

MINNESOTA LAWS FOR NEWLY LICENSED TEEN DRIVERS



For more on teen driving, visit www.dps.state.mn.us/ots/teens

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.

To Qualify for a Full-Privileges License

License holder must have a safe driving record or be age 18. For details, visit www.mndriveinfo.org.

Parents' Role in Developing Safe Teen Drivers

- Reinforce these teen driving laws and follow through with your own consequences if violations occur.
- Monitor and train teen drivers — even after licensure. Teens need supervised exposure in a variety of driving conditions and environments.
- Be a positive role model: buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention, and don't drive aggressively.