

ALASKA LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE FILES, 2003-2004 80/2

10920 HOUSE LABOR & COMMERCE

Two important *exceptions* to the Provisional License law:

- A driver with a Provisional License may be eligible for a work permit so that they can drive to or from work or drive during the scope of their employment.
- Driver's issued permits or licenses under the DMV's hardship or off-systems licensing programs are in no way affected by the GDL licensing provisions.

The Graduated Driver's License is a means for the young driver to gain experience on the road while minimizing risks. As the driver gains experience, the provisions are gradually lifted and the youth is eligible for an unrestricted driver's license.

Since the National Transportation Safety Board adopted its graduated driver licensing recommendations in 1993, states have dramatically modified their driver licensing practices. Since 1993, the 38 states that have adopted comprehensive GDL licensing systems have reported significant reductions in fatality rates of teen drivers and passengers. In California, teen passenger deaths and injuries when 16-year olds are behind the wheel dropped 21 % statewide in 1998 and 1999. These results come two years after passage of California's GDL. Florida, which adopted GDL in 1997, saw a drop of 21 % in the rate teens are involved in accidents.

Research published in October 2001 from Michigan and North Carolina, two states with comprehensive laws that include both an extended learners' permit phase and a nighttime driving restriction reaffirms the effectiveness of graduated licensing. In Michigan, research shows that 16-year olds were 25% less likely to get into a crash; in North Carolina, the risk of a crash dropped by 23 %. Further, in North Carolina, nighttime crashes involving 16 year olds declined by 43% and fatal crashes dropped by 57 %.

~ Give them the time to learn to drive ~

The goal is to limit teen exposure to risky driving situations during their first few months of licensure, a time when their crash rates are extremely high. Parents indicate strong support for GDL and for the specific restrictions. Graduated licensing will save young lives in Alaska, guaranteed!

* In 1997, with passage of HB 11, Alaska adopted a mandatory 6-month learner's permit for drivers under 18 yrs old.

Contact: Linda Sylvester
465-4963

Updated: January 28, 2004

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State DOT
Yanicie, W

Table A.7.1
2000 Alaska Traffic Accidents
by Age and Injury Severity

AGE	NUMBER OF PERSONS				TOTAL
	No Injuries	Minor Injury	Major Injury	Fatal	
Unknown	6,546	183	5	-	6,734
Under 4	789	57	7	3	856
4 - 10	1,299	232	15	2	1,548
11 - 15	1,161	269	22	3	1,455
16 - 20	5,983	692	24	12	6,710
21 - 25	3,097	691	48	7	3,843
26 - 30	2,445	551	36	10	3,042
31 - 35	2,161	444	38	5	2,648
36 - 40	2,532	543	44	6	3,125
41 - 45	2,455	453	36	7	2,951
46 - 50	1,948	439	33	15	2,435
51 - 55	1,496	301	7	5	1,809
56 - 60	952	181	15	3	1,151
61 - 64	462	97	15	-	574
65 - 70	457	104	8	3	572
71 - 74	254	45	3	2	304
75 - 80	256	53	10	4	323
81 - 85	98	23	-	4	125
Over 85	52	17	1	1	71
ALL AGES	33,443	5,704	416	106	39,669

Table A.7.2
Persons Involved in 2000 Alaska Traffic Accidents
by Month and Injury Severity

MONTH	NUMBER OF PERSONS				TOTAL
	No Injuries	Minor Injury	Major Injury	Fatal	
January	4,982	692	24	12	5,710
February	3,262	437	34	7	3,740
March	3,047	425	41	3	3,516
April	1,663	282	23	6	1,974
May	1,835	435	33	7	2,310
June	2,240	491	35	13	2,779
July	2,566	545	55	14	3,180
August	2,496	520	42	10	3,068
September	2,431	498	30	8	2,967
October	2,815	395	31	8	3,249
November	2,856	486	29	5	3,376
December	3,250	498	39	13	3,800
ALL YEAR	33,443	5,704	416	106	39,669

Instant Survey Results

Rep. Bruce Weyhrauch



**Thanks for taking
my survey.**

Your answers have been tallied

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire. Your responses will help my fellow legislators and I serve you better. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact me at the link here. [Send E-Mail](#).

Residence?

in District 4	41	42.71
outside District 4	15	15.62
Outside Juneau area	40	41.67
Total Answers = 96		

Are you a licensed driver?

Yes	95	97.94
No	2	2.06
Total Answers = 97		

Gender?

Male	30	31.25
Female	66	68.75
Total Answers = 96		

Age?

under 18	5	5.21
19 - 25	1	1.04

26 - 30 8 8.33
over 30 82 85.42
Total Answers = 96

Do you believe new drivers get better with driving experience?

Yes 92 96.84
No 2 2.11
Not Sure 1 1.05
Total Answers = 95

Do you believe teenage passengers are safer if their teenage driver has at least a minimum amount of driving experience?

Yes 89 92.71
No 5 5.21
Not Sure 2 2.08
Total Answers = 96

Do you believe a teenager is safer driver if no other teenage passengers are in the vehicle?

Yes 85 87.63
No 7 7.22
Not Sure 5 5.15
Total Answers = 97

Do you believe inexperienced teenage drivers should be restricted from driving between 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m.?

Yes 85 87.63
No 7 7.22
Not Sure 5 5.15
Total Answers = 97

Would a provisional drivers license help parents reinforce safe driving habits and limitations on driving for teenage drivers?

Yes 83 86.46
No 4 4.17
Not Sure 9 9.38
Total Answers = 96

If a provisional license law was written to allow exceptions to work related driving between 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. and allowed carrying minor passengers who were siblings, would you support the general restrictions on newly licensed teen drivers while they gain driving experience?

Yes	84	86.60
No	7	7.22
Not Sure	6	6.19

Total Answers = 97

Even though it might place additional training responsibility on parents, would you support the provisional drivers license concept if it would substantially reduce the number of teenage auto accidents, injuries, and deaths as it has done in other states?

Yes	91	93.81
No	2	2.06
Not Sure	4	4.12

Total Answers = 97

Free form text entries are recorded, but not displayed.

Statutory & Regulatory Basis for the Hardship and "Off-System" License.

I. Division of Motor Vehicles issues a "hardship license" under the authority of AS 28.15.051(e)

Sec. 28.15.051. Instruction permit, temporary driver's license and special driver's permit.

(e) Notwithstanding other provisions of this chapter, the department may issue a special driver's license to a person who is under the age of 16 years because of the circumstances of hardship. Special licenses to be issued because of hardship shall be determined on an individual basis by the commissioner.

Regulations that implement AS 28.15.051(e)

13 AAC 08.355. Special driver's license (hardship license)

Statute text

(a) Because of death, incapacitating illness or injury or other unique conditions in the immediate family, a special driver's license will, in the department's discretion, be issued to a person between 14 and 16 years of age who must drive a motor vehicle to

(1) prevent financial hardship for the person's family; or

(2) transport an ill or disabled family member.

(b) A special license issued under this provision will expire on the licensee's date of birth as provided in AS 28.15.101(a), or sooner if the reasons for issuing the special license are not longer sufficient.

(c) A letter requesting a special license must be signed by the applicant's parent or guardian, specify the conditions of hardship, and indicate for what period of time the special license is necessary.

(d) An applicant for a special license must meet all requirements for a regular driver's license, with the exception of age.

II. The "off-system" license is issued under the authority of AS 28.15.121

Sec. 28.15.121. Restricted driver's license.

(a) The department, upon issuing a driver's license, may for good cause impose restrictions suitable to the licensee's driving ability with respect to special mechanical control devices required on a motor vehicle that the licensee drives. The department may impose other restrictions applicable to the licensee that it determines to be appropriate to assure the safe operation of a motor vehicle by the licensee.

(b) The department may issue a special restricted license or may set out restrictions on the usual license form.

. 28.05.011. Duty of commissioners to adopt regulations.

State of Alaska Division of Motor Vehicles Standard Operating Procedures	SOP No. D-76	Page No. 1 of 2
	Effective November 13, 2003	
Subject: OFF SYSTEMS RESTRICTION	Supersedes	Dated 1/1/03
	Approved	
Statute: AS 28.15.121	Regulation: 13 AAC 08.330	Form No.

An Alaska license can be issued to a person who has met the requirements for a license, with the exception of the performance (road) test. The license is restricted with either a "6" for a non-commercial license or a "7" for a CDL. (C-150) The license is commonly referred to as an "Off Systems License", although it is not actually a type of license but rather a restriction on a valid license. A driver with an off-systems restriction may only operate the class of vehicle shown on the license in areas of the state that are not connected to:

- the land highway or vehicular way to the land-connected State highway system or
- a highway with an average daily traffic volume greater than 499.

The residence address should be the physical address where the person is actually living. The "off-systems" status is indicated by the restriction code regardless of where a person lives.

Tests: Knowledge and Vision tests

Fee: Normal fee for that class of license (D-43)

Requirements: The individual must meet the requirements for the class of license to be issued, except for the performance (road) test.

Procedures: Licenses with a restriction code of 6 are normally issued by Juneau Driver Licensing (JDL). See Appendix D for address information.

Applicants will be given information stating how the license with this type of restriction can be used and what is needed to remove the restriction. (See example below)

NOTE: Upon request a license with an "Off System" restriction with a photo may be issued in place of a valid without photo license. The applicant must apply in person, pass a vision test, surrender the license without the photo and pay the duplicate license fee. (D-43)

*****NOTICE*****NOTICE*****

RESTRICTION: OFF SYSTEM LICENSE ONLY
THIS LICENSE IS VALID ONLY IN AREAS NOT
CONNECTED TO THE LAND HIGHWAY
SYSTEM OR TO A HIGHWAY WITH AN
AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC VOLUME GREATER
THAN 499. YOU MUST SUCCESSFULLY PASS
A ROAD TEST TO REMOVE THE RESTRICTION.

State of Alaska Division of Motor Vehicles Standard Operating Procedures	SOP No. D-76	Page No. 2 of 2
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REMOVING AN OFF-SYSTEMS RESTRICTION:

When a person with an off-systems restriction wishes to drive in an area of the state not covered by the off-systems license, they must do one of the following:

- 1) Obtain a permit. (D-70) A knowledge test is not required, as they met this requirement prior to issuance of the license with the off-systems restriction.
- 2) To remove the restriction the applicant must satisfactorily complete the performance (road) test for that class of license. They will then be photographed and the "6" will be removed from the license. Use the function for a duplicate license and charge the current fee. The expiration date remains the same.

Cross Reference:

Appendix D DMV Addresses

D-43 License Fees

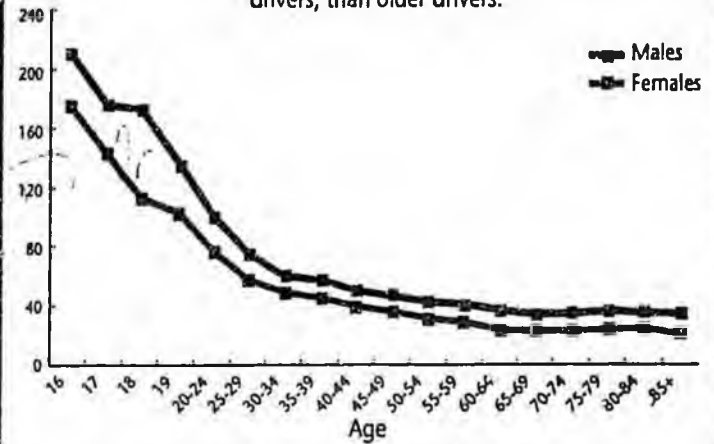
D-70 Class IP & IE – Instruction Permits for Vehicles

C-150 CDL Off-Systems

THE
FOLLOWING
DOCUMENT(S)
ARE
POOR
ORIGINAL
COPIES

ACCIDENTS PER 1,000 LICENSED DRIVERS, 2000

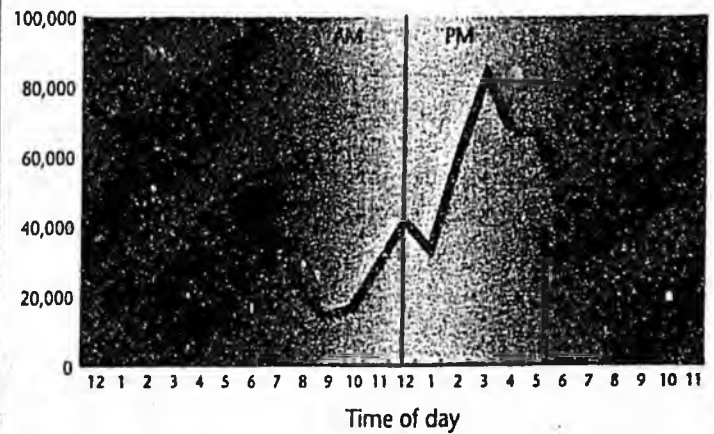
Teenagers, 16 to 18, are involved in more crashes per 1,000 licensed drivers, than older drivers.



Source: Journal of Safety Research, Vol. 34, No.1, National Safety Council, 2003.

WHEN CAR ACCIDENTS ARE LIKELY TO HAPPEN TO TEENS

Sixteen- to 17-year-olds are involved in more crashes between the hours of midnight and 5 a.m. than during daytime hours.



Source: Journal of Safety Research, Vol. 34, No.1, National Safety Council, 2003.

GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSING LAWS

States have been passing laws that ease teens into driving. The three important components of these GDL laws are:

1. A learner permit for at least six months.
 2. A required amount of supervised driving.
 3. An intermediate permit restricting night driving.
- Many states also limit the number of passengers.

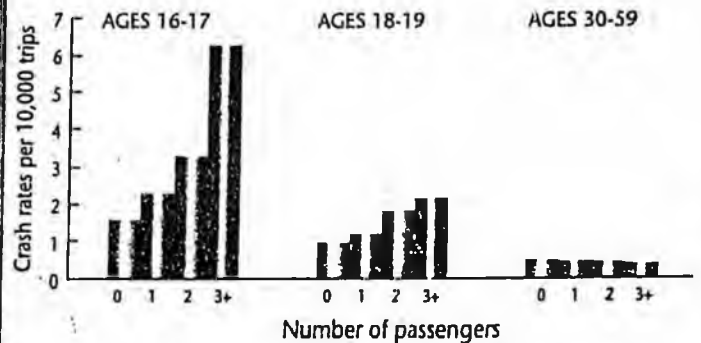


- One component
- Two components
- All three components
- ◇ Passenger restrictions

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures, December 2002

TEEN DRIVING WITH PASSENGERS

For teen drivers, the presence of passengers results in higher crash rates per 10,000 trips. As the number of passengers increase, so does the accident rate.



Source: Journal of Safety Research, Vol. 34, No.1, National Safety Council, 2003.



COMPARISON OF YOUNG AND ADULT DRIVER
CRASHES IN ALASKA USING LINKED TRAFFIC CRASH
AND HOSPITAL DATA

Martha Moore

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
Community Health and Emergency Medical Services
P.O. Box 110616
Juneau AK 99801

COMPARISON OF YOUNG AND ADULT DRIVER CRASHES IN ALASKA USING LINKED TRAFFIC CRASH AND HOSPITAL DATA

ABSTRACT

This report describes the most serious young driver crashes in Alaska for the period 1991 through 1995. Rates, characteristics, and medical and financial out-comes of young driver crashes are compared with that of adult driver crashes. This research project demonstrates the usefulness of data linkage in crash research. Using the Mini Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System (MINICODES), trauma registry hospital discharge data were linked with traffic crash records. The data were analyzed to compare drivers aged 16-20 with drivers aged 21-50 who were involved in a crash resulting in the hospitalization or death of a crash victim. The CrashCost Program was used to estimate costs associated with young driver crashes for the five years.

Young drivers were 2.9 times more likely than adult drivers to be involved in crashes that resulted in the hospitalization of a crash victim, and 2.6 times more likely to be involved in a crash involving a fatality. Human factors were recorded as contributing factors for 68.2% of the young drivers, compared with 55.5% of the adult drivers ($P < .0001$). The highest hospital charge averages were those incurred by the victims of motor-cycle crashes. Total costs associated with the young driver crashes were estimated to be over \$300 million, which resulted in a cost per young licensed driver that was 3.4 times the cost per adult licensed driver.

INTRODUCTION

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for young people in the United States aged 15 to 20 years. National statistics reveal that teen drivers are disproportionately involved in crashes. In 1995, young drivers aged 15 to 20 years comprised only 6.7% of the driving population, yet they accounted for 14% of the drivers involved in fatal crashes and 17% of the drivers in police-reported crashes. The losses these crashes represent in terms of human suffering are vast and difficult to quantify. The financial toll has been estimated at \$31 billion annually (1).

There are a number of factors that impact the driving performances of teens including age, inexperience, supervised driving, and night driving. An examination of the

effects of the different state laws on 15-17 year old driver fatality rates found that the minimum legal driving age and curfew laws had the greatest impact on driver fatality rates (2). Delayed full licensure age, night driving curfews, and supervised driving have all been shown to be effective in mitigating the high crash rate among 16 year olds. In upstate New York, however, where a combination of these strategies are employed, crash involvement rates remained low through age 24, compared with the other northeastern states studied (3).

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recommends that states adopt a graduated licensing system that combines delayed full-privilege licensure, supervised driving, and night driving curfews. An evaluation of the effectiveness of New Zealand's graduated licensing system, in place since 1987, reveals a 23% reduction in crash injuries for the 15 to 19 year old population (4). Eleven states now have some form of graduated licensing. Evaluations of graduated licensing in California, Maryland, and Oregon demonstrated a 5-16% reduction in young driver crashes (5).

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Alaskans aged 16 through 20 and cause almost 50% of the unintentional injury deaths for this age group. Drivers in this age range were involved in 13.1% of police-reported crashes in Alaska during the period 1991 through 1995 while they accounted for only 6.3% of licensed drivers in the state. The crash rate of drivers aged 16 through 20 from 1991 through 1995 was 135.9 crashes per 1,000 drivers, which was 2.4 times the crash rate of drivers aged 21 through 50 (56.9 per 1,000 drivers).

Among 16 through 20 year old drivers, the crash rate in Alaska decreased each year to age 20. The crash rate of 17 year old drivers was 24% lower than that of 16 year old drivers; the 18 year old driver crash rate was 22% lower than that of 17 year old drivers; the 19 year old driver crash rate was 21% lower than that of 18 year old drivers; and, the 20 year old driver crash rate was 12% lower than that of 19 year old drivers.

The purpose of this study is to describe the most severe young driver crashes in Alaska, between 1991 and 1995, in terms of rates, characteristics, and medical and financial outcomes; to make comparisons between youth driver crashes and adult driver crashes; and, to demonstrate the usefulness of data linkage in crash research.

METHODS

Computerized crash records from the Highway Analysis System (HAS) for 1991 through 1995 were obtained from Alaska's Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. This system contains information on motor vehicle crashes on a trafficway, either recorded by police or self-reported. Alaska law requires that any motor vehicle crash which results in death, injury, or property damage of \$500 or more must be reported to the Alaska Department of Public Safety. Data include passenger demographics, type of vehicle, type of crash, contributing factors, type of injury, and body region injured. There are up to two contributing factors listed per driver involved in a crash, recorded by the enforcement officer. They fall into four main categories: human error, roadway conditions, environmental elements, and vehicle defects.

Hospital discharge data were extracted from the Alaska Trauma Registry, also for 1991 through 1995. The trauma registry is a statewide information system housed in the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, which includes detailed data on all injury hospitalizations in the state. Alaska's trauma registry is somewhat unique in that trauma data are collected from all Alaskan acute care hospitals, of which there are 24, and are collected on all patients admitted for 24 hours or more. Data include patient demographics, ambulance service transport and treatment, hospital treatment and length of stay, diagnosis, injury severity, discharge status, charges, and payer billed.

In order to associate circumstances of crashes with corresponding injury outcomes, crash records and trauma registry records were linked using the Mini Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System (MINICODES), developed by the National Association of Governor's Highway Safety Representatives (NAGHSR) with the support of NHTSA. This software relies on a probabilistic linkage methodology which is particularly useful with data that lack identifiers or may contain incomplete or erroneous information. The methodology has been extensively tested and has demonstrated high precision matching (6).

Trauma registry records were considered for linkage by virtue of an external cause of injury code (E Code) in the range 810.0-816.9 and 819.0-819.9, motor vehicle traffic collision injury. E Codes are a coding system within the International Classification of Diseases, 9th Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-9-CM), which are routinely entered into the Trauma Registry for each trauma patient. The identifiers used for linkage of the two databases were sex, age, birthdate, geographic region, and probable hospital admission date and time. Additional variables were used to review questionable matches. They consisted of vehicle type, crash type, residence city, crash city, position of injured person in vehicle, anatomical location of injury, and the injury description.

Only the most serious crashes were considered for study, i.e. those involving the hospitalization or death of a crash participant. A hospital crash refers to any motor vehicle traffic crash resulting in at least one victim of the crash admitted to a hospital for 24 hours or more. A fatal crash refers to any motor vehicle traffic crash resulting in at least one fatality. A fatality is defined as a death that occurs as a direct result of a motor vehicle crash within 30 days of the injury or during an acute care hospital stay if the patient was originally hospitalized within 30 days of the injury.

Through linkage of traffic crash data with trauma registry data, two populations were identified for study: drivers in crashes and victims of crashes. Drivers were divided into two groups, those aged 16 through 20 who are referred to as young drivers, and those aged 21 through 50, referred to as adult drivers. These two age groups were used for comparison to avoid the introduction of older drivers who are involved in crash patterns unique to their group. The victims of the crashes were described in terms of outcome, hospital charge payment source, and costs. The victims were also divided into two groups, those who were victims of young driver crashes and those who were victims of adult driver crashes.

Safety equipment consists of safety belts, safety belts with harnesses, child safety seats, and helmets. Alcohol involvement is recorded as a contributing factor on the police record if alcohol use is confirmed by a test or suspected. Disability is defined as the expectation that the patient will never be able to return to his or her pre-injury level of function in the judgement of the trauma registrar collecting the information from the medical record file.

Average hospital charges per crash victim were calculated using available trauma registry data. Because not all of the hospitals release this information, hospital charges are missing on about 50% of the trauma registry patients. More inclusive cost estimates were derived using the CrashCost Program obtained from NHTSA. This software program estimates the economic costs of motor vehicle crashes, including direct medical expenses, direct "other" expenses and indirect costs. The CrashCost program also accounts for unreported crashes and adjusts for locality and current economics (7).

The CrashCost estimates were based on Alaska specific data on the number of crash fatalities and the number of patients identified with an Abbreviated Injury Scale (AIS) score of four (severe injury) or five (critical injury). Injuries of an AIS of three or less are not adequately tracked by the trauma registry since only patients admitted to the hospital for one or more days are entered into the database. Therefore, the national ratio based estimates from the CrashCost Program were used to estimate the number of these less severe injuries.

RESULTS

A total of 3,158 trauma registry records were considered for linkage with traffic records, resulting in 2,183 matches, or a 69.1% matching success rate. The linked trauma registry records were compared with the unlinked records to see if the linked records were representative of the unlinked records. There were no significant differences between the groups in sex and age, however, there were significant differences relating to geographic location of crash and type of crash. The crashes among the linked trauma registry records occurred more often in the urban areas (Anchorage, Fairbanks, the Kenai Peninsula, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and Juneau) ($p < .0001$). There was a significantly smaller percentage of Alaska Natives in this group than in the unlinked data group ($p < .0001$). The mean injury severity was greater among the linked records than among the unlinked records ($p < .05$). The linked data also included less pedestrian injuries ($p < .0001$) and more driver injuries ($p < .0001$) than the unlinked data.

Drivers

Linkage of traffic crash data with trauma registry data resulted in 2,508 drivers identified for their involvement in hospital and fatal crashes: 488 young drivers and 2,020 adult drivers. A comparison of crash involvement rates of young and adult drivers, annualized over the five-year period, is shown in Table 1. Young drivers were 2.9 times more likely to be involved in crashes that resulted in the hospitalization of a crash victim, and 2.6 times more likely to be involved in a crash involving a fatality.

Table 1.
Annualized Young and Adult Driver Involvement Rates in Hospital and Fatal Crashes, Alaska, 1991-1995

	Young Drivers (Age 16-20) N=488		Adult Drivers (Age 21-50) N=2,020		Rate Ratio
	N	Rate*	N	Rate*	
Hospital Crash Involvement	408	3.15	1,659	1.10	2.86
Fatal Crash Involvement	80	0.617	361	0.240	2.57

The young and adult drivers in hospital and fatal crashes are compared in Table 2. The two groups of drivers were similarly distributed by sex and use of safety equipment. Hospital and fatal crashes occurred most often during the summer months (July and August) among both groups of drivers. The time of day of the crash was also similar between the two groups. Adult driver crashes that

resulted in serious injury peaked in late afternoon and early evening (25.6%) and young drivers were most at risk between noon and 4 PM (23.4%).

Table 2.
Comparison of Young and Adult Drivers in Hospital and Fatal Crashes by Driver Sex, Safety Equipment Use, and Crash Time, Alaska, 1991-1995

	Young Drivers (Age 16-20) N=488		Adult Drivers (Age 21-50) N=2,020	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Sex				
Male	324	66.4%	1,441	71.3%
Female	164	33.6%	579	28.7%
Safety Equipment Use				
Recorded	462		1,871	
Used	252	54.5%	1,053	55.9%
Not Used	210	45.5%	818	44.1%
Unrecorded	26		149	
Crash time				
Midnight-4am	90	18.4%	304	15.0%
4am-8am	36	7.4%	187	9.3%
8am-noon	48	9.8%	232	11.5%
noon-4pm	114	23.4%	403	20.0%
4pm-8pm	111	22.7%	517	25.6%
8pm-midnight	89	18.2%	377	18.7%

* Rate per 1,000 licensed drivers

There are up to two contributing factors recorded in the traffic crash database for each driver in a crash. As indicated in Table 3, the percentage of young drivers with a contributing factor due to human error, as recorded by the investigating officer, was significantly higher than that of the adult drivers ($p < .0001$). Conversely, there was a greater percentage of adult drivers with "no contributing factor" recorded to describe their involvement in the crash ($p = .01$).

Table 3.
Comparison of Young and Adult Drivers in Hospital and Fatal Crashes by Contributing Factor, Alaska, 1991-1995

	Percent of Young Drivers with the Contributing Factor N=488		Percent of Adult Drivers with the Contributing Factor N=2,020	
	N	Percent *	N	Percent *
Human	333	68.2%	1,122	55.5% **
Vehicle	22	4.5%	49	2.4%
Environmental	23	4.7%	75	3.7%
Roadway	41	8.4%	122	6.0%
None	78	16.0%	551	27.3%***
Unknown	7	1.4%	21	1.0%

* Up to two contributing factors per driver so that column does not equal 100%

** $p < .0001$

*** $p = .01$

The contributing factors attributed to the young and adult drivers are detailed in Table 4. "Unsafe speed," i.e. speed too fast for conditions, was recorded as a contributing factor of the crash for 29.1% of the young drivers. "Alcohol" was believed to be a factor in the crashes of almost 16%. Conversely, alcohol was recorded factor for 24.9% of the adult drivers, with unsafe speed ranking second at 19.9%.

Table 4.
Comparison of Young and Adult Drivers in Hospital or Fatal Crashes by Contributing Factor, Alaska, 1991-1995

	Percent of Young Drivers with the Contributing Factor N=488		Percent of Adult Drivers with the Contributing Factor N=2,020	
	N	Percent*	N	Percent*
Unsafe Speed	142	29.1%	401	19.9%**
Alcohol	76	15.6%	502	24.9%***
Driver Inattention	59	12.1%	142	7.0%
Failure to Yield	45	9.2%	144	7.1%
Driver Inexperience	36	7.4%	28	1.4%
Pavement Slippery	32	6.6%	107	5.3%
Improper Lane Usage/Passing	27	5.5%	76	3.8%
Traffic Control Devise Disregard	24	4.9%	79	3.9%
Other Human Factor	19	3.9%	81	4.0%
Turning Improperly	10	2.0%	35	1.7%
Fell Asleep	9	1.8%	42	2.1%
View Obstructed	8	1.6%	36	1.8%

* Up to two contributing factors per driver so that column does not equal 100%

** $p = .04$

*** $p = .04$

Victims

Table 5 describes the outcomes of the two crash victim groups. There was no significant difference between the victims of the young driver crashes and those of the adult driver crashes in injury severity or length of hospital stay.

Table 5.
Outcomes of Young and Adult Driver Crashes, Alaska, 1991-1995

	Young Driver Crash Victims N=584		Adult Driver Crash Victims N=1,894	
	N	N	N	N
Total Deaths	99		344	
Scene Deaths	67		228	
Hospital Deaths	32		116	
Hospitalizations	517		1,666	
	Mean		Mean	
Injury Severity Score *	10.8		11	
Length of Hospital Stay (days)	6.7		7.6	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Head Injury	208	40.2%	628	37.7%
Chest Injury	116	22.4%	402	24.1%
Spinal Cord Injury	14	2.7%	43	2.6%
Discharged with Disability	70	13.5%	186	11.2%

* Injury Severity Score is on a scale from 1 to 75, with 75 the most severe. An ISS of 16 or greater defines major trauma.

Average hospital charges for both groups of victims are listed in Table 6. These figures are based on available cost data from the trauma registry. Included are charges by type of vehicle, contributing factor, and use of helmets and safety belts. There were no significant differences between the two groups at the 95% confidence level in any of the categories compared. The highest average charges were those associated with motorcycle crash patients. The average charge for hospitalization for non-helmeted victims of young driver crashes was twice that of the helmeted victims.

Table 6.

Hospital Charges of Young and Adult Driver Crashes by Vehicle Type, Contributing Factor and Safety Equipment Use, Alaska, 1991-1995

	Young Driver Crash Victims, N=517		Adult Driver Crash Victims, N=1,666	
	Mean	Standard Error	Mean	Standard Error
All	\$16,269	\$ 1,640	\$18,174	\$ 1,146
Vehicle Type				
Passenger Car	\$15,250	\$ 1,889	\$17,397	\$ 1,450
Motorcycle	\$27,354	\$ 8,344	\$30,148	\$ 6,279
Pick-Up Truck	\$18,482	\$ 5,653	\$15,590	\$ 1,748
Contributing Factor				
Unsafe Speed	\$14,344	\$ 2,575	\$22,778	\$ 2,511
Alcohol Use	\$19,426	\$ 5,614	\$18,911	\$ 2,184
Driver Inattention	\$17,129	\$ 4,452	\$15,504	\$ 2,848
Failure to Yield	\$10,201	\$ 2,294	\$19,062	\$ 2,797
Safety Equipment Use				
Safety Equipment Used	\$15,543	\$ 2,223	\$15,943	\$ 1,514
Safety Belt	\$15,220	\$ 2,547	\$14,355	\$ 1,176
Motorcycle Helmet	\$17,309	\$ 3,699	\$28,323	\$ 9,519
No Safety Equipment Used	\$17,087	\$ 2,512	\$19,599	\$ 1,774
No Safety Belt	\$14,259	\$ 2,420	\$19,518	\$ 2,505
No Helmet	\$34,640	\$19,672	\$28,407	\$ 7,029

The distribution of payers billed for hospital expenses associated with the 2,183 hospitalized victims are presented in Table 7. Of the patients involved in the young driver crashes, the largest percentage billed their hospital expenses to private health insurance (33.1%), followed by those who were uninsured (19.3%), and those covered by automotive insurance (14.7%).

Table 7.

Payers Billed for Hospitalization of Victims of Young Driver and Adult Driver Crashes, Alaska, 1991-1995

	Young Driver Crash Victims N=517		Adult Driver Crash Victims N=1,666	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Private	171	33.1%	472	28.3%
Uninsured	100	19.3%	368	22.1%
Automotive	76	14.7%	225	13.5%
Indian Health Service	50	9.7%	174	10.4%
Medicaid	40	7.7%	110	6.6%
Military	24	4.6%	118	7.1%
Champus	12	2.3%	42	2.5%
Medicare	10	1.9%	48	2.9%
Other/Unknown	34	6.6%	109	6.6%

Table 8 gives estimates of the total costs associated with young and adult driver crashes in Alaska for the five years using the CrashCost Program. Cost per young licensed driver was 3.4 times the cost per adult licensed driver.

Table 8.
Cost Estimates for Young and Adult Driver Crashes,
Alaska, 1991-1995 *

	Young Driver Crashes	Adult Driver Crashes
	N	N
Fatalities	99	344
Injuries **	7,648	26,569
Property Damage Only	34,333	119,248
	Cost	Cost
Direct Medical Costs	\$ 36,750,837	\$126,786,020
Direct Other Costs	\$134,898,306	\$468,099,927
Indirect Costs	\$131,086,293	\$454,729,271
Total	\$302,735,436	\$1,049,615,218
Cost per Licensed Driver	\$2,336	\$697

* Cost estimates based on NHTSA CrashCost Program

** Injuries include hospitalized and non-hospitalized

DISCUSSION

Alaska is similar to the rest of the nation in that young people are disproportionately involved in motor vehicle crashes, and crash injuries constitute a major health problem among this group. Alaska is, however, distinctive by having the lowest population density of any state, about one person per square mile. There are 13,485 miles of roads but only five of Alaska's urban centers are connected by road. The formidable terrain, isolation, and extreme weather conditions make access to medical care a challenge for residents and visitors alike who are involved in motor vehicle traffic crashes. Teen drivers demonstrated a greater propensity for involvement in the most severe crashes compared with adults, but the involvement rate did not increase significantly with injury severity.

The serious and fatal crashes involving young drivers were more likely attributed to human factors compared with crashes involving adult drivers. These data suggest that immaturity, inexperience and risk-taking behaviors contribute to young driver crashes.

The high percentage of safety belt and helmet nonuse among both of the study populations (44%-46%) is partially explained by the fact that these were the drivers in crashes resulting in the most serious injuries, including injuries to themselves. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 1995 reported that about 20% of Alaska high school students surveyed responded that they rarely or never use safety belts. Among those who ride motorcycles, about 40% rarely or never wear helmets (8). In response to the 1995 Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, 33.1% of adults reported that they did not always use safety belts (9). These percentages are all higher than comparable national percentages. Lap and shoulder belts are 40-50% effective in reducing deaths and 45-55% effective in preventing moderate-to-critical injuries to passenger vehicle occupants (10). NHTSA estimates that helmets are 29% effective in preventing fatal injuries to motorcyclists and in a recent study showed that motorcycle helmets are 67% effective in preventing brain injuries (11).

Alcohol was not the leading contributing factor in young driver crashes as it was for adult driver crashes. This has been reported by other researchers and can be attributed largely to an alcohol purchase age of 21 in all states and a zero tolerance law for drivers under the age of 21 in 30 states, including Alaska. Zero tolerance means that anyone with a BAC level above 0.02 g/dl is considered legally intoxicated (1, 12, 13).

Almost 50% of hospitalized victims of teen driver crashes relied on private or automotive insurance to pay their hospital expenses. One hundred victims, or 19.3%, were uninsured. The hospital charges of an additional 26.3% of the patients were billed to a government program. NHTSA estimates that nationally private insurance

companies pay 55% of medical costs for hospitalized patients of motor vehicle crashes and the government pays only 23% (14). Alaska has a large Native American population and several military bases, which contribute to a significant role of the federal government in covering the cost of medical care in the state.

The highest average costs of hospitalization were incurred by motorcycle crash victims. Unhelmeted crash patients topped the list with an average cost of over \$34,000, double that of the helmeted victims in the same group.

Using the CrashCost Program, the estimated costs for teen driver crashes in Alaska for five years was over \$300 million. The financial burden quickly becomes an issue of public policy when such a large percentage of the cost is reimbursed with public funds.

There were several limitations to this study. Every driver in a crash was included in the crash involvement rates. Multiple car crashes involving more than one driver added multiple drivers to the statistics, often into both age groups simultaneously. In reality, driver responsibility for crashes is more complex than that, with participants assuming varying degrees of fault. For the purpose of this study, however, driver responsibility was given equal weight and was based on involvement.

Missing and incorrect data is undoubtedly partly responsible for the inability to link all trauma registry records with traffic crash records. The error rate in data linkage due to the linkage process itself has not been quantified. It is believed, however, that the 31% in non-linked data was largely due to unreported traffic crashes. A comparison of hospital discharge files and police road injury data in Australia resulted in a linkage rate of 64%. The researchers found increased linkage with injury severity and varying linkage rates with different types of crashes (29% for motorcyclists vs. 79% for motor vehicle drivers.) They also noted that the casualties outside the urban area linked less often to a police report than the urban casualties. Their conclusion was that the low linkage rate was largely due to the underreporting of crashes by police (15).

An under reporting of pedestrian injuries was reported by Agran, Castillo and Winn in 1987, in a comparison of police report information with hospital monitoring system information in Orange County, California. It was estimated that police underreported pedestrian injuries by 20%. The researchers also noted that nontraffic incidents were especially underreported, mainly because the police database criteria excludes cases occurring on private property (driveways, sidewalks and parking lots) where a large percentage of pedestrian injuries occur (16). Similarly, Alaska's traffic crash data reporting system excludes incidents on private property, as well as those involving vehicles not customarily used for transport on roads.

Other possible reasons for the under reporting of traffic crashes include lack of police officers in the rural areas, reluctance of crash participants to notify police, and failure of local enforcement personnel to submit investigation forms to the Department of Public Safety.

The mean age of the injured victims of young driver crashes was slightly lower than that of the entire population of injured victims studied (25 vs. 30). Since the CrashCost estimates were based on national averages, the present discounted value of lost productivity for victims of young driver crashes would differ slightly from the value of lost productivity for victims of all crashes. The difference, however, is likely to be minor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The factors contributing to Alaska's young driver crashes -- youth, inexperience, and risk-taking behavior -- are analogous to those seen in other states and countries. Currently there is no graduated licensing system in Alaska; however, legislation has been introduced and is currently under consideration during the 1997-98 legislative session. Alaska is also one of few states that does not require any instructional permit prior to obtaining a full privilege license. Graduated licensing has been shown to successfully reduce young driver crashes. It is recommended that Alaska adopt a graduated licensing system that is appropriate for Alaskans, to include the requirement of supervised driving under an instructional permit, a probational driving period, and raising the minimum age for full licensure to 17. The expected result would be a reduction in injuries and deaths, mitigation of the impact of crashes on Alaska's stretched emergency medical services, and a significant cost savings.

Alaska has a primary safety belt enforcement law for children under age 16 and secondary enforcement for those aged 16 and over. There is a helmet law for motorcyclists under age 18 and all motorcycle passengers. At the least, the primary safety belt law and the helmet law should be expanded to include young drivers through age 20 to protect those drivers at greatest risk. Even more effective are universal laws, i.e. mandated usage for all persons, which have been shown to increase belt usage 10-15% and helmet usage to 100% (10,11).

In the past three years Alaska has enacted two zero tolerance laws for young people under 21 years of age. A minor caught in possession of or consuming alcohol, regardless of motor vehicle involvement, can have his or her driver's license revoked. A minor also can be cited for "driving while intoxicated," for any level of alcohol registered on a breathalyzer test. These laws send an important message to young drivers about drinking and driving in a state that has a major problem with alcohol involvement relative to a great variety of injuries. Full commitment by state and local jurisdictions is needed to enforce these and all other traffic safety laws.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1997-2001		
Cause of Death	Deaths	% All Deaths
Unintentional injuries	121	44.0%
Motor Vehicle*	69	25.1%
Intentional self-harm (suicide)	88	32.0%
Assault (homicide)	18	6.5%
Total deaths	275	100.0%

2001		
Cause of Death	Deaths	% All Deaths
Unintentional injuries	23	43.4%
Motor Vehicle*	13	24.5%
Intentional self-harm (suicide)	16	30.2%
Malignant neoplasms	3	5.7%
Total deaths	53	100.0%

2000		
Cause of Death	Deaths	% All Deaths
Unintentional injuries	35	50.0%
Motor Vehicle*	24	34.3%
Intentional self-harm (suicide)	25	35.7%
Assault (homicide)	2	2.9%
Influenza and pneumonia	2	2.9%
Total deaths	70	100.0%

1999		
Cause of Death	Deaths	% All Deaths
Unintentional injuries	19	35.2%
Motor Vehicle*	11	20.4%
Intentional self-harm (suicide)	16	29.6%
Assault (homicide)	4	7.4%
Malignant neoplasms	4	7.4%
Total deaths	54	100.0%

1998		
Cause of Death	Deaths	% All Deaths
Unintentional injuries	20	45.5%
Motor Vehicle*	7	15.9%
Intentional self-harm (suicide)	18	40.9%
Assault (homicide)	2	4.5%
Total deaths	44	100.0%

1997		
Cause of Death	Deaths	% All Deaths
Unintentional injuries	24	44.4%
Motor Vehicle*	14	25.9%
Intentional self-harm (suicide)	13	24.1%
Assault (homicide)	8	14.8%
Total deaths	54	100.0%



California Teen Auto Deaths Decrease Following GDL Passage

September 20, 2000

According to a recent California auto club report, teen passenger deaths and injuries when 16-year-olds are behind the wheel dropped 21 percent statewide from 1998 to 1999. These results come two years after passage of California's graduated driver's license law (GDL).

GDL, of which the National Association of Independent Insurers (NAII) was a strong supporter, helps new drivers make the transition by limiting their exposure to more risky driving situations, such as driving at night or with other young passengers. The

GDL law took effect in July 1998 after being passed in 1997.

Thus far, 42 states have adopted a version of GDL, though only 31 states use the extensive three-stage system present in California. Florida, which adopted GDL in 1997, saw a drop of 21 percent in the rate teens are involved in accidents.

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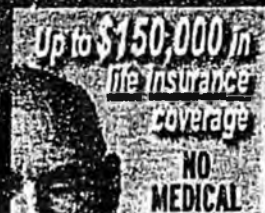
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Graduated drivers licensing programs save lives

By Ron Lent
Insure.com

What is the leading cause of death among teenagers? The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) reports it's vehicular crashes. IIHS statistics show vehicular crashes killed 5,648 teenage drivers in 2000.

Drivers between the ages of 16 and 19 have the highest crash rates relative to other age groups. The risk of a crash per mile driven among teens is four times higher than for older drivers says Pete Moraga, a spokesman for the Insurance Information Network of California.

States, seeking to curb the high death rate among teenage motorists, have adopted at least one of three components of a graduated drivers licensing (GDL) system. GDL programs allow teenagers to receive full driving privileges in stages. IIHS defines the graduated drivers licensing system (GDL) as a program that phases "in young beginners to full driving privileges as they mature and develop driving skills." Versions of GDL are found throughout the United States, as well as in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Insurance Information Institute (III) spokeswoman Loretta Worters says most states "have enacted one or more elements of a graduated licensing program. [Many] states I believe have all the elements ... learners permit and provisional license, etc."

More than 40 states have implemented GDL programs since the mid-1990s. A three-pronged system is applied in 34 states, but program guidelines vary widely from one state to the next.

Alabama, Arizona, Hawaii, Kansas, Montana, Nevada, Oklahoma, and Wyoming are among the states with either no GDL program or one IIHS rates as "poor" says Russ Rader, spokesman for IIHS. "These are states with little or no restrictions on young drivers."

"Take Hawaii as an example. Hawaii imposes a three-month mandatory learning period for beginning drivers. Hawaii requires inexperienced drivers to stay in the learner's permit stage for short period of time, but from our perspective, that's not a graduated licensing program," Rader says.

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Sound GDL programs have three "distinct phases" to a full graduated system, points out Rader. Rader says beginners must stay in each of the first two phases for a minimum amount of time, with the restrictions lasting until the driver turns 17. Rader says the three steps are a "supervised learner's period," an "intermediate license" which allows the teen to drive unsupervised with certain limitations, and licensing with full privileges after completion of the first two phases.

GDL apparently works, if results from Florida and South Carolina are any indication. Florida, which in 1996 became the first state to adopt GDL, has experienced a 21 percent drop in teen driver fatalities since the program got started. In South Carolina, the percentage of teenagers involved in crashes declined to 13 percent in 1999 from 14.5 percent in 1998, the year that state's GDL law took effect.

Insurance industry observers such as Moraga cite teenage immaturity and inexperience behind the wheel as two of the driving forces fueling high crash rates among teens. Insurance companies, state and local governments, as well as many other organizations sponsor campaigns to reduce the number of teenage traffic fatalities. GDL programs save lives, prevent injuries, and decrease the number of auto insurance claims, helping to make auto insurance more affordable, says Moraga.

Sobering statistics

Underage drinking remains an element in teenage highway fatalities, although not as much as before GDL programs got under way. Among drivers 16 to 20 years of age, 22 percent who died in traffic accidents had a blood alcohol level at or above .10 percent. This is a sharp decrease from 49 percent in 1980. In some states, a blood alcohol level of .10 percent is the legal limit. In other states, .10 is well above the level where drivers are considered legally drunk.

The drop can be attributed in part to vigorous campaigns by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and other organizations against underage drinking. GDL programs draw strong support from MADD.

MADD President Wendy Hamilton says her organization "advocates that each state adopt laws providing that persons under 21 receive driver's licenses which are more restrictive than full licenses, under which violations would result in driver improvement actions and license revocation and civil sanctions in addition to any criminal sanctions and penalties."

"Early driving experiences must be acquired in a lower risk environment through extended restriction of no alcohol use, primary [seat] belt enforcement, limitations on night time driving and teenage passengers," asserted Hamilton. "Appropriate restrictions should be lifted in stages,

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based on clean driving records."

Hamilton is an enthusiastic backer of graduated drivers licensing programs, as is Monica Zech, safety educator and public information officer for the fire department in El Cajon, California, near San Diego. Zech says based on her research of the program, "it's proven to save lives. It's reduced the number of deaths and injuries among teens by giving them more experience behind the wheel before getting their official driver's license, and that's something we should all support."

North Carolina Department of Insurance (DOI) spokeswoman Chrissy Pearson says her state has an effective GDL program. "You'll find that our state's GDL program is one of the most viable of its type in the country. It's important for youthful drivers to take part in accident prevention programs to gain experience and knowledge, so they can be safe and responsible drivers rather than end up as a sad statistic on highway fatalities," says Pearson.

Last updated February 7, 2003

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Study: Stages Reduce Teen Driving Mishaps

By DEE-ANN DURBIN
Associated Press Writer

February 18, 2003, 11:08 PM EST

WASHINGTON -- Requiring teens to get learner's permits or go through other interim stages before gaining their driver's licenses reduces auto accidents among young drivers -- though they continue to have the highest rate of fatal crashes.

Twelve studies released Tuesday by the nonprofit National Safety Council found that graduated driver's license programs reduce teen crash rates by as much as 33 percent. One study found fatalities involving teen drivers plummeted 58 percent.

Among all drivers, however, teenagers still had the highest rate of fatal crashes -- 71 fatal crashes out of 100,000 for 16-year-olds; 63 out of 100,000 for 18-year-olds; 59 out of 100,000 for 17-year-olds; and 57 out of 100,000 for 19-year-olds.

At least 38 states and the District of Columbia have three-tiered graduated driver's license programs. While they vary, a typical program generally gives teens their licenses after they have received a learner's permit and an intermediate license.

A learner's permit requires teens to drive with an adult, while an intermediate license may allow teens to drive unsupervised but only during daylight hours.

"We know now, and we have the evidence, that GDL can be and is successful," said Chuck Hurley, vice president of the council's transportation safety group.

The National Safety Council, an Illinois-based nonprofit organization that lobbies the government on safety issues, examined graduated driver's license programs in the United States, Canada and New Zealand, which was the first country to adopt a graduated license system in 1984.

The studies indicated that such programs reduce teen crash rates whenever they are implemented.

For instance, in Florida, which was the first state to adopt a three-tiered licensing system in 1996, there was a 9 percent reduction in fatal and injury crashes for 15- to 17-year-olds from 1995 to 1997, according to a 2000 study published in the periodical *Accident Analysis and Prevention*.

In Pennsylvania, crashes involving 16-year-old drivers dropped 27 percent between 1999 and 2000, while fatalities in that group dropped by 58 percent, according to a 2002 study by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

Researchers say the most likely cause of the drop in accident rates is that provisional licenses keep teens off the road, particularly at night.

One-third of fatal crashes involving teens occur between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., even though only 15 percent of the miles driven by teens are driven between those hours, according to the National Safety Council.

But researchers say it's also possible teens are driving more carefully under the restrictions, or that graduated licensing programs make parents more aware of safety restrictions and more likely to enforce them.

Opponents, often including state lawmakers who have refused to pass restrictions, say the programs infringe on parental rights.

Earlier this month in Wyoming, Republican state Rep. Jack Landon unsuccessfully tried to amend a graduated driver's license bill to prevent it from applying to minors who have written permission to drive from a parent.

"This bill is a major, major catastrophic departure from a heritage of ethics that holds that parents know what is best for their children," Landon said.

States that have graduated license programs include: Alabama, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

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On the Net:

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Appendix C

Teen Crash Statistics

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for American teenagers.
- In 1997, 5,477 young people (passengers and drivers age 15-20) died in motor vehicle crashes. Twenty-one percent of the young drivers involved in fatal crashes had been drinking.
- Young people age 15-20 make up 6.7 percent of the total driving population in this country but are involved in 14 percent of all fatal crashes.
- In 1997, over 60 percent of youth (16-20) who died in passenger vehicle crashes were not wearing seat belts.
- In 1997, almost one quarter (22 percent) of those who died in speed-related crashes were youth (15-20).
- In the last decade, over 68,000 teens have died in car crashes.
- Sixty-five percent of teen passenger deaths occur when another teenager is driving.
- Nearly half of the fatal crashes involving 16-year-old drivers were single vehicle crashes.
- Forty-one percent of fatal crashes involving teenagers occur at nighttime (between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.).
- One quarter of fatally injured teen drivers (16-20 years old) in 1995 had a BAC (blood alcohol concentration) at or above .10 percent, even though all were under the minimum legal drinking age and are not legally permitted to purchase alcohol.
- Two out of three teenagers killed in motor vehicle crashes are males.





S A V I N G T E E N A G E L I V E S

Section I

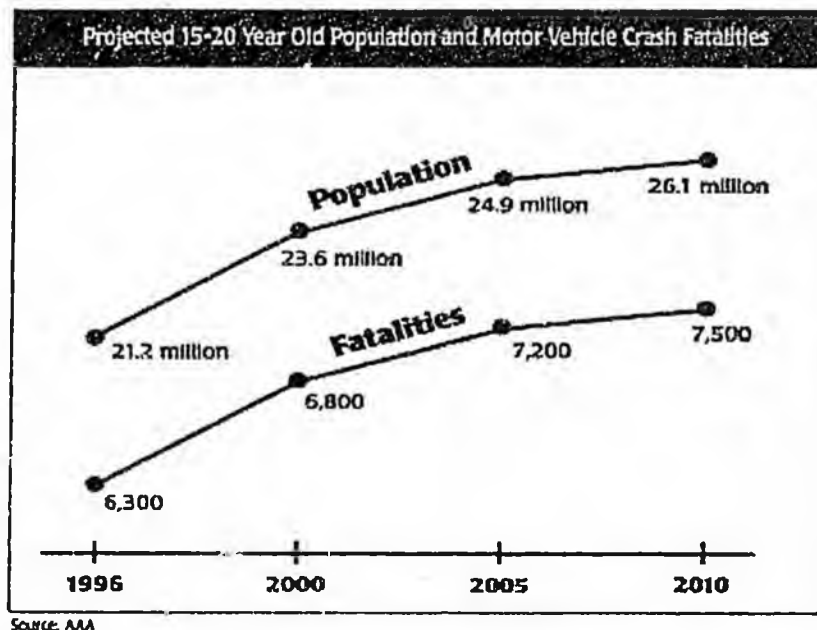
Introduction: The Need for Graduated Driver Licensing

In 1996,
6,319
young
people age
15-20 died
in motor
vehicle
crashes.
Even
though this
age group
makes up
only seven
percent of
the driving
population,
they are
involved in
14 percent
of all
traffic
fatalities.

The Teen Driving Problem

It has been said many times that children are our most precious resource. While parents throughout time have loved their children enormously, today's parents have taken this saying to heart in more visible ways than previous generations. From the "CautionBaby on Board" window decals of the early 1980s to the ubiquitous "My child is an honor student at" bumper stickers of today, modern parents use the family car as a billboard to showcase their parental pride and their children's accomplishments.

But the same motor vehicle that goes from school to soccer to piano in which Mom, Dad and the kids seem to live may also be the vehicle in which our teenagers die. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for young people 15 to 20 years of age, causing roughly one-third of all fatalities in this age group. In 1996, 6,319 young people age 15-20 died in motor vehicle crashes. Even though this age group makes up only seven percent of the driving population, they are involved in 14 percent of all traffic fatalities. In 1996, teens were involved in more than two million non-fatal traffic crashes. Based on population projections, these numbers will go up unless we intervene. (See chart below.)



On the basis of miles driven, teenagers are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as are all drivers. Why do young drivers have such poor driving performance? Three factors work together to make the teen years so deadly for young drivers:

- Inexperience
- Risk-taking behavior and immaturity
- Greater risk exposure

Inexperience: All young drivers start out with very little knowledge or understanding of the complexities of driving a motor vehicle. Like any other skill, learning to drive well takes a lot of time. Technical ability, good judgment and experience all are needed to properly make the many continuous decisions, small and large, that add up to safe driving. By making it so easy to get a driver license by literally handing teenagers the car keys without requiring an extended period of supervised practice-driving time we are setting them up for the risk of making a fatal mistake.

Risk-taking behavior and immaturity: Adolescent impulsiveness is a natural behavior, but it results in poor driving judgment and participation in high-risk behaviors such as speeding, inattention, drinking and driving, and not using a seat belt. Peer pressure also often encourages risk taking.

Greater risk exposure: Teens often drive at night with other teens in the vehicle, factors that increase crash risk.

Teen drivers are different from other drivers, and their crash experience is different. Compared to other drivers, a higher proportion of teenagers are responsible for their fatal crashes because of their own driving errors:

- A larger percentage of fatal crashes involving teenage drivers are single-vehicle crashes compared to those involving other drivers. In this type of fatal crash, the vehicle usually leaves the road and overturns or hits a roadside object such as a tree or a pole.
- In general, a smaller percentage of teens wear their seat belts compared to other drivers.
- A larger proportion of teen fatal crashes involve speeding, or going too fast for road conditions, compared to other drivers.
- More teen fatal crashes occur when passengers usually other teenagers are in the car than do crashes involving other drivers. Two out of three teens who die as passengers are in vehicles driven by other teenagers.

Age	All Crashes Per Million Miles	Fatal Crashes Per 100 Million Miles	All Crashes Per 1,000 Population	Fatal Crashes Per 100,000 Population
16	43	17	84	33
17	30	13	107	42
18	16	8	103	52
19	14	7	95	48
20-24	20	9	96	44
25-29	10	5	81	41
30-34	6	3	64	33
35-39	5	2	51	26
40-44	4	2	47	23
45-49	4	2	42	20
50-54	4	2	39	18
55-59	4	2	34	18
60-64	4	2	31	16
65-69	4	3	27	16
70-74	7	4	27	16
75+	8	5	25	17
75+	12	12	18	17

Source: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (Transportation Research Board Circular #458 - April 1996)

Effective remedies exist for controlling these risk factors and reducing traffic crash fatalities among young drivers without seriously encroaching on their need to get around. Graduated driver licensing combines a number of measures proven to be effective in fostering safer driving behavior in young drivers. In Ontario, Canada, and in New Zealand where graduated driver licensing is in effect crash deaths and injuries for teenage drivers have been reduced. Maryland, which has a nighttime driving restriction, and California have shown reductions in both fatal crashes and traffic violations among young drivers.

With graduated driver licensing, new drivers typically go through a three-stage process that involves their gradual introduction to full driving privileges. By restricting when teenagers may drive, and with whom, graduated driver licensing allows new drivers to gain much-needed on-the-road experience in controlled, lower-risk settings. It also means that a teenager will be a little older and more mature when he or she gains a full, unrestricted license. After the

young driver demonstrates responsible driving behavior, restrictions are systematically lifted until the driver "graduates" to full driving privileges.

This manual explains what graduated driver licensing is and why it is so important for every jurisdiction to take steps towards its implementation.



S A V I N G T E E N A G E L I V E S

Section II

Traditional Driver Licensing vs. Graduated Driver Licensing

The Traditional Driver Licensing Process

Driver licensing is a function of state government. Each state has different rules and regulations, but the essential steps are similar. An individual applies to the Department of Motor Vehicles or other licensing agency for a driver license. He or she usually must pass a written knowledge test and a vision test before scheduling a road test with the driver license examiner. New drivers must demonstrate basic driving skills in a road test.

In 35 states, a learner's permit is required for novice drivers. Teens under 18 must have parental permission to apply for a learner's permit. Learner's permits automatically expire in all states except Virginia. The expiration ranges from 60 days to six years. Most states place only minimal limitations on driving with a learner's permit. For instance, only 19 have any limits on nighttime driving.¹

A comprehensive evaluation of state driver licensing codes by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety concluded that current driver licensing practices "allow a quick and easy route through the learning phase" and place too little emphasis on supervised practice and training.¹ Most highway safety experts agree that it is too easy to get a driver license in this country. Driving a motor vehicle is dangerous, yet the requirements and testing are minimal. It is entirely conceivable that an inexperienced young driver could pass a road test and receive a full, unrestricted driver license with almost no "real world" driving experience. A graduated driver licensing system addresses this problem by controlling the circumstances under which

beginning teenage drivers may get behind the wheel.

The Graduated Driver Licensing Process

A graduated driver licensing system allows young drivers to acquire safe driving practices and attitudes as they progress through a three-stage process of licensure.

This system has several distinct advantages over the traditional driver licensing system. Graduated driver licensing gives young, novice drivers:

- Practice in developing driving skills over an extended period of time, leading to greater experience, maturity and judgment;
- Increased time in supervised behind-the-wheel training during daylight and nighttime hours;
- Education in basic and advanced driving skills and safety knowledge; and
- Motivation to practice safe driving skills and behavior by requiring a crash-free/conviction-free driving performance prior to full licensure.

The Three Stages of Graduated Licensing

Learner's permit:

Supervision is required at all times, and other restrictions also apply. This period includes basic driver education and requires that no crashes or convictions occur before the learner advances. There are restrictions on carrying teenage passengers, there can be no violations for failing to wear a seat belt and there is zero alcohol tolerance.

Intermediate license (or provisional license or junior license):

Fewer restrictions are imposed; for example, unsupervised driving is permitted during daylight hours. This period may include advanced driver education and continues to require zero alcohol tolerance and no at-fault crashes or convictions before advancing the driver to the final stage.

Full license (or unrestricted license):

All driving restrictions are removed (except for applicable laws, such as zero alcohol tolerance for drivers under 21).

Core and Recommended Components

All graduated driver licensing systems contain certain core components in order to be effective. Other components are

recommended and should be considered for any new or expanded program.

Stage 1 - Learner's Permit

This stage allows the young novice driver the opportunity to practice basic driving skills and safe driving practices under totally supervised conditions.

Minimum eligibility requirements:

- Meet the minimum age required by the state (currently varies from age 14 to age 17; no younger than age 16 is recommended);
- Pass vision and knowledge tests, including rules of the road, signs and signals.

Core components:

- All driving must be supervised by a licensed parent, guardian or adult at least 21 years old;
- Permit holder must complete basic driver education including behind-the-wheel/vehicle skills training;
- All vehicle occupants must wear seat belts;
- Zero alcohol tolerance for those under age 21;
- Permit is cancelled if applicant is convicted of any alcohol-related offense;
- Applicant must remain free of at-fault crashes and convictions for at least six consecutive months in order to move to the next stage; and
- Minimum holding period of six months;
- Permit is visually distinctive from other driver licenses.

Recommended components:

- Parental participation in the driving process (for instance, certifying that the novice driver has had a minimum number of supervised hours of driving);
- Youth-oriented and more rapid driver improvement actions are taken in the event of violations or at-fault crashes;
- Limitations on speed and types of roads where driving is allowed; and
- Limitations on carrying teenage passengers.

Stage 2 - Intermediate License

This stage gives the young driver behind-the-wheel practice under less restrictive circumstances and exposes the driver to more demanding driving situations. It provides an opportunity for the new driver to use newly acquired driving and decision-making skills by

full license until age 21;

- Pass second level knowledge test and on-road driving test; and
- Successfully complete advanced driver education.

Refer to Appendix B for a chart of states that have one or more of the core components of a model graduated licensing law, as developed by the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances (Appendix A).



S A V I N G T E E N A G E L I V E S

Section III

How Graduated Driver Licensing is Effective

Addressing the Problems

Young novice drivers are a highway safety problem for many reasons, primarily a combination of immaturity, inexperience and high-risk driving exposure. This is true for teenagers everywhere, but it is a particular problem in the United States, where more teenagers have cars or have access to a family car than in any other nation.

Teenagers are also more likely to drive older and smaller cars, are less likely to wear seat belts, and are more likely to have multiple teenage passengers.

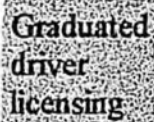
Traditional approaches-high school driver education, a learner's permit and perhaps stepped up penalties for infractions-have not had as great an impact on reducing the incidence of teen crashes and convictions as anticipated. In fact, there is some evidence that early driver education classes may encourage younger licensure, thereby increasing risk exposure.

On the other hand, graduated driver licensing has been shown to be effective by:

- Expanding the learning process;
- Reducing risk exposure;
- Improving driving proficiency; and
- Enhancing motivation for safe driving.

Let's look at each of these four benefits.

Expanding the learning process



Graduated driver licensing lengthens the learning process. The longer the period of time that elapses between issuance of the first permit to the full, unrestricted license, the more maturity and experience the novice driver will accumulate and the better his or her driving

has been shown to be effective by

Expanding the learning process:

Reducing risk exposure:

Improving driving proficiency and

Enhancing motivation for safe driving.

performance will be. The learning experience for driving cannot be rushed. As with any complex task, it takes time to assimilate the skills and information needed to perform the job adequately.

Reducing risk exposure

Graduated driver licensing allows young drivers to gain much-needed driving experience in controlled, lower risk circumstances, such as nighttime driving restrictions, passenger limitations, required restraint use for all occupants, and license sanctions that kick in at a lower threshold (e.g., first conviction for a serious violation).

These exposure-reducing components work in two ways. First, they catch young drivers early when they make mistakes or errors in judgment and allow correction. Second, they serve as a motivating factor for teens to study for tests, drive safely and avoid risks in the first place.

Percentage of Fatal Crashes With Various Characteristics, by Driver Age, 1993

	Driver Age		
	16	17-19	20-49
Single Vehicle	44	37	29
Driver Error	82	74	62
Speeding	37	33	62
3+ Occupants	33	27	18
0.10+ Percent BAC*	5	28	48
Female Driver	34	27	29

*BAC=Blood Alcohol Concentration. In most states, 0.10 percent is the legal BAC threshold.

Source: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (Status Report - December 17, 1994)

Improving driving proficiency

Placing limits on teen mobility may reduce driving exposure, but driving proficiency can be improved through measures that emphasize getting teens behind the wheel to practice. These components encourage the intermediate licensee to make safe driving decisions while driving to reduce risk. They include: multi-level instruction coupled with multi-level testing (giving inexperienced drivers the opportunity to first learn then practice the basics before moving on to learning and practicing more advanced skills); parental guidance; driver improvement courses; and delayed re-testing after failure.

Enhancing motivation for safe driving

Graduated driver licensing not only helps the novice driver better cope with risks, but also enhances the motivation to drive safely and "play by the rules." Restrictions are lifted as rewards for good driving, and sanctions are imposed for violations. For young drivers, the worst sanction may be the delay that keeps them in an earlier stage longer, while their peers advance to the next level. By making relief from restrictions contingent upon a good driving record, graduated driver licensing provides incentive to drive safely.

How the Community Can Promote Graduated Driver Licensing

Everyone has a role to play in promoting graduated driver licensing and helping it succeed. Here are just a few examples:

Parents-

Parents or guardians are essential. While no system should put all the burden on parents, a graduated driver licensing system emphasizes parental supervision (e.g., providing driving practice, determining when and where driving is done, etc.) and parental certification that practice hours have been completed as required. Graduated driver licensing encourages parents to actively take part in preparing their teenagers for driving. It provides an opportunity for parents to serve as positive role models for their children.

Traffic Safety Education Field -

Driver education works better with a graduated driver licensing system, which provides an incentive for formal instruction. The current high school driver education system can be adapted to fit well within a graduated driver licensing system. This would require the course to be divided into two or three discrete phases, with practice sessions and testing at the end of each segment.

Modern communications tools such as home video and interactive computer learning materials can supplant or augment classroom training prior to behind-the-wheel practice. Training programs and materials should not focus on how to pass the test but rather how to incorporate the appropriate skills, attitude and behavior to be

a safe, successful driver. Such a program should also include information on other aspects of transportation safety, such as pedestrian safety, bicycle safety, the need for occupant protection, and the importance of motorcycle helmets. Programs should also cover transportation issues such as alternate transport, trip planning and vehicle preparation and actions to take in an emergency. And, where there is a choice, teens should be encouraged to drive safer vehicles.

Medical Community-

The medical community sees firsthand the results of motor vehicle crashes. Most physicians, nurses, emergency medical service professionals and others will tell you that the hardest part of their job is telling a family about the loss of a child or other family member. Although implementation of a graduated driver licensing process does not directly involve the medical community, these individuals (as well as their state and national professional organizations) are likely to be strong allies and partners in the process.

Driving is a skill that improves with time and maturity.

Law Enforcement -

Nearly every national law enforcement group has endorsed graduated driver licensing because police officers-like the medical community-are the ones who see the results of poor driving every day. Law enforcement has an active role to play in the implementation of a new system, and keeping traffic officers informed about changes in laws is a vital step. Law enforcement officers are also highly effective speakers at high school assemblies, Scout meetings, and other youth group gatherings.

Questions and Answers On Graduated Driver Licensing

Does graduated licensing discriminate against teenagers?

No. On the contrary, graduated driver licensing protects teenagers by introducing beginning drivers to the driving process under controlled circumstances in a low-risk manner. Just as teens are not allowed to conduct certain work, legal or financial transactions without direct parental involvement, they should not be allowed to drive until they have learned how to do it safely.

How can teens get around to school, jobs and extracurricular activities?

There is no question that, for safety's sake, graduated driver licensing limits mobility for younger teens. This is true especially at night (the most dangerous time), but most states allow exceptions in the case of driving to school or work or for farm-related activities.

Delaying full licensure does not significantly hinder extracurricular and social activities, however. A survey by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety of more than 50,000 high school students in seven states found that the social life and work patterns of

16-year-olds were generally unaffected by the beginning driving age in their state.

Is driver education the best way to learn to drive?

A good program that combines both classroom learning and behind-the-wheel training is an effective way to learn basic driving skills. But most driver education programs do not allow for significant hours of practice driving, and that is what new drivers need. Driving is a skill that improves with time and maturity. A 1994 Report to Congress by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration concluded that "current novice driver education is not doing a very good job in motivating youngsters to drive safely." A graduated driver licensing system rewards good driving by allowing the safe novice driver to move ahead to the next step.

Aren't parents anxious for their teens to drive so they don't have to be the "chauffeur"?

Parents face a real dilemma when it comes to teen driving. On the one hand, most are quite anxious to give up the "chauffeur" duties and let their teens handle their own transportation. On the other hand, they are fearful of the increased risks this brings. Parents strongly support

graduated driver licensing, despite some minor inconveniences to themselves. More importantly, graduated driver licensing gets parents more involved by asking them to ensure their children get enough supervised driving practice. The longer period of supervised driving gives parents and teens plenty of opportunity not only to practice but also to discuss driving skills, attitudes and behaviors. Parents also may feel more secure once their teens are fully licensed because they have more experience and maturity to handle difficult situations on the road.



AAA Alaska
(800) 391-4AAA

January 21, 2004

House Transportation Committee
House of Representatives
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative:

Among the very important legislation under consideration this session is House Bill 213, an act to implement Graduated Drivers Licensing. AAA strongly supports this bill and we urge your support as well.

Driving is a skill that is learned by doing. Unfortunately it is also an inherently risky endeavor. The premise of Graduated Drivers Licensing is simple and it works -- extend the learning process and reduce exposure to risk and you'll reduce the number of teen crashes. House Bill 213 does this.

This bill has all the components of the most successful GDL systems. It provides for time to learn -- the six-month instruction permit. It provides for behind the wheel experience -- the 50 hours of certified driving experience. It provides for responsibility - six months of citation free driving. And finally -- it removes two major risk factors for novice drivers -- passengers and late night driving.

Please review the enclosed information regarding how injuries, accidents, and fatalities have been reduced with GDL. AAA estimates that through GDL, the state of Alaska over a decade could prevent some 970 injuries, over 3,000 crashes, and save over \$21 million dollars.

The time has come for us to change the way we teach our teens to drive, and people are ready. A recent AAA poll shows that 74 percent of Americans support laws limiting teenage passengers who may ride with inexperienced teen drivers, and that 73 percent of adults think that officials should do more to improve the safety of drivers between the ages of 15 to 19.

You have before you an excellent opportunity to protect teen drivers, their passengers, and all on the road. Please support House Bill 213.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Charity Watt Levis'.

Charity Watt Levis
Manager, Public Relations

enclosures

ANCHORAGE SOUTH
9191 Old Seward Hwy. #20, 99515
TEL (907) 344-4310
FAX (907) 344-4319

FAIRBANKS
3409 Airport Way, 99709
TEL (907) 479-4442
FAX (907) 479-4899



News Release

For Immediate Release
Contact: Denice Harris
(800) 332-8119 ext. 8113
dharris@mtw.aaa.com

**DESPITE STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT, ALASKA DOES
NOT HAVE MOST EFFECTIVE MEASURE TO REDUCE
TEEN CRASHES, SAYS AAA ALASKA**

ANCHORAGE, Alaska, January 22 – Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of Americans support laws limiting the number of teenage passengers who may ride with inexperienced teen drivers, according to a nationwide poll released today by AAA, yet just half of states have these lifesaving laws. Crash data show that passenger restriction laws, an important component of Graduated Driver Licensing systems (GDL), are the most effective way to reduce teen crashes, deaths and injuries.

"There is a current misconception that parents will find the teen passenger restriction law burdensome because parents typically designate the teen as the chauffeur to the younger siblings," said Charity Watt Levis, AAA Alaska spokesperson. "The reality is that parents are willing to wait an additional 30 days to six months longer to ensure the teenager will have the best opportunity to drive safely."

The survey also found that most adults (73 percent) think that public officials should do more to improve the safety of drivers between the ages of 15 to 19. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for people 15 to 20 years of age.

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Currently forty-nine states and the District of Columbia have some form of a Graduated Drivers Licensing law (GDL). GDL laws help novice drivers learn to drive by controlling their progression towards full unrestricted driving. However, half the states, including Alaska, still do not have the most effective components of a GDL law – passenger restrictions, late night driving restrictions and behind the wheel training.

California, where the first significant teen passenger restrictions took effect in 1999, teen passenger deaths and injuries have dropped by 23 percent. One study showed that inexperienced teens driving with one teen passenger nearly doubled their fatal crash risk; having two or more passengers increased their crash risk five-fold compared with driving alone.

“AAA expects to push for passenger restrictions and other components that strengthen GDL laws in at least 33 states this year including Alaska,” said Watt Levis. “Our efforts during the last decade have led to nearly every state having some form of a GDL law, but there is still much work to do in making these laws stronger. We must remember that motor vehicle crashes are the greatest danger that teenagers face.”

Opinion Research Corporation conducted the national telephone poll on December 4 through 7, 2003 for AAA. The survey sampled the opinions of 1,005 adults, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percent.

AAA Alaska, a AAA MountainWest Club, is dedicated to providing its over 21,000 members in Alaska with travel, insurance, financial and auto-related services. A fully taxpaying, not for profit corporation, AAA MountainWest, Inc. works for the improvement of motoring and traveling conditions and is a leader for travel, civic and safety issues. AAA can be visited on the Internet at www.aaa.com.

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**AAA Projects Prevention of 1.5 Million Crashes
and Savings of Over \$9 Billion
over next decade through
National Adoption of GDL Laws**

	TEN YEAR INJURIES PREVENTED	TEN YEAR CRASHES PREVENTED	TEN YEAR TOTAL COST SAVINGS		TEN YEAR INJURIES PREVENTED	TEN YEAR CRASHES PREVENTED	TEN YEAR TOTAL COST SAVINGS	
Alabama	10,260	32,020	\$223,062,990		Missouri	10,390	32,280	\$225,469,800
Alaska	970	3,020	\$21,077,810		Montana	2,240	6,990	\$48,691,910
Arizona	6,030	18,690	\$130,689,870		Nebraska	4,360	13,580	\$94,702,930
Arkansas	4,710	14,670	\$102,340,600		Nevada	2,790	8,710	\$60,683,380
California*	30,210	93,650	\$654,987,830		New Hampshire	2,350	7,290	\$50,920,750
Colorado	7,480	23,280	\$162,449,270		New Jersey	5,440	16,320	\$116,454,450
Connecticut	3,180	9,780	\$68,732,690		New Mexico	3,480	10,890	\$75,739,690
Delaware	1,120	3,450	\$24,172,500		New York	15,080	46,550	\$326,483,330
D.C.	230	700	\$4,915,760		North Carolina	15,560	48,580	\$338,193,690
Florida	26,690	83,220	\$579,998,340		North Dakota	1,710	5,330	\$37,127,450
Georgia	11,670	36,310	\$253,399,620		Ohio	17,870	55,450	\$387,561,370
Hawaii	1,430	4,420	\$30,911,100		Oklahoma	7,430	23,140	\$161,368,770
Idaho	3,460	10,810	\$75,273,690		Oregon	4,900	15,200	\$106,281,310

Illinois	20,120	62,490	\$436,497,860		Pennsylvania	13,330	41,270	\$288,869,510	
Indiana	10,680	33,160	\$231,665,410		Rhode Island	800	2,420	\$17,161,200	
Iowa	6,950	21,710	\$151,136,000		South Carolina	6,470	20,130	\$140,455,970	
Kansas	7,200	22,470	\$156,493,400		South Dakota	2,140	6,670	\$46,451,940	
Kentucky	6,300	19,540	\$136,583,820		Tennessee	10,530	32,850	\$228,819,010	
Louisiana	6,760	20,980	\$146,683,870		Texas	40,110	125,000	\$871,322,210	
Maine	1,800	5,570	\$38,996,100		Utah	6,590	20,540	\$143,195,450	
Maryland	6,210	19,250	\$134,566,700		Vermont	1,000	3,100	\$21,705,250	
Massachusetts	5,460	16,680	\$117,783,060		Virginia	12,120	38,590	\$265,531,830	
Michigan	14,260	44,150	\$309,076,220		Washington	9,000	27,960	\$195,339,760	
Minnesota	7,830	24,260	\$169,654,660		West Virginia	2,880	8,960	\$62,581,740	
Mississippi	5,140	15,990	\$111,560,420		Wisconsin	10,770	33,490	\$233,729,770	
					Wyoming	570	1,710	\$12,173,900	
TEN YEAR TOTALS	416,060	1,293,270	\$9,029,725,750						



**AAA Projects Prevention of 1.5 Million Crashes
and Savings of Over \$9 Billion Through Nationwide
Adoption of Graduated Driver Licensing Laws;
Improved Driver Education Targeted Next**

Washington, D.C. - 6/5/2001 -- Citing a recent statistical analysis of state Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL), AAA today projected the U.S. could lower tremendous human and economic costs over the next decade by reducing the number one killer of teens – motor vehicle crashes.

The most effective GDL law, and one that AAA endorses, could account for up to 1.5 million fewer crashes, 500,000 fewer injuries, and 500 fewer deaths for 16 to 17-year-old drivers and over \$9 billion in savings over a ten-year period. AAA projections are based on injury and crash data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The AAA findings conclude that three key provisions are most effective in reducing teen crashes: nighttime driving restrictions, passenger restrictions, and incentives for staying crash and conviction free. AAA also said that learner's permit provisions play an important role in preventing crashes. States with strong GDL laws can expect a 15% reduction in crashes and 15% reduction in injuries and a 2.5% reduction in teen deaths.

The findings were released as part of a progress report on AAA's Licensed to Learn: A Safety Program for New Drivers. Launched nationally in 1997, Licensed to Learn is the most comprehensive program nationwide to curb novice driver crashes. LTL advocates an integrated system for raising public

-more-

awareness about teen crashes and improving state licensing laws through passage of GDL. Additionally, LTL advocates focusing attention on the need to improve the quality and availability of driver education and training through uniform national curriculum standards and instructor qualifications.

Since the introduction of Licensed to Learn, the number of states with GDL laws has climbed from 8 to 44, plus the District of Columbia, due to AAA's involvement. In releasing the findings, Susan Pikrallidas, AAA's Vice President of Public Affairs, credited the dramatic increase to dedicated efforts at the state level.

She cautioned, however, that there is still much to accomplish. "We want the strongest laws possible. That is why today, AAA and its partners ask all states to examine their GDL measure and to make the necessary changes that we now know will make a difference," Pikrallidas said.

As North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA provides its members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding in 1902, the not-for-profit, fully tax-paying AAA has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers.

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Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL)

Note: References shown by number in parenthesis following statistic. Full references listed at end.

Overall Effectiveness:

- With varying lengths of learner phases (LPs), studies have shown that GDLs are effective in reducing teen crash rates:
 - California: 5% reduction with 6 week LP (1)
 - San Diego, California: 20% reduction with 6 month LP (2)
 - Connecticut: 22% reduction with 3-6 month LP (3)
 - Kentucky: 32% reduction with 180 day LP (4)
 - Michigan: 25% reduction with 50 hour LP (5)
 - Ohio: 11% reduction with 6 month LP (6)
 - New Zealand: 7% reduction with 6 month LP (7)
 - North Carolina: 27% reduction with 12 month LP (8)
 - Nova Scotia: 24% reduction with 6 month LP (9)
- GDL has also been shown to be effective in reducing injury/fatality crash rates:
 - Michigan: 24% reduction (5)
 - Florida: 11% reduction (10)

Passenger Restrictions (PRs):

- Compared to other age groups, fatal crashes are more likely to occur when 16- and 17-year-old drivers had male passengers, passengers aged 20 to 29, and teenaged passengers (11)
- For drivers aged 16 and 17, the risk of death per 10 million trips with 3 or more other passengers was more than 2 and ½ times greater when compared to without passengers (11)
- 16-year-old drivers with passengers, compared to drivers of aged 30-59 with passengers, were 4.72 times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash (12)
- New Zealand: After PRs were implemented, a 9% reduction in proportion of crashes involving teens resulted (13)
- San Diego, California: Passenger injuries per licensed driver decreased by 23% after implementation of PRs (2)

Night Restrictions (NRs):

- North Carolina: With NRs at 9 pm, total crashes for 16-year-old drivers decreased by 47% at night (8)
- Florida: With NRs at 11 pm, night crashes for 16-year-olds decreased 17% (10)
- Michigan: With NRs from midnight to 5 am, there was a 53% reduction in night crashes for 16-year-olds (5)
- New Zealand: After NRs were imposed at 10 pm, a 37% reduction in night crashes occurred for 16-year-olds (7)

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Subject: [Fwd: HB 213]

Date: Thu, 29 Jan 2004 13:14:04 -0900

From: Bruce Weyhrauch <Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@Legis.state.ak.us>

Organization: Alaska State Legislature

To: Linda Sylvester <Linda_Sylvester@legis.state.ak.us>

Subject: HB 213

Date: Thu, 29 Jan 2004 08:30:33 -0900

From: Pete & Cathie Mauro <alaskamauro@gci.net>

To: Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@legis.state.ak.us

Do I support Graduated drivers licensing...ABSOLUTELY !! Automobile crashes are the leading cause of death for our children. In the last six years Alaska has lost 130 of our youth to traffic crashes...one of those 130 people was my daughter. That very day she was studying for her permit and missed her 15th birthday by days. We as a family are devastated by this loss and don't wish this to happen to another family. Do I think HB 213 will save lives..ABSOLUTELY !! Do I think practice and experience will save lives...ABSOLUTELY. This legislation will help give parents the tools to restrict their children from driving with the distraction of other teens in the car and the limit the times when teens are on the road and when that car should be parked in your driveway and your child be safe at home. Nothing good happens from 1-5 in the morning. In my mind, this is a no brainer...the message is pure and simple...this legislation SAVES LIVES. There is overwhelming data on this issue

"ROAD READY TEENS" ...YES!!!!

Sincerely and Sadly

Cathie Mauro

Subject: [Fwd: HB 213 Graduated Driver's License bill]
Date: Wed, 28 Jan 2004 13:42:16 -0900
From: Bruce Weyhrauch <Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@Legis.state.ak.us>
Organization: Alaska State Legislature
To: Linda Sylvester <Linda_Sylvester@legis.state.ak.us>

Subject: HB 213 Graduated Driver's License bill
Date: Tue, 27 Jan 2004 20:28:40 -0900
From: Nancy Tankersley Fair <fairwinds@gci.net>
To: Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@legis.state.ak.us
CC: Con Bunde <Senator_Con_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us>,
Les Gara <Representative_Les_Gara@Legis.state.ak.us>,
Lesil McGuire <Representative_Lesil_McGuire@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Bob Lynn/Rep." <Representative_Bob_Lynn@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear Rep. Weyhrauch:

As a mother of two teenagers, ages 15 and 19, and a victim of an accident caused by a teenage driver, I strongly support the Graduated Driver's Licensing bill.

We have instituted slightly stronger policies with our teens, to good results. However, it would be much better to have the same ground rules for all teens. As other states have shown, a system like this saves lives.

This is a very reasonable first step in making our roads safer. If the rural areas find this too restrictive, perhaps you can add a clause that makes this pertain only to larger communities with a bigger road system.

Thank you for sponsoring this important piece of safety legislation.

Sincerely,

Nancy Fair
4741 E. 112th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99516

Subject: [Fwd: Graduated Drivers License Law - GDL]
Date: Tue, 27 Jan 2004 10:50:56 -0900
From: Bruce Weyhrauch <Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@Legis.state.ak.us>
Organization: Alaska State Legislature
To: Linda Sylvester <Linda_Sylvester@legis.state.ak.us>

Subject: Graduated Drivers License Law - GDL
Date: Mon, 26 Jan 2004 18:18:35 -0900
From: Bill & Cindy Sims <simsfamily@gci.net>
To: Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@legis.state.ak.us

Hello Rep. Weyhrauch ... I am a parent of 3 teenagers here in Anchorage and wish to respond to the information I received pertaining to HB 213 you are sponsoring. I am in total support of this bill and ask that you continue to push to get this bill through to law.

I had heard rumors about this "restrictive" bill that was being proposed and after reading the actual proposed law, I was amazed that this law is actually very similar to restrictions I have given my own teenagers when they get their permit and driver's license. I have an 18 year old daughter, 16 year old son, and 14 year old daughter, and I have always been involved in our public schools and volunteer quite a bit at Dimond High -- so in other words, I am around teenagers quite a bit. One thing I have seen is that a lot of parents do not really think about adding restrictions to their teenagers when they obtain a license. Parents are busy and most actually look forward to when their child can drive to help out with getting them to and from sports, activities, etc. But we as parents need to look beyond our "conveniences" and realize that we have a responsibility to teach our young drivers. I have found that when you put more than one teenager in the car at a time things change -- the music is turned up, there are more distractions in the car, etc. We need to not only protect ourselves, but also those teenagers whose parents are not aware of the additional dangers that are associated with new young drivers.

Thank you for your support of HB 213. Please feel free to use this e-mail in support of the Alaska Graduated Driver's Licensing Law.

Cindy Sims
907.344.7748 or simsfamily@gci.net

Rep. Bruce Weyhrauch
Capital Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801
465-2273

Dear Representative Weyhrauch:

Thank you for introducing HB213.

Considering that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15-18 year olds, something must be done. I believe that young people should be introduced to the driving experience gradually by phasing in full driving privileges over time and in lower-risk settings. Your bill would help to achieve this... thereby saving the lives of our teenage drivers and their passengers.

You have my total support.

NAME

ADDRESS

SIGNATURE

Brenda Sadler P.O. Box 57045
North Pole 99705 *Brenda Sadler*

Perry J. Williamson 1221 Loir Lane
Fairbanks, AK 99702 *Perry Williamson*

Sandra Trumbower P.O. Box 81305
Frbks AK 99708 *Sandra Trumbower*

Gabriele Lorry 1853 Bridgewater Dr
Fairbanks, AK 99708

Gabriele Lorry

BILL LARRY 1853 BRIDGE WATER DR

Bill Larry

LINDA L. PEARSON 3252 HELEN PL
FAIRBANKS, AK 99709

Linda L. Pearson

Rep. Bruce Weyhrauch
Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801
465-2273

Dear Representative Weyhrauch:

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You have my total support.

Sincerely,

name Ronald F. Taylor
organization _____
address 1090 North Sateen Drive
city/state/zip Anchorage, Alaska 99508
telephone (907) 770-1843
email RFT1@dellmail.com

Ronald F. Taylor

Rep. Bruce Weyhrauch
Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801
465-2273

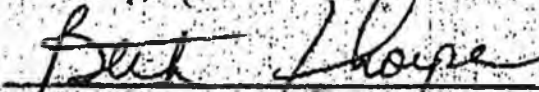
Dear Representative Weyhrauch:

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You have my total support.

Sincerely,



name Beth Thorne

organization Alaska Injury Prevention Center

address 3701 E Tudor, Ste 105

city/state/zip Anchorage AK 99521

telephone 929-3939

email _____

Rep. Bruce Weyhrauch
Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801
465-2273


Dear Representative Weyrauch:

Thank you for introducing HB213.

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You have my total support.

Sincerely,


name Corinne Stevens
organization Anchorage Police Dept.
address 4501 S. Braggus
city/state/zip Anchorage, AK 99507
telephone 786 8749
email cstevens@ci.anchorage.ak.us

Rep. Bruce Weyhrauch
Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801
465-2273

Dear Representative Weyrauch:

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You have my total support.

Sincerely,



name Sam O'Connor
organization Wadeville Community Patrol
address H9310 Laurel #1A
city/state/zip Juneau AK 99807
telephone 222-5157
email SamOConnor@gnl.net



MADD
Activism | Victim Services | Education™

Anchorage Chapter
4105 Turnagain Boulevard, Suite A • Anchorage, AK 99517
(907) 562-6890/Fax (907) 562-6896
Email: info@maddalaska.com
Visit our Web Site: www.maddalaska.com

Our Mission is to stop drunk driving, support the victims of this violent crime and prevent underage drinking

January 27, 2004

Representative Bruce Weyhrauch
Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Weyhrauch,

I am writing on behalf of the Anchorage Chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving in support of HB 213, Graduated Drivers Licensing.

This bill allows young, inexperienced drivers extra time to gain critical experience behind the wheel without the distractions of other youth in the vehicle, and also emphasizes the increased risk of driving during the late night/early morning hours.

Approximately four years ago, MADD participated in a series of youth forums during which young people 14-17 years of age, who discussed teen driving behaviors. The top reason they indicated for teen crashes was inattention, and they went on to describe the inattention as the result of paying attention to conversations and actions of their friends in the vehicle with them, including physically turning their head from the roadway to join in talk or actions going on around them.

Thank you, Representative Weyhrauch, for providing this step toward increasing the safety of Alaska's teen drivers.

Sincerely,

Marti Greeson

Marti Greeson
Executive Director
MADD Anchorage Chapter

Subject: [Fwd: HB 213]

Date: Tue, 27 Jan 2004 10:54:59 -0900

From: Bruce Weyhrauch <Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@Legis.state.ak.us>

Organization: Alaska State Legislature

To: Linda Sylvester <Linda_Sylvester@legis.state.ak.us>

Subject: HB 213

Date: Tue, 27 Jan 2004 08:03:26 -0900

From: "Michael Frost" <akshltzu@hotmail.com>

To: Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@legis.state.ak.us

Hello!

I am glad to see this type of legislation restricting the driving of a new driver for the first 6 months. This is exactly what I had implemented with my own son who is now 17 and my daughter will be 16 in a month and she will be restricted also.

I came up with this idea because I was hit 23 years ago by a new teen driver on her lunch break from school, with 3 other teens in the car with her. She ran a red light, totalled both cars and sent me and a couple of her friends to the doctor. I still suffer today from the injuries I recieved in that accident that may have been avoided if she had not been distracted with her friends in the car.

Nice going Mr. Weyrauch!

I hope this bill passes!

Michael Frost
Boreal Shelties
8326 Blackberry St.
Anchorage, Alaska 99502
Phone: (907) 248-0055
<http://mywebpage.netscape.com/BorealShelties/homepage.html>
E-Mail: akshltzu@hotmail.com

Shetland Sheepdog Club of Anchorage - Board Member & Show Chairperson
Alaska Kennel Club - Show Committee Member
Alyeska Canine Trainers - Puppy Obedience Instructor

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BIS Canada 2003, Am/Can CH Boreal Ring My Bell

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Skyview Storm Chaser

Boreal High Speed Traveler

Subject: [Fwd: Graduated Drivers License Law - GDL]
Date: Tue, 27 Jan 2004 10:50:56 -0900
From: Bruce Weyhrauch <Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@Legis.state.ak.us>
Organization: Alaska State Legislature
To: Linda Sylvester <Linda_Sylvester@legis.state.ak.us>

Subject: Graduated Drivers License Law - GDL
Date: Mon, 26 Jan 2004 18:18:35 -0900
From: Bill & Cindy Sims <simsfamily@gci.net>
To: Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@legis.state.ak.us

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Thank you for your support of HB 213. Please feel free to use this e-mail in support of the Alaska Graduated Driver's Licensing Law.

Cindy Sims
907.344.7748 or simsfamily@gci.net

Subject: [Fwd: HB 213]

Date: Tue, 27 Jan 2004 10:54:59 -0900

From: Bruce Weyhrauch <Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@Legis.state.ak.us>

Organization: Alaska State Legislature

To: Linda Sylvester <Linda_Sylvester@legis.state.ak.us>

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Nice going Mr. Weyrauch!

I hope this bill passes!

Michael Frost
Boreal Shelties
8326 Blackberry St.
Anchorage, Alaska 99502
Phone: (907) 248-0055
<http://mywebpage.netscape.com/BorealShelties/homepage.html>
E-Mail: akshltzu@hotmail.com

Shetland Sheepdog Club of Anchorage - Board Member & Show Chairperson
Alaska Kennel Club - Show Committee Member
Alyeska Canine Trainers - Puppy Obedience Instructor

Home to:
BIS Canada 2000, BISS, Am/Can CH Singltree Irresistible (1996-2003)
BIS Canada 2003, Am/Can CH Boreal Ring My Bell
Boreal Cafe' Kaladi
Beckward Dustcatcher
Simco Against All Odds
Skyview Storm Chaser
Boreal High Speed Traveler

Subject: [Fwd: Graduated Driver's Licensing Law]

Date: Tue, 27 Jan 2004 10:42:19 -0900

From: Bruce Weyhrauch <Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@Legis.state.ak.us>

Organization: Alaska State Legislature

To: Linda Sylvester <Linda_Sylvester@legis.state.ak.us>

Subject: Graduated Driver's Licensing Law

Date: Tue, 27 Jan 2004 09:02:47 -0900

From: "June Bewley" <ajb@da-insurance.com>

Organization: Denali Alaskan Insurance

To: <Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@legis.state.ak.us>

CC: "June Bewley" <ajb@da-insurance.com>

A resounding YES to the 3 stages enumerated in the brief I received this morning. Obviously, lack of experience is the prime contributor to crashes.

Please vote to enact the staged GDL as soon as possible!

Will the teens who already have their licenses be "grandfathered in"?

Please make the law effective as soon as possible.

Thank you,

June Bewley

Subject: HB213

Date: Mon, 26 Jan 2004 19:16:06 -0900

From: "Robin Near" <rnear@alaska.net>

To: <Linda_Sylvester@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear Representative Weyrauch,

Having lived in AK for almost 33 years, I have known several families devastated by the deaths of their loved ones in vehicular accidents. Many involved teenagers who were inexperienced and not ready to drive. I raised two boys here and gladly paid for approved driver's training courses before allowing them to drive. Even that didn't seem enough. I am appalled that anyone 16 years of age can obtain a driver's license with no education or driving experience...all they need do is pass a simple written and driving test.

Your bill regarding a Graduated Driving License makes tremendous sense to those of us who know that the way one learns to become a good driver is **only by time & experience**. No one should learn such a complex skill by practicing on other drivers. It's time our state took responsibility for safer roads for all, by making youthful drivers regard driving for what it really is; **a serious responsibility!** The best way to guarantee this, is for youth to earn the privilege thru a series of checks. Thirty five other states have proven that it works by lower death and injury rates. What in the world are we waiting for? I hope your cohorts realize how many lives could be saved and how much needless suffering could be avoided by implementing a graduated drivers license law. Thank you for your insight and willingness to try and make a big difference for families in Alaska.

Sincerely, Robin Near
P.O. Box 80847
Fairbanks, AK 99708

January 26, 2004

Pete Eagan
699 Yak Road
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Re: HB 213

Rep. Bruce Weyhrauch
Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Weyrauch:

I am a life-long Alaskan (49 years), and am familiar with many a tragedy on our highways and roads. Thank you for introducing HB213. I believe that it is a very good bill. Some opponents might argue that it will be an inconvenience for families with young drivers, but our families' lives are certainly worth a little inconvenience.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15-18 year olds. Statistics in other states have clearly shown a significant reduction in the number of accidents and fatalities in the teen driving ranks following the institution of similar GDL legislation. It makes very good sense to phase in full driving privileges over a relatively short period of time. Experience can be rapidly gained while the young driver is free of many distractions that are currently the norm (e.g. late hours, rowdy peers in the vehicle, possible underage drinking, etc.).

This is a very sound and responsible bill. I heartily support it, and I hope that our Interior legislators do too.

Sincerely,

PETE EAGAN

Pete Eagan
451-5462 w
455-4793 h

Subject: [Fwd: Limiting Teenaged Drivers]
Date: Fri, 23 Jan 2004 10:03:41 -0900
From: Bruce Weyhrauch <Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@Legis.state.ak.us>
Organization: Alaska State Legislature
To: Linda Sylvester <Linda_Sylvester@legis.state.ak.us>

Subject: Limiting Teenaged Drivers
Date: Mon, 19 Jan 2004 03:17:29 +0000
From: "Jeanne Baker" <skreech29@hotmail.com>
To: Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@legis.state.ak.us

Mr. Weyhrauch;

A friend of mine suggested I contact you regarding this state's young drivers. I work for the local electric company as a meter technician. I am on the road all day every day reading meters and connecting and disconnecting electricity. I drive in town on busy streets, on the highways and on low traffic country roads, flats and hills. I am on the road in every weather condition Mother Nature can come up with. My job puts me in contact with many, many other drivers, young ones, old ones, good ones and bad ones. I cannot tell you how many times I have yielded to young drivers in order to avoid an accident, even though I had right of way. I have been cut off, nearly run off the road and been the recipient of many rude gestures when I honk to let a fellow driver know that he is a little too close or has not yielded when he was supposed to. The majority of these incidents have been young men, although there have been a few mature men, a few girls and women. Most older drivers are slower, but stay in the slow lanes and stay home in bad weather.

I have 2 grown children and did allow them to drive at 16 years old. I did not, however, allow them to transport a car full of kids, only an occasional one in an emergency, and they had curfews. They had to drive a full summer before I even thought of allowing them on the road. I used to take them to the school parking lot only when it was totally clear and have them slam on the brakes so they could learn how it felt if they skidded on the highway. We were only going about 20 MPH...but the effect was there. All this was done in a conscientious way so as to assure that they would not be a hazard on the road. They are in their mid-thirties now and have each had one speeding ticket, both in high school, and are very good drivers today.

I truly believe that if a program limiting teenaged kids was in effect, it would make the roads much safer for everyone. Of course, there would have to be stipulations for working teens...but the majority would be restricted in some ways. I really think this would give them a chance to mature a little bit and be a better driver and less of a hazard on the public roadways.

Sincerely,

Jeanne L. Daniel

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<http://wine.msn.com/>

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Monday, January 26, 2004

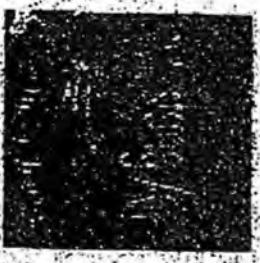
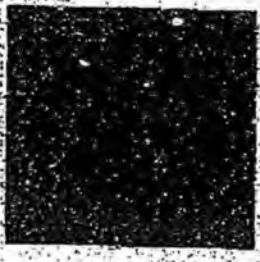
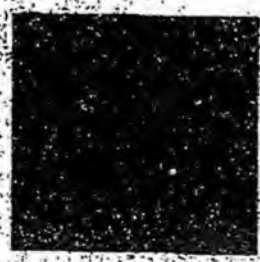
Bill proposes limited driving for teens

By AMY MENEREY-Frontiersman reporter

MAT-SU -- A Juneau representative, backed by Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, has introduced a bill in the Legislature that would add a third step to licensing of young drivers.

Rep. Bruce Weyhrauch recently introduced House Bill 213, Provisional Driver's License. The bill creates a three-tiered system in which young drivers would pursue a full, unrestricted driver's license. The current Alaska law requires drivers under the age of 18 to hold a learner's permit for six months before testing for a full driver's license. Under HB 213, a graduated system would be enacted that begins at 14, as the current system does, when a teen-ager is eligible to apply for a learner's permit. At the age of 16, however, when drivers can currently receive a full license, the young driver would be issued a provisional license that includes verification of driving experience, limits the hours of driving and eliminates other teens in the vehicle.

The proposed bill is based on the Graduated Driver Licensing System, a program developed by the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to give young drivers more time to learn how to operate a vehicle. More than 40 U.S. states have already adopted some form of graduated licensing, although each state's conditions vary to some degree. The first is a supervised learner's phase, lasting a minimum of six months, as Alaska law now requires. Some systems,



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such as the one proposed by Weyhrauch, also require a certain number of hours that a teen-ager has to drive to reach the next level -- similar to accumulating a number of supervised flight hours before flying an airplane solo. Weyhrauch's proposal requires a parent or guardian's certification that the youth has acquired at least 50 hours of driving experience, 10 of which are nighttime hours.

Numerous reports, including Alaska Department of Transportation's Alaska Traffic Accidents report, indicate that teens are involved in more collisions than any other age group. According to ATA's 2001 report, drivers between the ages of 14 and 20 were involved in 4,457 collisions, with driver injuries occurring in 706 of those collisions and seven fatalities. Alcohol and drug abuse, lack of experience and distractions are the leading cause of these collisions.

Riz Arbelovski, Valley mother of two teen drivers, agreed that many 16-year-olds lack the experience and judgment needed behind the wheel. "I feel my kids right now are not as responsible as I was at that age," Arbelovski said.

The intermediate step in graduated licensing allows teens more hours of unsupervised driving, but only in less risky situations by limiting hours of driving and the number of passengers. California was the first state to ban teen-age passengers altogether, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's October report, "Graduated Licensing: A Blueprint for North America." The ban applies to the first six months of a 12-month intermediate phase, unless an adult is present in the car. Weyhrauch's bill proposes limiting passengers in this phase to only a parent or one person 25 years of age or older. For some parents this idea is not so appealing.

"It might be a difficulty for some people," said Adel Kuper, a Wasilla mother who depends on her older children for transportation of their younger siblings.

"Yes," agreed Arbelovski, "I could see maybe two passengers."

For many teens the privilege of driving is tied into those responsibilities.

"The whole point of us driving is so we can pick up our brothers and sisters, and run errands for our parents," said Kuper's 14-year-old daughter Honnah, who also said she was looking forward to the responsibility.

Full-privilege licensing becomes available when conditions of the first two stages are met. This usually means the driver has incurred no violations or accidents during the first two phases. Under HB 213, a teen-ager could apply for a full unrestricted license after 12 months of issuance of a provisional license, as long as they have not had any traffic citations or convictions for at least six months before the application.

According to the IIHS report, though many states and provinces have adopted portions of the graduated licensing system, there is too much variation between them. The report rates each state as either poor, marginal, acceptable or good, in their new licensing requirements. Alaska was among 10 states rated as marginal, in the company of South Dakota, Nevada, Minnesota and Kentucky, to name a few. Rated poor by IIHS were Arizona, Hawaii, Kansas, Montana, Oklahoma and Wyoming. Twenty-six states were rated acceptable, and nine received the top rating of good.

Graduated licensing is supported by many organizations, including the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, The Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Information about HB 213 can be found at www.akrepublicans.org/weyhrauch/23/spst/weyh_hb213. More information about graduated licensing can be found on various Web sites, including IIHS, at www.iihs.org/safety_facts/state_laws/grad_license.htm, or www.hwysafety.org/

[safety_facts/qanda/images/grad_lic.pdf](http://www.hwysafety.org/safety_facts/qanda/images/grad_lic.pdf).

[Fwd: GDL legislation]

Subject: [Fwd: GDL legislation]
Date: Mon, 26 Jan 2004 16:12:31 -0900
From: Bruce Weyhrauch <Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@Legis.state.ak.us>
Organization: Alaska State Legislature
To: Linda Sylvester <Linda_Sylvester@legis.state.ak.us>

Subject: GDL legislation
Date: Mon, 26 Jan 2004 11:04:01 -0900
From: "L J Rowinski" <ffljr@aurora.uaf.edu>
To: representative_bruce_weyhrauch@legis.state.ak.us

Thank you for your good work on this bill. The people whose lives are spared will never know they were in danger; but, you know and I know that we are everyone of us at risk. Thank you, Christi Rowinski, 479-5317
ffljr@uaf.edu

Subject: Letter of support for HB 213

Date: Mon, 26 Jan 2004 17:25:30 -0800 (PST)

From: Linda Pearson <lpearson18@yahoo.com>

To: terry.harvey@legis.state.ak.us

Hi Terry:

This is the letter I tried unsuccessfully to fax....

<?xml:namespace prefix = o ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />

January 26, 2004

Representative Bruce Weyhrauch

State Capitol Building- Room 30

<?xml:namespace prefix = st1 ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:smarts" />Juneau, Alaska
99801

Dear Representative Weyhrauch,

Thank you for sponsoring and supporting House Bill 213- the Graduated Drivers License proposal. As a high school counselor for 30 years in the Fairbanks area, I had the opportunity to observe teens driving on a daily basis. Every day I saw kids showing off to their peers by speeding, gunning their engines, jumping stop signs, even challenging and racing other drivers and threatening pedestrians (playfully, of course). And this was before and after school in a school parking lot. This risky driving extends to the roads we all use.

As a proponent of safety, I practiced a type of GDL with my own children. They got their permits after their sophomore years, practiced driving with me for a year and a summer, and took a drivers' ed class before taking their licensing tests. I know that lots of practice under safe driving conditions helps novice drivers become good drivers and avoid risky behaviors.

Other states that have adopted GDLs have seen a reduction in teen accidents, deaths and injuries. Insurance companies also recognize the dangers posed by inexperienced drivers in the form of higher rates for young drivers.

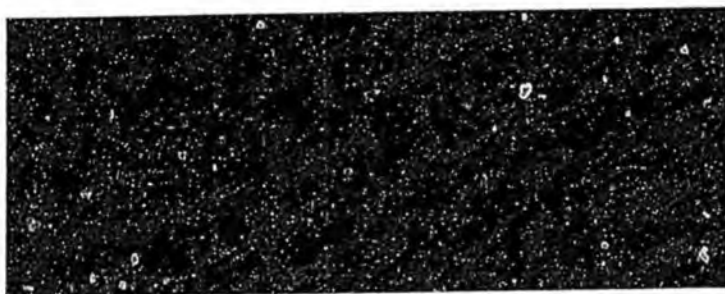
Thank you for your concern for all drivers and for promoting HB 213.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Pearson

3252 Helen Place

Fairbanks, Alaska 99709



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Subject: Support of HB 213

Date: Mon, 26 Jan 2004 10:31:36 -0900

From: Debbie Manning <dmanning@northstar.k12.ak.us>

To: Linda_Sylvester@legis.state.ak.us

Dear Rep Weyrauch,

I lost my daughter on March 26, 2003 in a traffic accident on the Parks Highway. She got her driving permit at age 14 and her driver's license at age 16. I tried to prepare her as best I could for all driving experiences by driving with her whenever possible. When she was on her own though or with friends, I know she didn't always follow the rules. She was a typical driver of her age group -- driving too fast and taking too many chances because she believed nothing could ever happen to her. At age 20 she was finally getting some experience under her belt and driving more defensively; however, she never got a chance to improve any more. She was in a head-on collision. I still don't know the cause of the accident but I believe it was a combination of lack of attention and inability to read road conditions correctly. Perhaps if she would have had a more restrictive driver's license from the beginning, she would have been more aware of her limited experience and taken more precautions. It's too late for her, but maybe this bill will save other young people.

Debbie Manning
North Pole, AK

*Debbie Manning, Human Resources Technician
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
(907)452-2000, ext 381
<http://www.northstar.k12.ak.us>*

Subject: Re: HB 213 - Graduated Driver's License

Date: Mon, 26 Jan 2004 11:49:10 -0900

From: "Don Henry" <donhenry@mtaonline.net>

To: "Linda Sylvester" <Linda_Sylvester@legis.state.ak.us>

I live in Palmer and the road conditions are anything but small town driving, plus a large percentage of our yearly driving is spent with winter (dark, snowy, icy) road conditions. I think adding the 50-hour instruction step with nighttime driving limited is a good one, but it should include or be in addition to a driver's ed (defensive driving) course. Here in the Valley, Community Schools offers a 4-week program (8 hours a week) that costs (if I remember right) \$80. They have simulated modeled driving situations that prepares new (young) drivers to be defensive, responsible drivers. Instead of (or in addition to) legislating more laws, I think the State government should put forth effort (money) for new driver training courses. If the driver's ed course was available more often, most parents can afford the \$80. Right now though there is limited space and the program is offered twice during the school year. So I do support the GDL bill but think there is room for improvement. One comment on the 6-month period that requires the presence of a parent or an over-21 adult, but allows for the driver to drive with two siblings (without a parent or over-21 adult it appears). This does not make sense, if I'm understanding it right. Thank you for allowing me to comment. Sincerely, Carole Henry, 25346 E. Buckshot Lane, Palmer, AK 99645 (907) 745-6578

Subject: Limiting Teenaged Drivers

Date: Mon, 19 Jan 2004 03:17:29 +0000

From: "Jeanne Baker" <skreech29@hotmail.com>

To: Representative_Bruce_Weyhrauch@legis.state.ak.us

Mr. Weyhrauch;

A friend of mine suggested I contact you regarding this state's young drivers. I work for the local electric company as a meter technician. I am on the road all day every day reading meters and connecting and disconnecting electricity. I drive in town on busy streets, on the highways and on low traffic country roads, flats and hills. I am on the road in every weather condition Mother Nature can come up with. My job puts me in contact with many, many other drivers, young ones, old ones, good ones and bad ones. I cannot tell you how many times I have yielded to young drivers in order to avoid an accident, even though I had right of way. I have been cut off, nearly run off the road and been the recipient of many rude gestures when I honk to let a fellow driver know that he is a little too close or has not yielded when he was supposed to. The majority of these incidents have been young men, although there have been a few mature men, a few girls and women. Most older drivers are slower, but stay in the slow lanes and stay home in bad weather.

I have 2 grown children and did allow them to drive at 16 years old. I did not, however, allow them to transport a car full of kids, only an occasional one in an emergency, and they had curfews. They had to drive a full summer before I even thought of allowing them on the road. I used to take them to the school parking lot only when it was totally clear and have them slam on the brakes so they could learn how it felt if they skidded on the highway. We were only going about 20 MPH...but the effect was there. All this was done in a conscientious way so as to assure that they would not be a hazard on the road. They are in their mid-thirties now and have each had one speeding ticket, both in high school, and are very good drivers today.

I truly believe that if a program limiting teenaged kids was in effect, it would make the roads much safer for everyone. Of course, there would have to be stipulations for working teens...but the majority would be restricted in some ways. I really think this would give them a chance to mature a little bit and be a better driver and less of a hazard on the public roadways.

Sincerely,

Jeanne L. Daniel

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Subject: Graduated licensing

Date: Tue, 20 Jan 2004 19:28:04 -0900

From: "Amy Menerey, Frontiersman" <editor@alaska.net>

To: linda_sylvester@legis.state.ak.us

Dear Rep. Bruce Weyhrauch,

I am writing because I recently heard that you are sponsoring a bill regarding graduated licensing in Alaska. My name is Amy Menerey and I am a reporter at the Frontiersman newspaper in Wasilla. My daughter Julie died at the age of 16 two years ago as the result of a car crash - she was driving. It was not late, there was no alcohol or drugs involved and there was only one passenger in her car; however she was driving too fast and being careless and it cost her her life. I have since spoke to numerous students about driving safe and about what happened to my daughter. After doing research I also wrote a story about what happened with Julie. I have included it and the sidebars in this e-mail, but it is much more effective on paper. I have also created buttons that I hand out to teenagers in the name of "Teens Drive Safe," promoting safe driving. I would love to be involved in any way in giving testimony, copies of the article, etc. to promote this bill.

My only objection to the proposal as it is written is that 16-year-olds have no passengers at all; I believe limiting the passengers to either 1 or 2, as other states have done, is sufficient, especially since so many teens have responsibilities that include driving younger siblings to destinations that are a condition of their privileges. I would be happy to discuss any of this further. You can call me at 352-2267 (the Frontiersman), or at home 376-7752.

Thank you for your time.

Amy Menerey

(I apologize for the length of this e-mail)

Published in the Frontiersman newspaper Nov. 24, 2002.

Getting behind the wheel By Amy Menerey Frontiersman reporter

It was shortly after 7:30 p.m. on a cold, icy Friday night when the phone rang. My daughter, Julie, and her friends, Sally, James and Cody, had left the house about 15 minutes earlier. On the phone, James was hysterical, barely comprehensible. The only words that were clear caused my pulse to race, my thoughts to run in a thousand circles and my heart to ache to the core of my inner being < Julie had been in an accident.

Nearly every teen-ager looks forward to that day when they can break from the constraints of mom and dad and finally 'be free.' With their 16th birthday comes the ability to drive in Alaska < which means no longer riding the school bus, the ability to get to and from work on their own, greater responsibility and more freedom to be with their friends. It is a great leap toward adulthood. For parents, it also means greater freedom. Their licensed teen can get where they need to be without a chauffeur, run to the store for necessities or drive younger siblings to their activities.

'When you get your license it's a coming of age,' said 19-year-old Melissa Davis. 'It's a lot of responsibility, but also the freedom to use that responsibility maturely.' Before the big day arrives, plans have to be made. What car will the teen-ager drive? What rules will accompany that privilege? And then, of course, there's the insurance. Why, many people end up asking, does insurance for teen-agers cost so much? The answer to that is repeated again and again in report after report from private and governmental agencies < teen-agers get into more accidents than any other age group in the United States. The risk for motor-vehicle crashes nationwide is higher among 16- to

19-year-olds than among any other age group. Per mile driven teen drivers between the ages of 16 and 19 are four times more likely than older drivers to crash, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Teen-agers represented just 10 percent of the U.S. population in 2000, but accounted for 14 percent of all motor vehicle-related deaths. Forty-one percent of those teen motor-vehicle deaths occurred between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. Moving a 3- to 4-thousand-pound piece of machinery at speeds of up to 65 mph is not something to be taken lightly. Experienced drivers often take automobiles for granted and forget that learning to drive is a difficult skill. Young drivers start out with very little knowledge or understanding of the complexities of driving a motor vehicle. Learning how a car handles and how people react takes a lot of time. To be a safe driver, teens must have technical ability, good judgment and experience, according to highway safety organizations.

The day before Julie's accident, Dec. 13, she drove me to work. I cautioned my 16-year-old about watching out for others, about taking time to slow down now that the roads were getting worse. 'Quit worrying mom,' she said in a tone that echoed her displeasure at hearing my consternation again and again. 'I'm a good driver,' she said confidently.

Here in Alaska, there were 14,127 traffic accidents during 2000. Ninety-three resulted in fatal injuries to occupants; nonfatal injuries were reported in 4,131 of all accidents; and 9,789 accidents caused only property damage. Traffic accidents injured or killed 6,226 people in Alaska during 2000, and caused \$52.3 million in damages to vehicles, plus \$2.1 million in damages to highway structures and other non-vehicular property, according to the Alaska Department of Transportation's 2000 Alaska Traffic Accidents report. Of these, the percentage of crashes involving either injuries or fatalities continued to increase over the past three years in three of the eight largest boroughs during 2000 - Kodiak, Kenai Peninsula and the Mat-Su Borough. When asked, many teens say they know people who have been involved in accidents. But when asked whether that involvement changed their driving behavior, the answers were mixed. One teen said his mother and father had been in an accident but claimed it changed his behavior little. 'Not really because I don't drive like them,' 18-year-old Phillip Talley said.

Dec.
16: I'm holding her pink and shapely manicured hands that she was so proud of before she got into her car and left that night. 'Don't they look fake,' she had said. As she lays unmoving in Alaska Regional Hospital's Intensive Care Unit I wonder, is she scared? Does she have any conscious thought? I am aware she might die. I knew that Friday night. But she made it through the night - the first 24 hours are crucial they told me. Then they told me the first 48 hours are crucial. So we passed 24 - halfway there, I thought. At 36 hours I thought maybe, just maybe, I wouldn't have to think about my only daughter dying anymore. The nurse at Valley Hospital Friday night told me, 'This is the beginning of a very long night for you, for you and your daughter, and its going to be a difficult one, so brace yourself, it won't be easy. But just be with her, let her know you're there - and pray.' It seems like another lifetime ago when my daughter was just another teen-age kid going out with her friends, bugging me for 10 bucks and looking absolutely perfect in her size 7 jeans. I haven't stopped praying since.

NHTSA's Web site on teen driving warns that 'adolescent impulsiveness is a natural behavior, but results in poor driving judgment and participation in high-risk behaviors like speeding, inattention, drinking and driving and not using a seat belt. Peer pressure also often encourages risk taking. Teens often drive at night with other teens in the car, increasing risk.' In Alaska, those same high-risk behaviors, unsafe speed, driver inattention and failure to yield - in that order - were the most frequently cited contributing factors for all crashes during 2000. Among all accidents in Alaska - as reported nationwide - more accidents involve teen-agers than any other age group. Teen-agers between 16 and 20 years old were involved in more than 6,000 car accidents in our state alone in 2000. The numbers drop significantly in other age groups, however. Statistics show that the 21- to 25-year-olds make up the age group with the next-highest rate of accidents

in Alaska. Reports indicate that, while speed and inattention are the major causes of accidents among younger drivers, drunken driving is the next-highest factor and as drivers become of legal drinking age, alcohol becomes a major factor in crashes. Captain Dennis Casanovas, head of the Palmer post of the Alaska State Troopers, agreed that he sees more new drivers in accidents than any other group. 'My general sense is that high up there would be driver inexperience [as the reason]; as we would expect, brand-new drivers do make more mistakes than experienced drivers,' Casanovas said. 'It can be first-winter drivers or perhaps those not driving the same car every day, who swap vehicles with their parents and [the vehicle doesn't] necessarily handle the same, brake the same or have the same pick-up when passing. It's true teens take more risks and are often out in lower-light driving [conditions]. It always seems more tragic when you read about those [teen-related crashes].' Friday night is the most common night for crashes in Alaska, and, the statistics show, more crashes occur on weekdays than on weekends here. Looking at road conditions, the number of accidents that occur when roads are dry, compared to roads that are packed with snow and ice, are relatively close < 5,602 accidents on dry roads compared to 5,933 on snow and ice, but there were more accidents with major injuries and fatalities on dry roads than roads with snow or ice. The numbers may correlate with an increase in driving time, higher speeds caused by lower levels of driver caution and longer hours of daylight, according to the ATA report.

It wasn't until after Julie had been taken to Alaska Regional and a hole had been drilled into her skull to measure the pressure from her massive brain injury that I learned what had happened after she and her friends left my house that night. The two boys, driving in another vehicle, and later Sally, Julie's passenger, told a similar story. They had stopped side-by-side at a stoplight heading into Wasilla. When the light turned green they both took off. Cody, driving a large truck, took off ahead of Julie. My daughter, not wanting to be outdone, said, 'I'm not gonna let them beat me,' and pressed the accelerator of her 1994 Chevy Beretta. Apparently they were nearly side-by-side when they approached a right curve in the road < Cody slowed down coming into the turn. For Julie, it was too late. The car's rear end slid to the left on the icy road and she overcorrected, putting the car into a spin and crossing the lane < right in front of an oncoming car. 'Oh shit, we're sliding,' Sally heard Julie say before looking up herself and responding, 'Whoa, we are.'

In 2000, Wasilla ranked fourth among Alaska's major cities in its motor-vehicle accident rate with 298 accidents, 11 with major injuries and one fatality. According to the ATA report, a high percentage of those accidents occurred along the Parks Highway, which runs through Wasilla. There were 83 crashes reported in Palmer, with no fatalities or major injury. Anchorage had the highest number with 8,286 crashes, 103 major injuries and 29 fatalities. Of all the accidents in Alaska in 2000, most of them, 5,597, were motor-vehicle angle crashes or T-bone accidents, as they are more commonly referred. The next most common type of accident in Alaska is the rear-end collision, with 3,790 in 2000. Compared to the 660 reports of crashes involving moose during the year or the 685 reports of vehicles in a ditch can give cause for reflection. Though only one in four crashes nationwide is a side or T-bone collision, this type of accident is responsible for one out of every three highway deaths. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, almost 10,000 occupant deaths occur each year in side-impact crashes and more than half of these involve head injuries. Head injuries are the cause of death in 51 to 74 percent of single-vehicle side impacts and 41 to 64 percent of multiple-vehicle side impacts.

Dec. 19: 'The numbers are up a little,' the nurses say, or 'the numbers are looking good.' It's no longer, 'Julie's looking good, or bad,' our focus is on the numbers displayed on the large screen above her hospital bed that monitors the pressure on her brain. It's as if she's no longer there < and, I guess she isn't, really. I don't mean her life is gone, but she's staying

in a controlled state, hanging in the balance between here and there by the manipulation of buttons. Tubes, machines, bells and beeps, suction in, suction out < this is my daughter's life right now < and mine. I fall asleep, my head on a pillow at her thigh, her hand in mine, to the sound of the humming, rhythmic machinery. I doze, still hoping that this is all some weird other-worldly dream, but it's not.

When a car crashes, there are three collisions, or impacts, that take place. The first one is the impact of the vehicle itself against something < a wall, another vehicle, or a light pole, for example. This causes a rapid deceleration. The second collision is the impact of the person inside the vehicle against objects in the car < the windshield, steering wheel, seat belt, or another person. The third collision is within the person. This is when organs slam against bones or other organs. When a small object and a large object collide, the larger usually wins. This applies to two vehicles colliding or the person within the larger object, namely the car itself. It is for this reason that safety standards applied by car manufacturers now include airbags, cars that 'give' more and also why the industry is gearing toward vehicles that are lighter and about the same weight as other vehicles on the road. Heavier cars subject their own occupants to more force at a given velocity than do smaller automobiles when they hit a fixed object, and in multi-car collisions, they strike the other vehicles with more force. A 2,000-pound car needs to achieve a speed of 46 miles per hour to generate as much force at impact as a 3,500-pound automobile traveling 35 miles per hour, according to an article entitled 'Automobile Weight and Safety,' at www.panix.com. A common tendency when a child reaches driving age is to either buy them an older, 'beater' car or to give them mom or dad's older vehicle. While many of these older cars may be heavier and seem safer, experts in the automobile safety industry warn that, because teens are more likely to get into an accident, they need newer cars with more safety features such as airbags, side air bags and construction made to crumple.

Dec. 20: My time is spent between sitting at Julie's side and updating everyone on her condition. The many friends and family that came to see her were astounded by her visible appearance. 'She just looks like she's sleeping,' they told me, astonished that, save for a wrapped arm and one small scratch on the side of her head there is no visible injury to my daughter. Yet the outcome is unknown. The swelling in her brain has not subsided as we had hoped and other complications have emerged. But with her eyes closed and the remains of her favorite purple eye shadow still visible, her brown hair flowing across the white hospital pillow and her painted hands resting at her side, were it not for all the tubes and IVs, she would look at peace.

Experts agree that new drivers need continued supervision after they get their license. Area law enforcement officials suggest limiting the hours young or inexperienced drivers are out driving and prohibiting the use of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs while driving. Although parents would like to believe their teen-ager will make good choices, it is important to make a 'free call' agreement for a ride home in case they abuse drugs or alcohol, or are with a driver who is doing so. A driver education program is recommended for young drivers and parents are encouraged to set a good example. The use of seat belts is not only recommended, but the law in Alaska. Still, Casanovas said, there are a lot of people who aren't using them. 'We still see roughly a quarter of the population in Mat-Su that fail to wear their seat belts,' he said, adding that safe driving also means keeping the car in working order, such as keeping headlights and windshield clear for optimal visibility. Parents, officials say, should take advantage of the two-year window between license eligibility and legal adulthood < obtaining a license doesn't mean the training period has ended. Currently Alaska law requires that anyone under the age of 18 who is seeking a license must first hold an instruction permit for at least 6 months. This permit, or provisional license, can be obtained any time after the age of 14 and requires the driver to have an adult present in the car with them. The adult must have been licensed for one year and must be 21 or older. A teen who

acquires traffic citations totaling six or more points in a 12-month period, or nine or more points in a 24-month period must also take a nationally certified defensive driving course to retain their driving privileges. Many states are also instituting graduated licensing < a system that allows beginning drivers to obtain a license with lower risks involved. (See 'THIS,' Page THIS) When signing for their child's driver's license, the parent and child are informed that parents have the right to suspend that license at any time if they choose. What many parents don't know, though, is that they also have the right to see their teen's driving record. In 1999, legislation was passed that enables parents to receive a copy of their minor child's driving record. According to that law, if a parent, foster parent or guardian requests it, the division of motor vehicles must release information about their under-18 teen driver, as long as the teen has not been emancipated. The law requires an 'abstract' be released, free of charge, which includes a listing of accidents, convictions of vehicle, driver and traffic offenses and 'any actions taken upon the driver's license, and information relating to financial responsibility.' At Al Driving in Wasilla, Jim Moody teaches the National Safety Council's 'Alive at 25' defensive driving course. The program is exclusively for young drivers from 16 to 25. While Moody doesn't offer any behind-the-wheel instruction, he feels the Alive course is very beneficial to young drivers. The four-hour course focuses on common errors teens make while driving and how to avoid them. Some local insurance companies offer discounts for teens who have taken the course, Moody said. Parents should check for available discounts with their insurance agent. Although the class is available to any 16- to 25-year-old, Moody said 90 percent of the teen-agers he sees in the class come because 'the law sent them here.' No one else in the Valley is teaching the course, he said, and it is required for teens who have exceeded the number of points allowable. The biggest mistake teens make when driving? 'Speeding,' Moody said. Cost of the course is \$40 plus tax, and it is offered twice a month. Call 357-2216 for more information. Area schools may offer driver education courses as well, such as the course offered by Colony High School that incorporates driver's education with first aid training throughout one semester. In that course, 10 to 13 hours of training is done before ever setting foot in a vehicle, through the use of a high-tech simulator that incorporates different driving courses and helps new drivers develop good driving habits before getting behind the real wheel. There can be as much as a 5 to 20 percent discount on insurance for completion of the course, according to Mike Boyd of CHS The driving portion of the program < and use of the simulator < is also available through the community schools program as a three-week course. Call 376-0831 for more information. Students enrolled in Job Corps in Palmer can take advantage of the Alive at 25 defensive driving course, as well as preparation for written and driving tests. Will Owens instructs teens and young adults at the center and assists them through the process of licensing, right up to the driving test at DMV.

Dec. 24: The doctor has now told us that Julie's injuries were massive and that he is afraid we may have been given false hope. He tells us her brain injury was a shearing type, the worst kind, and the outcome would probably not be good < he dashes away any hope we had. 'Wait and see,' the phrase we have heard for the last 10 days, has turned to 'she will not survive this.' We had been told that the swelling of Julie's brain would eventually subside and then we could begin to address other complications that had resulted from her comatose state. Even if she should live, I am told, it will probably only be with the aid of machines. The room spins and the floor disappears below my feet < I feel like that first night is being played all over again. I cannot be with people at this time. I get in my car and drive aimlessly through Anchorage streets, stopping in a movie theater parking lot and sobbing until my nose runs red with blood. I scream, I curse < I ask God why and ask for direction, for courage, for the strength to survive watching my daughter die.

Short of following teen-agers and spying on them, several new devices that enable parents to find out how their teen-ager is driving are now on the market. Taking its cue from the trucking industry, the Am I Safe? Program is advertised as a youth safety awareness system. The system < for a monthly

fee of \$39 per family < works much the same as the 'How am I driving?' sticker seen on the back of commercial vehicles. Parents receive a kit containing safety information, a parent-teen safe driving partnership agreement and a decal to affix to the teen-ager's car. The decal contains a toll-free number for other drivers to call with reports on the teen's driving. The parent receives immediate notification of reported driving behavior < good or bad < a quarterly summary of the teen's driving habits and a quarterly newsletter with safety tips, updates and news articles. The company claims an accident reduction rate of 40 to 50 percent. A registration form is available online at www.amisafe.net. Although controversial, the 'black box' is making its way into the automobile industry. These boxes work much like those in airplanes and have been used in race cars, armored cars, police cars and transit vehicles. Although many drivers aren't aware, event data recorders are already in many cars < all GM cars since 1999 and in many other makes and models since 1996 have them < and controversy has risen over the information obtained from the recorders and who should have access to it. Insurance companies claim the information will end disputes about what happened in a car crash, such as a vehicle's speed before impact, engine speed, brake status and airbag status. A similar monitor device is now being advertised for parents who want to track their teen's driving habits. The Auto Watch black box comes with a computer program that gives guardians information about how long a vehicle has been driven, at what speeds and distances the vehicle has traveled, among other things. The box is password protected and the program notifies the parent if it has been tampered with. The Auto Watch comes at the hefty price of \$295, but if used in conjunction with guidelines and consequences, parents may consider this information about their teen's activities worth the cost. More information on Auto Watch is available at www.drivehomesafe.com/autowatch. Insurance companies in the Valley may offer other programs that couple lower insurance rates with driving improvement courses for young drivers. Allstate, for example, offers Teen Smart, a course on a computer disk that teens can take. The course includes a test which, when completed, can be taken to an area office and, depending on the test score, may make the teen eligible for insurance discounts. They also offer discounts for young drivers who keep their grades up and for college students attending school away from home. 'We believe if they're a good student, then they're also probably more of a defensive driver; so these [discounts] promote both,' said Martina Edwards of Allstate's Michael Hughes Agency in Wasilla. 'The discounts are well worth looking into.'

Dec. 25: The hospital is quiet, alone. Everyone is gone for the holiday. Julie lies there, her cheeks looking both sallow and puffy at the same time. Her respirator speeds her breaths faster than before and to listen to it makes my breathing increase, my heart rate increase and my fears swell. This place is too quiet. She seems to be doing well today and I try to take my mind away but I am numb from a night of little sleep, of crying, of panic attacks filled with fear and wondering how this could be real. Tired, I return to her room about 2 a.m. < I need to be with her. My heart sinks as I look at the monitor < her blood pressure has dropped < it is 90 over 70. The nurse, usually cheerful and optimistic, is distant as she busies herself with Julie's assortment of IVs hanging from trees with plastic tubes trailing to my little girl's arms and chest < Julie's Christmas Trees I had called them earlier in the day. 'I assume you'll be wanting to stay with her tonight,' the nurse says in an assuming, almost demanding tone. I hold Julie's hand and speak to her as I watch in shock as each reading from the pressure cuff on her arm drops. The nurse comes in and closes the curtains < an act that tells me more than I want to know. She explains that Julie's heart is failing, that they have tapped out all the medications available and she is getting very little oxygen to her blood < and her brain. Her blood pressure continues to fall < 80 over 60, over 50, over 40 < as I share stories with the nurse and respiratory therapist of the once-spirited, smiling girl who liked to work on cars, sing loud, dance and had no qualms about farting in public. I want them to know who this girl is and I want her to know I am here. Her body is giving up; whether or not my Julie is still there I do not know. Her skin is pale and ashen compared to the red glow of

her previous feverish days lying in the ICU. I go up and wake her father, 'I'm sorry, wake up; she's leaving us,' I say. He doesn't hesitate, he doesn't question < he knows. Returning to the room the eyes of the nurses who had cared for her, hoped with us, prayed silently to save this young woman whose vitality and sense of humor they had never known are welled up on the brink of tears. They do their jobs then once again close the curtain, leaving us to say good-bye to our daughter. 'Tell her it's okay to go,' I sob to her father < I already had. He falls to his knees beside the bed and tells her she can stop trying, it is okay, it's time to go to heaven. The monitor begins to beep and the nurse comes into the room in tears. She turns the monitor away from view, saying, 'Don't look at the screen, look at her, don't let your memories be of this.' The room is dark and, once warm, suddenly so cold as her father holds her hand and I stroke her face, watching the color drain away as her heart stops beating. The nurses return and one, then the other, puts her stethoscope to Julie's chest and listens, then steps aside and, eyes red and streaked, announce her time of death. 3:35 a.m. Dec. 26, 2001. Two weeks after Julie's death, after leaving the hospital that had become our days and our nights, after making funeral arrangements, after putting relatives on a plane, after I have reached a point of numbness that prohibits me from feeling or crying, I am looking through her things. I come across a photograph of Julie on her 16th birthday. She is sitting cross-legged in her pink flannel pajamas, hair pulled back in a familiar ponytail and a wide, toothy smile graces her face. She is holding her driver's license. The tears begin to flow.

Side: Graduated licensing sweeping the country The Graduated Driver Licensing System is a program developed by the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to give young drivers more time to learn how to operate a vehicle. Forty-seven U.S. states have adopted some form of graduated licensing, all but a few since 1994. Although each state's conditions vary, the system optimally involves three stages. The first is a supervised learner's phase, lasting a minimum of six months, as Alaska law now requires. Some systems also require a certain number of hours that a teen-ager has to drive to reach the next level - similar to accumulating a number of supervised flight hours before flying an airplane solo. The intermediate step permits unsupervised driving, but only in less risky situations, such as during daytime hours, and with a limited number of passengers. California was the first state to ban teen-age passengers, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's October report, 'Graduated Licensing: A Blueprint for North America.' The ban applies to the first six months of a 12-month intermediate phase, unless an adult is present in the car. Full-privilege licensing becomes available when conditions of the first two stages are met. This usually means the driver has incurred no violations or accidents during the first two phases. In the U.S., graduated licensing applies to young drivers < specifically those under the age of 18 < because of the high incidence of accidents among this group, with the exception of Maryland and New Jersey. Those states have followed the lead of Canada, where graduated licensing has been instituted for some time and applies to drivers of any age on the basis that it is designed to address a lack of driving experience. According to the IIHS report, though many states and provinces have adopted portions of the graduated licensing system, there is too much variation between them. The report rates each state as either poor, marginal, acceptable or good, in their new licensing requirements. Alaska was among 12 states rated as marginal, in the company of South Dakota, Nevada, Minnesota and Kentucky, to name a few. Rated poor by IIHS were Arizona, Hawaii, Kansas, Montana, Oklahoma and Wyoming. Twenty-four states were rated acceptable, and nine received the top rating of good.

Side: Accidents are the leading cause of all head and brain injuries. Brain injury can occur when the head has been struck, usually by striking an object such as a windshield, or the brain undergoes a sudden acceleration/deceleration movement without direct external trauma to the head. Many brain injuries are the result of bruising, bleeding, twisting or

tearing of brain tissue. Damage to the brain may occur at the time of the accident, or develop over time as tissues swell and bleed within the head. Many people have minor brain injury from accidents and don't realize the results for years, which can include loss of memory and changes in behavior. Fifty percent of all brain injuries are caused by vehicle crashes, according to the Brain Injury Association, and more than 50,000 people die each year from brain injuries. Each year, about 1.5 million Americans sustain a traumatic brain injury (TBI). That's eight times the number of people diagnosed with breast cancer and 34 times the number of new cases of HIV/AIDS each year, according to BIA.

Side: It could be you By Sally Fielder

The last thing I remember is me looking in my purse and Julie saying, 'Oh shit, we're sliding,' and me looking up and I don't even remember what I saw, just looking up. I don't remember anything at Valley hospital, or even much at Alaska Regional Hospital, but I do remember the nurses pushing me and going over the seam in the doorway and screaming because of my back. It was the worst pain I ever had in my life, a broken back. Although I don't remember much, I had a broken back, my pelvis was broken in four places, I had two broken ribs, a punctured lung, and a ripped spleen. I also lost a kidney as a result of the crash, and have lots of nerve damage to my left leg. I went through several surgeries. The first was an exploratory surgery when they sewed my spleen back into place. Then I had to have major surgery when I had my fixator and the screw put in my back. Later, I had another one when they took my fixator out and then another to take the screw back out of my back. The screw didn't come out of my back until about 6 months after the crash. I couldn't even lay on that side of my back because I could feel the four-inch screw through my skin. Most of what I know about the hospital is what my family told me happened, because I was heavily drugged. I hallucinated a lot during that time and some of those memories are clear. I remember the really traumatizing stuff, like when the nurses had to lift me or move me to take care of me. I also had chest tubes in place, in addition to the IVs and oxygen in my nose. Because of the extent of my injuries the doctors didn't know whether or not I'd have a catheter the rest of my life < if I'd even be able to go to the bathroom by myself, let alone walk. I did better than they expected me to. The doctor said I healed as fast as a person could. Initially, when I did start walking, it was with a walker, then a crutch. I can walk fine now, but I still have pain and I limp from the pain in my leg because of the nerve damage. The worst possible thing that came out of this < even aside from any of the physical pain < is losing my best friend. The pain of the injuries does not even compare to having someone you love die. That's what's with me mostly now. Julie was a part of my family since fourth grade, so it not only hurts me but every person in my family. They all knew her very well and they knew and loved her for years < everyone was hurt by this and still are. Sometimes I do get mad because she's gone and I wish I could ask her 'why.' But it's because of the fact that she's gone, not because I'm mad at her for anything she did. It's only because she's not here. My family said that at first they didn't know what to expect when the accident happened, it was the most horrifying moment. They knew I had a lot of injuries and would suffer a lot from it, but they also knew I would live. Then there was Julie, and no one knew. One day you're going to work, and the next it's the most horrible experience there is. Now I'm completely paranoid of driving < if it snows or the road is slippery I'm terrified to death of driving. It's hard for me to ride with someone else < almost every one of my friends I would disqualify to drive me around. I consider myself a good driver because I'm so cautious of everything now. I think it's made me a better driver, though. I go on the road every day knowing this could be my last drive < the slightest wrong move could be your last chance. I think people misjudge how much power they have in their hands. I would tell everyone, look at your best friend, your brother, sister, mom or dad < someone you love more than anything in the world, someone you could trust and tell everything to < and picture one night what you could lose, just for not using good judgement. That they could be gone forever.