

TEENS

*Speak Out***Is Graduated Driver's Licensing Good for Teens?**

Teen drivers are much more likely to get into accidents than older drivers, who have more experience. A recent study found that among teens ages 16 to 19, there were 148 crashes for every 1,000 teen drivers. This rate was much higher than the rate for any other age group.

To protect young drivers, most states now have graduated licensing programs. These programs put various restrictions on young drivers, which gradually decrease as these drivers gain experience. Read on to find out what two teens have to say about graduated licensing programs.



Drawbacks of Graduated Licensing

With graduated licensing, newly licensed teen drivers cannot engage in certain types of driving. For instance, they may not be allowed to drive at night or with more than one passenger. These restrictions apply to all young drivers, not just the problem drivers. As a result, teens may have trouble getting to school, work, and after-school activities.

“My state’s graduated license program says that I can’t drive after dark unless I have an adult with me. I don’t think it’s fair that they’re assuming I’ll be a bad driver just because I’m a young person.”

—Nancy B., age 17



Benefits of Graduated Licensing

Graduated licensing gives teens a chance to gain experience driving in safer situations. They can improve their driving skills with adult supervision. They can also practice driving in the daytime and without passengers to distract them. Graduated licensing has been found to reduce the rate of accidents by 10 to 30 percent.

“Learning to drive is kind of like learning to swim. You don’t want to jump into the deep end until you’ve had some practice. I like the idea that with my provisional license, I can gradually become more comfortable with the toughest kinds of driving, instead of being thrown into the deep end.”

—Ali S., age 16



Activity

Beyond the Classroom

- 1. Research** graduated licensing requirements in your state. Do teens go directly from a learners’ permit to full driving privileges, or is there an intermediate stage? If there is a special license for beginners, what restrictions does it impose?
- 2. Discuss** these graduated licensing requirements with other teens and with adults. How do they feel about this issue? What arguments do they make for and against the program?
- 3. Summarize** your findings in a newspaper article. Discuss the attitudes teens and adults have toward graduated licensing. In the last paragraph, draw your own conclusions about whether the benefits of graduated licensing outweigh the drawbacks.

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Go to glencoe.com and use this code for more information about graduated licensing.