



MONTANA ROUNDAABOUT



NEWS FROM THE TRAFFIC EDUCATION OFFICE—MONTANA OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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10 Years of the Montana GDL Graduated Driver Licensing Works

Many know that Montana was the last state in the country to adopt Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) to give teen drivers time to develop crucial driving skills and experience. But did you know that it took four consecutive legislative sessions before it became law? Starting in 1999, then in 2001, 2003 (when it passed, but was vetoed by Gov. Judy Martz), and finally in 2005 the bill passed and was signed into law by Gov. Brian Schweitzer.



So, we tip our collective hats to GDL champion Sen. Kim Gillan (D-Billings) who served in the Montana State Legislature from 1996 to 2012, and steadfastly introduced every GDL bill. Thanks to her efforts and the support of numerous organizations and individuals, state law now requires young drivers to gain driving skills with supervised

practice before they enter the high-risk period of solo driving. Ten years after GDL went into effect, there is a marked decrease in teen crash fatalities and injuries, as shown by the chart below and a chart on page 2 showing crash data by age.

Implemented in 2006, Montana's GDL has led to a 35% decrease in total teen crashes and a 59% decrease in serious injuries of 14-18 year olds during the period of 2005-2014.* Integrating driver education and parent-supervised practice helps teens develop driving skills, safe habits and crucial behind-the-wheel experience. While the number of teen crashes has declined, some mistakes continue to have serious and fatal consequences, especially driving off the road and not wearing seat belts.

Distracted driving education was also added as a component of Montana's GDL, with the recognition that there are many things that shift our focus away from driving, along with using cell phones and other hand-held devices. The OPI's Traffic Education Office provides resources for distracted driving awareness and includes distracted driving curriculum and other educational materials for use in the classroom.

THE LAW: Montana's GDL went into effect on July 1, 2006

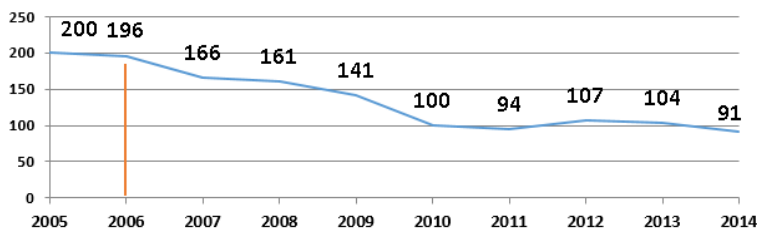
The purpose of Montana's GDL is to "create a graduated driver's licensing program that will allow persons under 18 years of age to progressively develop and improve their driving skills in the safest possible environment and that will improve highway safety by reducing the disproportionately high incidence of motor vehicle accidents involving minors." MCA 61-5-131

Education on distracted driving.

(1) The department, in consultation with the superintendent of public instruction, shall encourage schools providing traffic education to include in their traffic education curriculum information regarding the dangers of physical and cognitive distractions while driving.

(2) To reduce the risks for novice drivers, the department shall include in its publications intended for novice drivers information concerning the dangers of physical and cognitive distractions while driving, including but not limited to mental inattentiveness because of stress, fatigue, heightened emotion, conversation with passengers, stereo or climate control adjustment, food and drink, use of electronic devices, and personal grooming. MCA 61-5-135

Montana Teen Fatal and Serious Injury Crash
Driver age 14 - 18



* Source: Montana Department of Transportation state and county young driver data: <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/datastats/crashdata.shtm>

GDL—THREE SIMPLE STEPS

1. **Learner License** – Log **50** hours of **supervised** practice with **10** hours at night for a minimum of **6** months, and no alcohol, drug or traffic citations.
2. **GDL Restricted License** – Allows **solo driving**; one-year restrictions include curfew, limiting passengers, and no alcohol, drug or traffic citations.
3. **Full Driver License** – After **one year** on the restricted license.

Download the GDL Parents Fact Sheet and Teen Driver Log