

Graduated Drivers License (GDL)

Introduction

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens, accounting for more than one in three deaths. Per miles driven, teen drivers age 16-19 are four times more likely than older drivers to crash¹. The top three predictors for motor vehicle crashes involving a fatality are 1) non-use of seat belts 2) teen drivers, and 3) roads with speed limits of 45 mph or higher¹.

This Facts on KIDS in South Dakota will examine teen deaths due to motor vehicle crashes in South Dakota and Graduated Drivers Licensing.

What is a Graduated Drivers License and why is it important?

The idea of a graduated drivers license (GDL) resulted from two driving studies in North Carolina. The studies showed younger drivers were involved in car crashes more often than middle-aged drivers².

Among teen drivers, those at a high risk for traffic accidents are¹:

- Males
- Teens with teen passengers
- Newly licensed teens

Some factors that put teens at risk:

- Overestimating driving abilities
- Underestimating hazardous driving conditions
- Distractions (peers and cell phones)
- Less likely to wear seat belts
- Drinking and driving
- Speeding

The aim of Graduated drivers licensing programs is to reduce teen driving injuries and fatalities. The program promotes mandatory supervised driving hours to help build safe driving habits and to gain more experience behind the wheel. Studies supported by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, found that the implementation of a graduated

drivers licensing program can reduce fatal crashes for 16-year old drivers by an average of 11 percent. Researchers from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health found that when states had comprehensive GDL programs, those with a least five of the following elements in effect, there was a 20 percent reduction in fatal crashes involving 16-year old drivers:

1. A minimum age of 15½ for obtaining a learner’s permit
2. A waiting period after obtaining a learner’s permit of at least three months before applying for an intermediate license
3. A minimum of 30 hours of supervised driving
4. Minimum age of at least 16 years for obtaining an intermediate license
5. Minimum age of at least 17 years for full licensing
6. A restriction on carrying passengers³.

Graduated drivers licensing is a three-stage approach that guides young drivers as they obtain full license privileges.

- 1) Supervised Learning Period, where the young driver is granted a learner’s permit and allowed to drive with an adult
- 2) Intermediate license, at this stage, the driver is allowed to drive without supervision, but with restrictions. Restrictions can relate to night driving or the number of passengers with the driver.
- 3) Full-Privilege license, this is where the driver has met age and driving requirements and can obtain an unrestricted license³.

The table below shows the optimal standards along with South Dakota standards for a graduated licensing program. Except for North Dakota, states bordering South Dakota have required minimum supervised driving hours. Minnesota requires 30 hours, with 10 of them being at night. Montana on the other hand requires 50 hours of supervised driving including 10 hours at night. The only states in our region that place restrictions on passengers are Montana, Wyoming, and Nebraska. North Dakota is the only state the does not

	Min Entry age	Mandatory Holding Period	Min. amount of supervised driving	Minimum age	Unsupervised driving prohibited	Restriction of passengers (family members excepted)	Nighttime restriction	Passenger restriction
Optimal	16	6 mo.	30-50 hrs.	16, 6 mo.	9/10 p.m. – 5 a.m.	No more than 1 teenage passenger	Until age 18	Until Age 17
South Dakota	14	6 mo.	None	14, 6 mo. (14, 3 mo. w/drivers ed)	10p.m.-6 a.m.	None	16	-

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have an intermediate stage that restricts nighttime driving or passengers⁴.

South Dakota's Graduated Driver's Licensing Program

South Dakota implemented its program in January 1999. Parental consent is required in order for a child under the age of 18 to obtain a driver's license or permit.

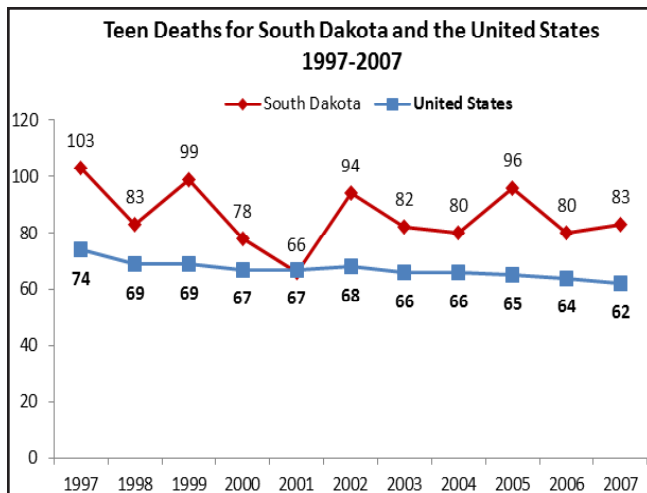
Instruction Permit: Minimum age 14 years. Applicant must pass vision and knowledge test. The permit holder is only able to drive between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. with a licensed driver who is at least 18 with one year of driving experience. From 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., the permit holder must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Restricted Minor's Permit: Minimum age 14 years. Applicant must hold instruction permit for a consecutive 180 days (90 days if successful completion of an approved Department of Education driver education course) with no traffic violations. Restricted minor's permit allows unsupervised driving between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. The minor is required to have a parent or guardian in front passenger seat between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

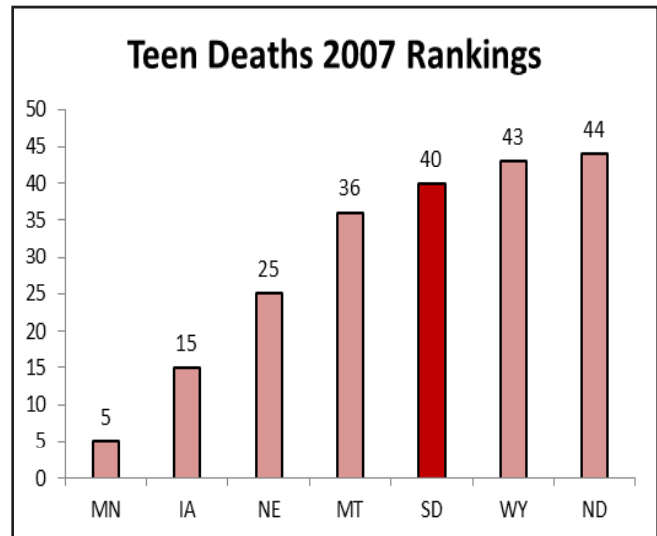
Operator's License: Minimum age 16. Applicant must pass the vision, knowledge, and driving test. If the applicant is under the age of 18, he or she must have met requirements of the instruction permit and not been convicted of a traffic violation during the six months prior to obtaining the operator's license.

South Dakota Statistics

National KIDS COUNT data comparing South Dakota to the United States, shows a higher rate of teen violent deaths since 1997 (see graph below).



Furthermore, the next graph depicts the teen death national ranking for South Dakota and surrounding states. South Dakota ranks 40th in the nation for teen deaths only slightly below Wyoming and North Dakota⁵.



According to the South Dakota Department of Public Safety⁶, There were 15,907 reported motor vehicle crashes in 2009. Young drivers are involved in more crashes than any other age group. A licensed driver in South Dakota under age 20 represents 8% of the total licensed drivers, but represents 17% of drivers in fatal and injury crashes, 12% of drinking drivers in fatal and injury crashes, and 28% of speeding drivers in fatal and injury crashes.

The chart below shows sixteen percent of total motor vehicle drivers involved in crashes were ages 6-19. Thirteen percent of fatal crashes reported involved drivers ages 6-19, while 17% of injury crashes involved drivers ages 0-19. Property damage only (PDO) crashes involving drivers 6-19 totaled 16%. Of all the age groups, 16 and 17 year-olds had the highest numbers of crashes resulting in fatalities, injuries, and property damage⁶.

In 2009, there were 59 drinking drivers involved in fatality and injury crashes ages 0-19. Speeding accounted for 146 injuries and fatalities in drivers ages 0 to 19.

Ages	Total Crashes	Fatal	Injury	PDO
6 to 13	16	1	6	9
14 to 15	654	1	183	470
16 to 17	1,544	7	446	1,091
18	899	5	292	602
19	798	5	231	562
Total	3,911	19	1,158	2,734

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A total of 48 teens age 15-19 died (all causes) in South Dakota in 2007. Since 2000 teen deaths have ranged from a low of 41 deaths in 2001 to a high of 58 deaths in 2002⁵. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) the leading cause of death for the 14-19 age group in South Dakota for 2000-2007 was unintentional injuries, with 225 deaths. Seventy-nine percent (79%) or 198 of the 252 unintentional injuries were motor vehicle transport, i.e., either a car, van or a pick-up truck, where the teen was a driver or occupant⁷.

The table below shows that 77% of unintentional injuries result from motor vehicle traffic. Breaking the numbers down, the data indicates that 78% of unintentional injuries resulting from motor vehicle crashes were for whites, while American Indian/Alaskan Natives were at 81%. Though American Indian/Alaskan Natives had a higher percentage, their numbers were considerably lower. When comparing males to female motor vehicle crashes, males of all races were at 74%, while females, of all races were at 88%. However, even though males had a lower percentage, the total number of motor vehicle crash fatalities was much higher than females.

STANDUP Act⁸

The State Teen and Novice Driver Uniform Protection Act, H.R. 1895, was introduced in the House of Representatives in April 2009. A nearly identical version of the bill, S. 3269, was introduced in the Senate in April 2010. The legislation would establish minimum federal requirements for state GDL laws and encourage all states to adopt GDL laws that meet those

minimum requirements within 3 years.

An overview of the STANDUP Act:

- States must meet the following requirements under the STANDUP Act:
 - Three stages of licensing – learner’s permit, intermediate stage, and full licensure – should be used.
 - Age 16 should be the earliest age for entry into the learner’s permit process.
 - Nighttime driving while unsupervised should be restricted during the learner’s permit and intermediate stages, until full licensure at age 18.
 - Driving while using communication devices (cell phone calls, texting) should be prohibited at least until full licensure at age 18.
 - Unrestricted, full licensure should occur no earlier than age 18.
 - Passengers should be restricted – no more than one non-familial passenger under age 21 unless a licensed driver over age 21 is in the vehicle – until full licensure at age 18.
 - Any other requirement adopted by the Secretary of Transportation, such as a minimum duration of 6 months and a minimum of 30 hours of supervised driving for a learner’s permit, may be included.
 - Compliance with the requirements within the first three years after enactment will make states eligible for incentive grants.
 - Three years are provided for states to meet the requirements, after which sanctions are imposed to encourage states to meet the requirements.

Unintentional injuries resulting from motor vehicle traffic, 2000-2007 for Teens Ages 14 to 19			
	Motor Vehicle Traffic	Total	Percentage
All Races	196	252	77%
White	133	170	78%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	64	79	81%
All Males	125	169	74%
White	81	112	72%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	43	55	78%
All Females	73	83	88%
White	52	58	90%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	21	24	87%

Sites of Interest

Road Ready Teens Guide to preparing teens for the road. http://www.roadreadyteens.org/RRParentsGuidev3bb_Pages.PDF

The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute.
Research gateway to teen driving. <http://www.teendriverssource.org/>

Safe and Sound South Dakota is an auto safety coalition that is devoted to making South Dakota’s highways safe, especially for youth, through enhanced auto safety legislation. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Safe-and-Sound-South-Dakota/152665261800#/>



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References

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2010) Teen Drivers: Fact Sheet. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/MotorVehicleSafety/Teen_Drivers/teendrivers_factsheet.html

²The Council of State Governments. (2008) Retrieved from <http://www.healthystates.csg.org/Public+Health+Issues/Injury+Prevention/>

³The Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association. (2010) Retrieved from http://www.rmiiia.org/auto/teens/Graduated_Drivers_Licensing.asp

⁴Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. (2010) Highway Loss Data Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.iihs.org/>

⁵Annie E. Casey Foundation. KIDS COUNT Data Center. (2010) Teen Deaths from All Causes (data file). Retrieved from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>

⁶South Dakota Department of Public Safety. (2009) 2009 SD Motor Vehicle Traffic Crash Summary. Retrieved from http://dps.sd.gov/enforcement/accident_records/documents/2009AR-FactsBook_000.pdf

⁷Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Injury Prevention and Control: Data & Statistics. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Available from <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html>

⁸Safe Roads 4 Teens. (2010) Retrieved from <http://www.saferoads4teens.org/standup-act>

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The South Dakota KIDS COUNT Project (www.sdkidscount.org) is a national and state-by-state effort, sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, to track the status of children in the United States. By providing policymakers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being, KIDS COUNT seeks to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for children and families. Additional funding for the state project comes from the South Dakota Departments of: Education & Human Services.

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