

Connecticut's GDL law: current provisions, potential improvements
Briefing material for Governor's Teen Safe Driving Task Force
Subcommittee on Preliminary Legislative Recommendations
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1. Learner's permit

A. Minimum age

current CT: age 16

no state has a later starting age (see table)

10 start at 16; 41 start earlier, with 15 the most common age (22 states)

later starting age would reduce crashes, but may well be unrealistic

B. Holding period

need substantial holding period to permit supervised driving practice

current CT: must hold for 6 months, reduced to 4 with driver ed

6 months is standard (41 states)

all states with longer holding period have earlier starting age

research shows longer holding periods delay licensure and reduce crashes

reduction in holding period for driver ed provision only in CT and SD

consider extending holding period to 6 months with driver ed, 8 months without

(recommended by CT Teen Safe Driving Partnership)

C. Supervised driving

need supervised driving to practice driving skills and safe driving practices

current CT: 20 hours, at home or in driver ed

of 41 states with a requirement, only 3 other states require 20 hours (table)

standard is 40-50 hours

requirement appears to produce more supervised driving

consider expanding to 40-50 hours

2. Intermediate license

A. Nighttime restriction

crash risk higher at night; restrictions reduce exposure to high-risk conditions

research shows restrictions generally obeyed, restrictions reduce crashes

current CT: midnight – 5 am

key is starting time

note 2006 data for CT drivers age 16-17 in injury crashes

108 between midnight – 5 am

70 between 11 pm – midnight

80 between 10 pm – 11 pm

85 between 9 pm – 10 pm

so each earlier restricted hour has potential to affect substantial crashes

19 states currently start nighttime restrictions at 11 pm or earlier (table)

consider starting at 9 or 10 pm

B. Passenger restrictions

- crash risk higher with teen passengers; restrictions reduce crash risk
 - research shows restrictions generally obeyed at first, but less so over time
 - restrictions reduce crashes
- current CT: first 3 months – none other than supervising driver and/or parent
 - next 3 months – family members only
- longer restricted period may produce lower compliance rates

C. Belt use requirement

- current CT: all front seat passengers age 7+ must wear belts, no rear seat requirement
 - no belt use requirement in GDL law
- a few states have a belt use provision in GDL law
 - ex: DE – if a teen driver with learner's permit or their passenger under age 18 is unbelted, the learner's permit is suspended for 2 months
 - NC – fine for any unbelted passenger is \$100 (\$25 for regular belt use law), next licensing level delayed
- research shows belts reduce injury in crashes
- consider requiring belt use for all passengers of learner's and intermediate licensees
 - penalty could be suspended license, license points, and/or delayed next license stage (recommended by CT Teen Safe Driving Partnership)

3. Unrestricted license

A. Minimum age

- current CT is 18 (nighttime restrictions are lifted)
 - unrealistic to set higher minimum age
 - 9 other states have minimum age 18 (table)
- no proposals on the table to change this

Selected resources

Current GDL requirements, by state: “U.S. Licensing Systems for Young Drivers,” IIHS
www.iihs.org/laws/pdf/us_licensing_systems.pdf

Summary of GDL implementation, evaluations, and components, with references: J. Hedlund, Novice teen driving: GDL and beyond, *J. Safety Research* **38** (2007), 259-266.

Summary of research on GDL components: A. Williams, Contribution of the components of graduated licensing to crash reductions, *J. Safety Research* **38** (2007), 177-184.

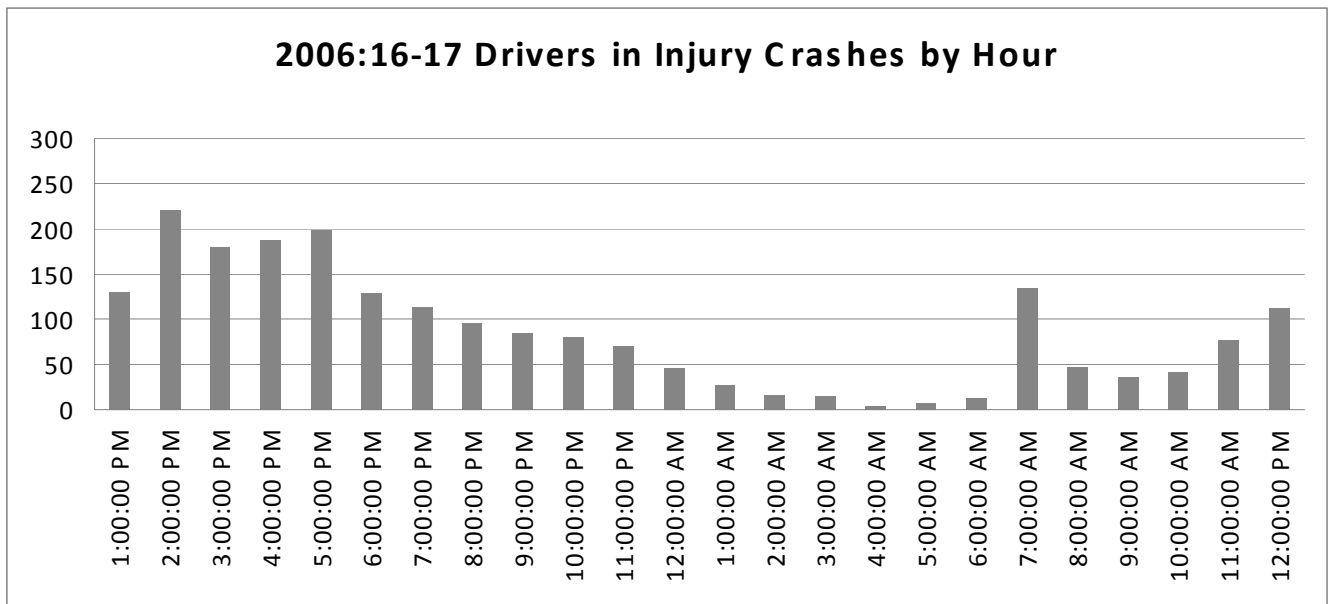
One-page discussions of GDL and components: “Countermeasures That Work,” Chapter 6, Young Drivers. www.nhtsa.gov/publications/HS810710/index.htm

One-page fact sheets on learner’s permit holding period, nighttime restrictions, passenger restrictions, technology and young drivers, key GDL influences and partners, and research-implementation-evaluation: National Safety Council. www.nsc.org/gdl/.

Graduated Driver Licensing Tool Kit, with one-page discussions of policy overview, what works, nighttime restrictions, passenger restrictions, alcohol restrictions, safety belt restrictions, parental enforcement issues, talking points, and resource list: Centers for Disease Control. www.healthystates.csg.org/Publications/

CT crash data: drivers age 16-17 in injury crashes, by hour

	2006	2005	2004
12-5 am	108	109	135
11-12 pm	70	65	80
10-11 pm	80	90	90
9-10 pm	85	98	107



State graduated driver licensing criteria as of December 2007

source: IIHS (www.iihs.org/laws/pdf/us_licensing_systems.pdf)

Minimum age for learner's permit

14	6 states
14-6 mo	2
14-9 mo	1
15	22
15-6	9
15-9	1
16	10, inc. CT

Minimum holding period for learner's permit

none	1 state
10 days	1
2 mo	1
6 mo	41 *, inc CT
9 mo	2 (IL – learner's permit at 15; VA – learner's permit at 15-6)
12 mo	5 (all with learner's permit at 15)

* reduced to 3 mos. in SD with driver ed, reduced to 4 mos. in CT with driver ed

Minimum age for intermediate license

14-6 mo	1 state
15	2
15-6	3
16	33
16-1	1
16-3	2
16-4	1, CT
16-6	7
17	1

Minimum age for unrestricted license (higher without driver ed in 3 states)

16	7 states
16-6 mo	10
16-9	1
17	19
17-1	1
17-6	1
17-9	1
17-11	1
18	10, inc CT

Supervised driving hours

none	10 states
20 hrs	4, inc CT
30	5
35	1
40	10
50	19
69	2

Nighttime restriction starting time (earlier start on weekdays in 4 states)

none	5 states
sunset	1
8 pm	1
9 pm	2
10 pm	4
11 pm	11
midnight	19, inc CT
1 am	6

Passenger restriction**number** of teen passengers allowed during initial intermediate license period

0	15 states, inc CT
1	21
2	2
3	2
no limit	11

length of any passenger restriction (unless minimum age comes first; see below)

3 mos	2 states
5 mos	1
6 mos	11, inc CT
12 mos	6

age at which any passenger restriction may be removed (some states require driver ed)

15-6 mos	1 state
16	1
16-3	1
16-4	1
16-6	13
16-8	1
16-9	1
16-10	1, CT
17	14
17-6	1
17-11	1
18	4
no limit	11