

**U.S. Department of Justice**  
Office of Justice Programs  
*Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*

# A Guide to Zero Tolerance and Graduated Licensing: *Two Strategies That Work*



Prepared by

**Pacific Institute**

FOR RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

In support of the  
**OJJDP *Enforcing the***  
***Underage Drinking Laws Program***

*This product was supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention as part of its Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Initiative (Award No. 98-AH-F8-0114, of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U. S. Department of Justice).*

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*The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policy of the U. S. Department of Justice.*

# A bout This Guide

While much progress has been made, alcohol-related traffic crashes are all too common among young people, resulting in many thousands of deaths and injuries. This guide provides information on two of the key strategies for reducing impaired driving among youth:

- "Zero Tolerance" laws prohibiting drivers under 21 from driving with even small amounts of alcohol in their systems
- Graduated licensing systems that ease young people into full driving privileges more gradually.

State and local policy makers, enforcement agencies, and concerned citizens can use this guide to

- gain an understanding of impaired driving issues as they relate to young drivers
- learn about the evidence of effectiveness of zero tolerance laws and graduated licensing systems
- identify strengths and weaknesses in existing laws, policies, and practices in their state or community
- persuade policymakers that changes are needed
- motivate more vigorous enforcement of existing laws.

This guide can be used in conjunction with *Strategies for Success: Combating Juvenile DUI*, published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention along with the Police Executive Research Forum.

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# **P**reventing Impaired Driving Among Youth: What You Need To Know

## The Bad News is...

In 1997, more than 2,200 youth died in alcohol-related crashes (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [NHTSA], 1998a).

## The Good News is...

That "Minimum Age 21" laws have worked. More than 17,000 traffic deaths have been avoided since states started raising the minimum legal drinking age (NHTSA 1998a).

Two other key strategies are

### **Zero Tolerance Laws**

These laws, establishing very low blood alcohol limits for drivers under 21, have been found to reduce alcohol-related crashes involving youth by between 17 and 50 percent.

### **Graduated Licensing**

This system, which eases beginning drivers into the traffic environment, has led to reductions in both alcohol-related and non-alcohol-related crashes.

The BEST News is.. you and your community can implement the strategies described in this document and prevent impaired driving among youth!



## Trends in Impaired Driving

Impaired driving is a preventable social problem that costs Americans billions of dollars each year. In 1997, over 21 percent of drivers between 15 and 20 years of age involved in fatal crashes had blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) between 0.01 and 0.10 (NHTSA, 1998a). Examining trends in impaired driving provides answers to many questions concerning the nature and extent of this problem, such as who drives impaired and how impaired driving rates vary over time and by state. The following question-and-answer format presents the latest data in the field and summarizes two of the most effective strategies for preventing impaired driving by young people in the United States.

### What is the magnitude of the problems caused by impaired driving?

The personal and societal costs associated with impaired driving are staggering. During 1997, there were more than 16,000 deaths and more than 327,000 injuries in alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes in the United States (NHTSA, 1998c). In 1997, more than 2,200 youth died in alcohol-related crashes (35.3 percent of their total traffic fatalities).

### What works to prevent impaired driving among youth?

#### **Minimum Purchase Age Laws**

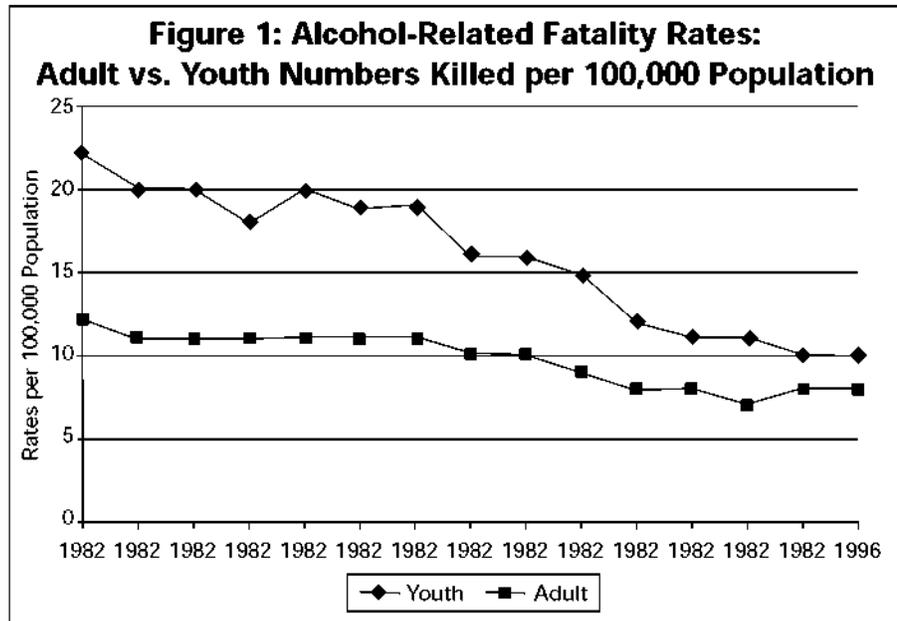
Drinking alcohol is a particularly risky activity for young people who lack experience and judgment. The risks of alcohol use by youth include traumatic injury, perpetrating or being the victim of crime or violence, and the possibility of the development of chronic alcohol abuse. "Minimum Age 21" alcohol purchase laws are an important and effective countermeasure to address these problems. In particular, they have been successful in reducing

alcohol-related crashes among young drivers. NHTSA estimates that these laws have reduced traffic fatalities involving 18- to 20- year-old drivers by 13 percent and have saved over 17,000 lives since 1975 (NHTSA, 1997c). Any law, policy, or enforcement effort that reduces youth access to alcohol can reduce alcohol-related traffic crashes as well as other problems. The types of strategies that are most effective in this regard are described in other publications, including

- *Strategies To Reduce Underage Alcohol Use: Typology and Brief Overview*
- *How to Use Local Regulatory/Land Use Powers to Prevent Underage Drinking*
- *Preventing Sales of Alcohol to Minors: What You Should Know About Merchant Education Programs*

These publications are available from the OJJDP-sponsored Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center at the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, toll free at 877-335-1287; [www.pire.org/udetc](http://www.pire.org/udetc).

Overall, impaired driving has declined nearly every year since 1982. The reasons for the decline in drinking and driving likely have involved the interaction of several factors, including stronger laws and more vigorous enforcement, changing social attitudes fostered by citizen pressure, and generally lower levels of alcohol consumption (Stewart & Voas, 1994). As can be seen in figure 1, declines among youth have been particularly impressive.



This guide describes two effective strategies specifically designed to reduce impaired driving among youth.

## **Zero Tolerance**

All states have enacted blood alcohol content (BAC) limits of 0.02 percent or less for drivers under age 21. These limits reflect the facts that drinking is illegal for anyone under 21 and that young drivers are particularly vulnerable to impairment at low BACs. These laws have been found to reduce alcohol-related crashes in the affected age group by as much as 50 percent in some states (Blomberg, 1993) and consistently by between 17 and 22 percent (Hingson et al., 1994).

## **Graduated Licensing**

Graduated licensing is a process by which learning drivers can be gradually introduced to driving. Reductions in traffic crashes, both alcohol-related and non-alcohol-related, have been measured as a result of nighttime driving curfews, increased age of licensure, and graduated driving privileges in which a variety of driving restrictions are lifted as the driver gains experience and maturity (Sweedler, 1990). Such licensing systems have been found to be very effective in New Zealand and Australia (National Transportation Safety Board, 1993).

Each of these strategies is described in more detail below.



# Zero Tolerance

## A strategy for preventing impaired driving among youth

Drinking alcohol before driving is extremely risky behavior for young people who lack experience and judgment. Over 33 percent of all deaths of 15- to 20-year-olds result from motor vehicle crashes, and in 1996, the alcohol-involvement rate for young drivers was approximately double the rate for the over-21 licensed driver population (NHTSA, 1997a). This phenomenon may be due to the fact that young drivers have less experience with both drinking and driving. They also may lack the fundamental skills needed to assess realistically the hazards posed by various driving situations.

All states (plus the District of Columbia) have enacted a law to prohibit underage drivers from operating a motor vehicle after drinking. The details of the laws, such as the precise permissible BAC, vary from state to state. Zero tolerance laws, when properly implemented and enforced, can be effective in sending a no-use message to young people and preventing alcohol-related crashes among young drivers. This chapter presents a brief overview of the strategy and reasons for the nearly nationwide spread of zero tolerance laws. It explains the importance of publicity and enforcement of such laws and discusses challenges that can accompany low BAC enforcement.

## What is zero tolerance?

Zero tolerance laws prohibit young persons from driving a vehicle while they have a BAC greater than 0.00 percent, 0.01 percent, or 0.02 percent. If a police officer has probable cause to believe that a driver has been drinking, the officer administers a breath test. In most states with zero tolerance laws, any amount of alcohol in the body of a driver under 21 is an offense for which the driver's license may be suspended for a period of time (NHTSA, 1996c). Because of the high value young drivers place on their licenses, the threat of license revocation has proven to be an especially effective sanction—for both its punitive and its deterrent effect—for this age group (NHTSA, 1996c).

The most commonly specified BAC for drivers under 21 is 0.02 percent, which is approximately equal to one drink for the average person (36 states). Twelve states and the District of Columbia have adopted the 0.00 percent level and two states, 0.01 percent (NHTSA, 1998a).

## Are zero tolerance laws effective in reducing traffic crashes involving youth who have been drinking?

The first four states to reduce the legal BAC limit for young drivers were Maine (July 1983), North Carolina (September 1983), Wisconsin (July 1984), and New Mexico (July 1984). These states experienced a 34 percent decline in nighttime fatal crashes among adolescents targeted by the lower BAC levels. This decline was approximately one-third greater than a similar decline observed in four selected nearby comparison states (Hingson, Heeren, & Winter, 1991).

By the end of 1990, 12 states had lowered BAC levels for youth. These 12 experienced a 16 percent decline overall in nighttime single-vehicle fatal crashes among young drivers targeted by the new laws, compared with a 1 percent rise among drivers of the same age in selected comparison states. Of the 12 states, four had adopted a BAC level of 0.00 percent, four had a level of 0.02 percent, and 4 had levels ranging from 0.04 percent to 0.06 percent. Measured crash reductions were statistically significant for the 0.00 percent states (22-percent reduction) and the 0.02 percent states (17 percent) but not for the 0.04 percent to 0.06 percent states (7 percent). It was estimated that if all states adopted a 0.00 percent or 0.02 percent level for drivers ages 15 to 20, at least 375 nighttime single-vehicle fatal crashes would be prevented each year (Hingson et al., 1994).

## What penalties are appropriate for zero tolerance violations?

All states have laws against driving while intoxicated (DWI) or operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol. These laws carry severe penalties, including a possible jail sentence, loss of license, and a substantial fine. A second or third impaired-driving arrest can lead to a felony conviction. Under zero tolerance laws, lesser charges are typically brought against young drivers; the strategy is not intended to send young persons to jail or to produce a criminal record.

The penalties for a violation vary widely across the states, but they nearly always involve the suspension or revocation of the driver's license. In some states, the term of the license suspension can be equal to or greater than the term of suspension for a DWI conviction. They may also involve alcohol or drug assessment, some form of alcohol or drug education or treatment, and a fine. High fines, jail, house arrest, the creation of a felony conviction record, and vehicle impoundment—all possible consequences of a DWI conviction—are not part of sanctioning for zero tolerance.

## How important is publicity about the law?

A public awareness campaign can dramatically increase the effectiveness of the law. Maryland experienced an 11 percent statewide reduction in the number of drivers under age 21 who had been drinking and crashed following the implementation of its 0.02 percent zero tolerance law. However, in six counties where a special public education campaign was implemented, alcohol-related crashes among young drivers were reduced by 50 percent (Blomberg, 1993). The campaign included television and radio commercials that featured local police officials as spokespersons. A pamphlet and matching poster with the theme "You don't have to be drunk to lose your license in Maryland" also were distributed to support the broadcast campaign. As with most other types of traffic enforcement, effects are greatest when the law and efforts to enforce the law are well publicized.

When considering enforcement issues, it is essential to keep in mind that detecting, apprehending, and punishing violators is not as important as deterring young people from drinking and driving in the first place. Deterrence is strongest when people believe that their punishment will be swift and severe. Therefore, well-publicized enforcement campaigns in which the apprehended offenders receive penalties are extremely important—even if there are many offenders who are not caught.

## What enforcement techniques are most practical?

Zero tolerance laws require somewhat different enforcement strategies from those used for traditional impaired driving patrols. Police officers are often reluctant to stop young people. Officers need to be trained to take enforce-

ment action when identifying low levels of alcohol in young drivers. Such training might include knowledge of the statute, application of implied consent under the statute, and procedures for handling juveniles. In general, officers identify these violations only after the vehicle has been stopped for some other reason such as speeding or suspected DWI over the 0.10 percent or 0.08 percent adult legal limit. Unlike for DWI, there are currently no standardized, documented cues to aid officers in the detection of zero tolerance violators within a moving traffic stream.

One tool that may eventually prove helpful in zero tolerance enforcement is the passive alcohol sensor. Such devices test the air around a driver for possible traces of alcohol from exhaled breath. They do not require the driver's active cooperation. Such devices have proven to be quite effective at sobriety checkpoints in identifying drivers at or near the legal limit (see Ferguson et al., 1995). However, the currently available passive devices were designed for enforcing the adult drinking driver statutes, and hence, higher legal adult alcohol limits. While they may prove useful for enforcing zero tolerance at checkpoints, these sensors appear to be less well suited for the enforcement of very low levels of alcohol during regular patrols (Leaf & Preusser, 1996).

It should also be noted that enforcement of any laws that involve juveniles can be difficult. In most states, juvenile offenders cannot be incarcerated with adults and, once arrested, may not be released except to a parent, guardian, officer of the court, or special juvenile facility. This may cause an officer to be kept off patrol for a long period while the arrest is processed and the parents are located. Communities that want their police to conduct this type of enforcement need to provide support personnel and facilities where the identified juvenile violators, typically those under the age of 18, can be handled.

## Summary

Elevated crash risk among teenage drivers can be seen after only one or two drinks. The goal of zero tolerance is to eliminate driving by young persons who have consumed any alcohol. Beginning with Maine in 1983, zero tolerance laws have now been adopted by most States. Substantial crash reductions have been documented, particularly in those places where the law has been well publicized. Further, zero tolerance laws provide consistent no-use messages to young people. Challenges that remain include finding more effective strategies for zero tolerance enforcement and related publicity.

# raduated Licensing

Youth between the ages of 15 and 20 are more likely to die in traffic crashes than from any other cause (NHTSA, 1996b). On a per-mile-driven basis, the risk of a crash is four to eight times higher for teenage drivers than for older drivers. When alcohol or drugs are added to the mix, the combination is often deadly. Driver licensing systems have been developed that can protect young people as they gain maturity and experience behind the wheel. These systems—usually referred to as graduated licensing—are especially valuable in improving traffic safety. They are also an important substance abuse prevention strategy.

## What is graduated licensing?

Graduated licensing is "a system designed to ease beginning drivers into the traffic environment under controlled exposure to progressively more difficult driving experiences" (NHTSA, 1996a, p. 3). A licensing system is considered to be graduated if it contains at least three distinct steps or stages:

### **Learning**

The young person is required to undergo a period of practice driving under the supervision of an experienced licensed driver.

### **Restricted**

The young person can engage in unsupervised driving subject to certain restrictions. A key restriction is a prohibition against driving after drinking any alcohol. Restrictions on night driving may also reduce the probability that the young driver will drive after using alcohol. Other possible restrictions include added requirements for seatbelt use, limitations on passengers, and limitations on the types of vehicles that can be driven. During the restricted stage, license actions and suspensions are often rendered for fewer and less serious traffic violations. Often there are very serious penalties for driving under the influence of any amount of alcohol.

## Full

The young person is issued a full-privilege (drive anywhere at any time) license.

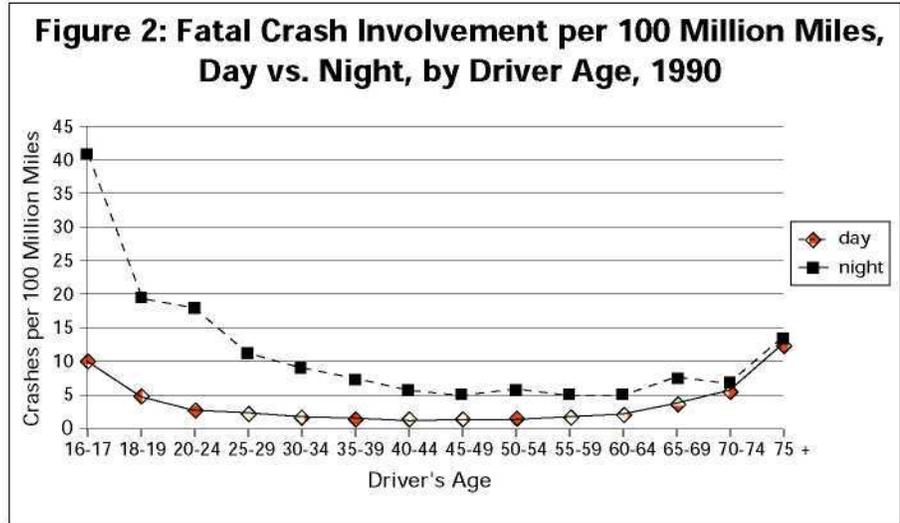
To enter the learning stage in a typical graduated licensing system, the young person needs to have attained the minimum age and pass vision and rules-of-the-road tests. Entry into the restricted stage requires completing a minimum period of violation-free driving as a learner and passing a road test. Full licensure requires reaching some minimum age, typically 17 or 18, and successfully completing the restricted stage with few or no violations or at-fault crashes. The required learning period and the required restricted period distinguish graduated licensing systems from traditional systems, in which the young person need only attain a certain age and pass rules, vision, and road tests before receiving a full-privilege license (see Hedlund & Miller, 1996). Graduated licensing is currently being considered by many states as a means to reduce the high crash rates and high crash costs associated with teen drivers.

## Does night driving increase the risk of crashes?

Yes. Figure 2 shows the fatal crash involvement rate by driver age for day versus night (9 p.m.-6 a.m.) driving as calculated from the 1990 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey (Research Triangle Institute, 1991) and the 1990 FARS (NHTSA, 1991). As shown in the figure, young drivers have much higher crash rates during the night than during the day. In fact, while drivers ages 16 to 17 accumulate only 14 percent of their miles driven between the hours of 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., they experience 39 percent of their fatal crashes during that time period. It is highly likely that some of the increased risk at night is due to the consumption of alcohol or drugs.

An integral element in any graduated licensing system is a restriction against night driving—other than for work or school or when accompanied by a parent or guardian—during the intermediate or restricted phase of the system. This night driving restriction may be in place for some period of time (e.g., the first year of driving in Maryland), until reaching some specified age (typically 17 or 18), or until the young person has reached some specified age and has completed a driver education course (e.g., in New York and Pennsylvania).

Night driving restrictions have been shown to be highly effective in reducing teen driver crash involvements. Reductions in fatal crashes have been demonstrated nationally by comparing those states with and without such restrictions (Levy, 1988) and for selected cities (Preusser, Zador, &



Source: NHTSA, 1991; Research Triangle Institute, 1991.

Williams, 1993). Reductions in nonfatal injury crashes have been found for selected states (LA, MD, NY, and PA) (Preusser, Williams, Zador, & Blomberg, 1984) and cities (Detroit, Cleveland, and Columbus) (Preusser, Williams, Lund, & Zador, 1990). These reductions in night crashes associated with night driving restrictions can be dramatic—as much as 69 percent—despite the fact that night driving with a parent or guardian, or to or from work or school, is typically allowed.

## Are teen passengers a problem for teen drivers?

Several studies have shown that teen drivers are more likely to crash when carrying only teen passengers than when traveling alone or when traveling with other passenger combinations (Drummond & Triggs, 1991; Foldvary & Lane, 1969; Preusser, Ferguson, & Williams, 1998). New Zealand's graduated licensing system and the system recently adopted in Georgia restrict unsupervised teen drivers from transporting teen passengers. Evaluation of the New Zealand law has shown a reduction in the number of teenagers injured as passengers in cars driven by teens (Langley, Wagenaar, & Begg, 1996).

## At what age should teens begin learning to drive?

Most States that recently changed their licensing laws to more closely resemble graduated licensing have left unchanged the age at which learning driving can begin. They have extended their required learning period and often added an intermediate or restricted driving period before full-privilege licensure. The effect of these changes has been to delay the time when a young person can obtain a drive-anywhere-at-any-time license.

Two states, Michigan and Virginia, recently lowered the age at which learning driving may begin. On one hand, lowering the learning age should allow for the accumulation of more supervised driving experience prior to full-privilege licensure. On the other hand, if young people enter the licensing process at an earlier age, they may qualify for a license when they are younger. More practice is consistent with the goals of graduated licensing; younger licensing is not. By allowing younger people to learn to drive, people may gain access to vehicles and driving knowledge at an even younger age, thereby contributing to more unlicensed and unsupervised operation of motor vehicles.

Table 1 summarizes state variations in minimum learning and licensing ages and associated teen driver fatal crash involvement rates per 100,000 population (Williams, Weinberg, Fields, and Ferguson, 1996). For the years 1989-93, those states that allowed earlier learning had higher fatal crash involvement rates for drivers ages 15 and younger and 16-year-old drivers. States that allow early learning and licensing also tend to have somewhat higher crash rates for 17-year-olds. As a group, these states tend to be more rural and thus to have higher overall fatal crash rates for drivers of all ages. Also, they are less likely to have night driving restrictions for 17-year-olds, such as the night restrictions found in New York and Pennsylvania, which do not allow learning until age 16.

**Table 1. State Licensing Law and Driver Fatal Crash Involvements 1989-1993**

State Group	Learn Age	License Age	Number of States	Crash Rates/100k Population		
				Driver's Age		
				15&<15	16	17
1	16	16-17	9	0.24	1.38	2.18
2	15.2-15.8	16	12	0.59	2.36	3.03
3	15	16	17	0.67	2.82	3.12
4	14	16	5	1.14	3.13	3.32
5	14-15	14-15	8	2.33	2.59	3.66

**Note:** License law information is from Williams, Weinberg, et al., 1996; total involvements data are from FARS (NHTSA, 1991).

## Does driver education help?

Historically, driver education has been used by young people as a way to learn how to drive, pass the required written and road tests, and get a license. Young people who have access to driver education have been more likely to become licensed and drive at a younger age than young people who have not had access to such courses. The result has been that those who live in communities that provide driver education, for example in their high schools, have more crashes than young people who do not live in such communities (Robertson, 1980).

There may not be an easy solution to this dilemma. On one hand, when young people do learn how to drive, it would seem prudent to provide them with the best available teachers and course materials. On the other hand, driver education will have negative effects if it enables people to drive or lifts driving restrictions sooner than would otherwise be the case had the course not been available (see e.g., Mayhew & Simpson, 1996).

A solution will likely require some form of multistage delivery of driver education leading to full licensing. Appropriate education may be used as a supplement as the young person moves into the next stage. It is also likely that future driver education will focus far more on the importance of avoiding alcohol and other drug use rather than simply teaching vehicle handling or rules of the road. Such multistage, risk-reduction driver education programs are currently under development (NHTSA, 1996a).

## Who is covered by graduated licensing provisions?

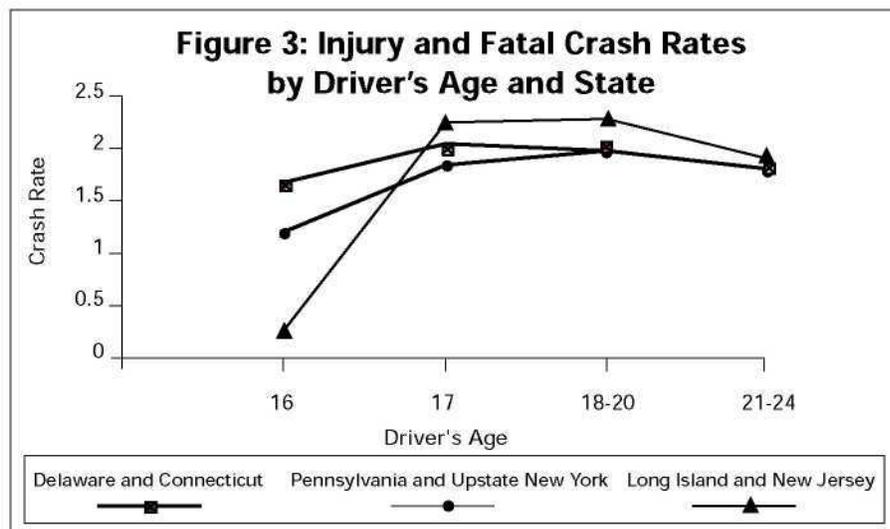
Countries, Provinces, and states with graduated licensing have taken various approaches as to who is, and who is not, included in the system. In New Zealand, graduated licensing applies to 15- to 24-year-olds. In Nova Scotia and Ontario, it applies to beginning drivers of all ages. In the United States, the two states with licensing provisions that most closely approximate graduated licensing are Florida and North Carolina. In both states, graduated licensing provisions are generally limited to people under age 18 with the zero tolerance alcohol provision limited to those under age 21. Similar age limitations can be found in Maryland, Michigan, New York, and Pennsylvania.

## Does graduated licensing reduce crashes?

Yes. Maryland implemented a graduated—then called provisional—licensing system with a night driving restriction in 1979. A 5 percent reduction in

the number of teen drivers involved in crashes and a 10 percent reduction in traffic law violations and convictions were found for 16- and 17-year-old drivers (McKnight, Hyle, & Albricht, 1983). New Zealand implemented a graduated licensing system, including a night driving restriction, in 1987. An 8 percent reduction in crashes was found for drivers ages 15 to 19 (Langley et al., 1996).

Upstate New York and Pennsylvania have had a key component of graduated licensing—a night driving restriction for 16-year-olds and some 17-year-olds—for several years. These two states were compared with Connecticut and Delaware, states that licensed 16-year-olds at the time of the study but did not have graduated systems, and with New Jersey and Long Island, NY, locations that did not license until age 17 (Ferguson, Leaf, Williams, & Preusser, 1996). Figure 3 compares teen injury and fatal crash rates associated with these three different approaches to licensing. The results indicated that New Jersey and Long Island, with no licensing until age 17, had a huge advantage over Delaware and Connecticut for 16-year-olds. However, crash rates were higher in New Jersey and on Long Island for the remaining teen years. New York and Pennsylvania, with the night driving restriction, had rates lower than Delaware and Connecticut for 16-year-olds and somewhat lower rates for 17-year-olds, followed by rates comparable to Connecticut and Delaware for the remaining teen years. It was argued that New York and Pennsylvania were better able to "ease" young drivers into the traffic stream by allowing them to accumulate driving experience during the less hazardous daylight driving situations.



## Where do we stand now?

Table 2 shows the key graduated licensing provisions for the 50 states and the District of Columbia (IIHS, 1997). Until recently, state licensing laws were static. The basic provisions concerning when young people could begin learning to drive, how long they needed to stay in learner status, when they could become licensed, and what restrictions were on the license had remained relatively constant for more than a generation.

State	Min. Age Learner's Permit	Min. Age License	Min. Permit Period	Special (Lower) IBAC	Nighttime Driving Prohibited?
Alabama	15	16	—	.02	—
Alaska	14	16	—	.00	—
Arizona	15 yrs., 6 mos.	16	—	.00	—
Arkansas	14	16	30 days	.02	—
California	15	16	6 months	.01	Midnight - 5 a.m. until age 17
Colorado	15 yrs., 3 mos.	16	90 days	.02	—
Connecticut	16	16 yrs., 6 mos.	180 days	.02	—
Delaware <sup>1</sup>	15 yrs., 10 mos.	16 yrs., 4 mos.	6 months	.02	9 p.m. - 6 a.m.
District of Columbia	16	16	—	.00	—
Florida	15	16	180 days	.02	16 yrs.: 11 p.m. - 6 a.m. 17 yrs.: 1 a.m. - 5 a.m. until age 18
Georgia	15	16	12 months	.02	1 a.m. - 5 a.m. until age 18
Hawaii	15	15	90 days	.02	—
Idaho	15	15	—	.02	—
Illinois	15	16	3 months	.00	11 p.m. - 6 a.m. Sun-Thr Midnight - 6 a.m. F & Sat until age 17
Indiana	15	15 yrs., 2 mos.	60 days	.02	1 a.m. - 5 a.m. Sat & Sun After 11 p.m. Sun-Thr until age 18
Iowa <sup>2</sup>	14	16	6 months	.02	12:30 a.m. - 5 a.m.
Kansas	14	16	—	.02	—
Kentucky	16	16 yrs., 6 mos.	180 days	.02	—
Louisiana	15	16	3 months	.02	11 p.m. - 5 a.m. until age 17
Maine	15	16	90 days	.00	—
Maryland	15 yrs., 9 mos.	16 yrs., 1 mo.	4 months	.02	Midnight - 5 a.m. until age 18
Massachusetts	16	16 yrs., 6 mos.	—	.02	1 a.m. - 4 a.m. until age 18
Michigan	14 yrs., 9 mos.	16	180 days	.02	Midnight - 5 a.m. for 1 yr or until age 18
Minnesota <sup>2</sup>	15	16	180 days	.00	—
Mississippi	15	16	30 days	.08	—
Missouri	15 yrs., 6 mos.	16	—	.02	—

Table 2 (Continued)

State	Min. Age Learner's Permit	Min. Age License	Min. Permit Period	Special (Lower) BAC	Nighttime Driving Prohibited?
Montana	14 yrs., 6 mos.	15	—	.02	—
Nebraska <sup>2</sup>	15	16	—	.02	Midnight - 6 a.m.
Nevada	15 yrs., 6 mos.	16	—	.02	—
New Hampshire	16	16 yrs., 3 mos.	3 months	.02	1 a.m. - 5 a.m. until age 18
New Jersey	16	17	—	.01	—
New Mexico	15	15	—	.02	—
New York	16	16	—	.02	9 p.m. - 5 a.m. until age 18
North Carolina	15	16	365 days	.00	9 p.m. - 5 a.m. for 6 mos. or until age 18
North Dakota	14	16	90 days	.02	—
Ohio <sup>2</sup>	15 yrs., 6 mos.	16	6 months	.02	1 a.m. - 5 a.m. until age 17
Oklahoma	15 yrs., 6 mos.	16	—	.00	—
Oregon	15	16	—	.00	—
Pennsylvania	16	16	—	.02	Midnight - 5 a.m. until age 18
Rhode Island	16	16	—	.02	—
South Carolina	15	15 yrs., 3 mos.	90 days	—	6 p.m. - 6 a.m. EST 8 p.m. - 6 a.m. EDT until age 16
South Dakota	14	16	—	—	—
Tennessee	15	16	90 days	.02	—
Texas	15	16	—	.00	—
Utah	16	16	—	.00	—
Vermont	15	16	—	.02	—
Virginia	15	16	180 days	.02	—
Washington	15	16	—	.02	—
West Virginia	15	16	—	.02	—
Wisconsin	15 yrs., 6 mos.	16	—	.00	—
Wyoming	15	16	10 days	—	—

Source: IIHS, 1997b, 1998.

<sup>1</sup>Delaware licensing law not in effect until 7/1/99.

<sup>2</sup>Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio licensing laws not in effect until 1/1/99.

## *Conclusion*

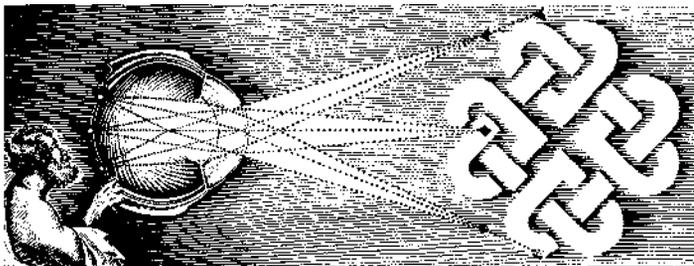
The goal of graduated licensing is to phase in exposure to increasingly complex driving tasks and environments for young people as they mature and develop their driving skills. During this process, alcohol is subject to a zero tolerance restriction. Also restricted is unsupervised night driving. Both of these restrictions should limit the extent to which alcohol and other drugs contribute to the crash injury and fatality of young drivers. They also help to establish clear legal and normative limits on substance use. By establishing a graduated licensing system and combining it with a zero tolerance restriction, states will be able to reduce their rate of youth-involved motor vehicle crashes and violations.

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