

Teen Graduated Driver Licensing in Wyoming

Nationally, teens are a high-risk driver group. Crashes are consistently the leading cause of death for this age group, accounting for more than one-third of deaths annually. Many states have adopted graduated driver licensing (GDL) for teens as one intervention to improve teen driver safety. The GDL creates a staged approach for teen licensing by postponing full licensure until older ages, establishing parameters to limit driver risk exposure, and promoting supervised driving experience.

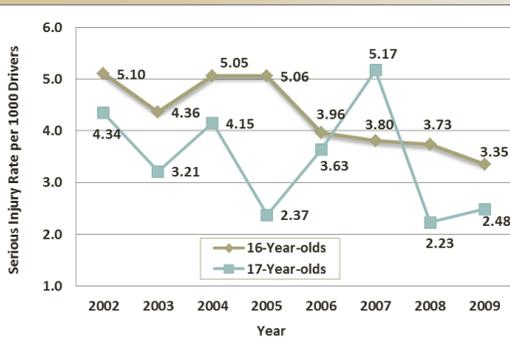
Wyoming implemented a graduated drivers licensing (GDL) program in 2005 to help reduce serious crashes among teen drivers. Crash event data was collected from the Wyoming Department of Transportation, and teen crash events in pre- and post-GDL periods from 2002 to 2004 and 2007 to 2009, respectively, were studied to assess the program efficacy.

Results

Serious injuries sustained by drivers between the ages of 15 and 17 from 2002 to 2004 constituted 2.3% of all crashes compared to 1.8% in the post-GDL period from 2007 to 2009. Moreover, the incidence of serious crashes among 16 year olds dropped markedly.

Wyoming Teen Driver Licensing Provisions

Provision	Pre-GDL Law	GDL Law
Minimum Permit Age	15 years	15 years
Driving Experience Requirement	None	50 hours including 10 nighttime.
Minimum Learner Permit Time	None	10 days
Minimum Provision Driving Age	None	16 years
Passenger Restriction	None	No more than 1 passenger <18 years
Nighttime Restriction	None	No driving 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.
Minimum Licensing Age	16 years	16 1/2 years



Serious Injury Crash Incidence, by Age

From 2002 to 2009, serious crashes involving 16-year-old drivers dropped from 5.1 to 3.4 crashes per 1000 drivers. The 17-year-old group includes both drivers who have and have not completed the GDL process, but some improvement is found in the safety performance for this age group as well. In the three-year pre-GDL phase, Wyoming experienced an aggregate rate of 5.7 serious injuries per thousand teenaged drivers which dropped to 4.2 in the post-GDL period, a 26.3% decline.

Considering the new provisions introduced in the intermediate GDL phase, the passenger and nighttime results are mixed. In crashes among 15- to 17-year-old drivers carrying teenaged passengers, serious injury occurred 2.3% of the time prior to the GDL measures versus 4.1% in the post-GDL period, suggesting that there is more room for improvement in that area. In crashes where there were no teenaged passengers involved, serious injury decreased from 2.3% to 1.6%, a 23% decline, when comparing pre- and post-GDL crash events. Another noteworthy improvement with regard to safety was a 38% decline in serious nighttime crashes for teen drivers.

Conclusion

Since its implementation in 2005, the graduated drivers licensing program in Wyoming has shown positive results in reducing serious injury crashes among teen drivers. Although the number of licensed teenagers is decreasing, the serious injury rates across the state have been decreasing more precipitously. In 2008, driver injuries fell to 3.2 serious injuries per thousand drivers, and in 2009 this figure declined to 3.1. This drop represents a significant decline in the injury rate from the pre-GDL period, which was consistently above 5.2 serious injuries per 1000 drivers. This bolsters the claim that graduated drivers licensing programs keep young drivers safer on roadways. Through exposure to various driving conditions in a controlled manner, new drivers gain valuable experience and become safer drivers.

For more information contact:



Dept. 2880
 Fargo, ND 58105
 Email: info@ugpti.org
 Phone: 701.231.7767

North Dakota State University does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, public assistance status, sex, sexual orientation, status as a U.S. veteran, race or religion. Direct inquiries to the Vice President for Equity, Diversity and Global Outreach, 205 Old Main, (701)231-7708.

The content of this report reflects the views of the authors, who are responsible for the facts and accuracy of the information presented. This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of the North Dakota Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.