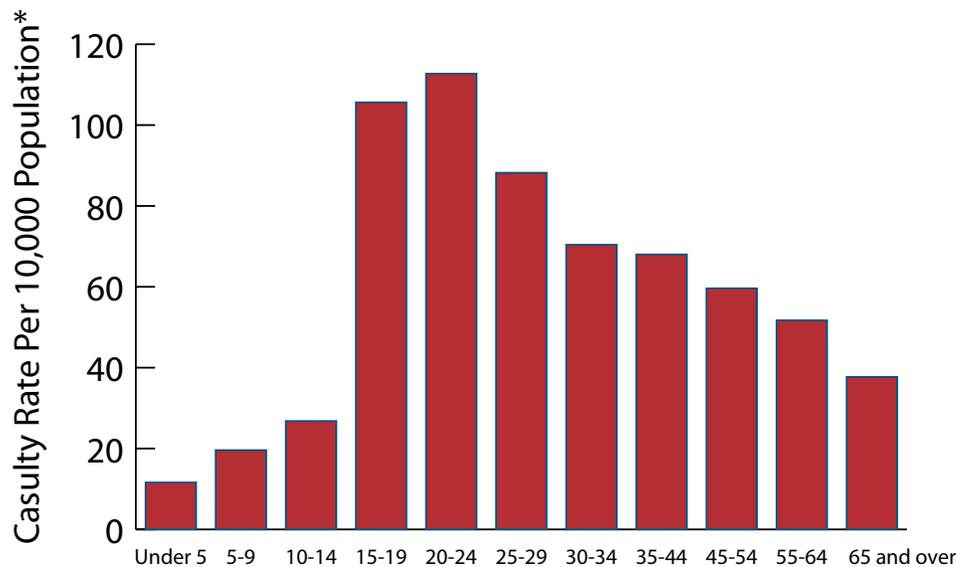
## The Stats

While teens and young adults account for 19 percent of the population, they are involved in 27 percent of traffic deaths and injuries. Despite the proven success of graduated licensing programs in many jurisdictions, the crash record of young drivers is disproportional compared to other age groups and is one of the reasons, historically speaking, that insurance premiums have been so high for this age group. Only seniors approach this degree of crashes relative to percentage of population or kilometers driven.

Transport Canada (<http://www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety/tp/tp3322/2006/page10.htm>)

# New driver risk factors – stats & causes continued

## Age of Casualties (casualty rate per 10,000 population, 2008)



In Alberta in 2008, driving casualty rates per 10,000 population were highest among people between the ages of 15 and 24, with the majority being male. Although this is a current statistic, the statistics have remained consistent over the last 20 years.

(Alberta Traffic Collision Statistics 2008)

<http://www.transportation.alberta.ca/Content/docType47/Production/2008AR.pdf>

Let's face it, teens, mature adults and seniors all experience driving differently. Numerous studies have collected and analyzed data on collisions involving teenagers and have found some consistent themes.

- A larger percentage of fatal crashes involving teenage drivers are single-vehicle crashes compared to those involving other drivers.



- 69% of fatal crashes in Alberta occurred on rural roads while the majority of injury and property damage crashes occurred in urban areas. (Alberta Traffic Collision Statistics 2008)
- In Canada every year, 76% of collisions involve property damage only, while the other 24% involve an injury or death. (Transport Canada, 2003)
- In the US, 55% of teen traffic deaths occurred on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday, 34% occurred between 6 p.m. and midnight. ([http://www.iihs.org/research/fatality\\_facts\\_2007/teenagers.html](http://www.iihs.org/research/fatality_facts_2007/teenagers.html))
- Friday has the highest number of collisions in Alberta according to the Alberta Traffic Collision Statistics 2008.
- Youth are more likely to engage in riskier behaviours such as faster driving, tailgating, and refraining from safety belt use. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration – NHTSA)
- When teens are with their peers they tend to engage in “time out behaviour” that suspends normal behaviour in favor of a party behaviour. (AAA Foundation for traffic safety)
- 71% of the casualties (ages 16-20) of passenger vehicle crashes, were not wearing safety belts. (NHTSA)

Although the statistics change slightly depending on location, the inescapable conclusion is that teens have a higher risk of being involved in a single vehicle collision that can be fatal.

# New driver risk factors – stats & causes continued

## The Causes

Why do new drivers drive so dangerously? Four factors work together to make new drivers a hazard on the road:

### Lack of Experience:

All young drivers start out with very little understanding of the complexities of driving a motor vehicle, let alone the knowledge and skills to do it. Young drivers commonly underestimate risk in many driving situations. This factor combined with lack of driving skills is a deadly combination. Young drivers need to master technical driving skills and develop a sense of good judgement in order to make wise driving decisions, and that only comes from experience.

### Maturity:

During the teen years, the brain is undergoing significant development. Rational judgement that is equated with maturity is not as common in the teen years. Teen decisions are typically based on emotion and are reactive rather than proactive in nature.

### Risk-taking behaviour:

While it is dangerous to over-generalize, studies show teens have a higher risk tolerance and are sensation seeking by nature. These two factors can result in poor driving judgement and participation in high-risk behaviours such as speeding, aggressive driving, drowsy driving, distracted driving, not using a seat belt, and in some cases drinking and driving.



### Greater risk exposure:

Teen drivers are different from other drivers, and their crash experience is different. Teens often drive at night with other teens in the vehicle, often on the highway — factors that increase crash risk. They can be easily distracted by passengers, radios, cell phones and other roadway items such as pedestrians, signage, other drivers, etc. Finally, teen drivers are still developing a sense of social responsibility, such as showing consideration towards other road users.

These are some of the special challenges of young drivers; they are certainly not all unique to this age group, but the young are uniquely susceptible to them. Unfortunately, many of these factors conspire to dramatically increase the total risk factor for your teen.



## Is your new driver ready to learn?

The answer to this question is often a dilemma. The later in life your teen starts driving, the less the risk there is in terms of absolute exposure, and the more mature your teen will be. On the other hand, delaying licensure could make him or her dependent on other, possibly less responsible drivers.

There are a number of variables to consider when assessing the readiness of your teen to drive and these can only be answered by you. If your 14 or 15 year-old wants to get a learner's permit (even though he/she can't be licensed until age 16) and you are inclined to let them, begin by determining their motivation for learning to drive.



## Readiness Assessment Quiz

| My teen:  | Yes                      | No                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ... is willing to practice?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... is mature for their age?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... is able to withstand peer influences?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... has shown interest in learning?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... has demonstrated responsibility (eg. school work, chores)?                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... has a basic understanding of the rules of the road?                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... is in need of transportation for a job, sports activities, lessons, etc.?           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... can take responsibility for the care of a vehicle (financially, maintenance, etc.)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Add up your YES scores and compare with the scoring chart below.

- 8 – Better get the car ready and gas up.
- 5 – 7 After clarifying areas of concern, buckle up.
- 4 or less You may want to wait awhile before getting behind the wheel with your teen.

Have them study Alberta Transportation’s driver information materials, as well as the supporting content on AMA’s website. You may also want to consider their needs with regards to transportation.

Your teen’s level of maturity will play a large role in whether or not you proceed as well. Questions you can ask yourself are how susceptible they are to peer influences and how do they deal with responsibility? Peer pressure can override the voice of reason when deciding what is right to do in a situation. They know speeding and reckless driving are dangerous, but they often believe that “it won’t happen to me”.

When your teen has passed the learners test and you feel they are ready, enroll them in AMA Driver Education’s New Driver program. It is generally advisable to arrange to spread the formal training out over a period of time. This gives them some time to digest the information and training, and allows some opportunities for practice. Commit to helping them get enough practice to master the skills they have been taught. Get out often with them in a wide variety of driving situations and weather. Then, just before taking the driving test, consider enrolling them in some brush-up lessons to get rid of any bad habits and to learn what will be expected of them during the test. Make use of the Record of Driving Achievement to identify and work on areas of need.



# Graduated Driver Licensing Program (GDL)

On May 20, 2003, Alberta Transportation implemented a Graduated Driver Licensing Program to help reduce risk for new drivers and reinforce safe driving practices. Research tells us that a set of significant restrictions on probationary drivers in the first two years of their driving career is effective in reducing their collision rates. Graduated Licensing has been adopted in many provinces, states and countries with successful results.

The program's objective is to ease new drivers into the driving environment by initially allowing them to drive in low risk driving situations for a period of time, progressing to more difficult situations to increase skills and experience before allowing full licensure. The types and number of restrictions in GDL vary greatly from place to place. Alberta has chosen to implement a very modest set of



## Conditions for Learners (Alberta)

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- Be 14 years of age or older.
- Pass a vision test and a knowledge test on the rules of the road.
- Must hold a Learner's Licence (Class 7) for at least one year.
- Must be accompanied by a fully licensed (non-GDL probationary) driver who is 18 years of age or older and who is seated next to the driver.
- Not permitted to drive from midnight to 5 a.m.
- No more passengers than seat belts.
- Fewer demerit points (8) allowed than for fully licensed drivers (15).
- Have a zero alcohol level.

## Conditions for Probationary Drivers (Alberta)

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- Be 16 years of age or older
- Pass road test.
- Must spend a minimum of two years as a Probationary Driver.
- No more passengers than seat belts.
- Fewer demerit points (8) are allowed than for fully licensed drivers (15).
- Have a zero alcohol level.
- No upgrading to a commercial licence (Classes 1,2,3 or 4).
- Cannot serve as an accompanying driver to a Learner.

[www.saferoads.com](http://www.saferoads.com)

restrictions. This creates opportunities for families to enhance the process of graduated driver licensing.

## Family Guidelines for Graduated Licensing

Family guidelines for graduated licensing adds to the existing legislated guidelines for driving and increases your control over where, when, how, and with whom your teen drives.

Using available data, we know when and where your teen is at greatest risk. The two main problem factors for young drivers are night driving and peer-aged passengers in the vehicle. These problem issues are followed closely by types of roads driven on, geographical locations, and types of vehicles driven. By providing family guidelines for safe behaviours, you reduce your teen's risk of a collision in the first two years of driving. The following are some guidelines you may want to consider for your own family.

### Restrict driving hours, specifically nighttime driving

Most nighttime fatal crashes among young drivers occur between 9 p.m. and midnight. The problem isn't just that late-night driving requires more skill. Outings late at night tend to be recreational.

In these circumstances, even teens that usually follow all the rules can be easily distracted or encouraged to take risks.

### Set geographical boundaries for driving

Allow teens to drive to specific destinations or within geographical boundaries, e.g., store and school, which can be increased as they become more mature, responsible drivers. Certainly discourage cruising around. Recreational driving breeds risky driving situations.

# Graduated Driver Licensing Program continued

## Restrict passengers to one

Teen passengers in a vehicle can distract a beginning driver and/or lead to greater risk-taking. Because young drivers often transport their friends, there's a teen passenger problem as well as a teen driver problem. The best policy is to restrict teen passengers, especially multiple teens, all the time unless there is an adult in the car. Family members should be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the sibling dynamic.

## Assess fitness to drive

Encourage teens to assess their own fitness to drive. If they are too tired, sick, stressed, emotionally distraught etc. it may affect their driving safety. Parents need to pay attention to their teen's fitness to drive and act as the last authority on the issue.

## Insist on safety belt use

Don't assume that belt use when you're in the car with your teen means that seat belts will be used all the time, especially when your child is out with peers. Remember that belt use is lower among teenagers than older adults.

## Prohibit driving after any drinking or medication

Make it clear that it's illegal and highly dangerous for a teenager to drive after drinking alcohol or using any other drug. While alcohol isn't a factor in the majority of young driver crashes, even small amounts of alcohol can cause teens to be impaired. Medication can also affect fitness-to-drive and result in impairment — even if it is only common over-the-counter medication.

## To become a fully licensed driver (Class 5) you must:

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- Have been suspension free for the last year of the two year Probationary Stage.
- Pass advanced road test.

[www.saferoads.com](http://www.saferoads.com)

## Did you know?

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In Alberta, a parent or guardian of a driver under 18 years of age must give their written consent to allow their teen to get their drivers licence?

You can revoke that permission at anytime, and your teen's operators' licence will be suspended.



## Teen-Parent Driving Contract Topics

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- moving violations / collisions
- alcohol or other drug use
- curfew violation
- violating passenger restrictions
- failure to provide destination or time of return
- allowing others to drive the car
- use of safety belts
- cell phone, music, food in car
- costs
- irresponsible behaviour
- failure to call if you are more than \_\_\_minutes late

## Have them pay for it

Require your teen to shoulder a portion of the expense for gasoline, maintenance and insurance. They need to become aware of the financial responsibilities of driving and the potential consequences of careless driving.

## Choose vehicles for safety, not image

Teenagers should drive vehicles that reduce their chances of a crash and offer protection in case they do crash. Small cars for example, don't offer the best protection in a crash. Avoid performance cars that might encourage speeding.

## Driving Contract

In order to instill boundaries for vehicle use, you may want to negotiate a Teen-Parent Driving Contract. This contract will outline your family's driving rules, and the consequences for breaking the rules. To create a driving contract with your teen, plan a time to sit down and discuss expected behaviour for various aspects of driving. Then write down the rules, agreement and consequences for reference later (see page 31).

The best thing you can do is work on instilling driving values by having open discussions on expected behaviour and hope that those values will come into play when teens are faced with making driving decisions regarding their safety.

Although driver education programs may be the most convenient way for your teen to learn driving skills, no one exerts more influence on your teen behind the wheel than you. It is important that both you and the driving instructor form an alliance with the common goal of instilling an awareness of safe driving procedures and the right driving attitude. There are a number of ways for you to encourage your teen to become a conscientious driver.



# The parents' role in driver education

## Role Modeling

From birth, our children have been watching what we do and learning from it. Teaching your teen to drive is the perfect time to reflect on your own driving skills. For better or for worse, most drivers learn key skills during the first fifteen years of life, watching the unwitting example of the parent. Research confirms that young people tend to imitate the driving behaviour of their parents or closest role model, even to the point of emulating their traffic violation history.

## Refresh Driving Knowledge

It never hurts to review your understanding of driving regulations and procedures before getting involved in practice sessions or discussions. Understanding current driving practices can help reinforce what

## Test your knowledge

Do you...

- ... stop fully at stop signs?
- ... Follow the speed limit?
- ... Always turn into the proper lane?
- ... Know the difference between a controlled and uncontrolled intersection?
- ... Know what time a school zone is in effect?
- ... Know where you should stop for a stop sign?



## Are you ready to coach?

| I am willing to:   | Yes                      | No                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ... devote time to taking my teen driving?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... incur the increased costs of gas, etc.?                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... communicate calmly when my teen makes driving errors?        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... search for resources that can help during driving practice?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... analyze my own driving habits and correct my driving errors? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered 5 out of 5, you're hired!  
Get ready to start your coaching job.

3 out of 5 – Take a moment to evaluate  
what you can improve on.

Less than 3 – Enlist someone to help with  
the coaching job or wait until you are  
ready to coach.

AMA's website [AMADriverEducation.ca](http://AMADriverEducation.ca) contains a broad selection of support materials and information for your learning driver.

your teen has learned in their driver education sessions. Take the "Test Your Knowledge" quiz in this guide to see what areas you need to brush up on. Access the learner's practice exam available at [AMADriverEducation.ca](http://AMADriverEducation.ca), read through the *Alberta Operator's Manual*, and other materials in the Home Study Kit that your student driver brings home, or sign up for any one of a number of refresher classes AMA offers for drivers of all ages. Students can also purchase CAA's *How to Drive* book from our online store located at [AMADriverEducation.ca](http://AMADriverEducation.ca).

## Take the Time to Practice and Observe

Too often parents think their teen is ready to tackle driving with little supervision after taking a driver education program. But in reality, teens still need to have their driving behaviour and skills monitored and reinforced. Give your teen frequent chances to practice their skills.

Recognize the AMA's Safe Performance Driving program as one of many systems for learning to drive. Try to learn a bit about it to avoid confusing your teen with contradictory information.

The Safe Performance courses are designed to help new drivers become more proactive drivers by practicing good driving habits. This includes encouraging students to think and look well ahead while identifying potential hazards when they drive. In addition, the aim of the course is to help new drivers make key safe performance procedures automatic so that they become habitual. The more time spent behind the wheel when learning, the less chance they will be involved in a serious collision. Any time spent practicing is beneficial to your new driver's abilities and confidence.



# Safe Performance course approach

## Legal Considerations

- The holder of a Learner's Permit must be accompanied by a fully licenced driver who is at least 18 years of age.
- The student driver will be charged with any moving violations committed during practice sessions
- The accompanying adult is at least partially responsible for the vehicle from a civil liability aspect.

## When Should Practice Start?

Many new drivers have at least some experience behind the wheel, which has its advantages and disadvantages. For the student who

## Stages of learning

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### Unconscious Incompetence

No awareness of what I don't know.

### Conscious Incompetence

Awareness of what I don't know.

### Conscious Competence

Actively aware of what I am learning / doing.

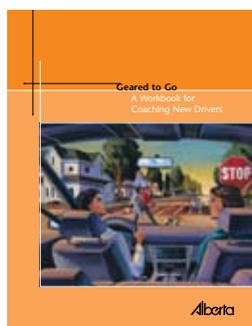
### Unconscious Competence

Responses are automatic.



The Alberta Government's *Geared to Go* booklet is another excellent resource for parents of new drivers. It provides a broad selection of tips and guidance for helping you coach and practice with your new driver.

These booklets are available from the Alberta government through their registries offices, including AMA Registries.



starts the course as a complete beginner, it is best to wait for the instructor's recommendation before starting practice. The unexpected mistakes of new drivers can be caught by a trained professional before they become habits. A parent or coach may not be as able to detect the mistakes. While the instructor cannot guarantee that a student will be safe with another coach in a non-dual-brake vehicle, their experience generally makes the recommendation worth waiting for.

## Do I Require Special Insurance to Practice with the New Driver?

Your standard automobile policy provides coverage for practice sessions, provided both parties—the learner and coach—meet all legal requirements.

For further details, and especially if there are unusual circumstances, call your insurance agent or underwriter.



# Setting up practice sessions

## Create a Learning Atmosphere

One of the most important elements when acting as a driving coach is to set up a positive learning atmosphere that is supportive and as free from unnecessary stress as possible. Whether your new driver shows it or not, he or she will likely be anxious enough without having to cope with a tense, emotionally-charged environment. This can be easier said than done; there is something about handing over the keys to the family car which can generate a lot of tension and some unexpected feelings. Providing a carefully managed, supportive learning experience, on the other hand, can contribute much to confidence levels and to the bond between parent and teen or coach and new driver. There are a few ways to create this environment.

## Explain your coaching approach

Before driving with your teen or new driver for the first time, set time aside to explain how you will be coaching them and lay out the rules

## Help your new driver

### SEE – THINK – DO!

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- SEE – Help the driver watch for possible hazards.
  - THINK – About the situation and what they might do and what you will do about it.
  - DO – Help the driver to execute the manoeuvre.
- Know your route ahead of time
  - Give directions well in advance (at least one block)



## Remark on the Positives

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If your teen shows improvement, tell them. If they handle a driving situation with skill, praise them.

## Keep your emotions in check

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If the driver has made a mistake, calmly ask them to pull over, stop the car, and put it in park.

Then calmly discuss the error and give some descriptive feedback.

Having said that, there may be times you need to control the vehicle.

of conduct for both of you before entering the vehicle. (Make sure each of you know the meaning of certain key words – left, right, correct, stop, slow down, go.)

## Ensure consistency of message

Make sure the message the new driver or teen is getting from you is consistent with what they were taught in driver education. If your new driver or teen is doing something you think is incorrect, talk to the driving instructor.

## Give descriptive feedback

Feedback should be precise, immediate and without judgement. If a mistake is made, point out the incorrect behaviour (switching lanes without shoulder checking), explain why it could be dangerous (hidden car) and repeat the manoeuvre by taking the driver step-by-step through the process (proper lane change process).

## Remark on the positives

If the driver shows improvement, tell them. If they handle a driving situation with skill, praise them.

## Keep your emotions in check

If the driver has made a mistake, ask them calmly to pull over, stop the car, and put it in park. Then calmly discuss the error and give some descriptive feedback.

Having said that, there may be times you need to control the vehicle.

## Intervening in Emergencies

Unlike the professional instructor who has a brake of their own, there are only three safe means of intervening in an emergency to assist your new driver:

# Setting up practice sessions continued

- **VOCAL COMMANDS** - Vocal commands are the first step in avoiding a collision. Ensure the new driver understands the importance of following commands like STOP, SLOW, or GO when spoken in a strong voice and that they are given well in advance.
- **GRABBING THE STEERING WHEEL** - Use your left hand at the bottom or side of the wheel and steady it, or apply the necessary correction.
- **SHIFTING THE TRANSMISSION INTO NEUTRAL** - If the new driver freezes on the accelerator, do this:
  - a) in a column-shift automatic – push the gearshift forward and up with the palm of your hand (do not pull the lever in and up; you risk bypassing neutral, possibly throwing the transmission into reverse or park)
  - b) in a floor shift automatic – push the gearshift forward with the palm of an open hand

You may want to practice these intervention skills in a parking lot from the passenger side to ensure you can do it in emergencies.

## Understand the Proactive Approach to Driving

When you learned to drive, you probably heard the phrase “drive defensively”. Defensive driving meant driving for, or reacting to, the other person in order to avoid an incident. Over the last while, there has been a change in this approach. Drivers are now encouraged to drive proactively. Proactive driving means looking and thinking well ahead and helps the driver identify problem situations early to avoid an incident altogether, which reduces or removes the need for evasive manoeuvres.

Right of way is a gift.

You do not have it unless someone gives it to you.

## Have a Plan – a.k.a The Three “T”'s Time

- Start with 30 minute sessions and progress to one hour.



## Coach's Corner

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Use the same terms for the same thing each time, e.g., gas pedal / accelerator.

Talk well in advance about what you want the driver to do, e.g., at the next stop light I would like you to turn left.

Don't overload them with one hundred things to remember.

Focus on one specific concept at a time until your teen feels more comfortable with driving, e.g., left turns.

While pulled over on the side of the road, draw what you mean - A picture is worth a thousand words.

## Record of Driving Achievement

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Look at your teen's Record of Driving Achievement card from their Driver Ed course. It will give you some guidance about what you should emphasize and what you should be careful about.

## Topic

- Outline objectives of the lesson before leaving for the drive and review what was learned in the last lesson.
- Early sessions should be more structured and progress from simple to more complex skills and manoeuvres, e.g., shoulder checks, lane changes, right turns, left turns, merging.
- Practice locations should begin in parking lots, then neighbourhoods, and on to light traffic, etc.

## Talk

- When beginning, you should provide step-by-step instruction, e.g., turns, signals, shoulder checks, etc.
- In later sessions, your teen should be able to provide a commentary of what they are seeing and doing, e.g., "I'm looking at the intersection ahead and preparing to stop because the light is about to change".
- As they become more skilled, you may want to ask them questions, well in advance of their action, that will enhance their driving judgement, e.g., What do you think we should do at this uncontrolled intersection up ahead?

## Practice Sessions

The rest of this guide will focus on specific topics to use when setting out to drive. It addresses only the most common questions and concerns of the parent/coach. However, there are many resources available to support your coaching efforts. One resource is "driver-Zed" (CD-ROM). The program is an interactive Risk Management training program for Teen Drivers.

The Student's Record of Driving Achievement is also a valuable tool for practice sessions. It will determine your teen's readiness to practice and reveal areas of strength and weakness. It can also be used as a general outline for practice sessions using the Vehicle Check and Pre-Operational Habit areas.



# Practice sessions – areas to cover

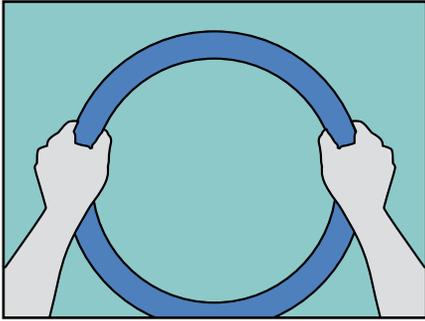
## Before Starting the Engine

Check for the operator's licence and vehicle documentation.

- Have your teen explain and/or perform a vehicle check.
- Identify all controls
- Have your teen explain/perform the Pre-Operational drill  
(see Record of Driving Achievement)

## Start Your Engine:

For the early sessions and especially with a true beginner, select a quiet area to practice basic control: starting, stopping, leaving the curb, returning to curb, signals, turns, lane changes, backing. Repeat these basic control functions as often as necessary; resist the tendency to move on too quickly. You as a coach must be sure that your teen has adequate control skills; this will make later practice much safer and more productive.



### Steering technique:

For optimum control, both hands should be on the wheel at the 9 and 3-o'clock position. In this position the driver is always ready to respond to an emergency situation; the position is balanced, relatively comfortable and maximum leverage can be applied.

### Vision:

Practice keeping vision up and constantly moving; scan one block deep, sidewalk to sidewalk; the car will tend to go where the driver is looking. If steering straight is a problem, ask the student where he or she is looking. Guide their scanning by asking strategic questions: "What colour is the light or car at the next intersection?"

### Consistency

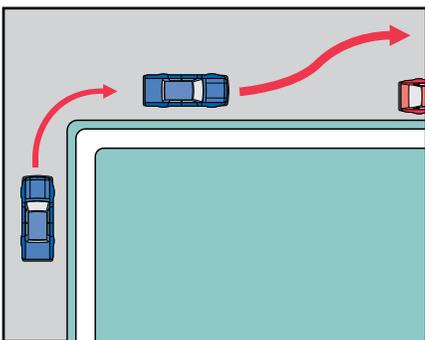
Even though each adult driver has habits and ideas about the best way to drive, resist the temptation to impose your ideas on your teen. Let them stay with the practices they learned in Driver Ed and build on them.

### Mirror Checks:

Associated with vision are the mirrors. Mirrors are used to inform the driver of what is behind and beside them. Understanding where blind spots are is important. To determine blind spot locations with the driver sitting in the car and the mirrors properly adjusted, walk behind the car and then slowly around to the side. Have the driver wave their hand when they cannot see you in either their rear view mirror or their side mirror. Repeat this procedure for the other side. These are the blind spots.

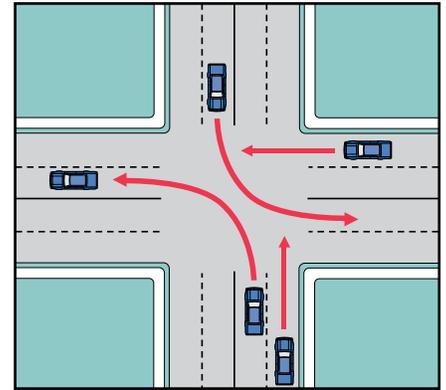
### Turns:

**RIGHT TURNS** require more steering skill, left turns are more dangerous. The law requires that right turns be made into the right curb lane if practical. The rule of thumb generally used by examiners is that the lane is available if there are no parked cars within half a block.



## Practice sessions – areas to cover continued

**LEFT TURN:** the turning manoeuvre begins from a point one car length from the center of the intersection. If there are oncoming cars, this is also the stopping point. Wheels and car should be kept straight while waiting due to the risk of a rear-end collision. Before proceeding, the student must repeatedly check (1) oncoming traffic, (2) the traffic light and (3) pedestrian traffic in the crosswalk to the left. Left turns in traffic are demanding and should normally be attempted only when the student is sufficiently skilled and has done a good number of them with an instructor.

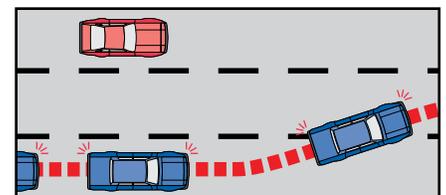


### Following skills:

AMA students are taught to maintain an ideal following distance of 2-3 seconds for urban street speeds, and 4 seconds for speeds above 80 km/h according to the conditions (rain, snow). Have your teen explain this if necessary, or refer to the How to Drive Book (this book is available for purchase) or their student handbook. Following distance should be increased when a vehicle behind is tailgating. Alternatively following distance should also increase if the driver sees a potential conflict developing with the vehicle ahead. Managing the space ahead and to the side is, for obvious reasons, one of the most critical collision avoidance tasks. Maintaining an adequate cushion ahead reduces the likelihood of both frontal and rear-end collisions.

### Lane changes:

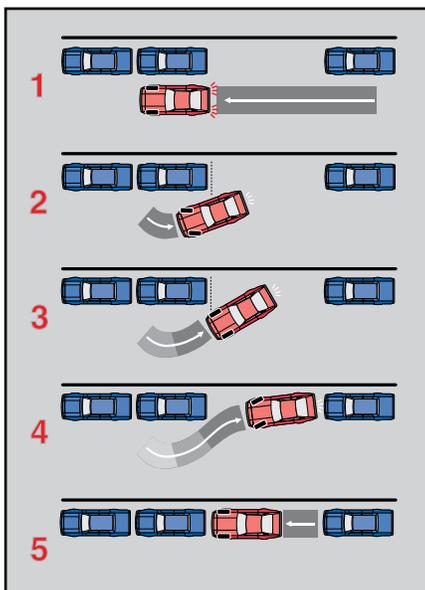
Before moving into an adjacent lane, drivers must check traffic following as well as and the blind spot to either side of the vehicle, then signal their intention, and move into the desired lane, accelerating slightly if possible. Beginning students are taught the following sequence: rear-view mirror, shoulder check, signal (if clear), shoulder check again and move (when safe). The reason for doubling the visual checks is that most beginners take a long time to perform





these checks. When proficiency improves, the desired sequence is: mirror check, shoulder check, signal if clear, and move. On most modern cars the lane change signal is activated by moving the signal lever slightly up or down—not far enough to latch it. This avoids having to manually cancel after completing the manoeuvre.

When control is well established, start driving in light to medium traffic, preferably in daylight. Practice ground search for pedestrians, jaywalkers, etc. Also practice scanning, anticipation, and maintaining an adequate space cushion around the vehicle, as well as lane changes and turns.



The road test normally includes parallel, hill and angle parks. The examiner may use the parallel park to assess basic car control before risking a drive in traffic, which can be difficult for the nervous student.

More students fail the road test making an unsafe turn or lane change than attempting to parallel park.

### Backing:

Steering in reverse is a critical skill which often gets too little attention in practice sessions. It is best to find an abandoned parking lot and practice backing straight, backing through left and right turns, and backing in a 3-point turn. Stress the importance of turning fully around, looking out the back window and of creeping in reverse (because of severely restricted vision). The fact that, in an average year in North America 300 children are run over in their own driveways, attests to the danger inherent in backing a vehicle. Practice backing out of a parking stall, ensuring that your teen checks right and left, then straight back before moving the vehicle. Backing should be practiced during every session.

### Parking:

Parking skills, especially those required for parallel parking, tend to take on an exaggerated importance in the minds of most beginning students. If basic car control and backing skills are good, parking will come easily; it is important not to start parking practice before these skills are well established. It is also important that you not stress

## Practice sessions – areas to cover continued

parking practice at the expense of skills which have more survival value. Refer to the “How to Drive” book or the student handbook for procedural details if necessary.

### Intersections:

Not surprisingly, most serious collisions occur at intersections. Reinforce the proactive skills your new driver has learned by:

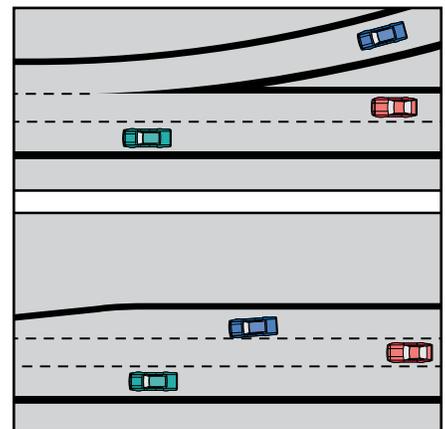
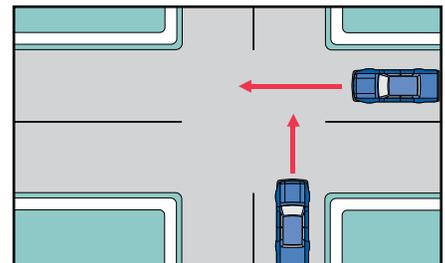
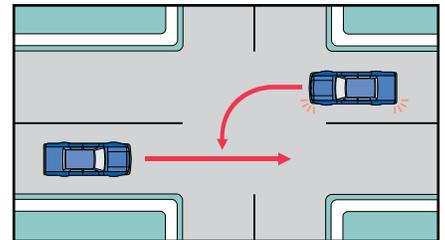
- analyzing upcoming intersections beginning from a block away (controlled or uncontrolled, type of streets intersecting, type of control, traffic volume, design, are there turning lanes?, etc.)
- stressing planning for the best lane position depending on the desired direction of travel.
- reinforcing the need for covering the brake as you approach the intersection – checking left, then right to ensure that all cross traffic is stopping before committing the vehicle.

### Merging on a Freeway:

This manoeuvre should not be attempted until your teen has done it with the instructor. Discuss in detail before practicing, the difference between merge and yield signs at the end of a ramp. Many drivers are not aware that when merging, the law requires both the merging driver and the freeway traffic being merged with to cooperate with each other to ensure that the manoeuvre can be completed in safety; neither has the right-of-way.

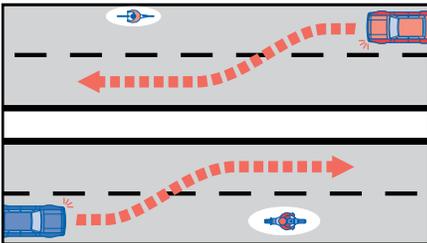
### Highway driving:

After entering a highway or freeway it is important to adjust your speed to that of the traffic on the highway, up to the posted limit. On a multi-laned highway it is best to have your new driver stay in





the right lane to allow faster traffic an opportunity to pass. Have the student establish a 12 second visual lead time and a minimum 4 second following distance. For negotiating curves at highway speeds it is best to have your new driver slow slightly prior to reaching the curve. After entering the curve they can then accelerate gently to exit the curve. Upon exiting the highway, have your new driver frequently monitor the vehicle's speed since all drivers can easily become "velocitized" (feeling that they are going slower than they actually are) after a period of high speed driving.



### Other Road Users:

Cyclists should be given the same consideration as automobiles since they are considered a vehicle under the Traffic Safety Act. Don't squeeze past them, instead lane change around them (they have been known to fall over) giving them their full lane. When stopping for pedestrians in a crosswalk, especially at mid-block, stop well back (at least 30m) to allow traffic in adjacent lanes a full view; many drivers are not aware that it is illegal to pass a vehicle which has stopped for a pedestrian. On a residential street where young children may dart out from between parked cars, a reasonable speed (as required by law) may be 20 or 30 km/h.



## “Licensed to Learn”: The lifelong learning concept

Maintaining safe performance as a driver is a life-long commitment; we can all improve our driving skills and can all benefit from periodic refresher training to remind us of things we have forgotten. There is an unfortunate tendency among many people to feel that once you have obtained a licence, there is little more to learn. It is important that this misconception be corrected.



## Habits to watch for:

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- Forgetting to signal
- Sloppy turns that cut across other drivers' lanes
- Following too closely
- Forgetting to reduce speeds when approaching potential hazards
- Having sudden changes in speed or direction that can catch other drivers unaware
- Backing up without checking behind and turning the head
- Accelerating through yellow lights
- Attention wandering more and more from the driving task
- Increasingly lax in obeying traffic signs and rules
- Not paying attention to other drivers' errors on the highway e.g., merging
- Rolling stops at stop signs
- Speeding
- Wandering in lane

## Some things you as a parent/coach can do:

- a) drive with your new driver weekly and look for signs of relaxed attention, sloppy habits, etc.
- b) set a good example
- c) Enroll the new driver in a defensive driving program such as AMA's Proactive Defensive Driver Course (a 6.5 hour classroom session), during the first year or two of driving.
- d) When the student has approximately 20,000 km of driving experience, they should be ready for the Emergency/Winter Driving Course, manoeuvres training program conducted under controlled conditions.
- e) Establish a formal goal of collision-free driving; this could take the form of a contract (similar to the "Contract for Life" included in the course materials) which specifies rewards or consequences for successful achievement over a specific time period.

# An agreement between a new young driver and parent/guardian on the use of a family car.

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
being a licenced driver, do hereby agree with my  
parent/guardian,

\_\_\_\_\_

as follows:

**That if I am permitted to drive an automobile which is registered in my parent's name, I do promise:**

- 1. I will drive carefully and cautiously, at all times**
- 2. I will not drink or use any type of drugs and drive**
- 3. I will not allow the car to be driven by anyone other than myself**
- 4. Knowing that the car is a machine with the power to kill or injure, I will not show-off with it**
- 5. I will not drive in excess of the posted speed limit**
- 6. I will slow down and look both ways at intersections and railroad crossings even if I have the right-of-way**
- 7. I will not race with other vehicles regardless of how much of a temptation it might be to do so**
- 8. I will not attempt to drive while distracted (cell phone, texting, eating, etc.)**
- 9. I will not attempt to drive if I feel sleepy or in any way impaired (alcohol or medication)**
- 10. I will obey all signs, street and highway markings, signal lights, and other traffic regulations**

I realize that if I violate these conditions, and a collision occurs through my carelessness or negligence, the cost of insurance coverage on the car could increase substantially... or the insurance company might be required to amend my parent's policy to remove me and that I would no longer be able to drive the car.

I further realize that this Agreement is not legally binding, but I hereby give my parent/guardian my word of honor that I will do what I have promised herein in return for the permission and privilege to drive the family car.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have signed this Agreement of my own free will and accord this day of:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

I, parent/guardian of

\_\_\_\_\_  
subscribe to what the new driver has promised herein, and have confidence that the Agreement will be kept. On suitable occasions, therefore, I hereby grant permission to the above-named driver to use, with my knowledge, this vehicle registered in my name.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Importance of Practice

While Driver Education is an important part of a new driver’s journey toward safe, independent driving, the importance of your example and good practice cannot be emphasized enough.

Dedicated practice time with a coach in specific driving situations will add to and reinforce the training and education a new driver has, or will receive. It is important that this practice happens enough, and that you as the coach, are satisfied with their performance, and of course, that it lines up with the training and education that has been received from their driver education program.

A general log sheet with recommended practice situations and times has been included in this guide to help ensure that enough appropriate practice has taken place.

## Log Sheet:

Each check box represents one hour of dedicated practice time.

It is important that your teen practice and that you are satisfied with their performance in each of these recommended activities.

Try to include some backing practice in each hour.

| Type of Driving             | Hours   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Residential Driving</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Urban Driving</b>        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Downtown Driving</b>     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Highway Driving</b>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Driving in Rain</b>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Driving in Snow</b>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Driving at Night</b>     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Rural (gravel) Roads</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Icy/Snowy Roads</b>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |