

SAFE TEEN DRIVER GUIDE

16 Steps to Your Teen Driver's Safety

Behind the Wheel



Compliment of
Spencer Insurance Agency, Inc.



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Introduction

This guide is intended to be used as a supplement to an accredited driving course. It is not intended to replace in part or in full the instructional materials from any accredited driving school. The lessons outlined in the following guide should not be attempted until the student driver has obtained his/her lawful learners permit. Successful completion of this course does not constitute an implied, stated, or otherwise any warranty that the student is a qualified driver.

According to the NHTSA, the number one cause of accidents among teen drivers is operator error. Many errors are the result of inexperience. Consequently, many experts recommend teen drivers should complete at least 100 hours of driving experience behind the wheel before obtaining their drivers' license.

In many states parents may teach their teen to drive. However, we strongly recommend that your teen complete a professional driving instruction course. Courses may be offered through:

- Your local High School;
- A community college or university;
- Professional Driving School
- Professional Race School

Obtaining an PA Driver Learner Permit

Obtaining Your Original Learner's Permit

An initial Learner's Permit is issued to any individual, 16 years of age or older, who has never been licensed to operate a vehicle, a new resident who has never been licensed, or a new resident who has been licensed in another state but whose driver's license has been expired longer than 6 months. If you are a new resident to PA, please visit the PA New Resident information page at http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/new_residents/driver_license.shtml

Process:

Step 1:

Acquire a Pa Driver's Manual from a local Driver's License Center, or on this Web site

http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/drivers_manual/index.shtml

Step 2:

Have a physician, physician assistant, certified registered nurse practitioner or chiropractor conduct a physical examination and complete Form [DL-180](#) "Medical Qualification Certificate".

DL-180 at http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/pdotforms/dl_forms/dl-180.pdf

Step 3:

Visit a Driver License Center with:

- The completed [DL-180](#)
- The completed [DL-180TD](#) (if under the age 18). This form must be completed by a parent, guardian, or spouse who is 18 years of age or older. Form available at http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/pdotforms/dl_forms/dl-180td.pdf
- Proof of identity, which is listed on reverse side of [DL-180](#). Note: If you are changing your name, you must present original documents supporting name changes such as a marriage certificate, divorce decree or court order.
- Two acceptable proofs of residency, listed on reverse side of [DL-180](#), if you are 18 years of age or older. Proof of residency is not required if you are age 16 or 17.
- Your Social Security card.
- A check or money order payable to PennDOT for the appropriate fee. (Cash is not accepted.)

Step 4:

An eye screening and Knowledge Test will be given. Once passed, a Learner's Permit will be issued. The Learner's Permit will be valid for one year. If you are under age 18, a six-month waiting period and 50 hours

behind the wheel driving experience is required prior to taking the skills test.

Step 5:

Schedule a road test either [online](#) at:

https://www.dot33.state.pa.us/exam_scheduling/eslogin.jsp#top?20080611175234991=20080611175234991

or by calling 1-800-423-5542.

Extent of Driving Privileges:

At the Driver License Center, your vision will be tested. If you wear glasses or contact lenses, please bring them with you. You will then take the Knowledge Test on signs, laws, driving rules and safe practices described later in this manual. After passing the Knowledge Test, the examiner will give you a learner's permit, which is valid for one (1) year. When you receive your learner's permit, you may begin to practice driving.

If you fail the Knowledge Test, the examiner will return the Non-Commercial Learner's Permit Application (DL-180) and your Parent or Guardian Consent Form (DL-180TD) to you. You may take the Knowledge Test only one time on any day regardless of test location. Keep your forms in a safe place since you must bring them with you when you are tested again. The Non-Commercial Learner's Permit Application (DL-180) is valid for one (1) year from the date of your physical examination; however, the physical examination date may not be more than 6 months prior to your 16th birthday.

If you are under the age of 18, you are required to complete at least 50 hours of behind-the-wheel skill-building before taking your road test. This training will help teach you the skills necessary to become a good, safe driver.

REMEMBER: A licensed driver who is at least 21 years of age or a spouse, guardian or parent who is at least 18 years of age and holds a driver's license must ride with you in the front seat of your vehicle at all times. In addition, drivers under the age of 18 cannot have more passengers in the vehicle than the number of seat belts.

After you have waited the mandatory six (6) months from your permit issue date and have a signed certificate of completion for the 50 hours of skill-building, you may take your road test. If your learner's permit expires or if you do not pass your road test after three (3) tries, you may obtain an Application to Add/Extend/Replace/Change/Correct Non-Commercial Learner's Permit (DL-31).

If you are using your learner's permit for driving outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, please check with your insurance company and the other state's Department of Transportation to make sure your learner's permit is valid.

If any information on your learner's permit is not correct, bring proof of the correct information to the examiner when you come to the Driver License Center for testing.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER INFORMATION

The Department is required by law to obtain your Social Security number, height and eye color under the provisions of Section 1510(a) and/or 1609(a)(4) of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code. The information will be used as identifying information in an attempt to minimize driver license fraud. Your Social Security number is not part of your public driver's record. Federal law permits the use of the Social Security number by state licensing officials for purposes of identification. Your Social Security number will not be printed on your learner's permit or driver's license.

PENNSYLVANIA VISION STANDARDS

You may have poor vision in either eye and still be able to obtain a driver's license; however, you may be required to wear glasses or contact lenses, be restricted to daylight driving or be allowed to operate only vehicles equipped with side mirrors.

If your vision fails to meet the vision standards, the examiner will give you a Report of Eye Examination Form (DL-102). You should have an optometrist, ophthalmologist or family physician test your vision and complete this form. When the form is completed, you may return to the Driver License Center to continue testing.

A driver learner permit does not legally allow you to drive alone under any circumstances.

Top 5 Mistakes Teen Drivers Make

1. **Speeding.** The faster a vehicle is traveling the longer it will take to bring the vehicle to a stop. Most teens understand this concept, however, the distance needed to stop increases exponentially as speed increases.
2. **Distractions.** Their biggest problem is they do not pay attention to their driving! Teens are constantly changing radio stations and C.D.'s. An increasingly popular and time consuming activity is talking on their cell phone or text messaging from their cell phone. Safety Tip; Don't call your teen when you know that they are driving. It is amazing how often parents do this!
3. **Overcorrecting.** Many teen will take turns at too high of speeds, will then overcorrect and lose control of their vehicle.
4. **Following too close.** This is the one thing that could prevent the largest number of accidents! If teens would just increase their following distance, then many times they could avoid an accident because they will have time to take evasive action. The correct following distance is two car lengths for every 10 miles per hour.
5. **Failure to Yield.** Many teens simply do not understand which vehicle has the right of way.

Vehicle Orientation and Maintenance

Before starting to drive perform a quick safety check of the vehicle. Now is a good time to have a brief discussion about vehicle maintenance. Explain basic maintenance items such as when oil changes are due and proper tire inflation. Verify that all lights and turn signals are functioning properly and free of snow.



Safety Tip: For emergency purposes, teach your teen to keep at least $\frac{1}{4}$ tank of gas in the car at all times. You do not want them running out of gas in an unsafe area. Additionally, you will avoid the frustration of having to unexpectedly stop for gas when your teen has been driving your car.

Familiarize your teen with the location and operation of the vehicle controls. It is important that your teen is comfortable in the driver's seat. Today's newer cars are capable of adjusting the seat, mirrors, steering wheel, brake pedal and accelerator. Review proper operation of the heater, air conditioning, cruise control and wiper blades.



Safety Tip: Hazard lights. Make sure your teen knows how to locate and turn on the hazard lights in each of your cars!

Explain the dashboard gauges and their purpose. Taking the time to explain the gauges will help maintain the vehicle in proper working condition. Furthermore, it may save you a large repair bill. After all, the time for your teen to understand the temperature gauge is not after the car has overheated! A good habit to form is maintaining a mileage log. The log should detail the date, miles on the vehicle, the number of gallons of gas added and the miles per gallon obtained on the prior tank

of gas. When the gas mileage decreases it is an early warning signal that the engine needs maintenance.

I strongly recommend that you have your teen change a tire before he/she obtains their license. With the prevalence of cell phones, many parents assume their teen can call them or AAA for assistance. Depending on the location and time of day, it may take 2-3 hours before assistance can arrive.



Safety Tip: Tire jacks can **KILL!** Practice with them the proper use and 'placement of the jack'. People die from this every year. Don't forget to show them how to chock the tires.



Safety Tip: It is very dangerous to change a tire on the highway. Call the state police to assure drivers move over and the safety of your teen.



Safety Tip: Maintain an Emergency kit in the trunk complete with: flares, a flashlight and batteries. Practice lighting flares.



Insurance Tip: Maintain Roadside Service as part of your insurance coverage. Help will be dispatched to help change tires or even deliver gas!

Vehicle Safety Check & Basic Maintenance

Vehicle Safety Check	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Check Tire Pressure/Change Tire		
Belts		
Windshield Wipers (Front & Rear)		
Headlights		
Emergency Brake		
Fuel Gauge		
Oil Gauge		
Temperature Gauge		
RPM Gauge		
Mirrors		
Seats		
Turn Signals		
Radio		
Heat/Air Conditioning		
Accelerator		
Brake/Parking Brake		
Hood Release		

Additional Comments:

Skills to review for next lesson:

Lesson #1: Getting Started

(Letting Go is hard to do!)

Start slowly by taking your teen to a deserted school or church parking lot. The first day should be conducted under ideal driving conditions. Find a place with wide open space and no traffic. Limit their speed to no more than 15 mph.



Safety Tip: MAP or visually locate the POLES and other FIXED obstacles in the parking lot. Locate pedestrians, bikers and boarders. DO not forget, you might be sharing the parking lot.

Make sure your teen is comfortable accelerating, braking and turning. The object of this lesson is for them to become comfortable behind the wheel and feel in control of the vehicle before driving on a public road. It is imperative that you correct any improper use of technique before a habit can be formed.

This is a learning experience for your teen as well as for you, as an instructor. Determine your teens' skill level and observe how your teen learns. One of the most common mistakes you can make as an instructor is to assume your teen is familiar with driving or the operation of the vehicle.



Safety Tip: Driving instruction is NOT just while the teen drives. YOU should be engaging the teen driver while you drive (even the pre-teen).

Start the lesson with you acting as the instructor and end the lesson with your teen acting as the instructor. One of the best ways to learn a subject is to teach the subject. By reversing roles, your teen will be demonstrating their full comprehension of the lesson.

This lesson may need to be repeated several times before both of you are comfortable venturing onto a public road. There is no need to rush this phase of

the process. Make sure your teen is comfortable behind the wheel before moving on to the next set of skills.



Safety Tip: Use games to teach your teen about driving. For example:

1. Spot the loser – Identify the worst driver on the road. Have your teen explain the errors the driver is making.
2. Count the errors – See how many errors you can see other drivers make.
3. Predict the move – try to predict the next move of the other vehicles on the road.

Your teen is and HAS BEEN thinking driving is easy. They do NOT know all the decisions you make as you drive down the road. Don't just tell them; tell them WHILE you are processing the decisions.

Lesson #1: Getting Started

(Letting Go is hard to do!)

Orientation (15 Minutes)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
<i>Vehicle Safety Check</i>		
<i>Adjust Seat & Mirrors</i>		
<i>Review Vehicle Controls & Gauges</i>		
Driving Experience (1 Hour)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
<i>Starting the Engine</i>		
<i>Engaging the Transmission</i>		
<i>Use of Mirrors</i>		
<i>Moving Forward</i>		
<i>Acceleration</i>		
<i>Braking</i>		
<i>Stopping Distance</i>		
<i>Turning</i>		
<i>Orientation on the Road</i>		
Review (15 Minutes)		Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
<i>Stopping Distances</i>		
<i>Orientation on the Road</i>		
<i>Scanning the Road (Anticipating Problems)</i>		
<i>Good Points</i>		

Additional Comments:

Skills to review for next lesson:

Lesson #2: Parking Lot

(No shopping cart races)

Start this lesson with a review of Lesson 1 and summarizing the skills you will be teaching today. The emphasis of this lesson should be on vehicle control and stopping the vehicle.

While driving it is important to be aware of where all the vehicles are on the road. In order to monitor the other vehicles on the road, a driver must effectively utilize his/her mirrors. This would be a good time to demonstrate the blind spot. While the auto is parked, stand in the blind spot to help your teen adjust the side mirrors. They will not realize until you physically show them this spot is real! Note: the side mirrors need to be adjusted out, you should only see a TRACE of the side of the auto. The KEY is what is next to the auto and outwards. The teen needs to KNOW all autos are different; some vehicles have larger blind spots than others.



Safety Tip: Apply the small convex mirrors to both side mirrors. These mirrors increase the view TREMENDOUSLY!

One of the top 5 mistakes teens make is following too closely. They do not realize the distance it takes to stop a vehicle. Once your teen is feeling a little more comfortable behind the wheel, have them simulate an emergency stop.



Safety Tip: Walk off the distance it takes to stop the vehicle from various speeds. Try using the marked white lines or bring a few cones to mark the distance. This process will help your teen realize just how long it takes to stop the car. Stress how the distance will increase at highway speeds.

Most vehicles on the road today are equipped with the ABS (Anti-Locking Brake Systems) safety feature. Try to engage this safety feature today. Depending on the size of the parking lot you are using, this may be difficult to do. However, it is important for your teen to experience this safety feature in a controlled environment for the first time.

Lesson #2: Parking Lot

(No shopping cart races)

Orientation (15 Minutes)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review Previous Lesson		
Safety Check		
Discuss Today's Lesson		
Driving Experience (1 Hour)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review Starting		
Review Stopping		
Review Turning		
Introduce New Skill: Scanning the Road		
Scan Forward		
Scan Side to Side		
Blind Spot		
Use of Mirrors		
Introduce New Skill: Backing		
Backing Straight		
Turning While Backing		
Review (15 Minutes)		Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Scanning the Road (Anticipating Problems)		
Backing		
Good Points		

Additional Comments:

Skills to review for next lesson:

Lesson #3: Parking

(We don't mean at the drive-in!)

Most new drivers are afraid to park the car because they are not comfortable judging the distance from their bumper to the other car. If the braking exercises were effective in Lesson 2, your teen may be doubly apprehensive. However, before they can venture onto the road, they must be comfortable with all the dimensions of the vehicle.

For this exercise practice all types of parking.



Safety Tip: Begin your parking exercises by using empty plastic trash cans to designate the other vehicles.

Don't forget to show your teen how to set (and take off) the parking brake when parking on a hill.

Lesson #3: Parking

(We don't mean at the drive-in!)

Orientation (15 Minutes)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review Previous Lesson		
Safety Check		
Discuss Today's Lesson		
Driving Experience (1 Hour)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Introduce New Skill: Parking		
Straight In Parking		
Angled Parking		
Parallel Parking (Use Trash Cans as Cars)		
Parking on a Hill		
Practice Backing		
Review (15 Minutes)		Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Parking		
Scanning the Road		
Blind Spot		

Additional Comments:

Skills to review for next lesson:

Lesson #4: Leaving the Garage

(Sometimes you have to go backward to go forward)

Your teen feels comfortable behind the wheel and with the basic operation of the motor vehicle. In order to demonstrate this skill, have your teen back the car out of the garage. Many teens fear they will scrape the side of the garage while backing the car out because they are not truly comfortable with the vehicle dimensions.



Safety Tip: Make sure the garage door is all the way up!

You are now ready to take your teen on the road and put to use some of the skills they have learned. This lesson should be performed in a small neighborhood where there is minimal vehicle and foot traffic.

For the first time they may encounter another moving vehicle or a vehicle parked at the side of the road. Try to remember the anxiety you felt the first time you approached an oncoming vehicle. It is imperative the teen have a “feel” for the dimensions of their car.

Practice defensive driving. Teach your teen to anticipate probable problem situations. For example, scan the sides of the road for small children that may dart onto the road. Anticipate that a parked car may suddenly pull out in front of you from the side of the road.

Turning is much different on the road from an empty parking lot. Practice making turns at an intersection both from a stop and while moving. Many teens struggle with gauging when to start turning, applying brake pressure and accelerating out of a turn. Again, finish the lesson with your teen acting as the instructor.

Lesson #4: Leaving the Garage

(Sometimes you have to go backward to go forward)

Orientation (15 Minutes)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review Previous Lesson		
Safety Check		
Discuss Today's Lesson		
Driving Experience (1 Hour)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Introduce New Skill: Garage Parking		
Backing Out of Garage		
Parking in Garage		
Backing Down Driveway		
Introduce New Skill: Driving in Neighborhood		
Approaching an Intersection		
Passing a Parked Car		
Oncoming Car		
Turning a Corner		
Review (15 Minutes)		Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Garage Parking		
Neighborhood Driving		
Parking		

Additional Comments:

Skills to review for next lesson:

Lesson #5: Neighborhood Driving

(80% of Accidents occur 7 miles or less from home)

For this lesson, you should continue driving in a small neighborhood with little traffic. By now, your teens' confidence should be building. Throughout this lesson stress the defensive driving techniques you have been discussing. Emphasize the need to scan the road and anticipate other drivers' actions. Anticipation can prevent many accidents before they happen.



Safety Tip: Teach your teen to look through turns, look past the auto ahead and watch for pedestrians. What will your teen do if a ball suddenly rolls into the street?

Part of the conversation should be discussing the perfect storm. Where and who are the bad drivers? Where do bad drivers congregate? Where is traffic congestion a problem? Where drivers are likely to be on cell phones and distracted? Where are pedestrians and people in a rush? Examples of where the perfect storm may exist are: mall parking lots, the grocery store and movie theaters.



Safety Tip: The perfect storm exists in the school parking lot every day when students are dismissed. Have your teen wait 10 minutes after dismissal before driving home.

Lesson #5: Neighborhood Driving

(80% of Accidents occur 7 miles or less from home)

Orientation (15 Minutes)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review Previous Lesson		
Safety Check		
Discuss Today's Lesson		
Driving Experience (1 Hour)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Practice Neighborhood Driving		
Approaching an Intersection		
Review Road Positioning		
Review Passing a Parked Car		
Review Oncoming Cars		
Review Turning		
Introduce New Skill: Driving with Distractions		
Turn Radio Up		
Talking While Driving		
Review (15 Minutes)		Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Parking		
Distractions		

Additional Comments:

Skills to review for next lesson:

Lesson #6: City Street Driving

(Cruisin' for a Bruisin')

It is now time to venture out of the neighborhood and onto the road with traffic. Try making the short trip to the nearest grocery store. Be careful, try to practice when there is minimal traffic. Most teens are nervous when they face their first oncoming car and tend to drift too far to the right. Have them use their mirrors to see where they are on the road.

This type of driving will require many more decisions. This driving is much more dangerous than any driving you have done to this point. Emphasize this point to your teen driver. You will also need to be much more alert at this time. As is the case with all the prior lessons, you may need to repeat this lesson several times before proceeding.

It is now time to use the defensive driving techniques you have been discussing. Techniques such as: scanning the road ahead, anticipating what other drivers and pedestrians are about to do, etc.



Safety Tip: Now would be a good time to play the games we recommended earlier:

1. Spot the loser – Identify the worst driver on the road. Have your teen explain the errors the driver is making.
2. Count the errors – See how many errors you can see other drivers make.
3. Predict the move – try to predict the next move of the other vehicles on the road.

This is probably where your teen will have their first experience with stop signs. You will want to avoid intersection with poor visibility in any direction.



Safety Tip: The last direction you should look before proceeding is the direction with the worst visibility. If there is an obstruction in either direction, look that way last.

Lesson #6: City Street Driving

(Cruisin' for a Bruisin')

Orientation (15 Minutes)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review Previous Lesson		
Safety Check		
Discuss Today's Lesson		
Driving Experience (1 Hour)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Introduce New Skill: City Street Driving		
Accelerating to Speed Limit		
Road Positioning		
Turning (Right & Left)		
Signaling (Hand Signals)		
Oncoming Traffic		
Approaching Intersection		
Approaching Traffic Light		
Yielding Right of Way		
Review (15 Minutes)		Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Parallel Parking		
Turning		
Driving Through Intersections		

Additional Comments:

Skills to review for next lesson:

Lesson #7: Traffic Lights

(Ready – Set – Go!)

Most of the driving we do is on city streets. Therefore, complete mastery of this lesson is essential. During this lesson pay particular attention to intersections and turning. Repeat this lesson until you are completely sure your teen has mastered these skills. Gradually increase the difficulty of the driving lesson. After this lesson your teen should be completing turns in all directions while remaining in their lane. They should know when they have the right of way and when to yield.



Safety Tip: One of the most common causes of teen accidents is failing to yield the right of way.

Practice approaching traffic lights. At this point they should be able to stop at a light without causing whiplash. Practice the timing of making a left turn IN FRONT of on-coming traffic. In fact, this is a major cause of accidents. Many teens have difficulty learning to be a GOOD Judge of the other drivers speed. It is common for teens to initially be too cautious before turning left in front of oncoming traffic. However, once they have gained confidence behind the wheel, this is an area where teens tend to take unnecessary risks. Remember, driver error is the number one cause of teen accidents. Turning left at intersections is one of the most common situations where drivers make mistakes.



Safety tip: At all intersections, teach your teen to look in the shortest direction last.



Safety tip: Watch the pedestrian walkway sign, when the “Don’t Walk” sign flashes the light is about to turn yellow.

Practice driving on congested roads and in congested areas. Again, emphasize who has the right of way.



Safety Tip: It is not uncommon for a friendly driver to “wave” you across a congested lane of traffic. WARNING! This action results in an accident as often as not. If you are in an accident, you will be judged at fault.

In order to cut costs and regulate the flow of traffic, many cities are using Round-a-Bouts or Circle Turns in place of traffic lights. Round-a-bouts are one of the most confusing traffic obstacles to navigate for the new driver. Truth be told, any driver that is unfamiliar with these intersections have difficulty.



Safety Tip: While navigating the round-a-bout many teen drivers have a tendency to stop and allow another driver to enter. **NEVER STOP!** In most instances the driver behind you is not watching you and the result is a rear end collision.

The number one cause of teen accidents is driver error. Sometimes in an effort to protect their young drivers, parents place their teens in a position to fail. Because your teen is just learning to drive you may avoid highly congested driving situations such as: rush hour traffic, driving to and from major sporting events, or concerts. However, sooner or later they will be driving in these types of situations. If you live in a major metropolitan area, have your teen drive you downtown. Don't you think it would be better if the first time they experienced this stressful driving was with you in the car? Many teens experience their first fender bender while driving under these conditions.



Safety Tip: In Pennsylvania it is legal to make a left hand turn on a red light onto a one way street. However, this is not the law in all states.

Lesson #7: Traffic Lights

(Ready – Set – Go!)

Orientation (15 Minutes)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review Previous Lesson		
Safety Check		
Discuss Today's Lesson		
Driving Experience (1 Hour)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review: City Street Driving		
Accelerating to Speed Limit		
Road Positioning		
Turning (Right & Left)		
Oncoming Traffic		
Approaching an Intersection		
Navigating a Round-a- Bout (Circle Turn)		
Approaching a Traffic Light		
Yielding Right of Way		
Parallel Parking		
Driving Through Intersections		

Additional Comments:

Skills to review for next lesson:

Lesson #8: Country Roads

(Wind in your hair, out on the open road)

You have navigated city streets at speeds up to 40 miles per hour and are now ready to venture onto the open road. It is time to drive the car at the higher speeds allowed on county roads. Pay careful attention to the positioning on the road. Remind your teen to use their side mirrors to maintain proper lane positioning.



Safety Tip: One of the top 5 causes of accidents among teen drivers is driver error such as overcorrecting when 2 wheels go off the roadway. First demonstrate for your teen how to bring the car back on the road without panicking. Then, have them practice this multiple times until you are comfortable with their skill level.

Now is a good time to reemphasize stopping distances. At higher speeds, a greater stopping distance is required. Your teen is now confident behind the wheel but will probably underestimate the distance required to come to a stop from 55 mph. As discussed earlier, following too closely is one of the top 5 mistakes teen drivers make.



Safety Tip: Use telephone poles to estimate your following distance.

Rural areas present additional hazards. What should you do when approaching a farm vehicle? When approaching farm equipment the slower rate of speed at which they travel, as well as the debris the equipment throws off, pose completely different hazards than other vehicles. Complicating the situation is the fact that the operator of farm equipment cannot hear your horn because of the noise of the equipment and their sheer size makes them difficult to pass. Additionally, they may not have turn signals.

Lesson #8: Country Roads

(Wind in your hair, out on the open road)

Orientation (15 Minutes)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review Previous Lesson		
Safety Check		
Discuss Today's Lesson		
Driving Experience (1 Hour)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Introduce New Skill: Open Road Driving		
Accelerating to Speed Limit		
Roadway Positioning		
Oncoming Traffic		
Following Distance		
Passing		
Approaching a Stop Sign		
Introduce New Skill: 2 Wheels off the Road		
Slowing to turn		
Review (15 Minutes)		Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
2 Wheels off the Road		
Following Distance		
Slowing to Stop or Turn		

Additional Comments:

Skills to review for next lesson:

Lesson #9: Open Roads

(Going straight does not mean going fast)

Reemphasize the points on stopping and following distances from Lesson 8. Review the skill of recovering from dropping two wheels off the road. You have now had the vehicle up to speeds of 55 miles per hour.

Introduce the new skill of passing on a two lane road.



Safety Tip: It is dangerous and illegal to exceed the posted speed limit while passing another vehicle. From lack of experience, teen drivers will commonly misjudge the speed, time and distance necessary to pass another vehicle.

Depth perception and judgment are crucial during this type of driving. This type of driving lends itself to driver error all too frequently. Most one vehicle accidents occur during this type of driving. Be sure to practice slowing safely in order to navigate sudden curves. It is quite common for 45 mph to be the safe speed required to navigate such turns. Additionally, rural roads of this nature frequently have bumps which are more severe than they appear upon approach. Or, the roadway may hide a stop sign.

Teens are very likely to speed on these types of roads due to a lack of traffic and that the road is straight for long distances. However, the sudden curves and unavoidable bumps are very hazardous. Now is a good time to discuss the dangers of speeding.

Once you are comfortable, move to Lesson 10 where we will begin highway driving.

Lesson #9: Open Roads

(Going straight does not mean going fast)

Orientation (15 Minutes)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review Previous Lesson		
Safety Check		
Discuss Today's Lesson		
Driving Experience (1 Hour)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review Open Road Driving		
Accelerating to Speed Limit		
Roadway Positioning		
Oncoming Traffic		
Following Distance		
Passing		
Approaching a Stop Sign		
2 Wheels off the Road		
Slowing to Stop and Turn		

Additional Comments:

Skills to review for next lesson:

Lesson #10: Highway Driving

(I can't drive 55!)

Proceed slowly with highway driving. Have your teen merge onto the highway, remaining in the right lane and exiting at the next ramp. Repeat this procedure multiple times. Merging is a critical skill to remaining safe on the highway and one that too many people are deficient. As experience is gained, your teen will gradually be ready to remain on the highway long enough to pass ramps and other vehicles. Pay particular attention to lane positioning. Anticipate the other drivers' actions while they are merging, passing you or when you are passing them.



Safety Tip: Teach your teen to always have an out. They need to keep space in a lane to either side or a following distance long enough to allow them to avoid the driver that makes a sudden move.

Review the lesson on blind spots. Work with your teen to be aware of where all the cars are around him/her. The blind spot is not a problem if they know when a vehicle is moving into their blind spot. Work on scanning the road ahead as well as using the mirrors to scan the road behind.

Teach your teen proper driving etiquette as vehicles merge onto the highway. Have your teen move to the center lane safely, allowing the other vehicle to merge easily.



Safety Tip: The center lane of the highway is full of POOR drivers. These drivers are drivers who can NOT merge well, and are afraid of merging themselves.



Safety Tip: Fog line drivers. Many inexperienced highway drivers think they are merging just by following the white fog line into the right line. CAUTION they do NOT have a clue that you are there in the right lane!

Learning all the nuances of entering and exiting the freeway is difficult because all drivers merge and exit a little differently.



Safety Tip: Some people do NOT want to let you back over into the exiting lane. When you slow up to let them move ahead, watch out they ALSO might be exiting and will hit their brakes.

Repeat this lesson multiple times in order for your teen to experience the various traffic patterns of highway driving. Gradually drive in increasingly heavy traffic.



Safety Tip: Have your teen drive during rush hour. Many parents avoid having their teen drive in rush hour traffic. Remember, following too closely is one of the most frequent mistakes teens make.

Driving habits vary from city to city. This is most evident when navigating the freeways around our cities. While driving on vacation, teach your teen to be observant when driving in a strange city and to be prepared to adapt to the local tendencies.

Lesson #10: Highway Driving

(I can't drive 55!)

Orientation (15 Minutes)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review Previous Lesson		
Safety Check		
Discuss Today's Lesson		
Driving Experience (1 Hour)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Merging onto Highway		
Using Your Mirrors		
Changing Lanes		
Passing		
Anticipating the Other Drivers		
Checking Your Blind Spots		
Following Distance		
Roadway Position		
Exiting the Freeway		
Review (15 Minutes)		Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Merging		
Checking Your Blind Spots		
Following Distance		

Additional Comments:

Skills to review for next lesson:

Lesson #11: Night Driving

(Blinded by the light)

Your teen has now experienced all the different types of driving, on city streets, the open road and the highway. It is now time to experience each of these types of driving at night. As you know, your depth perception and vision are impaired at night which reduces reaction time. Scanning the road is harder to do and road hazards are more difficult to see.

Many states require a minimum of ten hours of night driving experience before a teen is allowed to receive their license. Do not cut these lessons short.

Additionally, night driving introduces a whole new set of dangers. Most animals in the roadway are encountered at dusk or during night driving. If you live in an area where deer are present you must scan off the side of the road.



Safety Tip: Deer are particularly active during harvest time as their cover is being taken away. Most deer accidents occur during this time. Also, when there is one deer, there are surely more to follow.

According to the NHTSA, most fatal accidents for teens occur between the hours of 8:00 and 12:00 pm. One reason is because this is when teens are most likely on the road. However, a major contributing factor is commonly driver fatigue. Teach your teen to spot the warning signs of fatigue. Not just their own, but of the other drivers on the road such as: erratic speed, weaving and crossing the center line or fog line.



Safety tip: It takes less than 4 seconds to fall completely asleep. Teach your child to never try to force their way through drowsiness. It is always better to pull off the road, get some fresh air or walk around the car to wake up.

In rural driving, many drivers do not use their high beams correctly. Review proper use of high beams and the distance between cars when the headlights should be dimmed. Properly adjusted headlights will typically illuminate the road up to 350 feet. If you are traveling faster than 55 mph it will be difficult to have the proper amount of reaction time when encountering a dangerous situation.



Safety Tip: When the oncoming car forgets to dim their lights what should you do? Focus on the white fog line for the split second that the vehicle with the high beams is passing. This will protect your night vision.

Lesson #11: Night Driving

(Blinded by the light)

Orientation (15 Minutes)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review Previous Lesson		
Safety Check		
Discuss Today's Lesson		
Driving Experience (1 Hour)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Use of Bright Lights		
Following Distance		
Signaling		
Changing Lanes		
Oncoming Traffic		
Turning		
Review (15 Minutes)		Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Following Distance		
Turning		
Use of Bright Lights		

Additional Comments:

Skills to review for next lesson:

Lesson #12: Bad Weather

(Wind, Ice, Snow, Rain – just like the mailman!)

This is probably the most difficult driving lesson to administer. It almost has to be performed on command because you never know when bad weather will occur. Learning to drive on snow and ice can be particularly difficult. Depending on when your teen obtains his/her permit, there may not even see snow for almost a year!

Driver inexperience and poor decisions are only magnified when driving in less than ideal conditions. Review how stopping distances need to increase exponentially in poor weather.

Do not avoid practicing with your teen on snow covered roads. Eventually they will be driving on them. Experience can only make them better. Take your teen back to the empty parking lot where your lessons began. Show them how their stopping distance increases in the rain as well as snow and ice. Have your teen practice fish tailing their car on the ice and snow.



Safety Tip: In order to regain traction, remove your foot from the gas pedal and turn into the skid.

Lesson #12: Bad Weather

(Wind, Ice, Snow, Rain – just like the mailman!)

Orientation (15 Minutes)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review Previous Lesson		
Safety Check		
Discuss Today's Lesson		
Driving Experience (1 Hour)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Steering While Skidding		
Following Distance		
Braking on Ice		
Braking in Rain		
Braking on Snow		
Turning on Ice		
Turning on Snow		
Black Ice		
Review (15 Minutes)		Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement

Additional Comments:

Skills to review for next lesson:

Lesson #13: Accidents Happen

(Oops... I made a mistake!)

For this lesson, simulate that your teen has been involved in an accident. Walk your teen through the steps they will need to take if this unfortunate event takes place.

First, think SAFETY. Can you exit the vehicle? Watch out for the other cars going around you. Check on the safety of the other driver and passengers. Once you are certain everyone is ok, start gathering information. Record the information on the claim pamphlet I provided. It is also a good idea to take pictures of the accident scene before you move the cars if possible (most people have a camera on their cell phone).



Insurance Tip: Do NOT admit fault to any degree. Merely state the sequence of events to your best recollection.

Collect the names, addresses, phone numbers and driver's license numbers of the other operator as well as any witnesses.



Insurance Tip: Make a note of the license plate numbers of all vehicles involved. It is amazing the number of times a driver will give false personal information to a police officer. The registered owner of the vehicle can always be traced with a plate number.

Write down the sequence of events as you recall them. Have the other driver and any witnesses do the same. Make sure they sign, date and note the time of day on their summary of the accident.

Call me, your Family Insurance Counselor, FIRST. If I am not available and bodily injury is involved, call the insurance company immediately. It is a proven fact that the quicker accident victims are contacted, the less likely they are to sue and/or change their story. Additionally, insurance payments are lower. If there is no bodily injury, speak to me before you speak to a representative of any insurance company.

Lesson #13: Accidents Happen

(Oops... I made a mistake!)

Orientation (15 Minutes)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review Previous Lesson		
Safety Check		
Discuss Today's Lesson		
Driving Experience (1 Hour)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review (15 Minutes)		Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement

Additional Comments:

Skills to review for next lesson:

Lesson #14: The High Price of Driving

(Scared Straight)

For this lesson arrange an appointment with your Family Insurance Counselor. He will be happy to provide a brief explanation on the following subjects:

1. How a speeding ticket and/or an accident affects your insurance rate.
2. The Good Student Discount. Many teens are surprised at how much money this discount saves.
3. How the type of vehicle you drive affects your insurance rate.



Insurance Tip: Unfortunately all drivers speed from time to time. However, did you know that being cited for driving in excess of 20 miles per hour above the speed limit is considered a serious violation (the same as a DUI!) by most insurance companies and will most assuredly result in the cancellation of your insurance!

I will be happy to dispel any myths or questions your teen may have. The most common question asked by teens that pay their own insurance is, “My friend pays so much less for his insurance and he/she has a worse driving record. Why is my rate so high?”

As I mentioned at the beginning of this guide, one of the top 5 mistakes teens make when driving is speeding. Speeding is almost always involved in teen accidents. If we could prevent teens from speeding, we could prevent many senseless injuries and/or deaths each year. A simple math problem will help stimulate the conversation.

Example Problem:

You and a few friends went to the movies and the movie lasted longer than you anticipated. You are 20 miles from home but only have 10 minutes to get home. You hesitate to call your parents because you just violated your curfew last night. Assume the speed limit is 35 mph, how long will it take you to get home if you drive the speed limit? How much time do you save if you average 45 mph? 55mph?

Lesson #14: The High Pricing of Driving

(Scared Straight)

Orientation (15 Minutes)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review Previous Lesson		
Safety Check		
Discuss Today's Lesson		
Driving Experience (1 Hour)	Grade (A, B, C)	Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement
Review (15 Minutes)		Comments, Praise and Areas of Improvement

Additional Comments:

Skills to review for next lesson:

Lesson #15: Map Reading

(In search of B3? You sank my battleship!)

An important lesson and with the advent of in car navigation systems, quickly becoming a lost art, is the ability to read a map. This valuable skill is needed while driving to locations that your teen does not frequent. The ability to read a map, whether State or City, is important for finding new places to visit.

In addition to maps, the ability to receive and give directions is also important. Work with your teen and their ability to take notes for directions. This is the time to dispel the rumor that men never ask for directions. Teach your teen where to look to get directions when they are lost.

Lesson #16: Your Teen is Now Licensed

(This is the beginning of a beautiful relationship)

Your teen has obtained their drivers license and your job is done. **WRONG!** Unfortunately, this is the thought process most parents undergo. Remember, your teen has been driving for slightly more than one year. They are still inexperienced! Worse, they are now over confident and have no doubt picked up some bad driving habits. We all know they drive differently when they are not with us! This is where your driving example is most crucial. Watch your speed; stay off the cell phone while driving and for heaven's sake – **DO NOT CALL YOUR TEEN WHEN YOU KNOW HE/SHE IS DRIVING.** You cannot emphasize the no phone while driving rule enough. However, you must practice as you preach.

Think back to the times you were teaching your teen to drive. There are areas you know that need additional training. Maybe your teen has not driven on the highway since he/she obtained his/her license. If not, make sure they drive the next time the family is on the highway. It is a good general rule to continue having your teen drive each time you are in the car together. The more they drive with you, the more comfortable they will become and their true driving habits will emerge. Teaching opportunities will almost surely arise.

Many parents restrict certain types of driving until their teen gains more experience. As an example, it is quite common in the Midwest for parents to restrict their teens driving on icy roads. However, sooner or later they are going to have to drive on icy roads. If you have this restriction, make sure you take your teen out each time the roads become icy. Help them get that experience. Your job of training is not done just because your teen obtained his/her license. In fact, this may be the most crucial training you do.

Driver inexperience is the number one cause of teen accidents. Make sure your teen has as much driving experience under your watchful eye, both before they are licensed and after, as is humanly possible.

11 Safety Tips EVERY Parent Should Enforce

1. Practice makes Perfect. Your teen should have a minimum of 100 hours behind the wheel experience before obtaining their drivers license.
2. Pay for your teen to attend a professional driving school.
3. Always wear your seat belt.
4. Limit the number of passengers. Driver distraction and peer pressure increases as the number of passenger's increases.
5. Install a GPS System. If your teen knows you are watching, they WILL drive differently! They WILL drive safer!
6. Obey the Speed Limit. Speed KILLS. Allow yourself plenty of time to reach your destination. If you are late, speeding WILL NOT get you there on time!
7. Ban cell phones while driving.
8. Maintain your vehicle. Make sure the windshield is clean and the tires are properly inflated. Many teens drive older cars; make sure they have newer tires and wiper blades.
9. Use turn signals to let other drivers know your intentions.
10. Don't get caught asleep at the wheel. Today's teens are more active than any previous generation. Consequently, they are out later and are more tired. Don't get behind the wheel if you are tired.
11. Don't Drink and Drive, and don't ride with anyone that has been drinking or is otherwise impaired.

Resources

For more safety tips, to learn about Teensurance and GPS systems to help keep your teen safe, insurance rates and teen driving statistics visit the following websites:

ADD NEW WEBSITE HERE

www.nhtsa.gov

<http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/home/index.shtml> PA DMV

Driving Schools

Google Driving schools and your city to obtain a list.