

What is the 40-Hour Parent/Teen Driving Guide?

Cars do not crash: people crash them. The driver, especially the young inexperienced driver, continues to be a weak link in automotive safety. Motor vehicle injuries involving teenagers account for more years of productive life lost than all other causes of death, and the impact of a serious accident in terms of human suffering on family, friends, and the community cannot be measured.

To address the dramatic increase in traffic fatalities involving teenagers, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation requiring parents to certify that their children have driven motor vehicles for at least 40 hours, 10 which must be after sunset, before they are eligible for a provisional license. Lack of experience and errors in judgment are the main reasons for accidents involving new drivers.

How do you teach a 16 year old to be mature behind the wheel of an automobile? Unfortunately there is no magic formula to prepare your teenager for the responsibilities of driving. Driving education at its best is a team effort involving schools, community, students and families.

The 40-Hour Parent/Teen Driving Guide provides an excellent starting point in helping parents guide their children to becoming skillful and responsible drivers. It is a technical assistance manual that provides parents with a systematic approach to guiding their children toward remaining collision-free in both low-and high-risk driving environments. The suggested lessons follow a sequential learning pattern that progresses from the parking lot to neighborhoods, to light traffic, to rural highways, to expressways and then to city driving.

A FEW MORE TIPS.....

Teen driver education must be done in 36 classroom periods. Topics include alcohol safety and drug abuse, organ and tissue donation, motorcycle awareness, and aggressive and distracted driving. Unless you are home-schooled, you must take the course at your high school or a [private driver training school](#).

Things to remember!

Each lesson provides parents with an estimated amount of time the student will need to achieve mastery; however, because students have different abilities and learning styles parents need to spend as much time as necessary to allow their child to master the skills before moving on to the next lesson.

Research shows that in order to remain collision-free, parents must model safe driving behaviors and invest in meaningful guided practice over a long period of time to turn these skills into good driving habits!

- Read through the [40-Hour Parent/Teen Driving Guide](#)
- Locate the 40-hour log located at the end of the technical assistance guide
- Be sure to sign for each practice session
- A friend or relative can conduct the guided practice session if neither parent has a valid driver's license
- Be a good role model for safe driving behaviors

There are only 14 in-car instruction periods required, seven periods of driving, and seven of observing. Of course, as a parent you will want your teen to practice more than this to become a proficient driver. Practicing outside of Driver's Ed will allow your teen to become a better, safer driver.