

HB

11

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 11

Revision Date: _____
Title: An Act relating to driver licensing
Sponsor: Representative Green
Requester: (H) FIN

Department Affected: Administration
BRU: Motor Vehicles
Component: Driver Services
COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 500

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 98	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03
PERSONAL SERVICES	22.9	36.7	36.7	36.7	36.7	36.7
TRAVEL	5.6	0	0	0	0	0
CONTRACTUAL	62.8	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
SUPPLIES	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
EQUIPMENT	16.5	0	0	0	0	0
LAND & STRUCTURES	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRANTS, CLAIMS	0	0	0	0	0	0
MISCELLANEOUS	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL OPERATING	108.3	39.5	39.5	39.5	39.5	39.5

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES (1005)	163.0	163.0	163.0	163.0	163.0	163.0
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FUND SOURCE: (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts	77.1					
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts	31.2	39.5	39.5	39.5	39.5	39.5
1037 GF/Mental Health						
OTHER						
TOTAL	108.3	39.5	39.5	39.5	39.5	39.5

Estimate of any current year (FY 97) cost: \$ _____

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	1	1	1	1	1	1
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary.)

SEE ATTACHED

Prepared by: Juanita M. Henslev
Division: Motor Vehicles

Phone: 465-2650
Date: April 7, 1997

Approved by Commissioner: Mark Boyer
Agency: Department of Administration

Date: 4/7/97

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FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 11

Revision Date: April 7, 1997

Department Affected: Administration

ANALYSIS: (continued)

In 1993, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) offered to states direct grants to assist in the implementation and evaluate a graduated license system. In 1994, Alaska and North Carolina were the only two states to be awarded these grants. Alaska's grant was in the amount of \$77.1.

Traffic crashes are the number one cause of death for youth nationwide. Alaska statistics are no different than the national statistics.

The impact this bill has on the Division of Motor Vehicles is the issuance of the full driver's license after the provisional license period is over. This bill requires the person be re-issued a driver's license without the provisional license restriction. The person will be required to pay a duplicate license fee of \$10. The division issued approximately 10,000 driver's licenses in 1994 to individual's in this age group. This will generate approximately \$100.0 in new general fund program receipts.

A person of this age group will have the driver's license suspended for accumulation of points at the 8 point level instead of 12 points in a 12 month period. In 1995, 1,205 warning notices were sent to individual's in this age group. It is anticipated, this bill, will cause a deterrent effect on this age group and, approximately 500 of these individuals will not reach the 6 point accumulation. This will result in approximately 700 additional point suspensions yearly. Since the point suspension notices are automated, the cost the Division will incur is for the postage to mail the suspension notices to the individual. The law requires these notices to be mailed by certified mail return receipt. Postage rate for certified mail is \$2.52 each.

It is estimated, 90 percent of all persons whose license is suspended will reinstate their driver's license. A \$100.00 reinstatement fee is charged anytime a person has had their license suspended. This will generate approximately \$63.0 in new general fund program receipts revenue. The total amount of additional new general fund program receipt revenue generated by this bill is \$163.0

The following is a cost breakdown associated with Alaska's graduated license implementation grant.

Personnel Services.	\$ 4.5	(Overtime cost associated with the grant administration.)
Travel	\$ 5.6	
Contractual	\$60.5	
Equipment.	\$ 6.5	
TOTAL.	\$77.1	

The following analysis is an estimate of the operational cost the Division of Motor Vehicles anticipates with the passage of this bill.

	FY98	FY99
<u>PERSONAL SERVICES</u>		
1 Motor Vehicle Representative (Anchorage) 1/2 year FY98	\$18.4	\$36.7
Federal Grant Receipts	\$4.5	
<u>TRAVEL</u>		
Federal Grant Receipts	\$5.6	
<u>CONTRACTUAL</u>		
Postage 700 notices (certified mail) @ \$2.52 each	\$1.8	\$1.8
Computer (Mainframe Connection), yearly costs	\$0.5	\$0.5
Federal Grant Receipts	\$60.5	
\$ 9.6	Data Processing Fees	
\$ 30.0	Computer Programming	
\$ 6.6	Public Service Announcements and Brochures	
\$ 13.0	Public Opinion Survey	
\$ 1.3	Tuition-National Judicial College for Hearing Officer Training	

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 11

Revision Date: April 7, 1997

Department Affected: Administration

SUPPLIES

Routine office supplies \$0.5 \$0.5

EQUIPMENT

1 Complete Computer Workstation \$10.0

One time costs
Federal Grant Receipts \$6.5

Upgrade of Computer equipment and software

TOTAL \$108.3 \$39.5

Alaska State Legislature

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
1000 EAST 12TH AVENUE
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99516
PHONE: 281-3111
FAX: 281-3112



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
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Representative Joe Green
District 10

Sponsor Statement

HB 11 - "Licensing Requirements for Young Drivers"

HB 11 establishes new rules for young drivers. Due to the high incidence of accidents, injury, and death among teenage drivers many states, and other political jurisdictions, are changing the rules which grant teenagers the "license" to drive.

One strategy to reduce young driver accidents is the provisional licensing system. HB 11 establishes a graduated system whereby a new, young driver must begin his/her progression to "driver-hood" with a learners permit, graduate to a restricted, provisional license, and then, if driving performance has been satisfactory during the provisional period, an unrestricted license is awarded.

Language in HB 11 establishes certain conditions during the provisional stage which include restrictions on nighttime driving, so that driving takes place in less dangerous circumstances. Several states have laws which limit teenagers from operating motor vehicles during late evening or early morning hours. Studies in these states have shown that nighttime restrictions have significantly reduced accidents.

Finally, HB 11 is designed to allow the Department of Public Safety to take advantage of federal legislation (the "High Risk Drivers Act of 1993") which establishes monetary incentives for states that implement programs for young drivers. I believe that passage of HB 11, along with federal support, will help stop the teenage carnage on our highways.

Sectional Analysis HB 11

An Act establishing a provisional drivers license

by Representative Joe Green

Sec. 1 Amends the restriction on the issuance of a drivers license to include a provisional license for drivers between 16 and 18.

Sec. 2 Increases the age of the person that must accompany the permit holder from 19 to 22.

Sec. 3 Establishes the provisional drivers license. Under AS28.15.055, the department may issue a provisional license to an applicant between the ages of 16 and 18 if the applicant has held an instructional permit for at least six months.

AS28.15.057 establishes who is required to hold the provisional license. (a) states that an applicant between 16 and 18 may not be issued an unrestricted drivers license until: (1) they have had an instructional permit for six months; (2) a provisional license for one year. (b) establishes that a driver with a provisional license may not operate a motor vehicle between the hours of 1 a.m. and 5 a.m., except along the most direct route between the drivers home and place of employment.

Sec. 4 Allows the department to suspend, revoke or deny an instructional permit or provisional license for the accumulation of eight or more points in a 12-month period.

Sec. 5 Conforming definitional language which includes "provisional license" under the definition of "drivers license" or "license".

ALASKA TRUCKING ASSOCIATION INC.

3443 Minnesota Drive • Anchorage, Alaska 99503 • PHONE (907) 276-1149 • FAX (907) 274-1946

February 19, 1997

TO: Members of the 20th Alaska Legislature:

FM: Frank Dillon, Executive Director, Alaska Trucking Association

RE: Support for House Bill 11

Members of the Alaska Trucking Association encourage your support of House Bill 11. House Bill 11 strengthens the requirements necessary to obtain a motor vehicle operator's license. As an organization that represents thousands of professional driver's throughout Alaska, we recognize a need to have properly trained young driver's on our roads. We also recognize that driver's between the ages 16 and 20 are involved in a disproportionate number of serious accidents resulting in many deaths and injuries. We believe that any prudent steps that enhance driver's training and skill for young driver's, and in fact all driver's, should be encouraged. Highway accidents are not a natural occurrence and dying in an automobile or motor vehicle accident is not a natural cause of death. Please support House Bill 11. We thank you and encourage its speedy passage.





MADD

Telephone: (907) 522-6233
FAX: (907) 522-6234

Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Anchorage Chapter
615 East 82nd Avenue, Ste. B-1
Anchorage, AK 99518-3357

January 30, 1997

Representative Joe Green
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Green:

On behalf of MADD - Anchorage's Board of Directors, staff and general membership, I write to express strong support for HB11. As we understand it, this bill would institute a graduated driver's licensing procedure for teenage applicants.

We are encouraged by the increased age of 22 requirement for the accompanying licensed instructor, although we feel age 25 is very prudent.

Again, you have our support for HB 11.

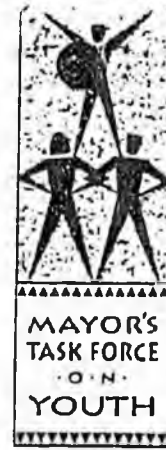
Sincerely,


Marti Greeson
Executive Director

Representative Joe Green
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

February 04, 1997

Dear Representative Green:



On behalf of the Juneau Mayor's Task Force on Youth, we would like to express our support for HB11 Licensing Requirements for Drivers. We supports a provisional licensing system as a way to reduce young driver accidents and prevent injury and death among teenage drivers in Alaska.

The Mayor's Task Force on Youth is concerned with the health and safety of young people in Juneau. We support programs, activities and public policy which support youth in making a healthy transition to adulthood.

The Mayor's Task Force on Youth agrees with the legislation proposing a graduated licensing system allowing a 14 year old to apply for a learners permit while increasing the age of the person accompanying the permittee. This will provide an opportunity for young drivers to learns from more experienced and hopefully more responsible drivers. We support allowing youth to get a provisional license at age 16 with restrictions on nighttime driving hours between 1 am and 5 am. We appreciate the exemption made for driving to and from work. At age 17 youth can progress to an unrestricted license if their driving performance has been satisfactory.

We do not feel this legislation will unduly limit the rights and freedom of young drivers, but rather provides a chance for them to gradually learn to be responsible drivers. This legislation will not significantly affect those youth who are already responsible drivers, instead it will support their efforts to drive carefully and responsibly.

We hope this bill will be supported by the legislature and be enacted by the Department of Public Safety as a way to reduce injuries and death to young drivers.

Thank you for introducing and supporting this legislatio.. If you need any additional support please do not hesitate to call Dan Fink at 463-5850 or Ron Gleason at 463-1900.

Sincerely,



Ron Gleason
Co-Facilitator,
Mayor's Task Force on Youth



Dan Fink
Co-Facilitator,
Mayor's Task Force on Youth

February 4, 1997

The Honorable Joe Green
House of Representatives
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Reference: House Bill 11

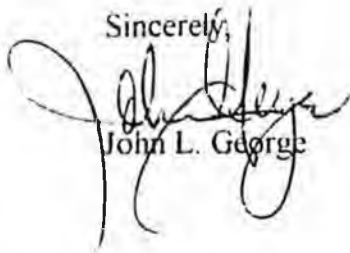
Dear Representative Green

On behalf of the National Association of Independent Insurers, a property and casualty insurance trade association, I want to thank you for introducing HB 11. The NAII believes that passage of HB 11 will result in reduced accident rates for young inexperienced drivers and will dramatically impact the frequency of late night and early morning accidents which statistically are the most serious and often fatal accidents for teenagers.

By targeting the inexperienced youthful drivers, this bill assures that each of them learns to drive with proper supervision and mature guidance. By teaching proper respect and responsibility to youthful drivers as they are just learning to drive, the stage is set for a lifetime of responsible motor vehicle operation. Legislation that serves to protect young drivers and instill's good lifetime driving skills is always worthwhile.

NAII urges passage of HB 11. We believe that it will have a large positive impact on accident rates and accident severity for youthful drivers.

Sincerely,



John L. George

Telephone: (907) 522-6233
FAX: (907) 522-6234



Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Anchorage Chapter
615 East 82nd Avenue, Ste. 31
Anchorage, AK 99518-3157

March 18, 1997

Representative Gene Therriault
House of Representatives
State Capitol
Room 511
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Therriault:

I am writing in support of House Bill 11 which establishes a graduated licensing system in Alaska.

Each year, 16 and 17-year old drivers are involved in more than twice the average number of crashes per mile driven as are experienced adult drivers. These crashes occur most frequently between midnight and 5:00 a.m. Studies show that although only 2 percent of the miles driven by 16 year olds occurs in these hours, 17 percent of their fatal crashes occurred in that five-hour period. Also, novice driving between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. account for 16 percent of their miles driven, but 43 percent of their fatal crashes.¹

One way to reduce this disproportionate involvement is through the use of provisional licenses for novice drivers. The provisional license serves as a tool to "ease" young drivers into gaining driving experience on the road. With restrictions mandated under graduated drivers license, the novice driver would gradually gain driving skills through education, driving during lower-risk hours, or with supervision.

¹National Highway Traffic Safety Administration "Provisional Licensing or New Driver Entry System."

Modifying Attitudes toward Drinking and Driving

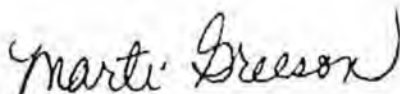
When young drivers do not have the option to drive during the high-risk hours under high-risk conditions, their driving experience is gained during the lower-risk hours, with fewer deaths as a result.

Every effort of provisional licensing programs are encouraging; states which place certain restrictions on driver's licenses show a sharp decline in the number of crashes and fatal crashes involving 16 year olds during restricted hours: Pennsylvania (69%); New York (62%); Maryland (40%); and Louisiana (25%).²

MADD advocates that all states adopt such measures as a means of further reducing youthful crash involvement.

On behalf of MADD Anchorage's staff, Board of Directors and membership, I write to express strong support for House Bill 11 and ask that you present this bill for action in the Finance Committee and assist in moving it forward.

Sincerely,



Marti Greeson
Executive Director

²Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Teenage Drivers, 1984.

March 19, 1997

Representative Gene Therriault
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 511
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Therriault,

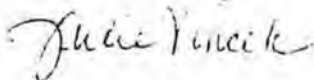
I am writing you to express my strong support for House Bill 11 which establishes a graduated licensing system in Alaska.

There is a great deal of supportive data telling our nation and more specifically our community that inexperienced teenage drivers operating their vehicles during high risk early hours is resulting in too many deaths and serious injuries.

There is no doubt that this bill must be passed now! Let's follow the example of other states who are standing up and demanding ways to reduce senseless, preventable auto deaths and injuries among youth.

I ask that you present this bill for action in the Finance Committee and assist in moving it forward! Thank you and good luck!

Sincerely,



Julie Vincek
12203 Woodward Dr.
Anchorage, Ak 99516
907-345-3130



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

Region X
Alaska Idaho Oregon
Washington

3140 Jackson Federal Building
915 Second Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98174

Region Phone No. 206-220-7549
Fax No. 206-220-7551

March 17, 1997

The Honorable Gene Therriault
Representative State of Alaska
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Representative Therriault:

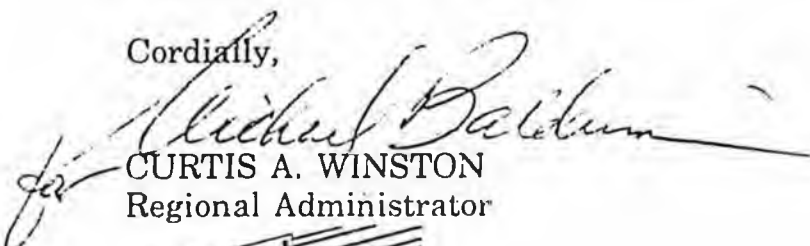
Traffic crashes are the Nation's number one cause of youthful deaths. The facts are clear. Teenage drivers are involved in a disproportionate number of motor vehicle crashes when compared to the rest of the population. One answer to minimizing the tragic outcomes caused by youthful drivers is a graduated licensing system. The U. S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) strongly encourages states to implement a graduated driver licensing system to ease young drivers into the driving environment through more controlled exposure to progressively more difficult driving experiences.

As Co-chair of Finance, you are acutely aware that HB 11, Provisional Driver's License, will reduce the economic costs losses in lives, injuries and health care associated with documented traffic crashes involving young people ages 15-20 in the State of Alaska. To date, eight States have enacted graduated licensing laws with an additional 13 states currently working on successful passage of the legislation during their 1997 Legislative Session.

NHTSA evaluation of graduated licensing systems in California, Maryland, and Oregon report a 5 to 16 percent reduction in crashes for drivers ages 15-17. If the experience in Alaska is like other States, legislative passage and enforcement of the proposed bill will definitely result in a decrease in fatalities, injuries and health care costs for those under age 18.

I trust the information provided will be helpful to you in the passage of this bill. If you or your staff have additional questions, please feel free to contact me or Rosemary Nye of our office.

Cordially,


CURTIS A. WINSTON
Regional Administrator



SAFETY BELTS SAVE LIVES

April 9, 1997

Representative Gene Therriault
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 511
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

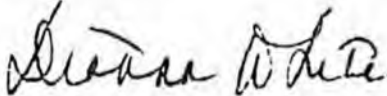
Dear Representative Therriault,

The purpose of this letter is to express my strong support for House Bill 11 which establishes a graduated licensing system in Alaska.

Supportive data indicates that the Graduated Licensing Programs have had a positive impact upon the driving habits of teenage drivers in other states. There have been numerous incidents in our very own community, which demonstrate why this bill should be passed.

I ask that you present this bill for action in the Finance Committee and assist in moving it forward

Sincerely,



Dianna White
6084 Doncaster Dr.
Anchorage, Ak 99504
907-337-3004



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
State Emergency Medical Services Directors

111 Park Place, Falls Church, Virginia 22046-4513
 Phone: 703-538-1799 • Fax: 703-241-5603 • E-mail: nasemsd@aol.com

Wednesday, October 23, 1996
 Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION #96-01

PRESIDENT
 Dan Manz
 Vermont

NASEMSD SUPPORT OF THE
 GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSING SYSTEM

PRESIDENT-ELECT
 Drew Dawson
 Montana

TREASURER
 Bill Griner
 Idaho

SECRETARY
 Louise Goyette
 Massachusetts

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
 Dale Bailey
 North Carolina

EAST REGION
 George Leggett
 New Jersey

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION
 Keith Wages
 Georgia

NORTH CENTRAL REGION
 Tom Wiedrich
 North Dakota

WEST REGION
 Donna Melara
 Hawaii

WHEREAS, the U. S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) encourages states to implement a graduated driver licensing system to ease young drivers into the driving environment through more controlled exposure to progressively more difficult driving experiences and driver licensing stages, prior to full licensure, and

WHEREAS, in 1995, 6,220 young people, aged 15-20, died in motor vehicle crashes, and

WHEREAS, young drinking drivers are involved in fatal crashes at twice the rate as drivers aged 21 and older, and

WHEREAS, graduated licensing has been shown to reduce crashes among youthful drivers, and

WHEREAS, ten states have a three-stage licensing system and four states have two stages of licensing, and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National Association of State EMS Directors supports graduated licensing systems.

Adopted in this form by unanimous vote of the membership,
 October 23, 1996:

President, Dan Manz

Secretary, Louise Goyette

States putting the brakes on teens' driving

With inexperience a major factor in accidents involving young drivers, more states are establishing 'graduated' licenses and other limits

By Jennifer Loven
The Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. — The four teens were laughing and carefree as they drove past a group of joggers on a country road that rainy afternoon.

Seconds later, a tanker truck slammed into their car, killing 15-year-old Colette Barnes and two other girls.

One of Colette's friends, a 15-year-old driving with a learner's permit but without an adult in the car, had run a stop sign. A 17-year-old boy in the back seat was the only survivor.

In the 14 months since, Colette's parents have led a crusade to spare other families from the same tragedy.

A law pushed by Lynda and Scott Barnes makes Michigan one of a growing number of states to establish "graduated" driver's licenses, which slowly give teen-agers more and more driving privileges as they gain experience behind the wheel.

The restrictions are aimed at what's considered the chief problem for young drivers: inexperience.

"We had to do something — we're losing our kids," said Lynda Barnes, 36, surrounded in her Mason home by pictures of Colette and her two other daughters. "I've got another one coming up, and I don't want to lose any more."

The law, passed last month

and effective in April, allows Michigan teens to start learning to drive earlier — at 14½ instead of 15. But it has a three-step process that sets stricter requirements for training, calls for more parental involvement, and limits the hours teens may drive.

Currently, Michigan teen-agers simply need drivers' education and 30 days with a learner's permit to get a full-fledged license at age 16.

Under the new law, teens will first receive a Level 1 license that, like a learner's permit, will require either a parent or a licensed driver over 21 to be in the car. Teens will have to stay at that level for at least six months, and parents must swear to supervise 50 hours of driving, including 10 at night.

Sixteen-year-olds who complete those requirements can then go to Level 2 and drive alone at most times of the day. Between midnight to 5 a.m., however, they cannot drive at all unless they are with a parent or are going to work.

An unrestricted license goes only to 17-year-olds who have spent six months at Level 2. Teens will have to be without an accident or a conviction to progress at each stage.

Colette's parents know the new restrictions might not have saved their daughter; the girl who ran the stop sign was



'We're losing our kids': Scott and Lynda Barnes' daughter Colette, 15, was killed in Lansing, Mich., when a truck slammed into the car in which she was riding. The driver of the car also was 15.

already breaking the law by driving without an adult. But they believe extra training and parental involvement will make novice drivers safer.

Studies have shown 5% to 16% reductions in crashes involving young drivers in places that have some graduated licensing provisions.

"It's really to train people to drive the same way we train people to do a lot of other complex tasks, a little bit at a time," said Rob Foss of the University of North Carolina's Highway

Safety Research Center.

Eleven states now have graduated licensing requirements, and many others have approved less comprehensive restrictions.

At least eight more states are looking at placing additional limits on teen drivers.

"It's a major problem in all the states with young drivers," said state Rep. Dan Gustafson, the Michigan bill's sponsor.

Encouraging teens to use seat belts and not drink and drive has reduced teenage

crash fatalities from their peak in 1986. But motor vehicle accidents still are the top killer of teens. Though teens made up 5.1% of the nation's licensed drivers in 1994, they accounted for 13.9% of traffic deaths.

Maryland was first to enact some features of graduated licensing, in 1979. But only in the last year or two have a larger number of states given the idea serious attention.

"There's increasing recognition that what we're doing isn't working," said Patricia Waller,

Among limits: 3-step licenses, restricting hours teens can drive

The nationwide move to establish graduated licenses or restrict young drivers:

► Eleven states have three-step licensing for young drivers: California, Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Wisconsin. Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont and Virginia are considering whether to further restrict young drivers.

► Twenty-seven states require driver's education, and 29 require teens to have a learner's permit before they get a full license.

► Six states — Connecticut, Florida, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota and Virginia — require teens to hold their learner's permit for at least six months be-

fore they can get a license.

► Thirteen states restrict the hours when teen-agers can drive without supervision. The limits range from South Carolina's, which bars unsupervised teen driving from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., to Maryland, Michigan and Pennsylvania's, which forbid driving by teens between midnight and 5 a.m.

► Forty-three states and the District of Columbia have enacted some kind of "zero tolerance" law setting a lower blood-alcohol level for young people than for adults. States that do not pass such laws by 1998 will lose some of their federal highway money.

► One of most recommended driving restrictions for young people: limiting the passengers drivers can have in the car in certain circumstances.

who wrote the graduated licensing concept 30 years ago and now heads the University of Michigan's Transportation Research Institute.

Kentucky and Michigan, which along with Florida approved graduated licensing this year, are considered to have the most extensive programs. What other states are doing varies widely.

Thirteen limit the nighttime hours when teens can drive, and six require young drivers to have a learner's permit for

six months or more. But most states still have attached rules to getting an unrestricted license. Only 29 require a learner's permit at all.

Some activists are frustrated at lawmakers' reluctance to approve what they consider a crucial provision — limiting the number of passengers in a teen's car. No state has such a restriction; New Zealand is the only country that does. Michigan's bill had one, but lawmakers removed it for fear of overly burdening parents.

Bill may pull teens off road

By DON KIRKMAN

Specials Howard News Service

WASHINGTON — Congress is considering a \$100 million program that would make it tougher for teenagers to get driver's licenses and encourage the elderly to restrict their driving or give up their licenses.

Already passed by the Senate, legislation that imposes restraints on high-risk drivers was scrutinized Thursday by the House surface transportation subcommittee.

The bill's No. 1 target is teen-agers, particularly those who drink and drive.

"The statistics are chilling," said Rep. Frank Wolf, D-Va., the bill's sponsor in the House. "Although teen-agers comprise only 7 percent of all licensed drivers, they account for nearly 15 percent of all traffic fatalities."

Please see Back Page. DRIVING

DRIVING: Tougher rules for teens

Continued from Page A-1

Approximately 8,000 people were killed by teen-age drivers last year, Wolf said, and one-quarter of those deaths were caused by teen-age drivers who were drunk or alcohol-impaired.

National Transportation Safety Board chairman Carl Vogt said one of the reasons teen-age drivers cause an unusually large number of highway deaths is that young people are easily impaired by small amounts of alcohol.

Drivers aged 16 to 20 who have small amounts of alcohol in their bloodstreams are six times more likely to cause fatal traffic accidents than adults, Vogt said.

Rep. Floyd Flake, D-N.Y., one of the bill's supporters, said researchers have determined that teen-age drivers whose blood alcohol level is 0.08 percent increase their chances of having a fatal accident 400-fold.

The legislation would provide \$100 million to state safety and licensing agen-

cies, beginning in 1995, if the states match the federal funds and carry out the program's initiatives.

To reduce high-risk teen-age driving, the legislation calls for states to implement a three-stage driver's license procedure.

The first stage would provide an "instructional" license that requires teen-age drivers to be accompanied by someone with an unrestricted license. Next, teen-agers would receive a "provisional" license after a written examination and road test. An unrestricted license would be granted a year later if the teen-ager has no traffic tickets or chargeable accidents.

States also would be required to make it illegal for people under age 21 to drive if their blood alcohol content is at 0.02 percent or higher, establish minimum fines of \$500 for people convicted of selling alcohol to minors, and mandate a six-month driver's license suspension for anyone under age 21 convicted of drunken driving.

4 hurt in car wreck remain hospitalized

17-year-old killed in weekend head-on collision on Sterling Highway

The Associated Press

KENAI — Four people seriously injured in a weekend accident that killed one of the drivers remained hospitalized Tuesday.

Matthew J. Reilly, 18, of Kenai was still in critical condition at Providence Alaska Medical Center, a spokeswoman said. His brother, Keegan R. Reilly, 15, of Kasilof, and another fellow passenger, Lucas F. Spruill, 19, of Kasilof, were upgraded to serious condition.

Harry R. Geron, 74, of Anchorage, a passenger in the second vehicle, was upgraded to satisfactory condition at Providence, a hospital spokeswoman said.

Thomas K. Davis, 17, of Kasilof was killed in the head-on collision Sunday evening on the Sterling Highway.

Davis was pronounced dead at the scene.

The teenagers were returning home from an 'after-prom' party in the Cooper Landing area when the accident occurred.

The teenagers were returning home from an "after-prom" party in the Cooper Landing area when the accident occurred, said Alaska State Trooper Robert Clark, who is investigating the accident.

The station wagon Davis was driving drifted across

the center line and into the path of an oncoming pickup truck, troopers said.

The pickup's driver, Joseph F. Connors, 54, of Anchorage, tried to avoid the other car but was unable to prevent the collision, troopers said. He was

treated and released at Central Peninsula General Hospital at Soldotna.

Alcohol is not believed to have been a contributing factor, but the cause of the crash remains under investigation, Clark said.

Chad Benson, 17, of Sterling and Levi Reilly, 17, of Kasilof, who had been following the station wagon when the collision occurred, dragged all six victims from the wreckage moments before both vehicles burst into flames.

"Troopers told me all six would have been dead if they hadn't pulled them out," said Benson's mother, Marlene Byrdly. "They're having a hard time right now. I don't feel much like a hero after you have a friend die in your arms."

Clark, the investigating trooper, was Davis' baseball coach.

"It's pretty tough when you pull the blanket off the kid's face and you know him," Clark said.

METRO

ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

MONDAY, April 22, 1996

STATE NEWS

Teen killed in early morning crash

A 16-year-old boy died early Sunday morning when the car he was riding in collided with another vehicle at C Street and 15th Avenue. Guathar M. Burt was pronounced dead at the scene after the 1983 Oldsmobile he was riding in collided with a vehicle driven by Jose Elias, 22, of Anchorage, according to the Anchorage Police Department. Burt was riding in the back seat of a car driven by Casey Weiss, 17, of Anchorage as the vehicle headed east on 15th, police said. Elias was traveling south on C Street in the right hand lane when his car collided with Weiss' vehicle about 2:30 a.m., police said. Elias and Weiss were taken to Alaska Regional Hospital, police said. Weiss was in stable condition Sunday evening. Elias was treated and released, a hospital spokesman said.

Eagle River man dies in wreck

An Eagle River man died near Cooper Landing Saturday afternoon when the motorcycle he was riding crossed the center line of the Sterling Highway and collided with an oncoming tractor-trailer truck, according to the Alaska State Troopers. Terry Lynn Collins, 40, died at the scene about 3:30 p.m. near a curve at Mile 50 of the highway, troopers said. Collins' Harley Davidson collided with a westbound tractor-trailer truck driven by Gary L. Spruill, 45, of Kasiloof, troopers said. Collins and his motorcycle were thrown into the eastbound lane and struck by a tractor-trailer truck driven by Charles Ashley, 23, of Soldotna. Ashley had been following the eastbound Collins. The truck Ashley was driving overturned after being sideswiped by Spruill's truck, which veered into the eastbound lane after colliding with the motorcycle, according to troopers. The truck operated by Spruill then collided with a pickup driven by Marvin Husek, 43, of Anchorage, troopers said. Husek had been behind Ashley's truck, troopers said. Spruill was taken to the Soldotna hospital for treatment, where he was listed in stable condition Sunday evening. Husek drove the pickup from the scene, troopers said.

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"If it's my fault, I'm willing to take the consequences," she said. "I was prepared to go to the mat. I called the superintendent. I was going to move them, home school or whatever."

Principal Lyons declined to comment.

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ects on the building, which was completed in 1983.

Meanwhile, another Project '80s building, the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts, roughly broke even last year, said the center's president, Von Roberts.

The arts center ran on a \$2 million budget last year, with roughly half the money coming from city taxpayers, Roberts said. The rest comes mainly from corporate and individual donations and ticket sales.

All told, the arts center took in \$2.35 million last year, Roberts said. Most of the surplus went to cover maintenance projects on the facilities, she added, though about \$10,000 is expected to land in a reserve fund for future maintenance.

"We don't shoot to make money," Roberts said. "If we have a surplus, generally that's funded back into maintenance projects and events."

Bill seeks tougher driver's ed

The Associated Press

JUNEAU — Teen drivers would spend more time on probation before earning their full licenses under legislation approved in the state House to ease new motorists onto the highways.



The bill's sponsor, Rep. Joe Green, R-Anchorage, said the plan would establish a gradual licensing system that would require young drivers to work their way up to adult driving privileges.

"As they learn and become more proficient, the restrictions are reduced until they obtain a full driver's license," Green said.

The proposal would set a curfew prohibiting drivers younger than 18 from operating a vehicle between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. Curfew exemptions would be made for teenagers driving to and from work.

Please see Page B-3, DRIVERS

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Costello, a large, amiable man with collar-length hair and a mustache, has been working on Route 12 only as long as his bus. He got the route in part, he said, because other drivers quit the transit department.

"We don't have a lot of good morale in the bus barn," he said.

Costello is originally from Butte, Mont. He first came north in 1971 to work in the Cook Inlet fishery. During the pipeline boom of the mid-1970s, he began working as a Teamster, often out of the Fairbanks hall, retiring after 20 years. He took up bus driving five years ago.

"It's not as easy a job as it looks," he said. "Well, you drive in Anchorage, you know how it is. Nobody wants to be behind a bus."

Costello lives in the Chugiak area. Three days a week, he clocks in at 6:49 a.m., out at 1:30 p.m., in again at 4:15 p.m. and out at 7:34 p.m. He works a longer fourth day to reach 40 hours. The split shifts allow the people in charge of the system to add buses during peaks in the

passenger load, but they make for long days. Since 1991, new drivers have received a lower hourly wage than their predecessors.

"A lot of people think us city workers are cutting a fat hog," Costello said. "I herd this bus around for \$33,000 a year."

The transit department hopes to have all 48 of its buses replaced in two years and to start a shelter-building program this summer. But the things that local taxes pay for, like more frequent runs, are less likely. Until the mayor and Assembly move public transit up their priority lists, as they should, not many people are going to get to hear the buses talk.

They talk?

"Wait a minute," Costello said as I got off the bus. He reached up to an overhead console and pushed a button.

"Have a nice day," the bus said.

□ Mike Doogan's opinion column appears in the Daily News each Tuesday, Friday and Sunday. His e-mail address is: mdoogan@pop.adn.com.

Street closure

blocks of C Street will be closed to through traffic the weekend while repairs are made to a broken water main. All bound lanes of C Street between 34th and 40th avenues will be closed from 8 p.m. today until Monday morning. A detour will redirect traffic on C Street around the project, city officials said. C Street will be reduced to one lane of traffic between 34th and 40th avenues to accommodate traffic. The section of C Street that broke has been repaired and water has been restored to serve homes and businesses. No one will be allowed to use the water while the repairs are made, officials

Daily News staff reports

the expense report Thursday, but she said Anchorage had the highest at \$13,930.

DRIVERS: Bill seeks probation for teens

Continued from Page B-1

In 1994, 16- to 20-year-olds made up 6.2 percent of the total drivers in Alaska but accounted for 12.9 percent of the car accidents in the state, according to the Alaska Highway Safety Planning Agency. That group also accounted for 29 percent of the state's fatal crashes.

The measure would still allow teens as young as 14 and 15 to get instruction permits, but they would have to drive

with another motorist at least 25 years old, instead of 21 as the current law requires.

At age 16, they would be eligible for a provisional driver's license so long as they have held a learner's permit for at least six months. By age 18, they could apply for a full driver's license after holding a provisional license for at least a year.

The bill now goes on for Senate consideration.

Anchorage Daily News

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March 15, 1996
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Anchorage Daily News

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Publisher



Kent Pollock
Editor

Michael Carey, Editorial Page Editor
Patrick Dougherty, Managing Editor

Gerald E. Grilly, Publisher, 1984—1993
Katherine Fanning, Editor and Publisher, 1971—1983
Lawrence Fanning, Editor and Publisher, 1967—1971
Founded in 1946 by Norman C. Brown

Young drivers

Let's start them off slowly

State Rep. Joe Green, R-Anchorage, wants to make it harder for teenagers to win full driving privileges. The power to him. The graduated licensing process he has in mind should help make Alaska roads safer for both youths and adults.

Rep. Green's bill is grounded in a reality that makes every parent of a teen worry. Young drivers simply have more accidents.

In Alaska, drivers age 20 and under are only 6.2 percent of the driving population, but they account for twice that number of accidents — 12.8 percent. (That's according to 1993 data from the Alaska Highway Safety Planning Agency.)

No doubt Rep. Green's idea will prove unpopular with Alaska youths. They'll naturally resent being barred from late night driving or having to maintain a clean record before getting full driving privileges.

At 16, a driver's license is a ticket to freedom, a chance to exercise new-found independence, to feel the power of sitting behind the wheel.

Unfortunately, that driver's license is often a ticket to something else — the hospital, or worse. And when young drivers make misjudgments, they aren't the only ones who suffer the consequences. Often their fellow passengers or other drivers wind up hurt or dead.

Contrary to what some youths may think, driving is not a right, it's a privilege — a privilege that carries a heavy responsibility. Creating a graduated license will encourage Alaska youths to use their



Frontiersman

Steve Krehl
Publisher

Vicki Naegelo
Managing Editor

Growing with the Valley since 1947

Prom night should be safe and fun

Recently, Houston High students witnessed a graphic illustration of what can happen when prom night (or any other night) revelry puts an intoxicated driver behind the wheel. Thankfully, the illustration was a mock accident, not the real thing.

This weekend, more local schools will hold their annual proms, and, in a few short weeks, graduation celebrations will mark another rite of passage. Unfortunately, both occasions tend to be marked with use of alcohol or other drugs by students, graduates and others.

Prom night, graduation and all such occasions should be full of memories that teens can carry with them forever. But they should be memories of joy and fun, not grief and terror. Nor should they be so blurred by controlled substances that they are only shadowy images of unrecalled acts.

Even though alcohol was not suspected in an April 28 crash that killed a Kasilof teen, Thomas K. Davis and his friends were returning from an after-prom party when Davis' car crossed the center line about 7 a.m. and drifted into the path of an oncoming vehicle on the Sterling Highway. Five others, including three of Davis' friends, were injured in the mishap. According to the Peninsula Clarion, all three teens have serious injuries, including back and head injuries.

Unfortunately, even this stark reminder of life's frailty will fall to sober some teens.

May each teen enjoy the end-of-the-school-year merriment safely, sanely and soberly. The rest of your lives are ahead of you.

MAR-18-94 FRI 9:31

P. 02

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPT. OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES SECTION**

WALTER J. HICKEL, GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 110616
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-0016
PHONE: (907) 455-3027
FAX: (907) 596-1877

March 18, 1994

Juanita Hensley
Chief, Driver Services
Department of Public Safety
Division of Motor Vehicles

Dear Juanita,

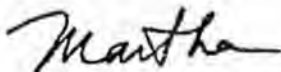
I have searched the Trauma Registry database for young adults, age 14-20, drivers of a passenger highway vehicle (not motorcycle, snowmachine, or ATV), hospitalized in Alaska for motor vehicle crash injuries.

There were 184 patients in this category. Based on the information I have, the average cost of hospitalization was \$ 25,984 per patient. Not included is physician fees and rehabilitation costs. Twenty-one (21) patients (11.4%) were discharged with a disability and 11 patients (6%) were discharged to a rehabilitation facility or nursing care facility.

This information covers a period from March, 1988 through December, 1993, but is not a statewide total for this period.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if there is additional information that you need.

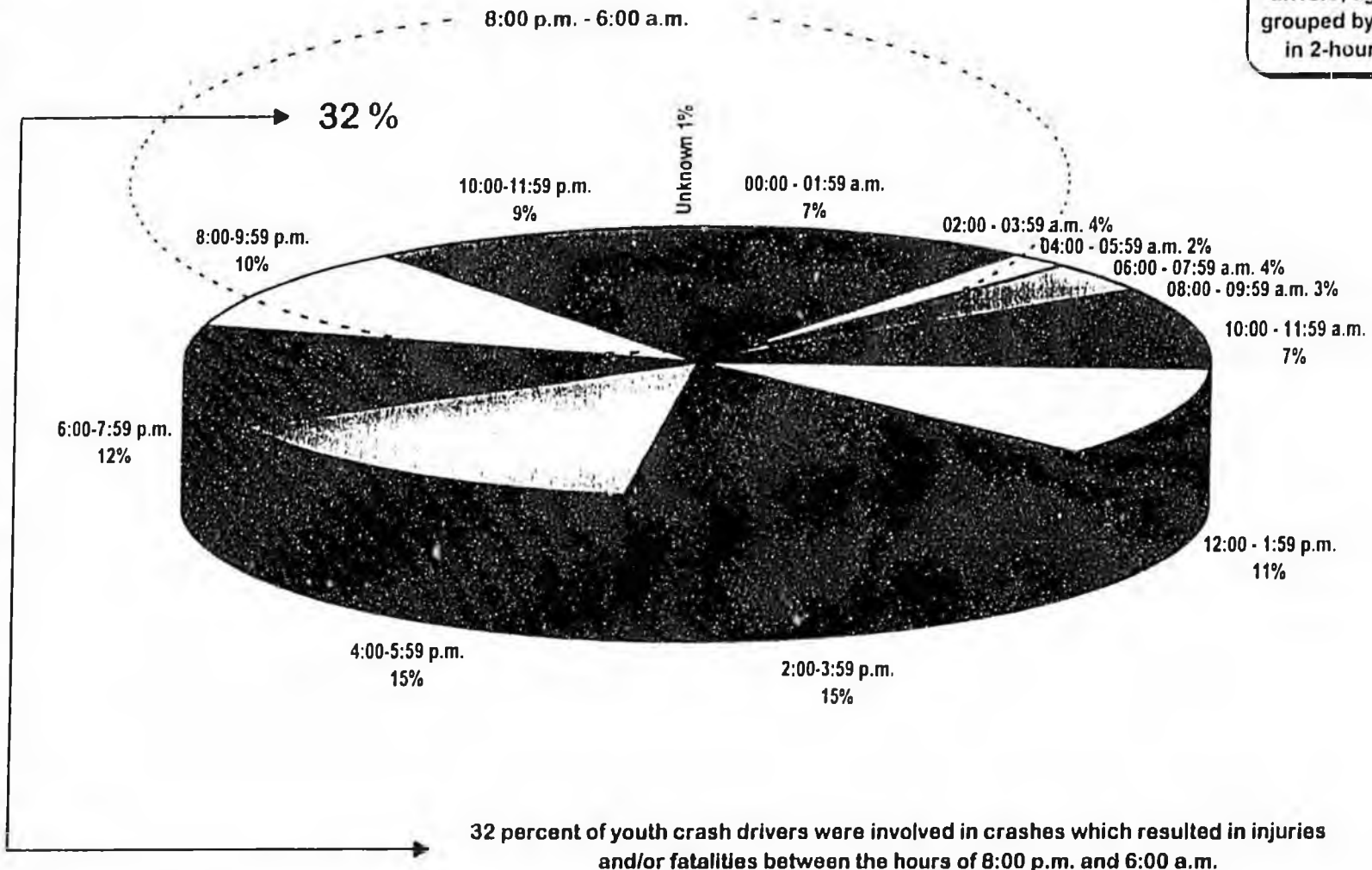
Sincerely,



Martha A. Moore
Trauma Registry Coordinator

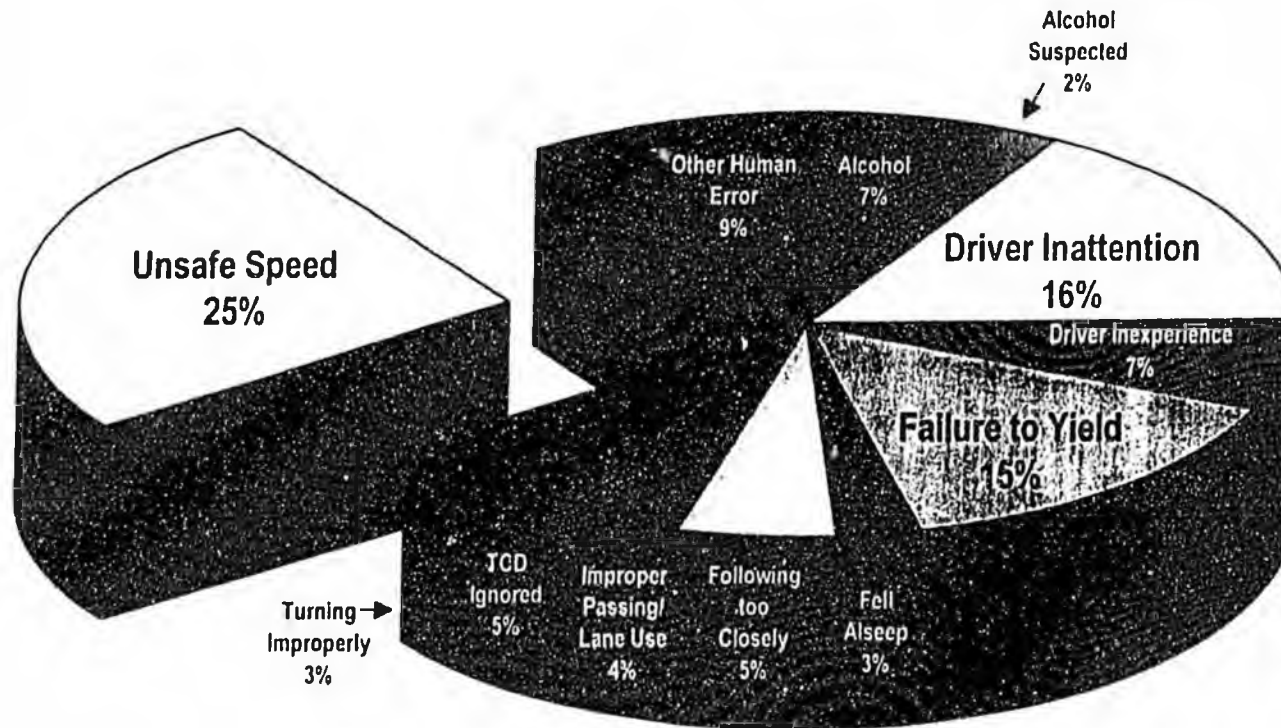
1993 YOUTH DRIVERS INVOLVED IN
INJURY AND FATAL CRASHES
{AGES: 16 - 20}

DATA REPRESENTED
Percentage of 1,138
injury and fatal crash
drivers, ages 16 to 20,
grouped by time of day,
in 2-hour intervals.



32 percent of youth crash drivers were involved in crashes which resulted in injuries and/or fatalities between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

**1993 HUMAN ERRORS KNOWN TO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO
INJURY AND FATAL TRAFFIC CRASHES
INVOLVING YOUTH DRIVERS {AGES 16-20}**



DATA REPRESENTED
 Percentage of 814 known human errors contributing to injury and fatal crashes which involved a youth driver, age 16-20.

Other Known Factors

There were an additional 145 contributing factors other than human error. Of those other factors, 83 involved roadway conditions. 'Slippery pavement' was cited in 71% (59 of 83) of roadway factors. **SPECIAL NOTE: 'unsafe speed' was cited in combination with 'slippery pavement' 68% of the time (40 of 59 occurrences).**

Year	YOUTH DEATHS				ALCOHOL-RELATED						
	Total Deaths	Youth Deaths	< Diff >	% Total Deaths	Total Alcohol Deaths	Youth Alcohol Deaths	Alcohol < Diff >	Youth % of Total Alcohol Deaths	Youth Death < Diff >	Alcohol % of Youth Deaths	
1979	91	32	59	35.2%	69	23	46	33.3%	9	71.9%	
1980	88	18	70	20.5%	64	8	56	12.5%	10	44.4%	
1981	100	25	75	25.0%	76	23	53	30.3%	2	92.0%	
1982	107	9	98	8.4%	54	9	45	16.7%	0	100.0%	
1983	150	45	105	30.0%	64	15	49	23.4%	30	33.3%	
1984	137	37	100	27.0%	70	14	56	20.0%	23	37.8%	
1985	127	30	97	23.6%	69	14	55	20.3%	16	46.7%	
1986	101	14	87	13.9%	50	6	44	12.0%	8	42.9%	
1987	76	17	59	22.4%	44	7	37	15.9%	10	41.2%	
1988	97	22	75	22.7%	48	6	42	12.5%	16	27.3%	
1989	84	12	72	14.3%	46	8	38	17.4%	4	66.7%	
1990	98	8	90	8.2%	48	3	45	6.3%	5	37.5%	
1991	101	16	85	15.8%	50	9	41	18.0%	7	56.3%	
1992	108	25	83	23.1%	61	10	51	16.4%	15	40.0%	
1993	118	34	84	28.8%	49	10	39	20.4%	24	29.4%	
Total	1583	344	1,239	21.7%	862	165	697	19.1%	179	48.0%	

YOUTH CRASH STATISTICS ~ 1979 thru 1993

Year	FATAL YOUTH CRASHES				ALCOHOL-RELATED					
	Total Crashes	Youth Crashes	< Diff >	% Total Crashes	Total Alcohol Crashes	Youth Alcohol Crashes	Alcohol < Diff >	Youth % of Total Alcohol Crashes	Youth Crash < Diff >	Alcohol % of Youth Crashes
1979	81	28	53	34.6%	45	19	26	42.2%	9	67.9%
1980	79	15	64	19.0%	43	7	36	16.3%	8	46.7%
1981	90	19	71	21.1%	50	17	33	34.0%	2	89.5%
1982	98	9	89	9.2%	54	9	45	16.7%	0	100.0%
1983	135	40	95	29.6%	53	13	40	24.5%	27	32.5%
1984	123	37	86	30.1%	61	14	47	23.0%	23	37.8%
1985	107	27	80	25.2%	58	12	46	20.7%	15	44.4%
1986	89	14	75	15.7%	46	5	41	10.9%	9	35.7%
1987	70	15	55	21.4%	40	6	34	15.0%	9	40.0%
1988	86	20	66	23.3%	43	6	37	14.0%	14	30.0%
1989	79	11	68	13.9%	44	7	37	15.9%	4	63.6%
1990	92	8	84	8.7%	47	3	44	6.4%	5	37.5%
1991	90	13	77	14.4%	45	7	38	15.6%	6	53.8%
1992	89	21	68	23.6%	50	9	41	18.0%	12	42.9%
1993	88	28	60	31.8%	37	9	28	24.3%	19	32.1%
Total	1,396	305	1,091	21.8%	716	143	573	20.0%	162	46.9%

1993 DRIVERS IN TRAFFIC CRASHES

Age Group	1993 Licensed Drivers	% Of Licensed Drivers	1993 Crash Drivers	% Represented in Total Crashes
< 16	1	0.0%	75	0.3%
16-20	24,310	6.2%	3,257	12.8%
21-25	41,861	10.6%	3,195	12.6%
26-30	48,780	12.4%	2,919	11.5%
31-35	57,756	14.7%	3,123	12.3%
36-40	58,506	14.9%	2,902	11.4%
41-45	50,586	12.8%	2,416	9.5%
46-50	37,471	9.5%	1,622	6.4%
51-55	25,819	6.6%	1,094	4.3%
56-60	17,226	4.4%	733	2.9%
61-65	12,396	3.1%	490	1.9%
66-70	8,979	2.3%	370	1.5%
71 +	10,236	2.6%	439	1.7%
Unknown	4	0.0%	2,740	10.8%
Totals	393,931	100.0%	25,375	100.0%

A New Course for DRIVER'S ED

Teaching teens how to steer and stop was the primary focus of driver training programs for a quarter-century. Today, they emphasize decision-making.

Driver education has long been the butt of many a joke. When Mary Sue Terry campaigned for governor of Virginia a few years ago, she was fond of saying that her hometown was so small that driver ed and sex ed were taught in the same car. And it seems as though every baby boomer can recall a stout football coach screaming into a bullhorn and chasing after the one student who couldn't get his white Ford out of reverse until every orange cone in the high school parking lot had been flattened into the gravel.

These days, driver education is less an object of ridicule, but that's because fewer people are taking it.

At the peak of DE's popularity a generation ago, 14,000 high schools in all but

a few states were teaching more than 2 million student drivers each year. However, its effectiveness wasn't evaluated until 1975, when federal transportation officials undertook a longitudinal study of 15,000 student drivers in DeKalb County, Georgia.

Periodic project reports indicated that not only did DE courses appear to have little positive impact on safety but they might actually be harmful to students, who often became overconfident in their driving ability and exercised less caution. Parents of those taking driver education also tended to spend less time practicing with their children and were more likely to let them drive at night—a key factor in accidents.

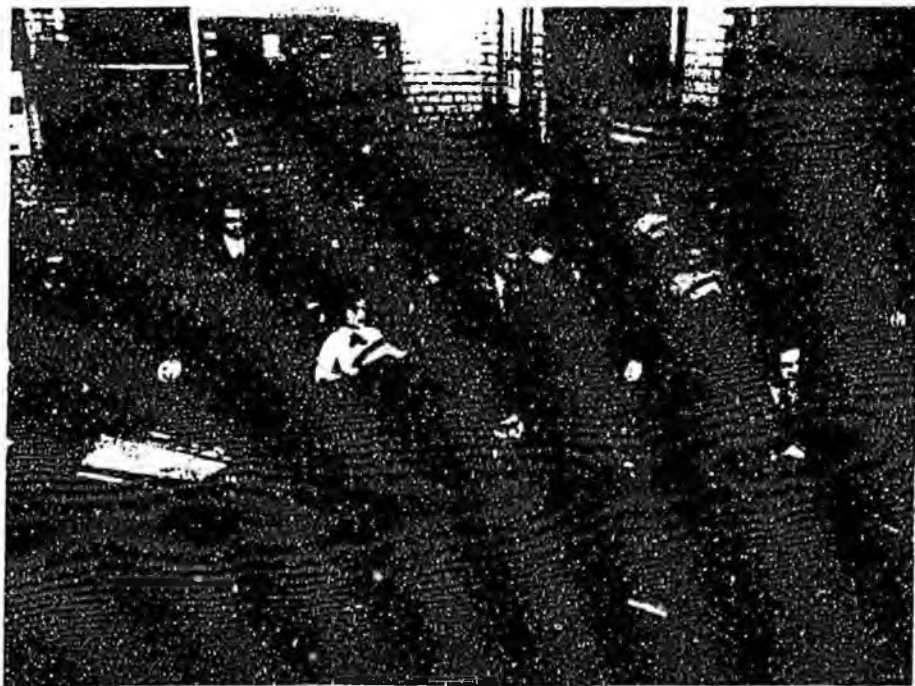
Given this evidence, as well as the

expense associated with the programs, DE was an easy target when states went looking to trim budgets during the early-1950s recession. Since then, nearly 20 states have removed DE from licensing requirements, and about half of all school districts dropped the courses after losing state funding for them. Many of those that still require driver education have modified it—keeping classroom instruction, for instance, while reducing or eliminating on-road training—or left it up to the private sector to offer courses.

But pointing to recent statistics that show the overwhelming cause of teen accidents is driver error, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety have begun a crusade to resurrect driver education. "When you realize that 40 percent of 16-year-old males have been involved in police-reported crashes, it is obvious that something needs to be done," says Stephanie Faul of the FTS.

Even if that figure seems disputable, citizens and policy makers alike are well aware that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15- to 20-year-olds, and few would disagree with Faul's conclusion. Of course, there are no simple answers to the problem. But the current angle of attack focuses on implementing driver training courses that place as much emphasis on reducing risky behavior as on perfecting parallel parking.

The first National Conference on High School Driver Education, which convened in 1949, recommended that students receive 30 hours of classroom learning and six hours of driving instruction. This formula is still the norm across the nation, even though



Driving simulators, with roadways shown on a movie screen, once taught teenagers how to operate a car. But that's only one facet of safe driving.

safety experts say nearly 5,000 miles of driving experience are necessary for a student to become an "average" driver. And the textbooks used in DE courses—typically a summary of the state's driving laws, not a handbook for safer driving—have come under fire as well.

"DE has had its problems," acknowledges Allen Robinson, president of the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association. "The way it was taught was not done correctly." Indeed, learning

Although his bill was "dismissed" at the subcommittee level, Haskins is determined to rekindle the issue next year.

In Nebraska, state Senator LaVon Crosby proposed a study of driver safety and DE after a string of accidents last spring resulted in teen fatalities. DE is not mandatory or publicly funded in Nebraska, so students are responsible for paying for a course if they want the training. "Teens are not getting the right kind of education about driving," Crosby says, "and driver's

keep an unrestricted license, a driver must be 17 and not cause an accident or be ticketed for a moving violation for at least six months. "This makes Michigan the leader in the nation in comprehensive driver's training," declared Representative Dan Gustafson, as the bill he sponsored was signed into law.

Kentucky, which began a graduated licensing program October 1, requires all new drivers to practice with a permit for six months, up from 30 days. Permit-holders can only drive when accompanied by a licensed adult over 21, and they are banned from driving between midnight and 6 a.m., except to or from work or school or in emergencies. The new law also has a zero-tolerance provision related to blood-alcohol levels and requires all students to take a four-hour safety course or high school DE by age 15.

Several states have seen marked results from graduated licensing laws. California, Oregon and Maryland all have reported decreases of between 5 and 16 percent in crashes involving teens after their programs began. Still, the new approach is not without its detractors.

Last year, Virginia's General Assembly reviewed a study of graduated licensing in other states. The report concluded that such programs were effective in reducing teen accidents, and recommended a minimal crash-free period before a full license is issued. However, Richard Holcomb, the Department of Motor Vehicles commissioner, strongly opposed graduated licensing as an intrusion upon parents' right to regulate their own children. The graduated licensing bill that lawmakers passed this spring became law without the governor's signature.

In a separate effort to curb teen crashes, Virginia lowered the minimum age for a driving permit from 15 years, eight months to 15. The idea was to give students more time to practice driving with adult supervision before they obtain their full licenses. But while acknowledging the good intentions of the measure, some question why the additional hands-on-the-wheel experience needs to come at the younger end of the driver-training spectrum, when students are less mature.

George Hensel, owner of the California Driving School, believes that raising the age for unrestricted licenses—as Michigan did—is the most important step in improving teen driving safety. In fact, he would not allow his daughter to get her license until she turned 15. □

ABOUT A DOZEN STATES HAVE GRADUATED LICENSING PROGRAMS, WHICH EXTEND THE TIME IT TAKES TO QUALIFY FOR FULL DRIVING PRIVILEGES.

how to operate a car is only one facet of overall training, addressing teenagers' inexperience, inattention and sense of invincibility is now widely considered to be an even more fundamental issue.

Michael F. Smith, a research psychologist at the NHTSA who authored a 1994 report for Congress about DE, notes that teens are more likely than other drivers to speed, run red lights, make illegal turns and tailgate. They also perceive that they have less to lose by engaging in reckless behavior and more to gain in the way of peer approval. He believes that DE should focus on two objectives: improving the skills teens use to estimate risk and reducing teens' willingness to take risks.

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, which aims to "reinvent" DE, has distributed a model curriculum outline to lawmakers and educators. Recommended reforms include less emphasis on mechanics such as turning and traffic laws. Instead, safety issues—identifying a safe distance between cars, road hazards and vehicle defects, as well as speeding and driving while intoxicated—are given equal weight.

Although states have yet to make sweeping revisits to driver education, legislators are showing increased interest in providing better ways to introduce young drivers to the skill. At least 14 states considered DE-related bills this year.

A measure introduced by state Representative Terry Haskins of South Carolina, for example, would have required 16-year-olds to take a DE course in order to obtain a license, as is the case in half of the states. But "there was not enough of a feeling that this is something we should do," he says.

ed is a big part of understanding safety."

The most interesting legislative activity occurred this fall when Michigan repealed its requirement that public schools provide DE classes. But the move was not as against the grain as it might seem. While achieving their goal of reducing education mandates, lawmakers changed the letter but not the spirit of the state's driver training law: Students must still take lessons in order to obtain a license.

Starting next April, schools that offer the service will get an \$50-per-driver reimbursement from the state, but are responsible for making up the difference—roughly \$100—until 1995. At that point, while local schools must match the state's contribution, they can charge students a fee to cover the remaining cost of the program. In places that scrap DE, students can receive an \$50 voucher from the state to offset a portion of the cost of private driver training.

In the same bill, Michigan followed the lead of about a dozen other states that have implemented "graduated" licensing programs, which extend the amount of time it takes to qualify for full driving privileges. Michigan's three-tier process begins with a learner's permit for those at least 14 years, nine months old. They must take a training course with road instruction, pass written and vision exams, and cannot drive without an adult.

At age 16, a restricted license can be issued after students complete at least 50 hours of driving with a parent (including 10 hours at night) and pass a road test. Driving unaccompanied between midnight and 5 a.m. unless commuting to or from a job is prohibited.

Finally—and most notably—to get and



Adolescent Health Research Updates

Supplement to the Adolescent Health Plan

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Research Updates are periodically distributed from the Alaska Adolescent Health Advisory Committee (AHAC). AHAC believes that effective planning for the health of Alaska's adolescents should have a strong scientific basis. *Alaska's Adolescents: A Plan for the Future*, the 1994 publication by AHAC, was the product of the committee's review of research related to adolescent health at that time. In order to stay current with new information, AHAC continually reviews research dealing with a broad range of adolescent health topics. Summary reports are prepared by AHAC members for distribution to people interested in teen health, especially those who use *Alaska's Adolescents* as a guide for their efforts in the field. Feedback about the usefulness of these updates would be welcomed.

Unintentional Injury Among Adolescents

Injury is crippling our youth. Both national and state statistics report its toll.^{1,2,3} Nationally, each year more lives are lost to injury than to all combined causes of death during the entire Vietnam war.¹ In Alaska, as in the nation, injury is the leading cause of death among youth aged 10-19.² Young people today die mainly as a result of injury from contact with vehicles, alcohol and firearms.²

What could prevent these deaths? There are many strategies that have been shown to prevent injury deaths. The licensing of all-terrain vehicle (ATV) users, curfews, helmet use, and the enforcement of alcohol laws are examples of effective means of saving lives.⁴

Injuries are considered either intentional (e.g., assaults, homicide, suicide) or unintentional (e.g., motor vehicle & bicycle crashes, drowning). Because subsequent reports will address violence and suicide, this report will focus on unintentional injury. Research on injury prevention demonstrates that unintentional injuries are predictable and preventable. The term "accident" is not used because it implies that the incident is unavoidable.

percent of high school students admit to drinking while driving in the 1995 YRBS. (21)

Costs

While the U.S. Congress continues to limit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) budget to study injury, the costs of injury to the U.S. public continue to rise. In Alaska, the cost of each hospital stay for each motorcycle injury patient who was not wearing a helmet is about \$27,000. Motor vehicle patients who were not wearing seat belts cost \$18,000. each.⁹ National figures show that 60% of motorcycle injuries associated with no helmet use are paid by Medicaid.¹ That means that the private decision to take risk comes right out of the public's pocket.¹

Injury Prevention

Approaches to injury prevention have evolved from faulting the victims to applying the public health disease model. The most recent approach involves "the 3 E's" of education/behavior, engineering/technology, and enforcement/legislation. Research has shown that in general, the engineering approach is more effective than the enforcement approach, and that education has been least effective.² Modifying the environment of individuals—through engineering or public policy—seems to be the most successful way to reduce the greatest number of injuries.

Ten years ago Frederick Rivara published a report that outlined the means for preventing injury to children.¹⁰ Although it reflects what we know about effective injury prevention, the methods have not been consistently employed. What seems to be lacking is political will. Actions that can prevent a third of the deaths among children are not being taken.

This section summarizes what is known about prevention strategies for the three major causes of death among teens in Alaska: vehicles, drownings, and guns.

Vehicle Injury

Vehicle injury is the most thoroughly studied as well as the most frequent cause of death. Fortunately, it is very clear that the following approaches all would reduce the incidence of vehicle injury:

- 1) increase in the price of alcohol (tax)⁴
- 2) curfews (that eliminate the dangerous driving hours)⁴
- 3) use of motorcycle helmets⁴
- 4) use of bicycle helmets⁴
- 5) use of seat belts⁴
- 6) decrease in speed limits (the recent national increase is expected to cause at least 4000 more deaths each year)⁴
- 7) decrease of legal blood alcohol level¹¹
- 8) delay of licensing and/or provisional licensing¹¹
- 9) graduated licensing²⁷
- 10) community based, coordinated, comprehensive programs to alter social norms in all age groups.¹¹

Research shows the following does not work:

- 1) driver education programs (which, instead, seem to put inadequately trained teens onto the highways earlier)¹
- 2) alcohol education programs alone, without license suspension following DWI convictions.⁴

In Alaska, the impact of ATV and snowmachine use is also significant. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends drivers be licensed for snowmachines.¹² The National Committee for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) recommends age and use controls on ATV's.⁴ Alaska injury prevention experts also recommend the use of helmets for snowmobiles and ATV's.²⁰

Drowning

Drownings represent almost 25% of unintentional deaths in Alaska. What would prevent them includes:

- 1) use of personal flotation devices (PFDs)⁴
- 2) laws, with funding for enforcement, requiring the use of PFDs⁴
- 3) blood alcohol laws applied to boating.⁴

Guns

Guns are a major factor in both unintentional and intentional injury. It is difficult to separate the research on violence, guns and unintentional injury because the studies often include suicide, homicide and "accidents". What is clear is that the states that have the most guns, have the most injuries from guns.¹³ Detroit has more gun deaths per capita than Northern Ireland during its worst IRA troubles.¹ According to national researchers, at least half of our homes have firearms.¹⁷ Half of