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Report to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and its Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, House of Representatives

May 2010

TEEN DRIVER SAFETY

Additional Research Could Help States Strengthen Graduated Driver Licensing Systems

GAO-10-544

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Highlights

Highlights of GAO-10-544, a report to Report to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and its Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

Teen drivers ages 16 to 20 have the highest fatality rate of any age group in the United States. As a result, states have increasingly adopted laws to limit teen driving exposure, such as Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) systems, which consist of three stages: a learner's permit allowing driving only under supervision; intermediate licensure allowing unsupervised driving with restrictions; and full licensure. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), within the Department of Transportation (DOT), supports state teen driver safety programs by researching teen driver safety issues, working to limit teens' access to alcohol, promoting seat belt use, and encouraging states to implement GDL systems. This requested report identifies (1) key GDL system requirements and the extent to which state programs include these requirements, and (2) challenges states face to improve teen driver safety and how states and NHTSA have addressed the challenges. GAO examined state GDL systems, visited six states, and interviewed federal and state traffic safety officials and other experts.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that NHTSA conduct additional research on teen driver safety requirements such as entry age, passenger and nighttime driving restrictions, and driver education to help identify the optimum provisions of GDL systems. DOT officials reviewed a draft of this report and concurred with our recommendation.

View GAO-10-544 or key components.
For more information, contact Susan Fleming at (202) 512-2834 or flemings@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

Key requirements of a GDL system, according to traffic safety experts GAO interviewed, include a minimum entry age, a learner's permit phase that includes supervised driving, and restrictions on nighttime driving and driving with teen passengers. Additional key requirements sometimes addressed as part of a GDL system include seat belt use, bans on using electronic devices such as using cell phones while driving, driver education, and parental involvement. Forty-nine states and the District of Columbia have a three-stage GDL system and most state systems include key requirements. For example, all states, including the District of Columbia, have a minimum entry age and learner's permit stage, 49 have nighttime driving restrictions, and 43 have passenger restrictions. However, specific provisions vary. For example, nighttime driving restrictions vary from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. in certain states to 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. in others. While research shows that GDL systems are associated with improved teen driver safety, additional research on specific requirements, such as minimum entry age, the learner's permit phase, nighttime driving and passenger restrictions, bans on electronic devices, drivers' education, and parental involvement could help state officials determine optimum provisions to strengthen their GDL systems. For example, limited research is available to indicate optimal times to limit teen driving at night or the effect of electronic device bans on teen drivers.

In addition to limited research, officials identified several challenges to improving state teen driver safety programs, such as difficulty in enacting and enforcing teen driver safety laws, limited resources to implement a teen driver safety program, limited access to standardized driver education, and difficulties involving parents as their teens learn to drive, among others. For example, enacting teen driver laws can be challenging because some groups, including legislators, believe these laws infringe on an individual's personal freedom. Officials have identified a number of strategies to address these challenges. For example, several states created a commission or task force to rally public support for new teen driver laws. Strategies to address other challenges included implementing enforcement checkpoints targeting teen drivers, seeking funding from private companies, developing driver education standards, and encouraging parent participation in teen driver programs. NHTSA also helps states address these challenges in several ways, including providing information on its Web site, publishing an annual guidebook on effective traffic safety countermeasures for major highway safety problem areas, including young drivers, and regular contact with state officials.

Contents

Abbreviations

AAA	American Automobile Association
AAP	American Academy of Pediatrics
DOT	Department of Transportation
FARS	Fatality Analysis Reporting System
GDL	Graduated Driver Licensing
GHSA	Governors Highway Safety Association
IIHS	Insurance Institute for Highway Safety
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
NTSB	National Transportation Safety Board
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
TRB	Transportation Research Board

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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

May 27, 2010

The Honorable James L. Oberstar
Chairman
The Honorable John L. Mica
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
House of Representatives

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman
The Honorable John J. Duncan, Jr.
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
House of Representatives

Teen drivers ages 16 to 20 years have the highest fatal crash rate of any age group in the United States.[1] In 2008, there were over 5,700 fatal motor vehicle crashes, resulting in nearly 6,300 fatalities, in which teen drivers were involved.[2] Several factors such as inexperience and immaturity may be associated with teen risk-taking behaviors—such as alcohol consumption, distraction, speeding, and driving without a seat belt—and may increase crash risk for teens.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), within the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), conducts research on teen driver safety issues, develops and demonstrates program strategies, develops targeted media messages for teens and parents of teen drivers, and provides grants to states that can be used to fund teen driver safety initiatives. There is no federal grant program specific to teens, however, and no federal law governs state teen driver safety programs. States have adopted a variety of strategies to address teen driver safety including passing Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws aimed at limiting teen

[1]For the purposes of this report, we use the term "teen drivers" to refer to drivers ages 16 to 20, although safety organizations may define the age range of teen drivers differently.

[2]In 2008, fatalities from all motor vehicle crashes totaled 37,261.

driving exposure to high-risk driving conditions. Research has shown that GDL systems are associated with reduced teen driver fatalities. These systems typically define requirements (based on state GDL laws) for three stages of teen driving: a learner's permit, intermediate licensure, and full licensure. In response to your interest in the safety of teen drivers, this report provides information on (1) the key requirements included in a GDL system and the extent to which state programs include these requirements, and (2) challenges that states have faced in improving teen driver safety and how NHTSA and the states have addressed these challenges.

To identify key requirements of a GDL system and the extent to which state programs include these requirements, we reviewed recommendations on specific requirements that should be included in a GDL system, including those from NHTSA, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). We also reviewed and verified IIHS's listing of state GDL systems identifying the specific requirements for each state. In addition, we interviewed federal officials and academic researchers and reviewed guidance and research from NHTSA and other transportation associations, which we identified based on certain selection criteria, including studies authored or provided to us by experts or organizations we interviewed and other studies published in the last 10 years. To obtain state and local perspectives on key requirements for GDL systems, we interviewed selected state and local transportation officials and representatives from traffic safety organizations in six states: Florida, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Dakota, and Oregon. We selected these states based on a range of factors, including IIHS's overall rating of states' GDL systems, fatality rates involving young drivers as well as fatalities in rural versus urban areas, suggestions from NHTSA and association representatives, and geographic dispersion. Since we used a nongeneralizable sampling approach, the results of these interviews cannot be used to make inferences about all states. To determine challenges states have faced in improving teen driver safety, we interviewed state and local officials in the six states we visited, NHTSA officials, and representatives of various transportation and safety associations. We systematically analyzed information from these site visits and other interviews to identify challenges that affected states' ability to improve teen driver safety programs, as well as strategies to address these challenges. We found fatality rate and population data—obtained from NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System and the Census Bureau—presented as background material for this report to be sufficiently reliable for our purposes. We conducted this performance audit from June 2009 to May 2010, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing

standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. (For a detailed description of our methodology, see app. I).

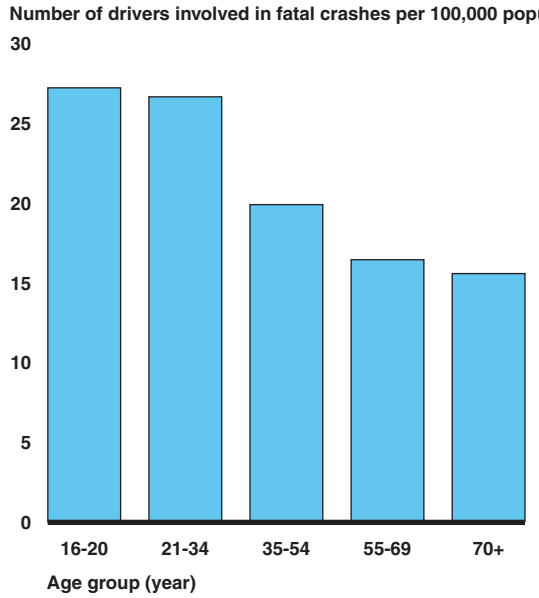
Background

Teens have the highest per-person rate of drivers involved in fatal crashes—27.2 drivers per 100,000 people in 2008, the most current year for which data were available (see fig. 1). Lack of driving experience and immaturity may contribute to higher crash rates for teens.[3] NHTSA and the Transportation Research Board (TRB) have reported that research on adolescent development suggests key areas of the brain involved in decision-making do not fully develop until the mid-20s. Driving inexperience and immaturity can be associated with risk-taking behaviors related to alcohol consumption, driving without a seat belt, driving at night, and distractions such as other passengers and electronic devices (e.g., cell phones). For example, of those whose restraint use was known, 55 percent of 16-to-20-year-olds killed in crashes were unrestrained in 2008, compared to 50 percent for ages 21 and above. IIHS also reported that, in 2008, 20 percent of teen crash deaths occurred between the hours of 9 p.m. and midnight, and 63 percent of teen passenger deaths occurred in vehicles driven by another teen.[4] In addition, NHTSA has reported that teens used hand-held cell phones and manipulated other hand-held devices, such as video games, while driving at a greater rate than other age groups and that use of these devices while driving may pose a greater risk to teens due to their relative lack of driving experience.

[3]Numerous transportation safety experts—including those from NHTSA, IIHS, and TRB—agree that inexperience and immaturity can lead to risk-taking behaviors for teen drivers.

[4]Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. *Fatality Facts 2008: Teenagers.* http://www.iihs.org/research/fatality_facts_2008/teenagers.html (accessed Feb. 15, 2010).

Figure 1: Number of Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes, 2008

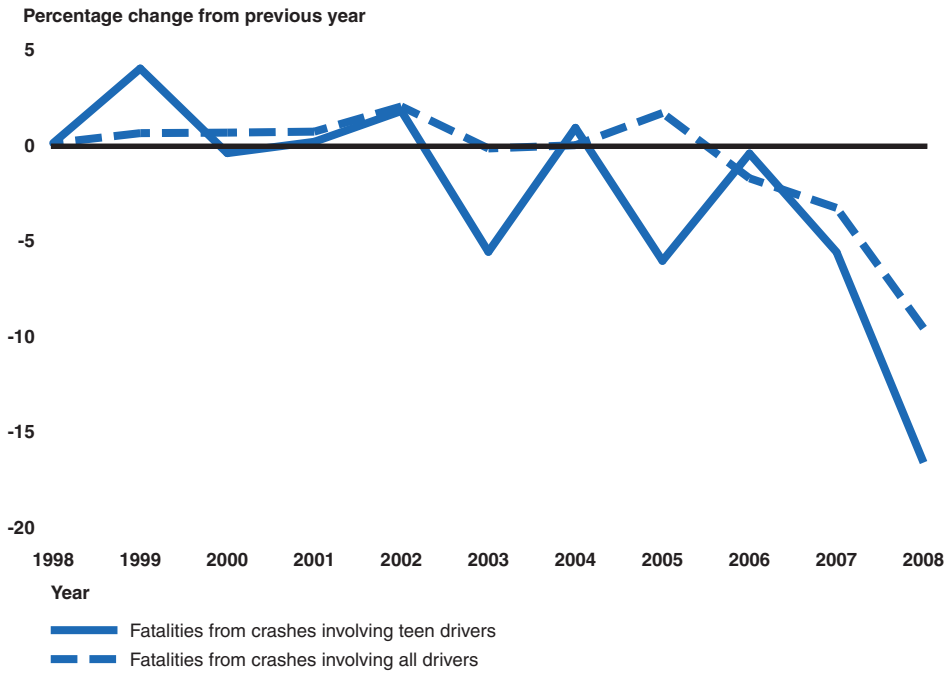


Sources: GAO analysis of NHTSA data and U.S. Census Bureau data.

Fatalities due to motor vehicle crashes have decreased in recent years, especially for teen drivers. While the number of fatalities resulting from crashes for all drivers decreased by 10.2 percent (from 41,501 to 37,261) from 1998 to 2008,[5] the number of fatalities resulting from crashes for drivers ages 16 to 20 decreased by 28.9 percent (from 8,585 to 6,289) during that same time period (see fig. 2).

[5]The fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel fell from 1.58 in 1998 to 1.27 in 2008. Also, the distribution of fatalities has changed since 1998, such as an increased percentage of motorcycle fatalities.

Figure 2: Percent Change of Fatalities from Crashes Involving Teen Drivers and All Drivers, 1998-2008



Source: GAO analysis of NHTSA data.

One factor that may have contributed to the decline in teen fatalities during this time is state adoption of GDL laws, which are designed to give new drivers experience under low-risk conditions. Florida was the first state to implement GDL legislation in 1996, and a majority of states had implemented a GDL system by 2000. GDL systems typically consist of three stages: learner's permit, which allows driving only under supervision; intermediate licensure, which allows unsupervised driving under certain restrictions; and full licensure. GDL systems can involve several requirements including a minimum number of supervised practice hours, nighttime and passenger restrictions, bans on electronic devices such as cell phones, and driver education courses.[6] Research, including studies by IIHS and the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, has shown GDL systems to be associated with significantly lower teen driver fatality rates. For example, an AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety study that

[6]For the purposes of this report we use the term "driver education" to refer to in-class and behind-the-wheel instruction for novice drivers.

analyzed fatal crashes of 16-year-old drivers in 43 states before and after GDL implementation indicated an 11 percent reduction in fatal crash involvement in 28 states with a three-stage GDL system.[7]

While states are responsible for implementing teen driver safety programs, NHTSA focuses its efforts on three priorities: (1) limiting teen access to alcohol, (2) promoting seat belt use, and (3) supporting state implementation of GDL systems.[8] As part of this approach, NHTSA focuses efforts to reduce traffic-related injuries and fatalities among teen drivers by promoting research, collecting and analyzing teen driver data, developing targeted media campaigns to encourage safe behavior among teens, and conducting pilot projects. Recent pilot projects related to teen driver safety include high-visibility enforcement campaigns on teen seat belt use and access to alcohol as well as projects on driver education and advanced driver training. NHTSA also recommends certain requirements of a GDL system such as a minimum entry age of 16 and a 6-month learner's permit stage with 30 to 50 hours of required supervised driving (see app. II for a comprehensive list of GDL requirements recommended by NHTSA and others), and develops guidance on ways to improve teen driver safety, such as Countermeasures That Work[9]—which outlines science-based strategies for major highway safety problem areas—and efforts to develop training, curriculum, and administrative standards for driver education.

Although no grant program specifically targets teens and no federal law requires states to meet specific licensing requirements or standards for

[7]Susan P. Baker, Li-Hui Chen, and Guohua Li. *Nationwide Review of Graduated Driver Licensing.* AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. February 2007.

[8]NHTSA works to limit teen access to alcohol and promote seat belt use primarily through educational materials and pilot projects such as highly publicized enforcement campaigns.

[9]Developed with the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), this publication describes current initiatives in areas of communication and outreach, licensing, and law enforcement—and the associated effectiveness, use, cost, and time required for state implementation. GHSA is a nonprofit association representing state highway safety offices and promotes the development of policy and programs to improve traffic safety. U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *Countermeasures That Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices*, Fifth Edition. DOT HS 811 258. Washington, D.C., 2010.

teen drivers or governs state teen driver safety programs,[10] Congress is considering several bills that address teen driver safety issues. Federal funding for transportation safety programs—including funding that could be used to address teen driver safety—was authorized to states under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) from 2005 to 2009.[11] Congress is considering the reauthorization of the surface transportation program, and several bills that address teen driver safety issues have been proposed, some of which target teen drivers. For example, two bills would encourage states to adopt a GDL system that meets certain minimum requirements,[12] several bills would prohibit the use of communication devices while driving[13] and one bill would establish a standard driver education curriculum for states.[14]

[10]However, legislation was enacted in 1984 and 1995, respectively, directing the Secretary of Transportation to withhold a percentage of federal highway funds from states which did not adopt a minimum drinking age of 21 (23 U.S.C. § 158), and from states which did not enact and enforce a law that considered an individual under the age of 21 who had a blood alcohol concentration of 0.02 percent or greater while operating a motor vehicle in the state to be driving while intoxicated or driving under the influence of alcohol (23 U.S.C. § 161). All states have now met these conditions to receive federal highway funds.

[11]According to NHTSA officials, the primary funding available to support teen driver safety programs includes the Section 402 formula grant, Section 405 Occupant Protection Incentive Grants, Section 406 Seat Belt Grants, and Section 410 Impaired Driving incentive grants.

[12]H.R. 1895, 111th Cong. (2009); S. 3269, 111th Cong. (2010).

[13]H.R. 3829, 111th Cong. (2009); 1938, 111th Cong. (2009); S. 1536, 111th Cong. (2009).

[14]S. 1729, 111th Cong. (2009).

Most State GDL Systems Include Key Requirements, but Specific Provisions Vary By State and Research on These Provisions Is Limited

States Generally Include Requirements That Safety Experts Considered Key, but Specific Provisions Vary Among States

According to NHTSA officials, state officials, and other transportation safety experts, key requirements of a GDL system include a minimum entry age, a learner's permit stage that includes supervised driving, and restrictions on nighttime driving and driving with teen passengers. Additional key requirements for teen drivers sometimes addressed as part of a GDL system include seat belt laws, bans on electronic devices,[15] driver education, and parental involvement.[16] Forty-nine states and the District of

[15]Most seat belt laws and some electronic device bans apply to drivers of all ages while others apply specifically to teen drivers. We included seat belt laws and electronic device bans in this analysis because officials identified these as key requirements included in GDL systems.

[16]Our analysis of key requirements includes those requirements most frequently mentioned by federal, state, and local officials as well as traffic and safety association officials and researchers we interviewed. We did not include other less-frequently mentioned requirements, such as "contingent advancement requirements," which specify the number of consecutive months during which a novice driver must remain crash- and conviction-free in the first two driver licensing stages before advancing to the next stage.

Columbia have a three-stage GDL system[17] and, as shown in table 1, most states include the key requirements identified by officials.[18] For example,

- all states have a minimum entry age and a learner's permit stage,[19]
- 49 states have nighttime driving restrictions,
- 43 states have passenger restrictions,
- 50 states have seat belt laws,
- 33 states have bans on electronic devices, and
- 34 states require completion of driver education before obtaining a driver's license.

However, specific provisions vary among states. For example, nighttime driving restrictions vary from "sunset to sunrise" or 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. in the most restrictive states, while in the least restrictive states, nighttime driving restrictions range from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. or midnight to 4 a.m. Appendix III provides additional detail on specific provisions for each state.

[17]North Dakota is the only state that has a two-stage rather than a three-stage GDL system, as it does not have an intermediate licensure stage.

[18]While most states include the key requirements identified by officials, some organizations have evaluated GDL systems and determined that some are more optimal than others. For example, IIHS ranks states using a point system that weighs the age of entry for obtaining a learner's permit, the number of required practice driving hours, nighttime and passenger driving restrictions, and the duration of these restrictions. Driver education is also considered in this ranking. As of May, 2010, 36 states were ranked "Good," 9 states were ranked "Fair," and 6 states were ranked "Marginal." No states were ranked "Poor." *U.S. News* also recently issued a "Best States for Teen Drivers" ranking using statistics from the U.S. Department of Transportation and U.S. Census Bureau and data on the safety of state driving laws from Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety and IIHS. The top five ranked states were: the District of Columbia, California, Colorado, Maryland, and Illinois.

[19]For the purposes of this report, the number of states meeting key requirements includes the District of Columbia but not U.S. territories.

Table 1: Key Requirements of a GDL System and State Driver Safety Provisions

Requirement	Description	Number of states with requirement[a,b]	Range of provisions
Minimum entry age	Age at which teen drivers can obtain a learner's permit.	51	• Minimum age of licensure to obtain a learner's permit varies from 14- to 16- years.
Learner's permit	Teen drivers can drive only when accompanied by an adult supervisor.	51	• Required minimum holding period for a learner's permit ranges from none to 1 year. • Required hours of supervised driving range from 0 to 100.[c] Some states also require up to 15 hours of supervised driving at night.
Nighttime driving restriction	Limits the hours during which a teen driver can operate a vehicle during intermediate licensure.	49	• Nighttime driving restricted hours vary from "sunset to sunrise" or 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. in the most restrictive states, to 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. or midnight to 4 a.m. in the least restrictive.[d] • The duration of nighttime restrictions varies from 6 months to 2 years.
Passenger restriction	Limits the number of passengers a teen driver can transport during intermediate licensure.	43	• Passenger restrictions vary from no passengers to no more than three passengers. • Some restrictions apply to all passengers; others apply only to passengers younger than a specified age and/or make exemptions for family or household members. • The duration of passenger restrictions varies from 5 months to 2 years.
Seat belt laws	Require drivers to use a seat belt while operating a motor vehicle.	50	• State seat belt laws can be either primary or secondary enforcement laws. For primary enforcement, a driver can be stopped for not wearing a seat belt, while for secondary enforcement, a driver can be ticketed for not wearing a seat belt only after being stopped for another offense. The specific provisions vary among. • Some states include seat belt requirements in GDL provisions, while others rely on seat belt laws that apply to drivers in general. For some states, a seat belt infraction may result in a delay in advancing from one GDL stage (e.g., intermediate license) to the next (e.g., full license).
Electronic device bans	Bans the use of electronic devices for drivers while operating a motor vehicle.	33	• State electronic device bans are subject to either primary or secondary enforcement. • Some states have electronic device bans that prohibit all hand-held devices; others ban text messaging. • Some states have electronic device bans specific to novice drivers.

Requirement	Description	Number of states with requirement[a,b]	Range of provisions
Driver education	Completion of a driver education course is required for licensure, allows earlier licensure, or reduces the number of practice driving hours required to get a license.	• 34 states require drivers under a certain age to complete driver education before receiving their license. • 13 states allow those who complete driver education to receive a license early, eliminate or reduce required supervised driving, or reduce nighttime and passenger restrictions.[e]	• Driver education varies from 8 to 42 hours of in-class instruction and 3 to 55 hours of behind-the-wheel training with an instructor, which can include hours observing other novice drivers. • 4 states eliminate supervised driving hour requirements and 2 states reduce the number of required supervised driving hours for students that complete driver education.[f] • 4 states reduce the amount of time required to hold a learner's permit for students that complete driver education.[g] • 4 states reduce the amount of time under nighttime and/or passenger restrictions during intermediate licensure for students that complete driver education.[h]
Parental involvement	Parents are often involved in helping their teens learn to drive but state provisions related to parental involvement are limited.	• Unknown.	• Some states require parents to certify that their teen has completed a certain number of supervised driving hours. • Some driver education programs require parents to participate in a parent's night.

Sources: IIHS, GHSA, and the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association (ADTSEA) data (see app. III).

[a]Number of states include the District of Columbia but not U.S. territories.

[b]As of May 14, 2010, states that do not have the following key requirements include:

- Nighttime restrictions: North Dakota and Vermont.
- Passenger restrictions: Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota.
- Seat belt requirements: New Hampshire.
- Electronic device bans: Alabama, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. State laws in Alabama, Iowa, Michigan, Oklahoma, Wisconsin and Wyoming banning electronic devices become effective after this report is issued.
- Driver education: Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Wyoming. The ADTSEA analysis determined it was unknown whether or not driver education was required for licensing in Arizona, Idaho, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and West Virginia.

[c]One state, New Hampshire, has no minimum holding period but requires supervised driving. Six states have a holding period but do not have minimum supervised driving hour requirements: Arkansas, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

[d]Some states include exemptions for activities related to school or work.

[e]Driver education requirements and incentives are as of April 2008.

[f]The four states that eliminate the supervised driving requirement for students completing driver education are Alabama, Arizona, Nebraska, and West Virginia. The two states that reduce supervised driving requirements are Georgia and Oregon.

[g]The four states that reduce the amount of time required to hold a learner's permit for students that complete driver education are Connecticut, Indiana, South Dakota, and Washington.

[h]The four states that reduce the amount of time under nighttime and/or passenger restrictions during intermediate licensure for students that complete driver education are Indiana (passenger restrictions), New York (nighttime and passenger restrictions), Oklahoma (nighttime and passenger restrictions), and Pennsylvania (nighttime restrictions only).

Research Supports Most Key Requirements, but Limited Evidence Exists on Optimal Provisions

Research has shown that GDL systems—particularly more comprehensive systems that include multiple requirements—are associated with significantly lower teen driver fatality rates. For example, an AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety study that analyzed GDL systems in 43 states found a 21 percent reduction in fatal crashes of 16-year-old drivers in states that implemented a GDL system with four requirements and a 38 percent reduction in states with five GDL requirements.[20] Additional research in states that have enacted various requirements separately has shown lower teen crash rates after implementing, for example, nighttime and passenger restrictions. However, limited evidence exists on the optimal provisions for GDL requirements, such as the specific times to restrict teen driving at night or the exact number of passengers to limit to promote safer teen driving.[21] Specifically, safety experts have identified gaps in research on provisions for six of the seven requirements identified by officials as key: minimum entry age, the learner's permit stage, nighttime and passenger restrictions, bans on electronic devices, driver education, and parental involvement. Therefore, identifying the optimal provisions to strengthen state GDL systems is difficult for state officials.

Minimum entry age and learner's permit. Establishing a minimum entry age and a learner's permit stage—which all states do to some extent—can delay teen licensure and provide teens with more driving experience prior to driving unsupervised. An IIHS study found 13 percent fewer fatal crashes for 15-to-17-year-old drivers in states that delayed licensure by 1 year, compared to those that delayed licensure by 1 month. However, this study also reported that significant differences in fatal crashes for this age demographic were not found for states with a 6-month supervised driving stage versus a 1-month stage, or for extending supervised driving by an additional 10 hours.[22] Another study in Connecticut found that the number of fatal crashes of 16-year-old drivers declined during the first year after

[20]Because isolating the effects of individual GDL requirements is difficult when states implement multiple requirements simultaneously, this study did not identify which requirements contributed most to the demonstrated decline in crash rates. Susan P. Baker, Li-Hui Chen, and Guohua Li. *Nationwide Review of Graduated Driver Licensing.* AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. February 2007.

[21]The studies reviewed for this report do not constitute a comprehensive review of research on key requirements of a GDL system. Rather, these studies provide examples of evidence and findings identified by select researchers in these areas.

[22]Anne T. McCartt, Eric R. Teoh, Michele Fields, Keli A. Braitman, and Laurie A. Hellinga. *Graduated Licensing Laws and Fatal Crashes of Teen Drivers: A National Study.* Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. May 2009.

that state instituted a 6-month holding period for the learner's permit stage, but the number of 17- and 18-year-old drivers in fatal crashes was higher during the same period.[23] NHTSA is researching the effects of delaying full licensure for 15-, 16-, and 17-year-old drivers on crash and moving violation rates and the role of supervised driving in GDL systems to determine whether supervised driving requirements influence parental or teen driver behavior during the learner's permit stage, as well as the effect on crash rates after licensure. However, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety and the TRB have reported it is unclear whether differences in crash rates are due to age or lack of more general driving experience, and that limited research is available on the role of experience or the development of driving competence.[24]

Nighttime driving restrictions. Multiple studies have found lower teen crash rates after states implemented nighttime driving restrictions for teen drivers during intermediate licensure. NHTSA has reported that teen drivers in states with nighttime driving restrictions have up to 60 percent fewer crashes during restricted hours.[25] In North Carolina, one study found the likelihood of nighttime crashes for 16-year-olds was 43 percent lower when a 6-month nighttime driving restriction was implemented from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m.[26] Another study in Michigan, which implemented a 12-month nighttime driving restriction from midnight to 5 a.m., found that nighttime

[23]Robert Ulmer, Susan Ferguson, Allan Williams, and David Preusser, "Teenage crash reduction associated with delayed licensure in Connecticut," *Journal of Safety Research*, vol. 32 (2001) pp 31-41.

[24]Susan P. Baker, Li-Hui Chen, and Guohua Li. *Nationwide Review of Graduated Driver Licensing.* AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. February 2007. Arthur Goodwin, Robert Foss, Jamie Sohn, and Daniel Mayhew. *National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 500: Volume 19: A Guide for Reducing Collisions Involving Young Drivers.* The Transportation Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences. Washington, D.C., 2007. C. Raymond Bingham, Richard P. Compton, Donald L. Fisher, James H. Hedlund, Sheila (Charlie) G. Klauer, Neil D. Lerner, Tsippy Lotan, Scott V. Masten, Daniel R. Mayhew, Anne T. McCartt, Daniel V. McGehee, A. James McKnight, Marie-Claude Ouimet, David F. Preusser, Teresa M. Senserrick, Jean T. Shope, Ruth A. Shults, Bruce G. Simons-Morton, Barry C. Watson, and Allan F. Williams. *Transportation Research Board Subcommittee on Young Drivers: Future Directions for Research on Motor Vehicle Crashes and Injuries Involving Teenage Drivers.* June 2009.

[25]U. S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *Traffic Safety Facts: Graduated Driver Licensing System.* DOT HS 810 888W. Washington, D.C., 2008.

[26]Robert D. Foss, John R. Feaganes, and Eric A. Rodgman, "Initial effects of graduated driver licensing on 16-year-old crashes in North Carolina," *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 286, no. 13 (2001) pp 1588-1592.

crash risk for 16-year-olds was 59 percent lower within 4 years after implementation.[27] However, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety and TRB have reported that insufficient research has been conducted to suggest which provisions are optimal, including the time when the restriction begins, the number of months it is in place, or the presence of exceptions for certain activities such as driving to work or school.[28]

Passenger restrictions. Numerous studies have shown lower teen crash rates after implementing a passenger restriction for teen drivers. NHTSA-sponsored research in three states indicated that crashes involving 16-year-olds decreased annually by about 740 in California, 170 in Massachusetts, and 450 in Virginia in the years immediately after implementing passenger restrictions.[29] Furthermore, IIHS research has shown lower teen fatal crash rates when no passengers are allowed versus when one passenger is allowed.[30] Although NHTSA is researching the social dynamics and increased risk that teen passengers have on teen drivers, TRB has reported that little information is available on the details of this increased risk, the impact of different numbers of passengers or the

[27]Jean T. Shope, Lisa J. Molnar, Michael R. Elliott, and Patricia F. Waller, "Graduated driver licensing in Michigan: early impact on motor vehicle crashes among 16-year-old drivers," *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 286, no. 13 (2001) pp 1593-1598 and Jean T. Shope and Lisa J. Molnar, "Michigan's graduated driver licensing program: Evaluation of the first four years," *Journal of Safety Research*, vol. 35 (2004) pp 337– 344.

[28]Baker et al. *Nationwide Review of Graduated Driver Licensing.* AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. February 2007. Goodwin et al. *National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 500: Volume 19: A Guide for Reducing Collisions Involving Young Drivers.* The Transportation Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences. Washington, D.C., 2007. Bingham et al. *Transportation Research Board Subcommittee on Young Drivers: Future Directions for Research on Motor Vehicle Crashes and Injuries Involving Teenage Drivers.* June 2009.

[29]U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *Evaluation and Compliance of Passenger Restrictions in a Graduated Driver Licensing Program*. DOT HS 810 781. Washington, D.C., 2007.

[30]Anne T. McCartt, Eric R. Teoh, Michele Fields, Keli A. Braitman, and Laurie A. Hellinga. *Graduated Licensing Laws and Fatal Crashes of Teen Drivers: A National Study.* Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. May 2009.

duration of the restriction, or whether and how passengers who are family members influence crash risks for teen drivers.[31]

Electronic device bans. Cell phones and other electronic devices present distractions for drivers and may contribute to higher crash rates. NHTSA reported that drivers ages 16 to 24 used hand-held cell phones and manipulated hand-held devices at a greater rate while driving than other age groups,[32] and concluded that the use of these devices while driving may pose a greater risk to teen drivers due to their relative lack of driving experience.[33] As of January 2010, we identified only one study—in North Carolina—that examined the impact of an electronic device ban specific to teen drivers. This study did not show a significant change in the proportion of teen drivers using cell phones after implementing a cell phone ban for teens.[34] NHTSA is funding additional research in North Carolina that combines high-visibility enforcement and social marketing to see if teen cell phone use while driving can be reduced. However, TRB and IIHS have reported that limited research demonstrates the effect of electronic device bans on driver performance or compares the efficacy of different types of bans, particularly for teen drivers.[35]

[31]Goodwin et al. *National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 500: Volume 19: A Guide for Reducing Collisions Involving Young Drivers.* The Transportation Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences. Washington, D.C., 2007. Bingham et al. *Transportation Research Board Subcommittee on Young Drivers: Future Directions for Research on Motor Vehicle Crashes and Injuries Involving Teenage Drivers.* June 2009.

[32]U. S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *Traffic Safety Facts: Driver Electronic Device Use in 2008.* DOT HS 811 184. Washington, D.C., 2009.

[33]NHTSA. *Countermeasures That Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices*, Fifth Edition.

[34]Robert D. Foss, Arthur H. Goodwin, Anne T. McCartt and Laurie A. Hellinga, "Short-term effects of a teenage driver cell phone restriction," *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, vol. 41 (2009) pp 419–424.

[35]Goodwin et al. *National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 500: Volume 19: A Guide for Reducing Collisions Involving Young Drivers.* The Transportation Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences. Washington, D.C., 2007. Bingham et al. *Transportation Research Board Subcommittee on Young Drivers: Future Directions for Research on Motor Vehicle Crashes and Injuries Involving Teenage Drivers.* June 2009. Anne McCartt. *Statement before the Joint Hearing of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection and the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet. Driven to Distractions: Technological Devices and Vehicle Safety.* November 2009.

Driver education. Studies on driver education have shown mixed results. NHTSA has reported that the most well-known evaluation of driver education programs in the United States occurred in the late 1970s in Dekalb County, Georgia. Although an initial analysis showed no difference in crash outcomes for teen drivers who took driver education versus those who did not, further analysis showed fewer crashes for students in the first months of driving.[36] Another study evaluating the effects of Oregon's GDL system observed lower crash rates among teen drivers who reported taking formal driver education and 50 hours of practice with their parents, when compared to teen drivers who reported 100 hours of practice with their parents without formal driver education. However, this difference did not exist among 16-year-old drivers in their second year of driving or 17-year-olds 7 to 12 months after receiving their licenses.[37] NHTSA has also reported that driver education, which was developed to teach driving skills and safe driving practices, may actually be associated with an increase in teen crash rates in states that allow for earlier licensure or reduce practice driving hours for teens who complete driver education.[38] In 2005, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) determined that the United States had not conducted a systematic evaluation of effective methods for teaching safe driving skills.[39] In response, NHTSA worked with stakeholders to develop the Novice Teen Driver Education and Training Administrative Standards[40]—published in October 2009—for program

[36]NHTSA. *Countermeasures That Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices*, Fifth Edition.

[37]This study states that it is not possible to determine if reduced crashes, traffic convictions, and suspensions are the result of driver education, or if they are due to selection bias. For example, parents who had teens take driver education may have placed greater restrictions on their teenage driver. U. S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *Evaluation of Oregon's Graduated Driver Licensing Program.* Washington, D.C., 2007.

[38]NHTSA. *Countermeasures That Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices*, Fifth Edition.

[39]The NTSB recommended that the U.S. Department of Education and NHTSA review driver education and training programs in use and develop a model driver education training curriculum, and determine the optimum sequencing of driver education and graduated driver licensing qualifications for educating novice drivers on safe driving skills. National Transportation Safety Board. *Safety Recommendation*. Washington, D.C., August 2005.

[40]According to officials from the Department of Education and NHTSA, the Department of Education has had limited involvement in efforts to address driver education, including the recent development of The Novice Teen Driver Education and Training Administrative Standards.

administration, education and training, instructor qualifications, parental involvement, and coordination with driver licensing authorities to assist states in planning and implementing driver education programs. However, development of these standards did not include a systematic evaluation of driver education.[41] NHTSA is assessing the status of advanced driver training programs[42] nationwide and cosponsoring a comprehensive evaluation of driver education in Montana and Oregon to determine the impact of driver education on teen driver crash rates, fatality injury rates, driving violations, and traffic convictions in those states. However, NHTSA and TRB reports indicate that research examining driver education programs on teen driver safety is limited and the impact of such programs is unclear.[43]

Parental involvement. Research has shown that parental involvement has been associated with positive safety outcomes. For example, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recently identified a significantly lower rate of reported crashes and reduced likelihood of using a cell phone while driving for teens whose parents were generally more involved, compared with teens whose parents were uninvolved.[44] Other research has found that parents could use driver monitoring technologies to encourage their teens to drive more responsibly. One study showed that combining in-car monitoring technologies and parental involvement significantly reduced unsafe driving events among teens. Specifically, this study used an event-triggered video camera that captured footage before and after a sudden

[41]U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *Novice Teen Driver Education and Training Administrative Standards.* Washington, D.C., 2009.

[42]Advanced driver training programs are offered after a teen has obtained a full license and provide additional training in maneuvers such as skid control, emergency braking, or crash avoidance or mitigation.

[43]Goodwin et al. *National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 500: Volume 19: A Guide for Reducing Collisions Involving Young Drivers.* The Transportation Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences. Washington, D.C., 2007. Bingham et al. *Transportation Research Board Subcommittee on Young Drivers: Future Directions for Research on Motor Vehicle Crashes and Injuries Involving Teenage Drivers.* June 2009. U.S. Department of Transportation, NHTSA. *Countermeasures That Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices*, Fifth Edition. *Teen Driver Crashes: A Report to Congress July 2008.* DOT HS 811 005. Washington, D.C., 2008.

[44]Kenneth R. Ginsburg, Dennis R. Durbin, J. Felipe García-España, Ewa A. Kalicka and Flaura K. Winston, "Associations Between Parenting Styles and Teen Driving, Safety-Related Behaviors and Attitudes," *Pediatrics*, vol. 124 (2009) pp 1040-1051.

change in velocity or other movement indicating potentially risky driving behavior, and alerted the driver when the camera was triggered. Parents then reviewed a weekly summary of their teen's performance relative to their peer group and video clips of all safety-related events. Results indicated a reduction in unsafe driving behavior, such as taking a turn too fast, and an increase in safe driving behavior, such as wearing a seat belt, during the period of combined in-car monitoring and parental review.[45] NHTSA is also conducting a similar evaluation, which examines an in-vehicle video intervention that includes parental feedback. However, NHTSA and TRB have reported that programs involving parents have not demonstrated a clear impact on teen driver crashes or fatalities, and little information is available regarding the impact of parental involvement on teen driver safety due to limited research.[46]

NHTSA and other leading highway safety organizations generally agree on some GDL provisions, such as establishing a minimum entry age of 16 years and prohibiting the use of cell phones for teen drivers during certain stages of licensure. However, recommendations for other GDL provisions vary, demonstrating limited research in these areas (see app. II). For example:

- The AAP recommends that states restrict nighttime driving for intermediate licensure between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m., while the NTSB recommends restrictions between midnight and 5 a.m.
- While most agencies and organizations recommend at least a 6-month supervised driving stage, recommendations on the minimum number of supervised driving hours vary from 30 to 50 hours.
- NHTSA recommends that states restrict the number of passengers for the first 12 months of licensure, while the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety recommends only a 6-month restriction.

[45]Daniel V. McGehee, Mireille Raby, Cher Carney, John D. Lee and Michelle L. Reyes, "Extending parental mentoring using an event-triggered video intervention in rural teen drivers," *Journal of Safety Research*, vol. 38 (2007) pp 215–227.

[46]Goodwin et al. *National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 500: Volume 19: A Guide for Reducing Collisions Involving Young Drivers.* The Transportation Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences. Washington, D.C., 2007. Bingham et al. *Transportation Research Board Subcommittee on Young Drivers: Future Directions for Research on Motor Vehicle Crashes and Injuries Involving Teenage Drivers.* June 2009. NHTSA. *Countermeasures That Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices*, Fifth Edition.

While NHTSA has research under way addressing most requirements identified by officials and experts as being key to a GDL system—including evaluating the impacts of delayed licensure, supervised driving, passengers, cell phones, driver education, and parental involvement—a single study will likely not determine optimal provisions for each of these requirements. For example, the study that NHTSA is conducting on teen driver cell phone use in North Carolina may not provide sufficient evidence to identify an optimal provision for an electronic device ban specific to teens for all states since the results (1) are based on the specific provisions included in North Carolina's cell phone ban and (2) may be influenced by other variables, such as socioeconomic or geographic factors within the state.

NHTSA officials stated that additional research on specific GDL provisions is needed. However, they noted that isolating the impact of specific provisions on teen driver crashes is difficult because states typically enact numerous provisions simultaneously. We recognize that GDL requirements and other variables may interact to affect teen crash and fatality rates. Our analysis of previous teen driver studies found that studies analyzing GDL systems often did not measure the independent effects of individual GDL requirements, or the interplay among them. For example, by analyzing a count of individual GDL requirements in a given system, but not differentiating which requirements are in place in each system, studies cannot identify associations between any specific requirement or combination thereof and driver outcomes. In addition, we found that some studies did not adequately control for the influence of external variables, such as whether lower crash outcomes for teen drivers were due to GDL requirements or lower rates of driving for teens. These studies acknowledged limitations of the research, including the difficulty of controlling for other variables. Without controlling for external variables, however, it is not possible to determine the extent to which changes in teen driver behavior and crash and fatality rates are due to GDL or to these confounding variables.

States Face Research, Legislative, and Other Challenges to Improve Teen Driver Safety and Have Developed Strategies to Address Them

Officials from 77 federal, state, and national organizations we interviewed highlighted several challenges to improving state teen driver safety programs, including research limitations discussed previously and barriers to enhancing teen driver legislation, among others.[47] These officials also highlighted a variety of strategies to address the challenges. (See table 2.)

Table 2: Challenges States Face in Improving Teen Driver Safety Programs and Strategies States and NHTSA Have Used to Address Challenges

Challenges	Strategies
Limited research identifying effective approaches for improving teen driver safety	• Conduct pilot projects to determine program effectiveness. • Obtain information on completed research and best practices from NHTSA.
Enacting state teen driver legislation	• Develop a task force to champion teen driver legislation. • Use a data-driven approach to convince key stakeholders of the need to strengthen teen driver safety laws.
Enforcing teen driver safety laws	• Establish enforcement checkpoints targeting teen drivers. • Require a decal on vehicles to indicate to law enforcement that the driver is a teen.
Limited resources	• Partner with private companies. • Use NHTSA data and the services of its data analyst contractor.
Limited access to standardized driver education for teens	• Subsidize driver education. • Develop driver education standards.
Getting parents involved	• Encourage parent participation in teen driver programs. • Provide parents information on the risks associated with teen driving and guidance on state teen driving laws. • Use NHTSA guidance to understand parent intervention programs.

Source: GAO analysis.

[47]Unless otherwise noted, the term "officials" refers to all the different types of officials we spoke with, including state and federal officials, representatives from national and advocacy organizations, academic researchers, and other transportation experts. For a full list of officials see app. I.

Limited research identifying effective approaches for improving teen driver safety. Officials from 32 of the 77 organizations we interviewed commented on the limited amount of teen driver safety research in several areas, such as parental involvement, understanding how novice drivers learn to drive, evaluation of specific teen driver safety programs, and effectiveness of teen driver safety laws—including many of the requirements discussed in the previous section. In particular, many officials highlighted the lack of research on the effectiveness of driver education programs. As previously discussed, driver education is not proven to improve teen driver safety, though several ongoing projects are attempting to evaluate its impact on teen driver safety. In addition, officials in one state and several NHTSA officials identified a lack of information on proven best practices for teen driver safety, including ways to implement specific programs.

We identified a variety of strategies in our discussions with officials to enhance teen driver safety research, including:

- As noted previously, NHTSA is undertaking research in a number of areas, including examining the impacts of delayed licensure, supervised driving, passengers, cell phones, driver education, and parental involvement. However, gaps still exist.

- Officials discussed efforts to develop and evaluate teen driver safety programs through pilot projects, which allow state officials to determine whether individual programs successfully increase teen driver safety before implementing the programs on a larger scale. NHTSA is sponsoring several pilot projects in a number of states, such as a project assessing the North Carolina teen driver cell phone ban, and a study examining driver education in Montana.

- NHTSA headquarters and regional officials also stated they pass along information on existing research and best practices to address teen driver safety through the agency's Web site. This information includes previous and ongoing teen driver safety research, parental responsibility for teen drivers, seat belt use, GDL, and youth access to alcohol. In addition, NHTSA provides information on teen driver safety through the Countermeasures That Work guide—which is updated annually and outlines a number of science-based strategies for major highway safety

problem areas, including a section on young drivers.[48] Finally, NHTSA officials regularly contact each state's Highway Safety Office to discuss possible strategies for addressing highway safety.

Enacting state teen driver legislation. Although all states have laws restricting teen drivers, the extent of the restrictions vary and officials from 52 of 77 organizations we interviewed commented that passing additional legislation is difficult. Many officials stated that groups, including some legislators, oppose new teen driver safety laws because the laws infringe on an individual's personal freedom and may restrict teens from driving themselves and others to and from activities such as school and work. In addition, efforts to pass teen driver legislation often depend on key stakeholders' willingness to support proposed laws, and reaching consensus on specific provisions can be challenging. For example, North Dakota recently attempted to enact a new teen driver safety law that included numerous changes to existing licensure laws. Several officials commented that the proposed bill was too complex and attempted to satisfy too many stakeholders. The North Dakota Legislative Assembly ultimately failed to pass the legislation by a 52 to 42 vote.

We identified several strategies in our discussions with officials on ways to enhance teen driver safety laws. For example:

- Officials noted that establishing a task force to act as a champion can improve a state's ability to strengthen teen driver safety laws. Officials also noted that highly publicized teen driver crashes can create momentum to establish a task force and change state laws. For example, a rash of fatal teen crashes in 2006 and 2007 in New Jersey led the state legislature to pass a bill—which the governor signed—to create the New Jersey Teen Driver Study Commission.[49] Ultimately, the Commission issued 47 recommendations resulting in two pieces of legislation that changed New Jersey teen driver laws in several ways, including requiring teen drivers with a learner's permit or intermediate license to display a decal on their vehicle, and extending the nighttime driving restriction from a start time of midnight to a start time of 11 p.m.[50] In another instance, a series of media

[48]NHTSA. *Countermeasures That Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices*, Fifth Edition.

[49]2007 N.J. Sess. Law Serv. 139 (West).

[50]New Jersey Teen Driver Study Commission. *New Jersey Teen Driver Study Commission Recommendation Report* (March 2008).

reports in the Chicago Tribune spurred Illinois' Secretary of State to create a Teen Driver Safety Task Force in 2006 that issued 10 recommendations and led to a number of legislative changes that became effective in January 2008.[51]

- Officials noted that using data and research on teen driver safety can help convince key stakeholders, such as legislators, of the need to strengthen teen driver safety laws. For example, Oregon officials stated that testimony from the Oregon Department of Transportation on the rise in teen deaths and research demonstrating increased teen driver safety as a result of GDL laws led to the state enacting its first GDL system in 1989. In addition, NHTSA officials commented that one way they help states strengthen teen driver safety laws is to provide research and recommendations on GDL systems. Specifically, NHTSA provides information via the Countermeasures That Work guide[52] and discussions with state officials on the effectiveness of youth programs based on prior research and evaluations. NHTSA distributes information in a number of areas, including GDL, learner's permit length, supervised driving hours, nighttime restrictions, passenger restrictions, seat belt use, cell phone restrictions, and intermediate license violation penalties.[53] NHTSA also recommends that states enact a three-stage GDL system containing NHTSA-recommended requirements in these areas (for a detailed list of NHTSA-recommended requirements, see app. II).

  Enforcing teen driver safety laws. According to officials from 26 of 77 organizations we interviewed, enforcing teen driver safety laws is challenging for a variety of reasons. Such reasons include the difficulty in determining a driver's age and enforcing secondary laws, which allow police to issue a citation only after stopping the driver for a separate offense. A number of officials stated that exemptions for transporting family members make identifying offenders difficult. In addition, several

[51]Changes to Illinois teen driver safety laws included extending the learner's permit stage from 3 to 9 months, shifting the nighttime driving restriction from 11 p.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays and from midnight to 11 p.m. on weekends, and extending the single passenger restriction from 6 months to 12 months. Illinois Teen Driver Safety Task Force. *Teen Driver Safety Task Force Final Recommendations* (Jan. 18, 2007).

[52]NHTSA. *Countermeasures That Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices*, Fifth Edition.

[53]Intermediate driving license penalties allow states to penalize intermediate license holders for GDL or traffic law violations by delaying full licensure. For example, NHTSA recommends that states require intermediate license holders to remain crash- and conviction-free for at least 6 consecutive months before full licensure.

state officials noted that law enforcement officers are not always aware of teen driver safety laws and do not always issue citations or arrest teen driver offenders because they require additional time to process through the judicial system.

We identified a variety of strategies in our discussions with officials to enhance enforcement efforts and improve compliance with teen driver safety laws. These strategies include:

- Several states use law enforcement checkpoints outside schools or in areas teens frequent to target teens violating driving laws. In addition, NHTSA supports efforts in several states to encourage teen seat belt use and limit access to alcohol through high-visibility enforcement campaigns, which combine traffic safety law enforcement with media to inform the public about the campaign.[54] For example, beginning in 2008, Mississippi partnered with NHTSA on Rock the Belt, a 2-year demonstration project that combines enforcement, media campaigns, and outreach to encourage teen drivers to use seat belts. Louisiana, New Mexico, and Texas have instituted similar programs.

- Another strategy recently adopted in New Jersey requires teen drivers to display a removable decal on the vehicle they are operating as of May 1, 2010, to enable law enforcement officers to more readily identify drivers subject to teen driving restrictions. (See fig. 3.) In addition, the Michigan Sheriffs' Association offers a voluntary program—Sheriffs Telling Our Parents and Promoting Educated Drivers (known as "STOPPED")—that allows parents to voluntarily register and affix decals to motor vehicles that will be operated by a driver under age 21. Law enforcement officers use the decals as an indication to notify parents when the driver is stopped by sheriff's deputies and inform them of potential problems and provide the opportunity to enforce parental rules. Some officials, however, expressed concern that a decal might allow others to profile and target teen drivers.

[54]GAO previously assessed NHTSA high-visibility campaigns. See GAO, *Traffic Safety: Improved Reporting and Performance Measures Would Enhance Evaluation of High-Visibility Campaigns*, GAO-08-477 (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 25, 2008).

Figure 3: New Jersey Teen Decal Prototype

Source: New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety, Department of Law and Public Safety.

Limited resources. Officials from 46 of the 77 organizations we interviewed highlighted resource challenges for implementing teen driver safety programs, including limited funding and staff. Several officials noted they are forced to prioritize finite resources in difficult economic and budgetary environments to fund specific education and prevention programs. Costs to implement teen driver safety programs could include costs for conferences, public service announcements, law enforcement personnel, and efforts to test and license new drivers. In addition, many state officials raised concerns over limitations of teen driver data, such as getting timely access to data on teen driver crashes, and not having the resources to analyze existing data sets.

We identified several strategies in our discussions with officials to address resource limitations, including:

- State officials are partnering with private companies to conduct and fund research on teen driver safety. For example, two insurance companies we spoke with—Allstate and State Farm—provide grant funds for projects designed to research and address teen driver safety. In one instance, Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, conducted research on

disparities in seat belt use across ethnic groups and subsequently partnered with State Farm Insurance Company, which provided funds for continued study in this area. Based on this research, officials from Mississippi's Jackson State University applied for and received grant funds from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to address low teen driver seat belt use rates in Mississippi.[55] In another instance, the North Dakota National Safety Council received a grant from the North Dakota Department of Transportation and State Farm Insurance Company to help implement the Alive@25 program—an interactive education program designed to teach new drivers the risks of driving and encourage them to take personal responsibility for their driving behavior.

- NHTSA officials also commented that their data center annually provides data at the state and county level to help each state identify and address highway safety concerns, and can provide additional data to individual states upon request. Furthermore, NHTSA has contracted the services of a data analyst to assist states with individual data analysis needs.

Limited access to standardized driver education for teens. Officials from 36 of the 77 organizations we interviewed indicated that teens may not have access to driver education for a number of reasons, including the price of these programs—which may cost hundreds of dollars. For example, state officials in Oregon said the availability and cost of driver education varies greatly across the state and only about one-third of eligible students participate in these courses. Many officials also commented on the limited oversight of driver education programs, which has led to many different course delivery methods across the country and within states. In addition, officials noted that, typically, the goal of driver education programs is to teach students to pass a driving test, which involves learning driving mechanics as opposed to driving safely. Finally, several state officials commented that existing driver education programs may be of poor quality and do not always employ qualified teachers.

We identified a variety of strategies in our discussions with officials to provide increased access to driver education. For example:

[55]Other federal agencies aside from DOT and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention fund teen driver safety research and programs, including the National Institutes of Health, which supports several teen driver research efforts, and the U.S. Department of Justice, which provides funds to states to reduce the sale and consumption of alcohol to minors through the Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws block grants.

- One approach states are taking to increase access to driver education is to subsidize the cost of these courses. Oregon, Florida, and Mississippi, for example, subsidize driver education by reimbursing schools that provide it. In Oregon, the Department of Transportation reimburses driver education providers up to $210 per eligible student choosing to take driver education, which, according to one official, typically costs $350 to $425.

- Officials noted they have developed or are developing driver education oversight and curriculum standards. For example, officials highlighted efforts in Oregon to develop driver education instructor and curriculum standards, which recently served as a model for North Dakota officials as they developed new state driver education standards. Nationally, representatives from the driver education community recently partnered with NHTSA to develop administrative driver education standards, which establish standards for overseeing, delivering, monitoring, and evaluating state driver education programs.[56]

Getting parents involved. According to officials from 24 of the 77 organizations we interviewed, states are challenged to get parents involved in teen driver safety. Specifically, many officials commented that some parents are not aware of the dangers involved in teen driving and do not actively teach their teens to drive or promote compliance with laws designed to protect them. For example, officials noted that parents may not know the specific teen driver provisions in their state. Moreover, even when parents are aware of teen driver requirements, a few officials noted instances when parents actively sought to circumvent the requirements. Specifically, officials noted that, in states requiring teens to keep a log of driving practice hours, parents may forge required supervised driving logs.

We identified several strategies in our discussions with officials to increase parental involvement in their teens' driving, including:

- States encourage parents to participate in teen driver activities, such as events where they receive information on parental responsibilities. For example, Oregon requires parents of students enrolled in driver education to attend a "parent night"—an orientation meeting at which parents are provided materials to help them support teens as they learn to drive. In addition, the New Jersey Teen Driver Study Commission recommended

[56]U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *Novice Teen Driver: Education and Training Administrative Standards* (Washington, D.C., 2009).

that New Jersey pass legislation requiring all teen drivers to attend a driving orientation meeting with their parents as a condition of obtaining a learner's permit.

- States try to educate parents on the dangers of teen driving and ways to mitigate the associated risks through a variety of methods, including Web sites and written guidance. For example, Florida, Michigan, New Jersey, and Oregon have developed booklets for parents that identify teen driver safety laws and outline tactics for supervising teen drivers, some of which include driving logs for parents to monitor hours spent in the car with their teen driver.

- NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work highlights five programs to assist parents and beginning drivers, including two that have been evaluated for effectiveness.[57] While no parent program has been proven to reduce teen crashes, programs—such as Checkpoints—have encouraged parents to set limits on their teen's driving opportunities, which studies have shown can be associated with reduced risky driving behavior, traffic violations, and crashes.[58] NHTSA has also supported several additional efforts to assist parents as they teach their teens to drive, including developing a parental responsibility toolkit that is available on NHTSA's website, providing grants to associations to develop guidance for parents, and working with organizations to provide this guidance to parents and implement a parental responsibility program.

Other challenges. In addition to those mentioned above, a number of officials mentioned other challenges states face in improving teen driver programs, including:

[57]The five highlighted programs are: (1) the *Checkpoints* program is a written agreement that parents and teens sign; (2) *Driving Skills for Life* is a teen driving course that emphasizes hazard recognition, vehicle handling, space management, and speed management; (3) *Road Ready Teens* provides a parent's guide, a parent-teen contract, and a video game and Road Ready Reality Check quiz for teens; (4) *Teen Driver: A Family Guide to Teen Driver Safety*, is a 68-page book that provides information and advice to parents and teens on crash risks, developing a family plan and written agreement for beginning drivers, and GDL components and restrictions; and (5) *The Novice Driver's Road Map*, describes eight driving situations of increasing difficulty and asks parents to complete a checklist when practice has been obtained in each situation. The two programs that have been evaluated for effectiveness are *Checkpoints* and *The Novice Driver's Road Map*. NHTSA. *Countermeasures That Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices*, Fifth Edition.

[58]The Checkpoints program uses a parent-teen driving agreement and other materials to increase parental limits placed on teen drivers, particularly under high-risk conditions.

- Overcoming public attitudes that lead to reckless behavior. Several officials commented that parents and teens do not always understand the risks associated with teen driving. In particular, officials were concerned about attitudes toward alcohol, including parents who permit teens and their friends to consume alcohol when they are at home and teens' tendencies to binge drink.

- Challenges with the judicial system. Many officials suggested several challenges related to punishing teens who violate driving laws, such as allowing teen drivers to enter into plea bargains, and the large degree of judicial discretion that may result in minimal and inconsistent penalties.

Conclusions

Despite the recent decline in fatalities, teen drivers remain at greater risk than any other group of drivers in the United States. Available research indicates that GDL systems are associated with lower teen fatality rates, and most states have a three-stage GDL system that includes key requirements recommended by safety experts. However, because limited research has been conducted on the optimum provisions and how they might interact with other variables, states might be missing opportunities for strengthening their GDL systems. While NHTSA and other researchers have conducted a range of studies concerning teen driver safety and a number of additional research initiatives are under way, gaps still exist in researching the effectiveness of specific GDL provisions. In particular, research is lacking on specific provisions for minimum entry age, the learner's permit stage, nighttime and passenger restrictions, bans on electronic devices, driver education, and parental involvement. We recognize that opportunities to study specific effects of GDL provisions and other programs may be limited. However, additional research on certain requirements could provide states with important information on the optimal provisions and, thus, help states to develop more effective teen driver safety programs.

Recommendation for Executive Action

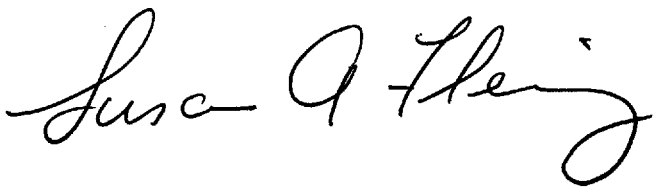
To assist states in understanding and implementing key requirements of a teen driver safety program and to help identify the optimum provisions of GDL systems, we recommend that NHTSA conduct additional research on specific GDL provisions, including minimum entry age, nighttime and passenger restrictions, the effect of bans on electronic devices, driver education, and parental involvement.

Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report to DOT for its review and comment. DOT officials concurred with our report and recommendation to conduct additional research. They noted that many states have revised and improved their GDL provisions since 2006 and that these changes should facilitate new research to clarify the benefits of the various GDL provisions. Consequently, DOT officials proposed conducting a meta-analysis—an analysis of evidence from several separate but similar studies to test for statistical significance—using available research and data to enable DOT to provide more specific guidance on the potential benefits of particular GDL provisions. We agree this approach would meet the intent of our recommendation. DOT officials also provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to interested congressional committees and the Secretary of Transportation. In addition, the report will be available at no cost on GAO's Web site at www.gao.gov.

If you or your staffs have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-2834 or flemings@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix IV.



Susan A. Fleming
Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

We were asked to evaluate states' efforts to address teen driver safety issues. Specifically, this report (1) identifies the key requirements of a Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) system and describes the extent to which state programs include these requirements, and (2) describes challenges that states have faced in improving teen driver safety and how NHTSA and the states have addressed these challenges.

To identify the key requirements of a GDL system, we reviewed recommendations on requirements that GDL systems should include from the: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety, American Academy of Pediatrics, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), and National Transportation Safety Board. We also interviewed individuals from these organizations on the recommended requirements of a GDL system. In addition, we interviewed representatives from the Governors Highway Safety Association, American Automobile Association (AAA), American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and other transportation and traffic safety organizations about their opinions on the key requirements of a GDL system. (See table 3 for a list of associations and other organizations we interviewed.)

Additionally, we visited six states to interview state officials about their opinions on the key requirements of a GDL system. Specifically, we visited the states of Florida, Michigan, Mississippi, North Dakota, New Jersey, and Oregon. We selected these states based on a combination of characteristics, including the IIHS's overall rating of states' GDL systems, fatality rates involving young drivers as well as fatalities in rural versus urban areas, suggestions from NHTSA and association representatives, and geographical dispersion. Selected states were chosen because they fell into a range of these characteristics. For each state we visited, we interviewed officials from the Governor's Highway Safety Office as well as the agency responsible for issuing driver licenses,[1] representatives from law enforcement agencies, and representatives from safety organizations such as the state's AAA or Safety Council association. In addition, where applicable, we met with state officials or individuals involved in driver education[2] and state legislators who had been involved in legislation to

[1]In Michigan, officials at the Department of State—the agency that issues driver licenses—declined to meet with us during the course of our study.

[2]In Michigan, the agency responsible for driver education is the Department of State, which declined to meet with us.

improve teen driver safety laws. Since we used a nongeneralizable sampling approach, the results of these interviews cannot be used to make inferences about all states. We also interviewed NHTSA regional officials responsible for each state we visited. (See table 4 for list of agencies and organizations interviewed in each state.) Finally, we interviewed researchers involved in studying teen driver safety. (See table 5 for list of researchers interviewed.)

To determine the extent to which state programs include recommended requirements, we reviewed and verified IIHS's listing of state GDL systems identifying the specific requirements each state included. We also reviewed a 2008 report from the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association that identified driver education provisions within each state. In meetings with officials in the six selected states, we also identified requirements these states included, both within each state's GDL system as well as other programs that may not have been part of GDL, such as driver education and programs to involve parents. To determine what research exists on key requirements of teen driver safety programs, we consulted NHTSA research and guidance and identified select national and state publications on overall effectiveness of GDL systems as well as research focusing on specific provisions. The research studies selected for this review do not constitute a comprehensive review of research on key requirements of a GDL system. The studies we reviewed included those authored or provided to us by experts and organizations we interviewed, as well as any studies referenced by those reports, limited to those published between 2000 and 2010. Each of these studies was evaluated for relevance and reviewed by social science specialists to ensure that any findings presented reflected the methodological approaches and limitations of each study.

Table 3: Associations and Other Organizations Interviewed

Association or Organization
AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
Allstate Insurance
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators
American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association
Association of Driver Education and Training Administrators

Association or Organization
Driving School Association of the Americas
Governors Highway Safety Administration
Illinois State Senate President John Cullerton
Insurance Institute for Highway Safety
International Association of Chiefs of Police
National Organization for Youth Safety
National Safety Council
National Transportation Safety Board
State Farm Insurance
Students Against Destructive Decisions

Source: GAO.

Table 4: Agencies and Organizations Interviewed, by State

State	Agency or Organization
Florida	Florida Department of Transportation's State Safety Office[a]
	Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Division of Driver Licenses
	Florida Division of Alcohol Beverages and Tobacco
	Florida State Senator Evelyn Lynn
	AAA Florida
	Florida Students Against Destructive Decisions
	Florida Sheriff's Association
	Leon County Schools Driver's Education Officials
	Tallahassee Police Department
Michigan	Michigan State Police – Office of Highway Safety Planning[a]
	Michigan Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission's Young Driver Action Team
	Michigan State Representative Richard LeBlanc
	AAA Michigan
	Michigan Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association
	Michigan Sheriff's Association
Mississippi	Mississippi Office of Highway Safety[a]
	Mississippi Driver Services, Mississippi Department of Public Safety
	Mississippi Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws Program
	Mississippi Pupil Transportation Services, Mississippi Department of Education
	Mississippi State Senator Kelvin E. Butler

State	Agency or Organization
	Hinds County Sheriff's Office
	Mississippi Mothers Against Drunk Driving
New Jersey	New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety, Department of Law & Public Safety[a]
	New Jersey Department of Education
	New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission
	New Jersey Police Traffic Officers Association
	New Jersey State Safety Council
North Dakota	North Dakota Department of Transportation, Drivers License and Traffic Safety Divisions[a]
	North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board
	North Dakota Highway Patrol
	North Dakota State Representative Ed Gruchalla
	Minot State University and North Dakota Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association
	AAA North Dakota
	North Dakota Safety Council
Oregon	Oregon Department of Transportation, Traffic Safety Division[a]
	Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles
	Oregon's Driver Education Advisory Committee
	Oregon State Representative E. Terry Beyer
	Oregon State Senator Rick Metsger
	Oregon Trauma Nurses Talk Tough Program
	Salem Police Department

Source: GAO.

[a]These are the offices primarily responsible for teen driver safety programs in each state.

Table 5: Research Organizations Interviewed

Researchers
Center for the Study of Young Drivers, Highway Safety Research Center, University of North Carolina
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Human Factors and Vehicle Safety Research Division, University of Iowa Public Policy Center
Jackson State University
Meharry Medical College
National Institutes of Health
Texas Transportation Institute
University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute
Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota State University
Virginia Tech Transportation Institute

Source: GAO.

To determine challenges states have faced in improving teen driver safety and strategies to address these challenges, we interviewed NHTSA officials, representatives of various transportation and safety associations, and state and local officials in the six states we visited. We systematically analyzed information from these interviews and our site visits to identify challenges that affected states' ability to improve teen driver safety programs and reduce teen driver fatalities and injuries. As part of these interviews, we also discussed and identified several strategies to address challenges.

We found fatality rate and population data—obtained from NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) and the U.S. Census Bureau—presented as background material for this report to be sufficiently reliable for our purposes. We previously tested FARS to assess the accuracy of required data elements, including conducting data comparisons and logic tests and testing for missing data and errors. We also reviewed basic aspects of the design and purpose of the Census Bureau data and determined that it was appropriate to use these data to create national age tabulations for 2008. We conducted this performance audit from June 2009 to May 2010, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: Recommended GDL Requirements

Agency/ Organization	Minimum entry age	Learner's permit duration and supervised driving	Nighttime restriction	Passenger restriction	Electronic device bans	Driver education
AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety	16 years	6 months, at least 50 hours supervised driving	10 p.m. to 5 a.m.	No more than one teen passenger for the first 6 months	No use of telecommunications devices until full licensure	Basic and advanced driver education course
Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety	16 years	6 months, 30-50 hours supervised driving	10 p.m. to 5 a.m.	No more than one non-familial teen passenger	No use of cell phones (hand-held or hands-free) until full licensure	N/A
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)	16 years	6 months, 30-50 hours supervised driving	9 p.m. to 5 a.m. for 6 months, midnight to 5 a.m. until age 18	No teen passengers for the first 6 months, no more than one teen passenger until age 18	No use of cell phones until full licensure	N/A
Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS)	16 years	6 months, 30-50 hours supervised driving	9 p.m. or 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. until age 18	No more than one teen passenger until age 18	N/A	N/A
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)	16 years	6 months, 30-50 hours supervised driving	10 p.m. to 5 a.m. with limited exceptions	No more than one teen passenger for 12 months, two teen passengers until age 18	No use of portable electronic communication and entertainment devices until full licensure	Basic and intermediate driver education training
National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)	N/A	6 months, at least 50 hours supervised driving	Midnight to 5 a.m. for 6 months	No more than one passenger for 6 months	No use of wireless communication devices until completion of at least 6 months of intermediate licensure	N/A

Source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety, AAP, IIHS, NHTSA, and NTSB data.

Appendix III: Requirements of a GDL System and State Driver Safety Provisions

State	Entry age	Learner's permit stage	Nighttime driving restriction[a]	Passenger restriction[a,b]	Electronic device bans[c]	Driver education[d]
Alabama	15	6 month holding period and 30 supervised driving hours	Midnight – 6 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	No more than 3 passengers from age 16 to 17 (1 year) **Beginning July 1, 2010:** **No more than 1 passenger from age 16 to 17 (1 year)**	None **Beginning July 1, 2010:** **Cell phone ban for drivers age 16 and 17 who have held an intermediate license for fewer than 6 months** **Text messaging ban for drivers age 16 and 17 who have held an intermediate license for fewer than 6 months**	Not required for licensing Students that have taken driver education are not required to undergo supervised driving hours Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, 12 hours in a simulator, and 3 hours in a car
Alaska	14	6 month holding period and 40 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night or in inclement weather	1 a.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 16, 6 months (6 months)	No passengers for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure	Text messaging ban for all drivers	Required for licensing Program includes 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training
Arizona	15, 6 months	6 month holding period and 30 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	Midnight – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 16, 6 months (6 months)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 18 for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure	Cell phone ban for school bus drivers	Unknown if required for licensing[e] Students that have taken driver education are not required to undergo supervised driving hours Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training or equivalent
Arkansas	14	6 month holding period and zero supervised driving hours	11 p.m. – 4 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 18 (2 years)	No more than 1 passenger from age 16 to 18 (2 years)	Ban on hand-held cell phones for drivers age 18 to 21 Cell phone ban for drivers younger than age 18 Cell phone ban for school bus drivers Text messaging ban for all drivers	Required for licensing Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction (must not be completed in less than 15 days), 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training, and 6 hours of observation

State	Entry age	Learner's permit stage	Nighttime driving restriction[a]	Passenger restriction[a,b]	Electronic device bans[c]	Driver education[d]
California	15, 6 months	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	11 p.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	No passengers younger than 20 (limited exception for immediate family) for the first year of intermediate licensure	Ban on hand-held cell phones for all drivers Cell phone ban for drivers younger than age 18 Cell phone ban for school and transit bus drivers Text messaging ban for all drivers	Required for licensing Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training, and 6 hours of observation
Colorado	15	1 year holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	Midnight – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	No passengers for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure and no more than 1 passenger for the second 6 months of intermediate licensure (1 year)	Cell phone ban for drivers younger than age 18 Text messaging ban for all drivers	Required for licensing Program includes a 4-hour awareness course, 30 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training
Connecticut	16	6 month holding period and 40 supervised driving hours	11 p.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16, 4 months to 18 (1 year, 8 months)	No passengers other than parents or driving instructor for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure and no passengers other than parents, driving instructor, or members of the immediate family for the second 6 months of intermediate licensure (1 year)	Ban on hand-held cell phones for all drivers Cell phone ban for drivers younger than age 18 Cell phone ban for school bus drivers Text messaging ban for all drivers	Required for licensing (if under 18) Students that have taken driver education reduce their learner's permit holding period from 6 months to 4 months Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction (if taken in a commercial or secondary school), and 8 hours of behind-the-wheel training
Delaware	16	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	10 p.m. – 6 a.m. restriction from age 16, 6 months to 17 (6 months)	No more than 1 passenger from age 16, 6 months to 17 (6 months)	Cell phone bans for learner's permit and intermediate license holders Cell phone ban for school bus drivers Text messaging ban for learner's permit and intermediate license holders	Required for licensing Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction and 7 hours of behind-the-wheel training

State	Entry age	Learner's permit stage	Nighttime driving restriction[a]	Passenger restriction[a,b]	Electronic device bans[c]	Driver education[d]
District of Columbia	16	6 month holding period and 40 supervised driving hours in learner's permit phase and 10 hours at night during intermediate licensure	September to June: 11 p.m. – 6 a.m. Sun. through Thurs.; 12:01 a.m. – 6 a.m. Sat. through Sun. July to August: 12:01 a.m. – 6 a.m. Restrictions are from age 16, 6 months to 18 (1 year, 6 months)	No passengers for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure and thereafter no more than 2 passengers until age 18 (1 year, 6 months)	Ban on hand-held cell phones for all drivers Cell phone ban for learner's permit holders Cell phone ban for school bus drivers Text messaging ban for all drivers	Required for licensing Unknown program[f]
Florida	15	1 year holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	11 p.m. – 6 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year) 1 a.m.– 5 a.m. restriction from age 17 to 18 (1 year) (total of 2 years)	None	None	Required for licensing Program includes a 4-hour course
Georgia	15	1 year holding period and 40 supervised driving hours, 6 of which must be at night	Midnight – 6 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 18 (2 years)	No passengers for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure and no more than 1 passenger younger than 21 for the second 6 months of intermediate licensure. After 1 year no more than 3 passengers until age 18 (2 years)	Cell phone ban for school bus drivers	Not required for licensing Students that have taken driver education reduce the required amount of supervised driving hours from 40 to 20 Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training
Hawaii	15, 6 months	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	11 p.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 18 (household members excepted) from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	None	Required for licensing (if under 18) Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training (or a simulator course and 2 hours of driving)

State	Entry age	Learner's permit stage	Nighttime driving restriction[a]	Passenger restriction[a,b]	Electronic device bans[c]	Driver education[d]
Idaho	14, 6 months	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	Sunset to sunrise restriction from age 15 to 16 (1 year)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 17 for the first 6 months that licensees age 16 and younger are in the intermediate licensing phase	None	Unknown if required for licensing[e] Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training
Illinois	15	9 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	10 p.m. – 6 a.m. Sun. through Thurs.; 11 p.m. – 6 a.m. Fri. through Sat. Restrictions are from age 16 to 18 (2 years)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 20 for the first year of intermediate licensure	Ban on hand-held cell phones for drivers in construction and school speed zones Cell phone ban for drivers younger than age 19 and learner's permit holders younger than age 19 Cell phone ban for school bus drivers Text messaging ban for all drivers	Required for licensing (if under 18) Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training
Indiana	15, 6 months	6 month holding period and 50 supervised hours, 10 of which must be at night	First 180 days of intermediate licensure: 10 p.m. – 5 a.m. After 180 days: 11 p.m. – 5 a.m. Sun. through Fri.; 1 a.m. – 5 a.m. Sat. through Sun. Restrictions are from age 16, 9 months to 18 (1 year, 3 months)	No passengers for the first 180 days of intermediate licensure Restrictions are from age 16, 9 months to 17, 3 months	Cell phone ban for drivers younger than age 18 Text messaging ban for drivers younger than age 18	Required for licensing Students that have taken driver education reduce the age at which they exit the learner's permit 16, 9 months to age 16, 6 months Students that have taken driver education reduce the age at which passenger restrictions are lifted from age 17, 3 months to 17 Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training

State	Entry age	Learner's permit stage	Nighttime driving restriction[a]	Passenger restriction[a,b]	Electronic device bans[c]	Driver education[d]
Iowa	14	6 month holding period and 20 supervised driving hours, 2 of which must be at night	12:30 a.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	None	None **Beginning July 1, 2010:** **Cell phone bans for learner's permit and intermediate license holders** **Text messaging ban for all drivers**	Required for licensing Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training (not to be completed more than 30 days after classroom instruction)
Kansas	14	1 year holding period and 25 supervised driving hours in learner's permit phase, 25 hours before age 16, and 10 of the 50 hours must be at night	9 p.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 16, 6 months (6 months)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 18 for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure	Cell phone bans for learner's permit and intermediate license holders Text messaging ban for learner's permit and intermediate license holders	Required for licensing Program includes not less than 8 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training (must total at least 20 hours)
Kentucky	16	6 month holding period and 60 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	Midnight – 6 a.m. restriction from age 16, 6 months to 17 (6 months)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 20 unless supervised by a driving instructor from age 16, 6 months to 17 (6 months)	Cell phone ban for school bus drivers **Beginning July 13, 2010:** **Cell phone bans for drivers younger than age 18** **Text messaging ban for all drivers**	Required for licensing Program includes a 4-hour GDL course within 1 year of license or high school course of 30 hours of classroom instruction and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training

State	Entry age	Learner's permit stage	Nighttime driving restriction[a]	Passenger restriction[a,b]	Electronic device bans[c]	Driver education[d]
Louisiana	15	6 month holding period and 35 supervised driving hours	11 p.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	None	Ban on hand-held cell phones for all learner's permit and intermediate license holders, irrespective of age Cell phone ban for all drivers younger than age 18 Cell phone ban for one year that applies to all drivers, irrespective of age, issued a first driver's license Cell phone ban for school bus drivers Text messaging ban for all drivers	Required for licensing Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training (or 12 hours of simulator training)
Maine	15	6 month holding period and 35 supervised driving hours, 5 of which must be at night	Midnight – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 16, 6 months (6 months)	No passengers for the first 180 days of intermediate licensure	Cell phone ban for learner's permit and intermediate license holders Text messaging ban for learner's permit and intermediate license holders	Required for licensing Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training
Maryland	15, 9 months	9 month holding period and 60 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	Midnight – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16, 6 months to 18 (1 year, 6months)	No passengers younger than 18 for the first 5 months of intermediate licensure	Cell phone ban for learner's permit and intermediate license holders Text messaging ban for all drivers	Required for licensing Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training
Massachusetts	16	6 month holding period and 40 supervised driving hours	12:30 a.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16, 6 months to 18 (1 year, 6 months) Restriction is subject to secondary enforcement from12:30 a.m. – 1 a.m. and 4 a.m. – 5 a.m. and primary enforcement all other times	No passengers younger than 18 for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure Restriction is subject to secondary enforcement from12:30 a.m. – 1 a.m. and 4 a.m. – 5 a.m. and primary enforcement all other times	Cell phone ban for school bus drivers	Required for licensing Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training, and 6 hours of observation

State	Entry age	Learner's permit stage	Nighttime driving restriction[a]	Passenger restriction[a,b]	Electronic device bans[c]	Driver education[d]
Michigan	14, 9 months	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	Midnight – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	None	None **Beginning July 1, 2010:** **Text messaging ban for all drivers**	Required for licensing (if under 18) Program includes 2 segments: 1) 24 hours of classroom instruction, 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training, and 30 hours of supervised driving; 2) 6 hours of classroom instruction
Minnesota	15	6 month holding period and 30 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	Midnight – 5 a.m. restriction for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure from age 16 to 16, 6 months (6 months)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 20 for the first 6 months intermediate licensure and no more than 3 passengers younger than 20 for the second 6 months of intermediate licensure (1 year)	Cell phone ban for learner's permit holders and provisional license holders during the first 12 months after licensing Cell phone ban for school bus drivers Text messaging ban for all drivers	Required for licensing (if under 18) Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training
Mississippi	15	1 year holding period and zero supervised driving hours	10 p.m. – 6 a.m. Sun. through Thurs.; 11:30 p.m. – 6 a.m. Fri. through Sat. Restriction from age 16 to 16, 6 months (6 months)	None	Text messaging ban for learner's permit and intermediate license holders	Not required for licensing Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training, and 12 hours of simulator training
Missouri	15	6 month holding period and 40 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	1 a.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17, 11 months (1 year, 11 months)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 19 for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure and thereafter no more that 3 passengers younger than 19 until age 17, 11 months (1 year, 11 months)	Text messaging ban for drivers age 21 and under	Not required for licensing Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training, and 12 hours of observation

State	Entry age	Learner's permit stage	Nighttime driving restriction[a]	Passenger restriction[a,b]	Electronic device bans[c]	Driver education[d]
Montana	14, 6 months	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	11 p.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 15 to 16 (1 year)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 18 for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure and no more than 3 passengers younger than 18 for the second 6 months (1 year)	None	Required for licensing (if under 16) Program includes 42 hours of classroom instruction, 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training, and 12 hours of observation
Nebraska	15	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	Midnight – 6 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 19 for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure	Cell phone ban for learner's permit and intermediate license holders younger than age 18 Text messaging ban for learner's permit and intermediate license holders younger than age 18 **Beginning July 14, 2010:** **Text messaging ban for all drivers**	Required for licensing Students that have taken driver education are not required to undergo supervised driving hours Program includes 20 hours of classroom instruction, and 5 hours of behind-the-wheel training
Nevada	15, 6 months	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	10 p.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 18 (2 years)	No passengers younger than age 18 for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure	None	Required for licensing (if under 18) Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training
New Hampshire	15, 6 months	No holding period and 40 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	1 a.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17, 1 month (1 year, 1 month)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 25 for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure	Text messaging ban for all drivers	Required for licensing (for 16 to 18 year olds) Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, 10 hours of behind-the-wheel training, and 6 hours of observation

State	Entry age	Learner's permit stage	Nighttime driving restriction[a]	Passenger restriction[a,b]	Electronic device bans[c]	Driver education[d]
New Jersey	16	6 month holding period and zero supervised driving hours	11 p.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 17 to 18 (1 year)	No more than 1 passenger (only drivers' dependents excepted) from age 17 to 18 (1 year)	Ban on hand-held cell phones for all drivers Cell phone ban for learner's permit and intermediate license holders Cell phone ban for school bus drivers Text messaging ban for all drivers	Not required for licensing Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, 3 to 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training or 15 hours of simulator training
New Mexico	15	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	Midnight – 5 a.m. restriction from age 15, 6 months to 16, 6 months (1 year)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 21 from age 15, 6 months to 16, 6 months (1 year)	None	Required for licensing Program includes 33 hours of classroom instruction, and 7 hours of behind-the-wheel training
New York	16	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 15 of which must be at night	9 p.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16, 6 months to 18 (1 year, 6 months)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 21 from age 16, 6 months to 18 (1 year, 6 months)	Ban on hand-held cell phones for all drivers Text messaging ban for all drivers	Not required for licensing Students that have taken driver education reduce the length of nighttime and passenger restrictions from 1 year, 6 months to 6 months Program includes 24 hours of classroom instruction, 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training, and 18 hours of observation
North Carolina	15	1 year holding period and zero supervised driving hours	9 p.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 16, 6 months (6 months)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 21 (if a family member younger than 21 is already a passenger then no other passengers younger than 21 who are not family members is permitted) from age 16 to 16, 6 months (6 months)	Cell phone ban for drivers younger than age 18 Cell phone ban for school bus drivers Text messaging ban for all drivers	Required for licensing (if under 18) Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction

State	Entry age	Learner's permit stage	Nighttime driving restriction[a]	Passenger restriction[a,b]	Electronic device bans[c]	Driver education[d]
North Dakota	14	6 month holding period and zero supervised driving hours	None	None	None	Required for licensing Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training
Ohio	15, 6 months	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	Midnight – 6 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year) 1 a.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 17 to 18 (1 year) (total of 2 years)	No more than 1 passenger from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	None	Required for licensing (if under 18) Program includes 24 hours of classroom instruction, and 8 hours of behind-the-wheel training
Oklahoma	15, 6 months	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	10 p.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	No more than 1 passenger from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	None **Beginning November 1, 2010:** **Cell phone ban for school bus drivers and public transit drivers** **Text messaging ban for school bus drivers and public transit drivers**	Unknown if required for licensing[e] Students that have taken driver education reduce the length of nighttime and passenger restrictions from 1 year to 6 months Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, 55 hours of behind-the-wheel training some of which can be during supervised driving hours
Oregon	15	6 month holding period and 100 supervised driving hours	Midnight – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	No passengers younger than 20 for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure and no more than 3 passengers younger than 20 for the second 6 months of intermediate licensure (1 year)	Ban on hand-held cell phones for all drivers Cell phone ban for drivers younger than age 18 Text messaging ban for all drivers	Not required for licensing Students that have taken driver education reduce the number of supervised hours from 100 to 50 Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training, and 6 hours of observation

State	Entry age	Learner's permit stage	Nighttime driving restriction[a]	Passenger restriction[a,b]	Electronic device bans[c]	Driver education[d]
Pennsylvania	16	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours	11 p.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16, 6 months to 18 (1 year, 6 months)	None	None	Not required for licensing Students that have taken driver education reduce the length of nighttime restrictions from 1 year, 6 months to 6 months Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training
Rhode Island	16	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	1 a.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16, 6 months to 17, 6 months (1 year)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 21 for the first year of intermediate licensure	Cell phone ban for drivers younger than age 18 Cell phone ban for school bus drivers Text messaging ban for all drivers	Required for licensing Program includes 33 hours of classroom instruction
South Carolina	15	6 month holding period and 40 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	6 p.m. – 6 a.m. during EST; 8 p.m. – 6 a.m. during EDT Restrictions are from age 15, 6 months to 16, 6 months (1 year)	No more than 2 passengers younger than 21 (driving to and from school excepted) from age 15, 6 months to 16, 6 months (1 year)	None	Required for licensing Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training, and 6 hours of observation
South Dakota	14	6 month holding period and zero supervised driving hours	10 p.m. – 6 a.m. restriction from age 14, 6 months to 16 (1 year, 6 months)	None	None	Unknown if required for licensing[e] Students that have taken driver education and score 80 percent on an exam reduce their learner's permit holding period from 6 months to 3 months Unknown program[f]

State	Entry age	Learner's permit stage	Nighttime driving restriction[a]	Passenger restriction[a,b]	Electronic device bans[c]	Driver education[d]
Tennessee	15	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	11 p.m. – 6 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	No more than 1 passenger from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	Cell phone ban for learner's permit and intermediate license holders Cell phone ban for school bus drivers Text messaging ban for all drivers	Not required for licensing Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training
Texas	15	6 month holding period and 20 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	Midnight – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 21 from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	Ban on hand-held cell phones for drivers in school crossing zones Cell phone ban for intermediate license holders for the first 12 months Cell phone ban for bus drivers when a passenger 17 or younger is present Text messaging ban for bus drivers when a passenger 17 or younger is present Text messaging ban for intermediate license holders for the first 12 months Text messaging ban for drivers in school crossing zones	Required for licensing Program includes 32 hours of classroom instruction, 7 hours of behind-the-wheel training, and 7 hours of observation
Utah	15	6 month holding period and 40 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	Midnight – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	No passengers for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure	Ban on hand-held cell phones for all drivers Text messaging ban for all drivers	Unknown if required for licensing[e] Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training
Vermont	15	1 year holding period and 40 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	None	No passengers without exception for the first 3 months of intermediate licensure and no passengers for the second 3 months of intermediate licensure (6 months)	None	Required for licensing (if under 18) Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training

State	Entry age	Learner's permit stage	Nighttime driving restriction[a]	Passenger restriction[a,b]	Electronic device bans[c]	Driver education[d]
Virginia	15, 6 months	9 month holding period and 45 supervised driving hours, 15 of which must be at night	Midnight – 4 a.m. restriction from age 16, 3 months to 18 (1 year, 9 months)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 18 for the first year of intermediate licensure and thereafter no more than 3 passengers younger than 18 until age 18 (1 year, 9 months)	Cell phone ban for drivers younger than age 18 Cell phone ban for school bus drivers Text messaging ban for all drivers	Required for licensing (if under 19) Program includes 36 hours of classroom instruction, 7 hours of behind-the-wheel training, and 7 hours of observation
Washington	15	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	1 a.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	No passengers younger than 20 for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure and no more than 3 passengers younger than 20 for the second 6 months of intermediate licensure (1 year)	Ban on hand-held cell phones for all drivers Text messaging ban for all drivers **Beginning June 10, 2010:** **Cell phone ban for learner's permit and intermediate license holders**	Unknown if required for licensing[e] Students that have taken driver education can get a learner's permit at age 15, rather than 15, 6 months Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training
West Virginia	15	6 month holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	10 p.m. – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 17 (1 year)	No passengers younger than 20 for the first 6 months of intermediate licensure and no more than 1 passenger younger than 20 for the second 6 months of intermediate licensure (1 year)	Cell phone ban for drivers younger than age 18 who hold either a learner's permit or an intermediate license Text messaging ban for drivers younger than age 18 who hold either a learner's permit or an intermediate license	Unknown if required for licensing[e] Students that have taken driver education are not required to undergo supervised driving hours Unknown program[f]
Wisconsin	15, 6 months	6 month holding period and 30 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	Midnight – 5 a.m. restriction from age 16 to 16, 9 months (9 months)	No more than 1 passenger from age 16 to 16, 9 months (9 months)	None **Beginning December 1, 2010:** **Text messaging ban for all drivers**	Required for licensing (if under 18) Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training

State	Entry age	Learner's permit stage	Nighttime driving restriction[a]	Passenger restriction[a,b]	Electronic device bans[c]	Driver education[d]
Wyoming	15	10 day holding period and 50 supervised driving hours, 10 of which must be at night	11 p.m. – 5am restriction from age 16 to 16, 6 months (6 months)	No more than 1 passenger younger than 18 from age 16 to 16, 6 months (6 months)	None **Beginning July 1, 2010:** **Text messaging ban for all drivers**	Not required for licensing Program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training

Sources: IIHS, GHSA and the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association data.

Note: Provisions are as of May 14, 2010, with the exception of driver education provisions which are from 2008.

[a]The restriction is for unsupervised driving only.

[b]Passenger restrictions include an exception for family members unless otherwise noted.

[c]While the focus of this report is teen driver safety, state electronic device bans may apply to a wide range of age groups.

[d]Driver education requirements are taken from a 2008 report from the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association. ADTSEA, National Overview of Driver Education (Washington, D.C., 2008).

[e]Source does not note whether or not driver education is required for licensure.

[f]Source does not note the typical driver education program.

Appendix IV: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

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Staff Acknowledgments

Other key contributors to this report were Sara Vermillion (Assistant Director), Lynn Filla-Clark (Analyst-in-Charge), Katherine Bowman, Matthew Cook, Colin Fallon, Kathleen Gilhooly, Terry Richardson, Beverly Ross, and Steven Putansu.

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