

TRAFFIC EDUCATION

Standards and Requirements for High School Driver Education Programs



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Health Enhancement and Safety Division

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State of Montana Health Enhancement and Safety Division
Traffic Education Unit, Office of Public Instruction
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MONTANA TRAFFIC EDUCATION STANDARDS & REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

This publication outlines the minimum program requirements and procedures necessary for Montana school districts to offer a quality state-approved Traffic Education Program. Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL), combined with a dynamic driver education curriculum and parental involvement, can increase young driver safety. Montana's teen driver education and training programs provide this foundation for a systems approach to traffic safety. An effective traffic education program with professional instruction and guided practice can start new drivers on a life-long career of safe and responsible driving.

Traffic safety and driver education in Montana's high schools is part of the basic education of all students. State-approved driver education should be scheduled so that a sufficient number of courses are available and allow every eligible youth within the school's geographic jurisdiction an equitable opportunity to enroll pursuant to Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 61-5-106. For school accreditation purposes, traffic education is an elective course and can be offered as part of the regular school curriculum to meet graduation requirements. A unit of credit is defined as the equivalent of at least 225 minutes per week for one year. Fractional credit for course work not meeting the full unit requirement can be awarded.

School districts have the choice of offering traffic education as part of the basic system of free quality public education for all students as outlined above, or including it as part of an extended school day program on Saturdays, or as a summer school program. Districts must employ qualified state-approved instructors to teach their state-approved program according to MCA 20-7-5.

Most districts charge students for traffic education, however, excessive registration fees will prevent a percentage of students from enrolling. Traffic crashes are the leading cause of injury and death of Montanans age 15-24. Injuries sustained in a car crash directly affect a student's potential success in life as well as increase health care costs for all Montanans. The OPI's annual reimbursement supports the Montana schools providing this essential driver training and valuable public service to the students and the communities in which they drive.

This publication provides answers to questions about operating a school-based traffic education program in Montana. For additional information and assistance, contact the Office of Public Instruction, Traffic Education Unit, PO Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2501 or call (406) 444-4432.

Table of Contents

I. Program Requirements	3
A. The Traffic Education Program	3
B. Parent Meetings Required	4
C. Cooperative Driver Testing Program	5
D. Traffic Education Teachers.....	6
E. Traffic Education Vehicles.....	8
F. Student Enrollment and Learner License.....	10
II. Program Procedures	12
A. Application for Approval	12
B. Reimbursement Requests.....	12
C. Driver Examination Procedures	13
III. Montana Standards for Traffic Education - Teen Driver	
Education and Training	14
A. Content Standards and Benchmarks	14
B. Performance Standards and Learning Phases	17
Appendices	
A. Required Forms used by School Districts for Traffic Education Programs.....	19
Sample Vehicle Safety Inspection Form	21
B. General Procedure for Obtaining a Montana Driver License	23
C. Scheduling Classroom and In-Vehicle Instruction	24
D. Perceptual/Physical Screening.....	25
E. Accommodating Students with Disabilities in Driver Education... ..	26
F. Guidelines for Behind the Wheel Instruction and Practice	27
G. Best Practices for Traffic Education Programs.....	29
H. Definition of Terms	40

I. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. The Traffic Education Program (ARM 10.13.307-308)

An approved Traffic Education Program for young novice drivers must:

1. be provided only by school districts operating a middle school, junior high school, or high school;
2. be for students who are 15 years old or older, or who will reach their 15th birthday within six months of course completion;
3. be taught by teachers of traffic education approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction;
4. use a curriculum that meets the content standards and benchmarks (ARM 10.14.401 - 409) and includes the dangers of physical and cognitive distractions while driving as required by MCA 61-5-135, and is based on a curriculum guide, or guides, readily available for review from the Superintendent of Public Instruction or traffic education staff;
5. ensure all students meet the minimum performance objectives identified by the local school district and fulfill the state-required hourly and minimum 25-day student-contact requirements in order to be considered as having successfully completed the program;
6. use lesson plans that maximize student-centered learning activities and integrate with objective-based route plans for behind-the-wheel (BTW) instruction;
7. determine the successful completion of driver education for each student based on criteria identified by the local school district, the minimum number of hours and student-contact days, and other applicable standards required;
8. be scheduled so that a sufficient number of courses are provided to allow every eligible youth within the school's geographic jurisdiction an equitable opportunity to enroll pursuant to MCA 61-5-106;
9. consist of at least 60 hours of structured learning experiences scheduled over no less than 25 student contact days for each student including no fewer than six hours of behind-the-wheel, in-traffic driving instruction by an Office of Public Instruction-approved traffic education teacher scheduled over no less than six student-contact days of which:
 - up to 12 of the required 60 hours may be satisfied by in-vehicle observation of an approved teacher instructing another novice driver; or

- for those schools having traffic simulator equipment approved by the Office of Public Instruction, 12 hours of simulation may be substituted for two hours of behind-the-wheel instruction or six hours of simulation may be substituted for one hour of behind-the-wheel instruction;

TRAFFIC EDUCATION DAYS AND HOURS REQUIRED PER STUDENT	
25 DAYS	60 HOURS
of which behind-the-wheel instruction is no less than	
6 DAYS	6 HOURS

10. provide behind-the-wheel instruction only to students who are currently participating in classroom instruction. All program phases must be conducted using concurrent or integrated scheduling;
11. use only dual-control vehicles that are equipped according to vehicle standards in ARM 10.13.311;
12. have property and liability insurance sufficient to protect the school, teachers, students, the public, the vehicle(s), and its owner;
13. use the Office of Public Instruction form entitled, *TE02 School/Dealer Vehicle Use Agreement* form or the school's equivalent form when a traffic education loan vehicle is procured from a vehicle dealer; and
14. complete all reports and documents required by the Office of Public Instruction and the Department of Justice, Motor Vehicle Division, in the time frames required.

A school's failure to comply with the program requirements outlined herein shall be grounds for the Superintendent of Public Instruction to deny or revoke the approval of the school's Traffic Education Program application.

B. Parent Meetings Required (ARM 10.13.307)

An approved Traffic Education Program for young novice drivers must include a parent meeting at the beginning of the driver education class that covers:

1. course schedule, requirements, and expectations of the teen student and the parents/guardians;
2. information on Montana's graduated driver licensing (GDL) law;
3. best practices in GDL and parental involvement that includes:
 - managing their teen's graduated learning process through each stage of the GDL;
 - tips on supervising the driving practice during the initial permit phase;
 - tips to determine when their teen is ready for the next step in driving;
 - objectives for success and significant hazards associated with each driving phase; and

- information and tools to negotiate and adopt a written agreement between the teen and parent(s) that reflects the expectations of both, including clearly defined restrictions, privileges, rules, and consequences that serve as a basis for the teen to earn, and for the parent to grant, progressively broader driving privileges; and
4. any other information that the district considers important for the successful and safe completion of driver education.

C. Cooperative Driver Testing Program (CDTP) (ARM 10.13.314)

The Department of Justice may authorize public school districts conducting a Traffic Education Program approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction to administer to the district's traffic education students required standardized knowledge and road tests and to certify the test results to the Department of Justice and issue learner licenses, provided that:

1. the school district completes, signs, and submits a *School District Intent to Participate in CDTP* form to the Motor Vehicle Division of the Department of Justice;
2. each of the school district's teachers who teach all or part of the district's traffic education curriculum:
 - is approved under this chapter as a traffic education teacher,
 - has attended and successfully completed a Cooperative Driver Testing Program training class conducted by the Department of Justice, and
 - has completed, signed and submitted an *CDTP Instructor Compliance Affidavit* and
3. the school district and its traffic education teachers administer the program as outlined in the Cooperative Driver Testing Program plan prepared by the Department of Justice, Motor Vehicle Division.

The school district's Cooperative Driver Testing Program shall be subject to review by the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice may terminate the district's authorization to participate as a CDTP-testing school district or a teacher's CDTP credentials if the Department of Justice's review indicates habitual, intentional, or negligent non-compliance by agents of the school district and/or the traffic education teacher.

4. The *District Intent to Participate form* and *Instructor Compliance Affidavit* are available from the Department of Justice, Motor Vehicle Division, PO Box 201430, Helena, MT 59620-1430; telephone (406) 444-1772.

D. Traffic Education Teachers (ARM 10.13.310)

1. All teachers of traffic education must be familiar with current graduated driver licensing laws and best practices and be able to provide clear, correct, and appropriate information to driver education students and their parents. They must also be approved to teach traffic education by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
2. Approval is contingent upon the applicant having:
 - a qualifying, valid Montana educator license (e.g. Class 1, Class 2, Class 5, Class 6);
 - a minimum of 8 semester or 12 quarter hours of credit course work in traffic safety education. This 8- or 12-hour block must include a driver task analysis (classroom instruction) and behind-the-wheel (developing vehicle operational skills) course;
 - appropriate course work for a Class 4B, 4C, or 7 Montana-approved educator license including teaching strategies and class management, but which does not count as a traffic education course requirement or elective toward the traffic education minor; and
 - a valid driver's license with a verified acceptable driving record from Montana and any other jurisdiction within which the applicant has been licensed to drive during the 10-year period immediately preceding the date of application.
3. The driving record shall be free from:
 - more than one moving traffic violation, as defined in MCA 61-11-203, within any 12-month period of the previous 36 months;
 - any conviction for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (DUI) under 61-8-401, 61-8-406, 61-8-410, 61-8-411 or 61-8-465 MCA within the preceding 36 months, or any conviction for a violation of a substantially similar nature from any other jurisdiction within the preceding 36 months;
 - any evidence of a refusal to take a test under an implied consent law in this or any other jurisdiction, or a test result under an implied consent law in any other jurisdiction that shows an alcohol concentration of 0.08 percent or more while operating a noncommercial motor vehicle or an alcohol concentration of 0.04 percent or more while operating a commercial motor vehicle within the preceding 36 months;
 - a conviction (MCA 61-5-213) resulting in mandatory revocation or suspension of a driver's license for any of the following offenses in the previous five years:
 - negligent homicide resulting from the operation of a motor vehicle;
 - fleeing from or eluding a peace officer;
 - negligent vehicular assault as defined in MCA 45-5-205;
 - any felony in the commission of which a motor vehicle is used;
 - any judgment under MCA 61-6-102(3) resulting in the imposition of civil liability for involvement in any fatal traffic accident during the previous five years; or

- a declaration of habitual traffic offender status pursuant to MCA 61-11-201 et. seq, during the previous 10 years.
- A teacher's failure to maintain the requirements for traffic education teacher approval constitutes grounds for the immediate revocation of the approval to teach traffic education. Any revocation of approval may be appealed to the deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction within 30 days of the date of the notice of revocation of approval. The deputy superintendent shall review the revocation and either confirm or reverse the revocation. The deputy superintendent's decision is final.

4. Teacher Approval and Renewal Process

To obtain approval, teachers need to complete and submit to the Superintendent of Public Instruction the *TE05 Application for Approval as a Teacher of Traffic Education*. Approval to teach traffic education shall be renewed with each renewal of the teacher's educator license.

After initial approval, for each succeeding renewal of the teacher's educator license, the teacher must accumulate 4 semester or 6 quarter hours of qualifying credit course work in traffic safety education, until such time as an endorsable minor, or its course work equivalent (20 semester or 30 quarter qualifying credits), has been completed.

5. Special Approval Provision

If a teacher's approval to teach traffic education has expired and the teacher has not met the renewal requirements, the teacher may request an extension for approval to teach traffic education, subject to the following:

- A one-time, one-year emergency extension of approval may be granted for a teacher who received initial approval but who has not been able to complete the required 4 semester or 6 quarter traffic education credits for re-approval. The public school district or eligible nonpublic school shall submit a letter to the Office of Public Instruction stating it has advertised for a traffic education teacher and that no qualified individuals were available to teach. In addition, the teacher for whom the school is seeking an emergency interim approval shall submit to the Office of Public Instruction a plan outlining how the teacher will satisfy the required course work within the one-year extended period.
- A one-time, extenuating circumstance extension of approval may be granted for a period up to two years. The district and teacher shall submit the same documentation described above. In addition to the above documentation, the teacher shall submit a statement of a compelling reason why course work deficiencies cannot be completed within one year, and shall assure the Office of Public Instruction that the teacher will complete the traffic education minor, or its equivalent, within the extension period.

- If other traffic education teachers are available to the school district, no emergency or extenuating circumstance extensions shall be granted. Both such extensions are contingent upon the other renewal requirements, including a valid driver's license, an approvable driving record, and renewal of the teacher's Montana educator license.

E. Traffic Education Vehicles (ARM 10.13.311)

Vehicles used for the behind-the-wheel driving phase of traffic education may be procured through a loan, lease, or purchase arrangement. Regardless of the method, it is essential that a sufficient number of vehicles be available for instructional use. Each traffic education vehicle must meet all federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS) applicable to the vehicle used and be equipped, maintained, repaired, identified, insured, stored, and used according to the following requirements and recommendations.

1. **Required** equipment:

- dual-control brake capable of bringing the vehicle to a complete emergency stop;
- two exterior mirrors and a teacher's rearview mirror;
- first aid kit with contents appropriate for possible minor injuries sustained during instruction;
- flares or reflector warning devices;
- fire extinguisher located in the passenger compartment; periodically inspected and operable;
- accident report forms;
- operable safety belts for each occupant. All occupants shall utilize a safety belt at any time the vehicle is in motion; and
- headlights must be in use at all times—low or high beam, as appropriate—during behind-the-wheel instruction.

2. **Recommended** equipment:

- power steering and power brakes;
- split or bucket-type front seat;
- four-door sedan;
- air conditioning;
- tow cable;
- shovel, ax, and bucket;
- flashlight;
- rear window defogger;
- jumper cables; and
- ignition cut-off switch.

3. Vehicle Maintenance

The vehicles assigned for use in the Traffic Education Program shall be kept in a safe operating condition. Maintenance and repair practices should conform to manufacturer's recommendations and with the policy established by the school district and participating dealer. Vehicles shall be given a periodic safety inspection by a knowledgeable person. The periodic inspection shall be conducted a minimum of once a year and prior to the annual commencement of behind-the-wheel instruction.

The district shall maintain and make available for review by the Office of Public Instruction, or its designee, a record of the safety inspections, which include:

- the date of the inspection;
- items inspected;
- condition of items inspected; and
- repairs made.

4. Vehicle Identification

All vehicles used in the Traffic Education Program are to be identified with a minimum of two exterior signs stating: Student Driver, Driver Education, or Driver Education Car clearly visible and readable to pedestrians and other traffic.

5. Restriction of Loan Vehicles

Vehicles provided by dealers on a loan basis shall be used for traffic education purposes only unless the dealer(s) gives written authorization to use the vehicles for other purposes.

6. License Plates

"Exempt" license plates shall be obtained for a traffic education vehicle. "Dealer" license plates are not to be used on these vehicles. Responsibility for securing an "exempt" license rests with the school district. The school must obtain the appropriate application from their county treasurer. In the space provided for Registered Owner, type the name and phone number of the school district, and the name of the dealer providing the vehicle.

7. Insurance

Each practice driving vehicle (including motorcycles) must be covered by an amount of insurance that meets or exceeds minimum requirements of local and state financial responsibility statutes.

8. Vehicle Use Agreements

If several dealers express a desire to provide practice-driving vehicles on a loan basis, the school district should either accept an equal number of vehicles from each dealer or should apply an annual rotation plan worked out with the dealer group or the local vehicle dealers' association.

9. Vehicles Rented, Leased or Owned by the School

Vehicles assigned for use in the Traffic Education Program must be readily available for this use. Use of vehicles for other purposes must not conflict with the traffic education instructional program. If a traffic education vehicle is being used for purposes other than driving instruction, all identification as a traffic education vehicle must be removed.

F. Student Enrollment and Learner License(s) (ARM 10.13.312 – 10.13.313)

The trustees of any district operating a middle school, junior high school, or high school may establish and maintain a traffic education course for students within the district's geographic jurisdiction, provided that any student enrolled in the course will have reached their 15th birthday within six months of course completion as prescribed in MCA 61-5-106. The district will not be reimbursed for students completing the course at a younger age or at 19 years of age or older.

All students enrolled in a Traffic Education Program and receiving behind-the-wheel instruction shall have issued to them a valid Montana traffic education permit, a valid Montana learner license, or a valid Montana driver license as prescribed in MCA 61-5-106.

1. Traffic Education Permit

Traffic education permits (TEP) are authorized and prescribed in MCA 61-5-106. A TEP is valid from the date of issue until course completion as indicated by the expiration date, provided an approved traffic education teacher accompanies the student while driving. These permits are issued to the school district by the local DOJ/MVD driver examiner when presented official Office of Public Instruction approval for the current year. These permits shall not be given to the student, but are kept by the traffic education teacher and carried with the teacher in the car when the student is receiving behind-the-wheel instruction.

2. Learner License

A Learner License is authorized and prescribed in 61-5-106(2) MCA. A driver with a learner license must be supervised from the front passenger seat by a licensed parent, legal guardian, a qualified traffic education teacher, or other licensed adult with permission of the parent or legal guardian. Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) law requires 50 hours of supervised driving practice with 10 hours at night over a minimum of six months.

A Learner License may be obtained while the student under age 16 is successfully participating in, or has successfully completed, a state-approved Traffic Education Program or through the local driver license station of the Motor Vehicle Division of the Department of Justice, provided:

- the respective school district personnel authorizes the student to apply for the license by placing his/her name on the *TE04 Student List* form and transmits the student list, along with the *TE03 Certification* form signed by the appropriate school district personnel to the local driver license station;
- the student has paid the necessary fee and obtained the driver license receipt and application form;
- the student presents the completed, notarized application, and receipt for payment of the permit with proof of identity, proof of authorized presence, proof of Montana residency, and social security number to the examiner (the learner license is valid for one year from the date of receipt);
- the student is at least 14½ years of age;
- the student is successfully participating in or has successfully completed a state-approved Traffic Education Program;
- the student successfully completes all parts of the driver license examination other than the driving test; or

through a public school district participating in the cooperative driver testing program (CDTP) provided:

- the student is at least 14½ years of age and is enrolled in an approved Traffic Education Program participating in the CDTP;
- the student presents to the CDTP school district the completed, notarized application with proof of identity, certified birth certificate, proof of residency, and social security number;
- the student successfully completes an eye exam and written knowledge test through the CDTP school district as authorized by the Department of Justice, Motor Vehicle Division. The learner license is valid for one year from the date of successful completion of the written exam; and
- the respective CDTP school district personnel places the student's name on the *TE04 Student List* form with an indication of a waiver for the knowledge test, and transmits the student list, along with the *TE03 Certification* form signed by the appropriate school district personnel with the driver license applications to the local driver license station within three days of issuance of the learner license to the student.

II. PROGRAM PROCEDURES

A. Application for Approval

1. The *TE01 Application for Traffic Education Program Approval for Young Novice Drivers* must be completed and submitted annually, every new school year, by the school district to the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), and approved *before* the school starts their driver education program.
 - All traffic education teachers teaching in the program must have approval issued by the Office of Public Instruction on or before the beginning date of the program or the school district will lose its approved program status.
 - Copies of the *TE01* and all OPI Traffic Education forms can be obtained from the Office of Public Instruction, Traffic Education Unit. Most Traffic Education forms can also be completed and submitted on OPI's Traffic Education Data and Reporting System (TEDRS) via the Internet.

B. Reimbursement Requests (ARM 10.13.309)

1. At the completion of each traffic education course, the administrative official of the school district is responsible for submitting *TE03 Certification* and *TE04 Student List* forms. These forms serve as a certified list of eligible pupils who have completed a state-approved Traffic Education Program and qualify the district for reimbursement. *TE03* and *TE04* are the official request forms for reimbursement and must be submitted to the OPI Traffic Education Unit at the completion of each course conducted, or no later than July 10 of each year, for all students who complete the program during the preceding fiscal year (by June 30).
2. Reimbursement per student is based on course completion and minimum age requirements, and is paid for each student who has completed at least 50 percent of the classroom and 50 percent of the behind-the-wheel segments of the program, regardless of whether they passed or failed the course. Students enrolled in the course must reach their 15th birthday within six months of course completion as prescribed in MCA 61-5-106. The district shall not be reimbursed for students completing the course at a younger age or at age 19 years or older.
3. On or before August 31 of each year, the OPI Traffic Education Unit will disburse to school districts operating approved traffic education programs the amount of money to which they are entitled. Reimbursement is based upon the total number of eligible students statewide and funds available for reimbursement in the state Traffic Education Account.

C. Driver Examination Procedures

Students completing a traffic education course should be advised to make an appointment at the driver license station they intend to visit. Students need to bring their required documents for proof of identity, authorized presence, and Montana residency. They must also present their social security card and notarized driver license application (or a parent may sign the application in front of one of the driver license officials) to the licensing official at the time they appear for examination.

Before students 15 years of age can obtain a driver license, the administrative official of the school district must verify successful completion of a state-approved Traffic Education Program to the DOJ-Motor Vehicle Division Driver License Examiner. This is accomplished by submitting the *TE04 Student List* and *TE03 Certification* forms indicating successful completion at the conclusion of each Traffic Education Program. Most districts are submitting required forms via the OPI's Traffic Education Data & Reporting system (TEDRS). See Appendix A for detailed instructions on processing and submitting these forms to the Driver License Station and the OPI.

(See Appendix B for more information.)



III. MONTANA STANDARDS FOR TRAFFIC EDUCATION TEEN DRIVER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Driving is an activity that affects the whole community. A successful program, therefore, requires the effective involvement of parents/guardians, schools, communities, and government agencies.

The purpose of the Montana Teen Driver Education and Training program is to provide structured learning and guided practice for students to acquire and demonstrate legal and safe driving skills, habits, and responsibilities.

A. Content Standards and Benchmarks

Benchmarks define the expectations for students’ knowledge, skills, and abilities. Performance standards define the quality of student performance and describe the performance to be demonstrated. Performance level descriptors provide a picture or profile of student achievement at four performance levels: novice, nearing proficiency, proficient, and competent. Rules for content standards and benchmarks are required for curricula development, program approval, and student training.

Traffic Education Content Standards Student must:			Benchmarks - Essential Learning Expectations Upon completion of Driver Education students will:
1	Laws and Highway System	demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the highway transportation system and the laws governing the operation of a motor vehicle.	1.1 know the laws outlined in the Montana Driver Manual; 1.2 understand the laws outlined in the Montana Driver Manual; and 1.3 consistently demonstrate knowledge and understanding by responsible adherence to highway transportation system traffic laws and control devices.
2	Responsibility	act responsibly by consistently demonstrating a positive attitude and respect for other roadway users, by obeying laws, and make an observable commitment to safe behaviors and good decision making.	2.1 recognize the importance of making safe and responsible decisions for owning and operating a motor vehicle; 2.2 demonstrate the ability to make appropriate decisions while operating a motor vehicle; 2.3 consistently display respect for other users of the highway transportation system; and 2.4 develop positive habits and attitudes for responsible driving.

Traffic Education Content Standards Student must:			Benchmarks - Essential Learning Expectations Upon completion of Driver Education students will:
3	Visual Skills	demonstrate and analyze the importance of proper visual skills for the safe operation of a motor vehicle.	3.1 know proper visual skills for operating a motor vehicle; 3.2 communicate and explain proper visual skills for operating a motor vehicle; 3.3 demonstrate the use of proper visual skills for operating a motor vehicle; and 3.4 develop positive habits and attitudes for consistent proper visual skills.
4	Vehicle Control	demonstrate skill in maneuvering and controlling motor vehicles smoothly, efficiently, and safely.	4.1 demonstrate smooth, safe, and efficient operation of a motor vehicle; and 4.2 develop positive habits and attitudes for safe, efficient, and smooth vehicle operation.
5	Communication	communicate and interact with the highway transportation system and other roadway users utilizing prescribed, effective, and safe practices.	5.1 consistently communicate their driving intentions (i.e., use of lights, vehicle position, and personal signals); 5.2 adjust their driver behavior based on observation of the highway transportation system and other roadway users; 5.3 adjust communication (i.e., use of lights, vehicle position, and personal signals) based on observation of the highway transportation system and other users; and 5.4 develop positive habits and attitudes for effective communication
6	Risk Management	demonstrate and safely apply driver risk-managing (defensive driving) strategies, behaviors, and habits, including measures to maintain distraction-free driving.	6.1 understand driver risk-management principles; 6.2 demonstrate driver risk-management strategies; and 6.3 develop positive habits and attitudes for effective driver risk-management.

Traffic Education Content Standards Student must:		Benchmarks - Essential Learning Expectations Upon completion of Driver Education students will:
7	<p>Lifelong Learning</p> <p>advocate for personal and public approaches to lifelong learning of the driving task.</p>	<p>7.1 identify and use a range of learning strategies required to acquire or retain knowledge, positive driving habits, and driving skills for lifelong learning;</p> <p>7.2 establish learning goals that are based on an understanding of one's own current and future learning needs; and</p> <p>7.3 demonstrate knowledge and ability to make informed decisions required for positive driving habits, effective performance, and adaptation to change.</p>
8	<p>Driving Experience</p> <p>acquire behind-the-wheel driving experience under the supervision of a Montana approved driver education teacher.</p> <p>under Montana Graduated Driver License regulations (MCA 61-5-132) students are required to obtain an additional 50 hours of driving experience under the supervision of a parent, legal guardian or other adult with a valid driver's license.</p>	<p>8.1 acquire at least the minimum number of behind-the-wheel hours over at least the minimum number of days, as required by law, with a Montana approved driver education teacher; and</p> <p>8.2 acquire additional behind-the-wheel driving experience with their parent, legal guardian or other adult with parent permission in a variety of driving situations (i.e., night, adverse weather, gravel road, etc.).</p>

Refer to the OPI's *Traffic Education Curriculum Guide* for detailed guidance on Content Standards, Benchmarks, Performance Standards/Essential Knowledge and Skills and a curriculum modules reference for the Montana Teen Driver Curriculum distributed by the Montana Office of Public Instruction.

B. Performance Standards and Learning Phases for Traffic Education

Traffic Education Performance Standards (ARM 10.13.410): Traffic education performance standards describe students’ knowledge, skills, and abilities in the driver education content area. These descriptions provide a picture or profile of the students’ achievement at the four performance phases: novice, nearing proficiency, proficient, and competent. These standards are not exhaustive in their indications of performance, but rather demonstrate a sample of performance in an example of skill and knowledge areas relative to the established standards and identified benchmarks.

Traffic Education Performance Phases <i>How well do students apply knowledge, skills, and abilities?</i>
<p>NOVICE: Shows weak driving skills, must use full concentration, and is easily distracted.</p> <p>NEARING PROFICIENT: Shows inconsistent performance, and still uses conscious effort.</p> <p>PROFICIENT: Shows more consistent performance, and still uses conscious effort.</p> <p>COMPETENT: Shows consistent performance and behavior is largely automatic.</p>
NOVICE
<p>The <i>novice</i> student is beginning to attain the prerequisite knowledge and driving skills that are fundamental for work at each benchmark and is just beginning to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for safe and responsible driving. He/she:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. shows weak driving skills, must use full concentration, and is easily distracted; 2. struggles with traffic in various driving situations, even with assistance; 3. rarely is able to use the risk-managing driving skills; 4. has difficulty interacting with others in a safe, courteous manner; 5. demonstrates limited understanding of the highway transportation system; 6. rarely demonstrates the visual skills needed to operate a motor vehicle; 7. shows little understanding of the local and state laws of Montana; 8. with assistance, has begun to drive in rural, urban, and residential environments; 9. has begun to learn signs, signals, and pavement markings; 10. has difficulty in comprehending and applying vehicle laws while driving a motor vehicle within a supervised environment; 11. demonstrates a limited proficiency of safe and responsible driving techniques and attitudes; 12. performs at a beginning level after obtaining the minimum number of behind the wheel hours with an approved driver education teacher.
NEARING PROFICIENCY
<p>The student <i>nearing proficiency</i> exhibits partial mastery or prerequisite knowledge and driving skills fundamental for proficient work at each benchmark and demonstrates a partial mastery of the knowledge and skills fundamental for responsible and safe driving. She/he:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. shows inconsistent performance and must use conscious effort; 2. understands that the laws of Montana, counties, and cities can differ; 3. demonstrates a limited ability to use risk-managing driving principles; 4. shows limited knowledge of motor vehicle laws while driving; 5. most of the time shows proficiency of safe and responsible driving techniques and attitudes; 6. performs in a limited manner after obtaining the minimum number of behind-the-wheel hours with an approved driver education teacher; 7. with assistance, can use basic skills needed to interact safely with the highway transportation system; 8. with assistance, demonstrates the visual skills needed to operate a motor vehicle.

PROFICIENT

The *proficient* student exhibits solid academic and driving skill performance for each benchmark and demonstrates competency over challenging subject matter, including subject matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to safe driving. He/she:

1. shows more consistent performance, but still uses conscious effort to demonstrate responsible and safe driving behavior;
2. demonstrates and consistently applies laws pertaining to driving;
3. consistently uses risk-managing driving principles;
4. demonstrates mastery of safe and responsible driving habits and attitudes;
5. performs satisfactorily in obtaining the minimum number of behind-the-wheel hours with an approved driver education teacher;
6. consistently interacts appropriately with other operators and traffic in various driving situations;
7. demonstrates basic skills needed to interact safely with the highway transportation system;
8. demonstrates appropriate visual skills needed to safely operate a motor vehicle;
9. demonstrates habits and attitudes necessary to communicate and interact with the highway transportation system utilizing effective, safe practices;
10. understands the laws that pertain to owning and operating a motor vehicle.

COMPETENT

The *competent* student exhibits strong knowledge and driving skills related to safely navigating roadways and interacting with other roadway users; shows consistent performance and driving behavior that is largely automatic; and exhibits driving behaviors safely and correctly in many different kinds of driving situations. She/he:

1. knows and adheres to the laws governing driving in Montana as demonstrated by habitually and consistently following the laws while driving;
2. knows and adheres to the highway transportation system as demonstrated by habitually driving consistent with the system;
3. always responsibly, properly, and smoothly operates a vehicle;
4. consistently researches ideas and opportunities to increase personal knowledge of the vehicle, the highway transportation system, and the driving task;
5. habitually knows, and always responsibly, applies defensive driving principles;
6. has acquired behind-the-wheel driving experience in various environments and road conditions for a period of time that exceeds the state minimum standards and graduated driver license requirements;
7. resists peer pressure, which may negatively influence good, responsible driving behavior.

Appendix A: Required forms for School-based Traffic Education Programs

The Office of Public Instruction administers the online Traffic Education Data and Reporting System (TEDRS). All required forms except the *TE02* and *TE05* (see below) can be submitted via TEDRS. School district personnel and Department of Justice examiners can request access to TEDRS by contacting the OPI Traffic Education Office.

TE01 District Application for Traffic Education Program Approval

Deadline: August 1 or before program begins

The *TE01 District Application for Traffic Education Programs for Young Novice Drivers* must be submitted to the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and approved *before* the school starts their driver education program. Include the assigned TE instructor(s) and program dates for fall, spring, and next summer. Teachers must be approved to teach traffic education and have CDTP certification.

TE02 School/Dealer Vehicle Use Agreement

This form, or its equivalent, may be used when a loan vehicle is obtained via a vehicle dealer. This form is not available for online submission. Download the form at: <http://opi.mt.gov/DriverEd>.

TE03 Certification and TE04 Student List

Deadline: Submit after each class, prior to July 10 for the previous fiscal year

When a district has received approval of their *TE01 District Application* for the current school year, the *TE03 Certification/TE04 Student List* may be completed and submitted for each traffic education class that ends between July 1 and June 30 of the current school year.

- When Learner Licenses are issued to students, the Notice of Participation on *TE03 Certification* should be signed and copies of both the *TE03/TE04* forms delivered to the local Driver License Station with students' driver license applications within *three days* of Learner License issuance.
- When the class completes, the Notice of Completion and Reimbursement Request on *TE03 Certification* should be signed and submitted with the *TE04 Student List* to OPI and the local Driver License Station (along with CDTP road test score sheets, if applicable).
- Both the *TE03/TE04* forms must be submitted to OPI upon completion of course(s) or by July 10 to request reimbursement for eligible students.

Forms submitted via TEDRS do not have to be mailed to the OPI, but do need to be delivered to the local Driver License Station. Refer to the *TEDRS User Guide* and *Student List How-to Guide* for detailed instructions on submitting forms via the Traffic Education Data & Reporting System.

TE05 Application for Approval as a Teacher of Traffic Education

Deadline: When educator license is due for renewal or upon completion of initial requirements

Traffic Education instructors must complete this form with each renewal of their regular educator license, even if they have an endorsement in Traffic Education. If a teacher has not yet obtained their TE minor or endorsement, a current TE program sheet (not a transcript) will be provided by MSU-Northern to the OPI for verification of the required college credits. The *TE05* form is not available for online submission, but can be filled out in Adobe Acrobat. Download the form at: <http://opi.mt.gov/DriverEd>.

TE06 Year-End Report

Deadline: July 10 for previous fiscal year

The *TE06 Year-End Report* is completed by the district annually and provides program and budget information from the previous fiscal year. It must be submitted to the OPI by July 10 to receive traffic education reimbursement in August. Summer courses completed after June 30 will be reimbursed in August of the next fiscal year and need to be reported on that year's *TE06* form.

Traffic education reimbursement funds come from a percentage of state driver license fees which partially offset district costs. Reimbursement is based on the number of students successfully completing driver education through the approved Traffic Education Programs at high schools across Montana.

Note: If online TEDRS access isn't available to district staff, all traffic education (TE) forms can be downloaded at <http://opi.mt.gov/DriverEd> for submission by fax or mail.



TRAFFIC EDUCATION VEHICLE INSPECTION FORM

School _____

Vehicle Make

Vehicle Model

Vehicle Year

Vehicle VIN#

Date of Inspection

Odometer Reading

Person Inspecting Vehicle

Checked for Operation / Condition	Satisfactory	Repair	Comments
Engine Oil			
Transmission Fluid			
Power Steering Fluid			
Brake Fluid			
Engine Coolant			
Window Washer Fluid			
Engine Belts			
Engine Hoses & Clamps			
Dashboard Gauges			
Interior Lights			
Head Lights (high & low beam)			
Parking Lights			
Turn Signals			
Hazard Lights			
Brake Lights			
Back-up Lights			
Foot Brake Operation			
Parking Brake Operation			
Dual Control Brake Operation			
Horn			
Windshield Wipers & Washer			
Windshield			

Checked for Operation / Condition	Satisfactory	Repair	Comments
Mirrors (interior & exterior)			
Seat Operation & Condition			
Doors (operation & locks)			
Windows			
Visors			
Heater / Defroster			
Air Conditioning			
Seat Belts / Air Bags			
Exterior Body Condition			
Trunk Operation			
Hood Operation			
Security Features			
Condition of Tires			
Condition of Rims			
Tire Pressures (including spare)			
Condition of Brakes (disc/drum)			
Condition of Exhaust System			
Condition of Suspension System			
Condition of Engine Running			
Condition of Vehicle Drivability			
Jack Components			
First Aid Kit			
Fire Extinguisher			
Accident Report Form			
Current Registration			
Current Insurance			
Proper License Plates			

Appendix B: General Procedure for Obtaining a Montana Driver License

Study and review the Montana Driver Manual. Knowledge and vision tests are required to obtain a learner license in a CDTP-certified traffic education course or at the driver license station.

Schedule an appointment at a local Driver License Station at <https://dojmt.gov/driving/appointments/>.

1. Pay the driver license fee to a driver licensing official.

A receipt and an application form will be issued. The receipt entitles the applicant to a total of three attempts to pass the examination within one year. (For additional knowledge testing attempts, wait one day and pay the fee again.)

2. Fill out the application form. Be sure to have signatures notarized or witnessed by a Department of Justice (DOJ) driver examiner.
3. When the applicant is prepared for the examination, present the completed application and receipt to the driver examiner.
 - a. New applicants will be required to present to the examiner satisfactory proof of identity and date of birth, proof of authorized presence, and proof of Montana residency at the time of the first examination. A certified copy of applicant's birth certificate is required; all documents accepted for these purposes are listed in the driver's manual.
 - b. Students must bring their social security card to the driver license station. Students who do not have a social security card should be advised to apply for one prior to driver licensing.

The examination will consist of a:

- knowledge test of traffic laws, traffic signs, and safe driving practices, unless waived by a CDTP-certified traffic education teacher;
- vision test; and
- behind-the-wheel road test, unless waived by a CDTP-certified traffic education teacher. If a student is not ready to take this test it may be postponed and a learner license may be obtained which authorizes practicing driving while accompanied by a licensed driver for up to one year from the date the knowledge test was passed. (If a student fails the road test, wait one week to try again.)

Verification of 50 hours of supervised driving practice is required by the Montana Graduated Driver Licensing law for drivers under age 18.

If the one-year learner license expires before the entire test is completed, the applicant will be required to pay the fee and start over again.

Appendix C: Scheduling Classroom and In-Vehicle Instruction

Scheduling can be challenging for traffic education programs since most driver education classes are offered before or after the normal school day, and often on weekends. Additionally, many school districts offering traffic education are faced with financial limitations and time restrictions. The following principles are offered to assist in scheduling decisions:

1. Classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel instruction should be offered on an integrated basis. This means scheduling driver education courses to include a blend of the classroom and associated behind-the-wheel instruction for the duration of the course.
2. Driving in inclement weather, within the abilities of the student driver, is encouraged, as opposed to cutting back or canceling driving until the arrival of fair weather.
3. Schedule two students per vehicle, per hour; three and four persons may reduce instructional effectiveness and waste time during driver changes. Never schedule only one student as it leaves the various parties vulnerable to perceptions and accusations of improprieties. In-vehicle observation can help students learn from others' mistakes and count for up to 12 hours of instruction.
4. School policy should govern which age-eligible students are accepted into the program first, second, and so on. They must be age 14 ½ by the completion of the TE program and also to take the knowledge exam for a learner license. During sign-up, consider age (oldest first), need (students who must financially assist family), grades, or first-come, first-served. This policy must meet the criterion of being "equitable." See definitions in Appendix H.
5. Traffic education instruction should be provided for in the regular school day as well as before or after school, and in the summer, if student enrollment justifies. This will help assure that all eligible students in the school's geographic jurisdiction have an equal opportunity to enroll as prescribed in MCA 61-5-106.
6. Schedule a parent/guardian meeting at the start of the driver's education class with the traffic education instructor(s) to cover the course schedule, expectations, and GDL requirements as required by ARM 10.13.307. When students attend with parents/guardians, the meeting can count as one of the required 25 days.
7. Issuance of a learner license to all students should be carefully considered before in-vehicle practice is initiated. Consider issuance of the learner license only after a student passes the halfway point in the Traffic Education Program and has driven with the instructor.

Appendix D: Perceptual/Physical Screening

Driving decisions and performance depend on a clear, complete, and accurate picture of the immediate surroundings. Ninety percent of a driver's decisions are based on perception.

Perceptual/physical testing is a necessary part of a well-rounded Traffic Education Program because it gives the student and instructor insight into individual capabilities and how to compensate for any deficiencies. Vision tests are required for driver licensing (MCA 61-5-110).

Students should be able to demonstrate an ability to observe and recognize, in an efficient manner, typical highway driving events and conditions for vehicle navigation along selected routes.

Instructors must screen for visual acuity and some or all of the following perceptual/physical characteristics before a student begins the behind-the-wheel phase of the program:

1. visual acuity;
2. distance judgment;
3. color recognition;
4. night vision;
5. glare vision and glare recovery;
6. central vision;
7. peripheral vision; and
8. reaction time.

This screening can be accomplished with appropriate equipment. The instructor can divide the students into groups and use classroom activities to stress the effective use of vision related to peripheral vision, distance judgment, reference points, scanning for hazards, and reaction time.



Appendix E: Accommodating Students with Disabilities in Driver Education

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to traffic education programs in Montana even if the courses are not offered during the normal school day. The guidelines below are distributed by the Montana Office of Public Instruction.

Guiding Principles

1. All driver candidates, regardless of mental or physical attributes, must prove their ability to safely operate a vehicle in complex highway situations.
2. Many individuals with disabilities can learn to drive safely with appropriate accommodations, but not all.
3. Some individuals with severe and profound physical disabilities may be accommodated to drive safely using high tech solutions in specially equipped vehicles, but not all. An advanced rehabilitation center providing driver services is likely to be necessary.
4. All drivers must pass a vision test and meet a minimum threshold of knowledge for a driving permit and driver license to be issued.
 - a. Reasonable learning accommodations are allowed to master the cognitive material.
 - b. The only accommodation allowed for the knowledge test is for the test to be read aloud by the examiner or approved proctor.
 - c. Medication may be a consideration.
5. All drivers must meet a minimum threshold of ability to be issued a permit and participate in behind-the-wheel (BTW) instruction and a minimum level of skill to subsequently be issued a license.
 - a. Reasonable accommodations can be made for individuals to safely operate a vehicle, which may, among other things, include hand controls, spinner knobs, and seat and pedal modifications.
 - b. Higher tech and more sophisticated accommodations may require the expertise and training from a rehabilitation center.
 - c. Medication may be a consideration.

Decision Authority

1. Parents decide whether their teen is ready to pursue licensing, assume liability for driving, and provide guided practice.
2. Special education experts facilitate decisions for learning and vehicle accommodations in consultation with parents, traffic education (TE) teachers, and other involved professionals, including but not limited to physical and occupational therapists and medical experts when appropriate.
3. TE teachers determine if the teen can operate a vehicle safely enough to participate in BTW training and successfully complete Traffic Education. If the safety of vehicle occupants is in doubt for BTW learning, prior to BTW, and subsequent to making appropriate accommodations, the instructor should make an in-vehicle assessment:
 - a. in a vacant parking lot with no passengers; and
 - b. evaluating ability to:
 - i. manipulate controls;
 - ii. see and collect important information, including ability to stay on task and refrain from distractions;
 - iii. ability to respond correctly and timely to instructor directions; and
 - iv. evaluating other operational issues that can reasonably be determined to put vehicle occupants and roadway users at undue risk.
4. Medical professionals make decisions rooted in medical, psychiatric, and medication issues.
5. Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) examiners ultimately decide whether a teen will be issued a license based upon favorable medical evaluation(s), successful completion of state vision, knowledge, and skill tests, and other state-established mechanisms when appropriate.

Appendix F: Guidelines for Behind-the-Wheel Instruction and Practice

Driver education begins the process of learning to drive—acquiring technical knowledge and skill. But teens need many hours of practice to become competent, safe drivers. Because of its short duration, driver education cannot provide all of the experiences that teens need to become safe drivers. Research shows that parent involvement in teen driving increases young driver safety. Montana Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) law requires parents/guardians to provide their teens a minimum of six months and 50 hours of supervised practice driving with at least 10 hours at night before they are eligible for a first-year GDL restricted license with limits on passengers and night driving. Many teenagers may require even more practice with varied road, traffic, and weather conditions.

The Cooperative Driver Testing Program allows trained and certified traffic education teachers to administer the knowledge exam and issue learner licenses, so the teen can begin supervised driving with a licensed adult while enrolled in a driver education course.

The 2017 Montana Legislature changed the rules about teen driver supervision to include any licensed adult authorized by the parent/guardian. Teens now can drive with the supervision of a grandparent, step-parent, or other relative or friend who is an experienced, responsible driver and can increase the teen's behind-the-wheel practice in preparation for their GDL restricted license. The parent/guardian who signed the driver license application is still legally liable for any damages or losses that may occur due to a traffic incident caused by the teen driver.

1. Parent/Guardian Participation

A parent/guardian meeting should be scheduled at the start of the driver education class with the traffic education instructor(s) to cover the course schedule, expectations, and GDL requirements as required by ARM 10.13.307. When students attend with parents/guardians and any other adult who may supervise their driving, the meeting can count as one of the required 25 days. Instructors have the opportunity to address parents as a group, share GDL information and resources, and ensure families have the tools they need manage risks for their new driver and assume responsibility for their teen's supervised driving period.

- Communication

Before the practice sessions, a good system of communication and method of instruction should be established so that each person knows what to expect of the other. To aid in parent/student/teacher communication, a check-off plan can be used by both instructor and parent so that each is aware of what the other is doing. An example of a BTW Teen/Parent Booklet is available on the Resources webpage at <http://opi.mt.gov/DriverEd>.

Use the *Montana KEYS Parent-Teen Homework* or a brief instruction sheet with the procedure sheet included. Outline specific tasks, such as backing up or turning corners that instructors want the student to practice with their parents.

- Driving Guidelines and Sequence

Before driving, the student should become familiar with the operation of all controls and safety devices since these differ from vehicle to vehicle. Also, the vehicle owner's manual should be studied in advance.

At the beginning of the practice session, the student should buckle their seat belt, start the vehicle, move it forward a short distance, and then stop a few times to adjust to the particular vehicle.

Easy left and right turns in empty parking lots and on level streets can be practiced first, followed by various kinds of turning situations. Good timing and coordination, especially during the correction phase of the turn, should be emphasized. Lateral judgment can be developed by pulling parallel along a curb to within 6 inches. Practice more complex skills such as changing lanes and merging.

- Stress Visual Habits

To ensure good perceptive driving, stress visual habits behind the wheel. If the eyes keep moving throughout the entire 360 degrees of the driving environment, the driver can make the correct responses to clues and hazards which are vital to proper vehicle operation.

Steering control, lane position, and speed control can be taught by using lightly traveled rural roads; good visual habits are essential to the development of all three skills. Allow practice time for adjusting speed control to road and traffic conditions, vehicle limitations, and driver proficiency.

Gradually, as the student becomes proficient in the manipulative skills and visual habits, instructors can have the student progress into traffic, cross through streets, turn onto and off, and then travel on streets. Be aware of the traffic situations ahead of the student and give cues when necessary. Occasionally, have the student verbalize what is seen ahead. If a hazardous situation should develop which the student is not prepared to handle, then it is best to pull over to the side and wait for the situation to clear up.

- Keep Sessions Short

A few short practice sessions (30 to 45 minutes) are generally more effective than one or two longer sessions. After considerable practice, a long drive (one to two hours) on the highway may suitably demonstrate the effects of fatigue and tension while at the wheel.

Beginning drivers usually need to take more time to see and evaluate what they see. They should not feel embarrassed because of their need for extra caution or because of an experienced driver's lack of patience or understanding. The student driver will learn and perform best under conditions where mutual respect abounds. Research has found that parents can reduce teens' crash risk in half by staying involved, setting rules, and being supportive.

Appendix G: Best Practices for Traffic Education Programs

I. Developing Safe Driving Habits for Life

Driving a vehicle requires a complex set of skills and judgment. It takes months, even years, for new drivers to develop the skills and safe habits that allow them to interact with vehicles, other drivers, and the highway system at a level most drivers take for granted. Driving is a process that requires knowledge, perception of the senses, and physical action. There is so much occurring simultaneously that appropriate and safe responses need to become habits. Safe habits are formed through repeated practice of correct behaviors.

Experience counts when it comes to driving safely. To increase young driver safety, traffic education programs should integrate driver education, Graduated Driver Licensing, and parent involvement. Montana's teen driver education and training program provides this foundation for a systems approach to traffic safety. Assisted by professional instruction and guided practice, students start driving with less risk, more skill, and greater potential for thousands of crash-free miles.

Students must apply concepts learned in the classroom to the realities of driving behind the wheel. Teachers can help students meet or exceed minimum performance standards through a combination of classroom activities and in-car instruction that includes modeling, knowledge assessment, skill assessment, guided observation, and parental involvement. Satisfactory completion of a driver education and training course qualifies the student to continue the graduated driver licensing process. The first six months of driving are the most critical and parent/guardian involvement is the key to developing driving experience, good driving skills, decisions, and habits.

II. Local Responsibility

The leadership of local school authorities and, particularly the school district superintendent, is of paramount importance in building community support for successful school-based traffic education programs. It is recommended that a qualified and interested individual is assigned the responsibility of leading and coordinating the school traffic education program.

Evaluating the overall effectiveness of the traffic education program is an indispensable means of improving instruction. School staff should work cooperatively in developing and applying an evaluation plan designed to reveal needs or new directions for improving traffic education. Such an evaluation plan should be an integral part of planning for and continuing instruction.

School officials should work closely with teachers to prepare and arrange, in sequence, a series of clearly written objectives that describe expected performances; develop instructional modules or units which contain learning activities; and create accurate and realistic measurement procedures for determining whether an individual or group has achieved the objectives.

The OPI's *Traffic Education Curriculum Guide* provides objectives and benchmarks for a state-approved traffic education program and a comprehensive teen driver curriculum with lessons plans, activities, presentations and quizzes designed to be taught concurrently with behind-the-wheel instruction. Visit <http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum> for details.

III. Planning for Instruction

This section provides guidelines to assist the school district administrator in planning, implementing, and evaluating its traffic education program.

A. Course Scheduling

The classroom and behind-the-wheel phases of instruction should be integrated and correlated through appropriate assignment of students. Students should not be scheduled for dual-controlled vehicle instruction until they have acquired certain basic knowledge in the classroom phase and have experienced skill development exercises with classroom activities, simulation equipment, a multiple-vehicle driving facility, or an off-street driving area.

There are several different systems used in scheduling classes for traffic education. Each administrator will need to apply sound judgment in selecting a system, which will allow inclusion of traffic education in the curriculum of the school.

The following considerations should be taken into account:

- the number of students and how they will be accommodated;
- the number of days/weeks needed to complete the course;
- the amount of time to allocate to classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel instruction;
- the number of qualified teachers available; and
- the availability of dual-control vehicles.

During the regular school year, each traffic education program should be scheduled for a full semester. Traffic education programs should be included in the regular school curriculum whenever possible. Classes may be taught after regular school hours, on weekends as well as on regular school days or as a summer school program.

1. Classroom Instruction

Montana's traffic education curriculum establishes the minimum requirements needed for teens to acquire the fundamentals of driving and fosters responsible attitudes and good driving habits. Emphasis is placed on relating visual search skills, space management, and balanced vehicle movement to reducing risky driving. Significant attention is given to risk awareness, driver alertness, and responsible actions for occupant protection, positive interactions with other roadway users, and the physical and psychological conditions that affect driver performance.

While curriculum content is an important element for improved driver education and training, a quality delivery system is critical to effective student learning. Quality instruction requires engaging classroom and laboratory-learning experiences delivered to students over an adequate period of time so students can practice processes and skills and develop habits necessary for safe vehicle operation. To be successful, instruction needs to be delivered in short training sessions extended over a long period of time. This allows students to learn simple skills correctly while adding more complex skills to their experience. It is not adequate for students to merely know the correct

response. They must repeat it often enough to generate correct automatic responses that can develop into effective driving habits

In the classroom, student instruction focuses on the personal and social factors affecting the safe and efficient movement of traffic. An overview of motor vehicle operation is introduced, including the roles played by all road users—drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists—anyone who uses the transportation system in their neighborhoods or on the highway. In planning for effective classroom instruction, approaches should be selected that result in desirable attitudes and behavior, and the fundamental knowledge and skills needed to operate a motor vehicle. Classroom experiences in traffic education courses may be enhanced through activities that simulate in-vehicle skills.

2. Behind-the-Wheel Instruction

The objectives developed for the behind-the-wheel instruction phase should parallel and supplement classroom instruction. Students may apply and reinforce the knowledge and behavioral tendencies gained in the classroom as well as acquire skills and establish desirable habit patterns.

Student experiences can include a combination of the following:

- behind-the-wheel practice in a dual-control vehicle, operated in traffic on a typical street with the supervision of a teacher seated in the front seat to the right of the student;
- in-traffic observation of the student’s experience in a dual-control vehicle;
- simulated experience consisting of filmed or realistic computer-generated traffic events which provide students the opportunity to respond to realistic driving events under the close supervision of a teacher; and
- behind-the-wheel experience in a practice driving vehicle which is operated on an off-street multiple vehicle driving facility.

3. Minimum Time

The need for recognition and support from within Montana’s educational system and from within the transportation system requires increasing accountability for instructional results. Since experience has not demonstrated that time-based instruction offers reasonable or acceptable assurance of student accomplishment, programs are moving toward criterion-referenced or performance-based instruction. This means that for each aspect of the traffic education program careful study must be made to determine the desired performance levels of students and the alternate methods through which the performances may be attained. Until such time as minimum performance-based standards are determined and established as common practice, present Montana law requires that the minimum schedule for student achievement of course objectives be 60 hours of structured learning experiences scheduled over no less than 25 student contact days for each student and including 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training.

In a competency-oriented program, the amount of time needed by a group or an individual student for learning a unit concept or topic could vary. Students need experience in both classroom and

behind-the-wheel instruction. Emphasis should be placed on student achievement of high-level performance objectives instead of time-based exposure to specific units of instruction.

B. Types of Courses

1. Dual-Control Vehicle Plan

The dual-control vehicle plan consists of classroom instruction plus actual in-traffic driving experience and observation time in a dual-control vehicle. There is a ratio of one teacher to one student behind the wheel, with up to three students as in-vehicle observers. Within each group, students rotate from observation to behind-the-wheel instruction. Most of the practice driving activity takes place on streets and highways accessible to the school site, using existing traffic conditions as the learning environment.

Experience indicates that the low teacher-pupil ratio in a dual-control vehicle provides students with an amount and type of individual attention that meets their needs. Teachers are able to vary the method and the length of instruction in order to bring all students up to a satisfactory performance level. Another positive conclusion is that student observers learn quickly from both the mistakes and the accomplishments of the student behind the wheel. On the negative side, the low teacher-pupil ratio results in a relatively high cost of instruction per student per unit of instructional time. Another weakness is the failure to provide teachers with a means of determining either the student's potential ability or performance level gained through previous experience in advance of scheduling for in-vehicle instruction. Also, this plan offers no safe, practical, and effective method for student to develop habitual responses to avoid collision-producing emergency situations. The practice driving activity is limited to streets and highways accessible to the school site. In rural Montana, this may represent minimal exposure to the varieties of traffic conditions and situations teens will be exposed to as they begin their driving career.

Experience leads to the conclusion that better results are obtained when student experiences in the classroom and behind-the-wheel are closely correlated. One method of accomplishing this is to have teachers rotate assignments between the two phases, using course content and teaching strategies derived from careful planning by the entire instructional staff.

2. Simulator Plan

The simulator plan calls for regular classroom instruction, simulated practice driving experiences using approved electronic equipment, and behind-the-wheel learning in a dual-control vehicle operated in traffic. The simulation equipment is located either in a classroom or in a mobile unit which can be moved from one location to another.

Research study results have demonstrated that use of simulation equipment as a part of traffic education can help students with scanning and anticipating hazards. The simulation medium permits teachers to assess the readiness of students before they are scheduled for on-street practice. Simulation experience can improve the student's ability to identify and predict what other road users may do, make sound decisions, and carry out their decisions effectively. It offers them

experience with a wider range of traffic situations than would be possible in many parts of Montana. Not only is the scope of instruction expanded but the order of exposure to more complex learning situations may be arranged progressively with the students' acquisition of advanced skills. The simulator plan gives the students practice, without undue risk, in recognizing common emergency situations and selecting the most appropriate response. The opportunity to learn proper responses to avoid collision-producing situations should be an integral part of all traffic education courses. It has also been shown that the simulator plan can prepare students at a lower per-pupil cost when the equipment is used on a full-time basis and student enrollment is adequate.

Weaknesses have been found with the simulator plan. Mastery of important manipulative skills in a simulator is not necessarily comparable to the learning potential a dual-control vehicle provides. In addition, simulation does not lend itself to developing more complex driving skills such as navigating intersections, controlling speed, skid control and parallel parking.

3. Multiple-Vehicle Driving Plan

This plan consists of regular classroom instruction, behind-the-wheel learning in a dual-control vehicle operated in traffic, and time spent at an off-street, multiple-vehicle driving facility. The multiple-vehicle driving plan provides greater opportunities for students to practice basic maneuvers. Not only do the students have additional driving time, but they can benefit from the unique design of the facility which requires skillful maneuvering and less time steering the car straight down the road. Such a facility should consist of a hard-surfaced area on which a number of student-operated vehicles are used simultaneously under the direct supervision of one or more teachers. The area should include space for development of fundamental driving skills and decision-making processes, road surfaces wide enough for two-way and multiple-lane traffic lanes, and an electronic or otherwise effective means of communication between teachers and students.

In addition, the driving facility experience requires students to rely on their own learning rather than depending on a “patient” teacher, ready to remind them of all the necessary driving acts or to use the dual controls. Students often come better prepared for the scheduled learning sessions, form sound decision-making habits, and acquire self-reliance, confidence, and performance abilities at a faster rate. The multiple-vehicle plan also permits teachers to evaluate the level of motor skills achieved by students so they can give special attention to individual needs and determine how ready students are to drive in actual traffic conditions. With appropriate space and design features, this facility can provide students with an opportunity to practice certain emergency maneuvers.

The advantages cited relate to the quality of instruction, but the per-student cost advantage for this type of laboratory instruction must not be overlooked. In dual-control vehicle instruction, the teacher-pupil ratio is one-to-one; for the multiple-vehicle facility, one teacher can work effectively with 12 or more students. The limited actual on-street driving in traffic is a disadvantage.

4. Multiple-Phase Approach

The multiple-phase approach may be the best possible framework for achieving the central purpose of traffic education because it combines the advantages of developing basic skills through

the dual-control vehicle plan, the simulator plan, and the multiple-vehicle plan, and adds advanced skills training in an additional phase. Scheduled for up to 90 hours, a multiple-phase course may provide each student with up to 45 hours in the regular classroom, 12 hours of simulator instruction, 6 hours of multiple-vehicle instruction, and 4 hours of dual-control vehicle instruction. This approach enables each student to have observation experience in traffic and time for scheduled project activities. There is also time for the use of other innovative approaches as they become available.

The principal disadvantage of the multiple-phase approach is the sizable investment required for the initial procurement of simulator equipment and facilities. However, when the useful life of the equipment and facilities and the improved teacher-pupil ratio are taken into account, per-student costs of the multiple-phase approach are at least comparable to those of the dual-control vehicle plan.

5. Specialized Training

Advanced Driver Training: Some experts have recommended a multistage training approach in which novice driver training is supplemented by a carefully designed advanced training program. Training exercises and discussion should be related to real-life scenarios. Overconfidence should be avoided; this is done by allowing students to fail (i.e., hit obstacles, or lose full or temporary control of the vehicle). Training in higher-level driving skills could improve teenagers' risk management skills so that they detect and respond to hazards earlier while driving.

Motorcycle Safety Education: An appropriate amount of the traffic education course time should be devoted to sharing the road courteously with other users and the relationship between automobiles and motorcycles. This instruction should bring out the fact that many traffic collisions involving automobiles and motorcycles occur because one or both operators are not aware of the special characteristics of the contrasting vehicles.

It is recommended that schools encourage a beginning motorcycle safety course for those intending to ride motorcycles. For information, contact the Montana Motorcycle Rider Safety Education Program at 1-800-922-BIKE or visit <http://motorcycle.msun.edu/>.

C. Course Content

Content of traffic education courses for student drivers should cover, but not be limited to, the following areas of study:

1. basic and advanced driving maneuvers;
2. perceptual and visual skill development;
3. decision-making techniques;
4. vehicle balance;
5. the effects of drugs, including alcohol, and other substances on driving performance;
6. rules of the road, state traffic laws, and local ordinances;

7. signs, signals, highway markings, and highway design innovations which require understanding for efficient driving performance;
8. operation of motor vehicles on streets and highways with emphasis on required seat belt use and techniques that will aid the driver and passenger in the event of a collision, and facilitate the transportation and care of injured persons;
9. special characteristics of urban, rural, and freeway driving;
10. share the road information on the capabilities and limitations of other highway users such as pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, and operators of commercial vehicles;
11. special techniques for coping with emergency situations and environmental factors such as wind, rain, flooding, heat, ice, and snow;
12. preventive maintenance, with emphasis on motor vehicle systems and sub-systems, which are critical to safe operation;
13. first aid and natural laws relating to the driving task;
14. comprehensive highway safety programs, such as law enforcement and traffic facilities engineering and how they are developed and improved;
15. career awareness;
16. consumer education; and
17. energy conservation as it relates to the driving task and the ecological impact of transportation.

D. Evaluation and Reporting

In order to provide a basis for program improvement in traffic education, school officials responsible for the program should conduct ongoing evaluations to determine the effectiveness of courses provided by its high school(s).

The evaluation plan should include school and district recording of the name, birth date, and course completion date of each student completing the program, and the per-pupil cost for that instruction. A simple cost-effectiveness comparison can be made for a given type of traffic education course in one school with that of other schools in the district or county of the state.

High schools should have the following information available for reporting purposes:

1. a description of the traffic education course offered, including documentation of established minimum Office of Public Instruction standards required for course approval;
2. a roster of traffic education teachers and administrators, along with their location of assignment and their qualifications and certification status; and
3. an accurate description of physical facilities and equipment made available at each school for traffic education, including complete information pertaining to practice driving vehicles.

A record of students who have successfully completed each type of traffic education course should be maintained for five or more years for possible research purposes. Effectiveness of programs over the time period should be determined.

E. Parent/Guardian Participation

Time available for behind-the-wheel instruction is limited to the extent that some students do not attain the desirable driving skill level. In some instances, the concerned students do not receive a passing grade and, in other cases, additional practice under supervision is provided during and after completion of the course.

Students with a learner license can begin practicing with parents/guardians and other adults to concentrate on the development of fundamental manipulative skills. Teachers provide professional instruction and guided practice and have more in-vehicle time with students to focus on decision making, visual/perceptual skills, and advanced elements of the driving task. In order to help parents/guardians with supervising their teen driver, the Montana KEYS Parent and Teen Homework includes resources, activities, skill assessments, and a parent/teen driving agreement form.

Montana's Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) law requires a minimum 6 months of supervised practice to help new drivers gain skills under low-risk conditions. Parents/guardians are required to provide their teens with a minimum of 50 hours of supervised practice driving with at least 10 hours at night before they are eligible for a GDL restricted license with limits on passengers and night driving. Many teenagers may require even more practice with varied road, traffic, and weather conditions. GDL systems progressively increase the privileges and responsibilities of a new driver and are proven to reduce teen crashes. Parents should continue to set limits and drive with their teens even after teens have a first-year GDL restricted license.

F. Resources

Traffic education can include in-class activities, role playing, seat belt discussions, in-vehicle cameras, and physical equivalent practice (PEP). Resource people, guest speakers, videos, PowerPoint presentations, and films should only serve to supplement and support the planned educational program.

1. Resource Personnel

When a resource person is used, the timing of their appearance should be well planned. A list of questions could be developed by the students and sent to the guest speaker ahead of time. Where class periods are long (50-60 minutes), do not expect the resource guest to speak the entire time. Use of a film or demonstration can help to increase interest and produce a better discussion.

Some suggested expertise areas for resource people are:

- automobile dealer
- doctor, nurse and emergency responders
- Highway Patrol (Alive at 25 Program)

- local police officer
- insurance agent
- judge/lawyer
- mechanic and auto body repairman
- traffic engineer
- snowplow driver and construction zone worker
- motorcycle safety trainer
- bicycle and pedestrian safety
- 911 dispatcher
- Operation Lifesaver (railroad safety) presenter <https://www.mtoli.org/>

2. Field Trips

Field trips can present first-hand experiences not possible in the classroom. A trip must be well planned. Students should be involved in the planning and have some objective to accomplish. Each student or group of students should have an assignment. Notify any person or business well in advance of the visit.

Possible field trip destinations are:

- car dealership
- emergency driving procedures workshop
- driver license station
- auto repair garage
- highway department
- large city
- traffic court
- service station

3. Videos

These resources should be reviewed on a yearly or semester basis. Teachers should consider the advantages of taking their own photos, slides and videos. This allows for better organization, and the instructor can emphasize those things deemed important in rural and urban areas.

Sources:

OPI Driver Education program web pages: <http://opi.mt.gov/DriverEd/>

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety: <https://www.aaafoundation.org/videos>

Montana Department of Transportation, Safety: <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/>

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety: <http://www.iihs.org/iihs/videos>

The Internet provides access to a world of resources and a variety of computer applications. Digital imaging tools, including digital cameras, allow easy development of electronic slide and video presentations.

G. Community Relations

Whether a person is a community leader, business owner, educator, student or family member, help is always needed to ensure students in Montana graduate ready for college and careers.

Traffic education is an area of the total school program that is constantly in the public eye. Parents, of course, are concerned for their children's safety in traffic; sharing this concern are many governmental officials and community agencies. For this reason, members of the media and public relations personnel are eager to cover traffic-related stories. Teachers and school administrators should do everything possible to maintain the quality of the traffic education course as an essential component of the total school program and an investment in community safety.

After everything administratively possible is done to assure that the best traffic education instruction can take place, then students, parents, law enforcement officers, license personnel, representatives from civic clubs, governmental agencies, community leaders, and news media can be brought in to raise the awareness of the program. School-community cooperative endeavors should take place. For example, an off-street, multiple-vehicle driving facility can become a focal point of activity during non-school hours. Methods of continuously interpreting the program to the public and its leaders include the following:

1. examples of good teaching and safe driving practices exhibited on streets and highways as well as in classrooms and on special facilities;
2. providing the news media with regular and special news items;
3. in-service work with the entire faculty;
4. open house and parent/teacher conferences;
5. proper care and exclusive use of practice driving vehicles for instructional purposes;
6. recognition by each teacher that, because he/she is known throughout the community, a good example for driving behavior must be made; and
7. acceptance by teachers and administrators of every opportunity to appear before civic groups to present both accomplishments and to discuss the needs of traffic education.

H. Safety Belts, Airbags and Occupant Protection

Safety or seat belts are preventive medicine. Buckling up is the single most effective act to protect an occupant in a crash. Montana law (MCA 61-13-103 and 61-9-420) places responsibility on the driver to ensure each occupant is properly buckled or in a child safety restraint on every trip, every time.

Seat belts with airbags and child safety seats provide the following major functions:

1. Seat belts prevent ejection from the vehicle in case of a crash. The risk of death is five times greater if an individual is thrown from the vehicle;

2. Seat belts hold the body in the seat during sudden stops and turns, giving the driver better control over the vehicle;
3. Seat belts along with airbags restrain and decelerate the body with the vehicle, thus minimizing injury; and
4. Seat belts along with airbags lessen injury inside the vehicle. Unbuckled bodies can collide at crash force into other people in the same vehicle, seriously injuring or even killing them in a crash.

I. Nighttime Instruction

Darkness is the most common and, perhaps least regarded, visual handicap. Classroom discussion, videos, and other approaches should be used to make the student aware of the problem of night driving. Where possible, school districts are encouraged to provide vehicle instruction during hours of darkness. This provides students with supervised vehicle operating experience under conditions that are less than ideal—a very real part of everyday driving.

J. Other Traffic Education Courses

Traffic education courses can be provided within school districts for beginning adult drivers, meeting special needs of individuals and groups (such as individuals with handicapped conditions), driver improvement, vocational purposes, motorcycle safety, snowmobile safety, recreational vehicle safety and advanced driving.

Such courses should:

1. be based on current curriculum guides approved by the Office of Public Instruction;
2. provide behind-the-wheel instruction only to students who are currently participating in the classroom phase of the program;
3. use only practice driving vehicles that are equipped according to standards established by the Office of Public Instruction and are covered by insurance sufficient to protect the school, teachers, students, and the public; and
4. use only appropriately qualified teachers.

Appendix H: Definition of Terms

Behind-the-wheel (BTW) – Driver training by an OPI-approved traffic education teacher in a vehicle that meets the requirements of ARM 10.13.311.

Cooperative Driver Testing Program (CDTP) – A joint program of the Montana Department of Justice, Motor Vehicle Division (DOJ) and the Montana Office of Public Instruction that authorizes approved traffic education teachers teaching in an approved driver education program to administer the written and skills tests for a learner license on behalf of the DOJ. Training offered by the DOJ/MVD is required for CDTP certification.

Concurrent scheduling – Scheduling the Traffic Education Program without an interruption in classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel instruction. ARM 10.13.307(4)(a).

Eligible student – Any youth who lives within the geographic boundaries of the public school district whether or not they are enrolled in the public school district (pursuant to MCA 61-5-106), and who meets the age requirements and has not yet reached 19 years of age on or before September 10 of the school year in which the student participates in traffic education. ARM 10.13.307 (4)(b). Students enrolled in the course will have reached their 15th birthday within six months of the course completion. ARM 10.13.312

Equitable – Treating all eligible students fairly and without bias in the notification, enrollment, and class administration procedures associated with traffic education. ARM 10.13.307(4)(c)

GDL - Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) systems progressively increase the privileges and responsibilities of a new driver and are proven to reduce teen crashes. Montana's GDL Step One Learner License Phase requires a minimum 6 months and 50 hours of supervised practice - 10 hours must be at night with parent/guardian for new drivers under age 18. GDL Step Two First-year Restricted License limits teen passengers and nighttime driving for one year. MCA 61-5-131 – 135.

Integrated scheduling – Scheduling the Traffic Education Program to include a blend of classroom instruction and associated behind-the-wheel instruction during the traffic education course. ARM 10.13.307(4)(d)

In-traffic – Operator training on roadways and byways open to and with public traffic including up to 30 minutes of initial vehicle familiarization and training in little used parking lots.

Student contact day – A day that a teacher engages a student in a structured learning activity of the district's traffic education curriculum that applies toward the required minimum of 60 hours of instruction, whether it be classroom instruction, teacher directed learning activities, observation, simulation, or behind-the-wheel instruction.

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