

# Driver Education with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students

## Driving Experience

The instructor and hard-of-hearing student should agree and discuss ahead of time the use of flash cards and fundamental signs that will be used to ensure effective communication during the driving experience.

The instructor should discuss with the hard-of-hearing student the route of driving instruction ahead of time. During the driving instruction, the interpreter should be seated behind the instructor. In the event the instructor needs to provide additional information or clarify instructions during the driving experience, ask the student to pull over to the side of the road. The interpreter will then translate the instructor's information to the student.

A whiteboard or 5" x 8" flashcards, and/or signs may include commands such as: "slow down," "faster," "pull over," "stop," "right," "left," "start," and "intersection."



Building a positive rapport with the deaf or hard-of-hearing student will lead to a successful and safe driving experience. Pictured above is a deaf student discussing with an interpreter some of the basic signs that will be used during the instructional driving experience.

## Helpful Basic Signs



SLOW DOWN



FASTER



PULL OVER



STOP



RIGHT



LEFT



START



INTERSECTION



Behind-the-wheel instruction for deaf or hard-of-hearing students can be a new and challenging endeavor, however, with these few tips everyone will have a successful experience.

## Classroom Experience

Facilitating communication in a Driver Education classroom with a deaf or hard-of-hearing student may involve sign language interpretation through a qualified interpreter. The role of an interpreter includes providing communication accessibility between students who are deaf, school staff, and other hearing students. As a Driver Education instructor, it is helpful to provide the interpreter with the class text, new vocabulary, or technical jargon.

A deaf or hard-of-hearing student will need access to visually accessible materials such as the use of the chalkboard, overhead, captioned films, and written tests. It may be necessary for the interpreter to provide sign language interpretation if the student is experiencing difficulty with the written English language.

Instructors may register online for free use of captioned films for Driver Education through Described and Captioned Media at <https://dcmp.org>

# Montana Office of Public Instruction

## Informational Guide for Driver Education Instructors Who Work with Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing Students

### **School District's Obligation**

It is the school district's obligation to provide services for students under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act to participate in extracurricular activities. When driver education is provided to students as an extracurricular activity, the school district is obligated to provide appropriate accommodations and services to eligible students with disabilities in accord with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

### **Liability**

Liability concerns should be discussed with your school administration and school insurance carrier.



*Special thanks to the Montana State School for the Deaf and Blind for developing this informational brochure.*

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Helena, MT 59620-2501  
In-State Toll-Free 1-888-231-9393  
Local (406) 444-3095

### **Resources**

Special Education Director in your local school district

Montana Office of Public Instruction  
Division of Special Education  
(406) 444-5661

Montana State School for the Deaf and Blind  
(406) 771-6000

Montana Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf  
[www.montanarid.org](http://www.montanarid.org)

Montana Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service  
(406) 771-9053