2026 EDITION

ROADREADY

The PARENT'S Supervised Driving Program

For the parents of teen drivers —
a resource for teen licensing

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A PROGRAM OF THE WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Division of Motor Vehicles DMV Authorized Partner

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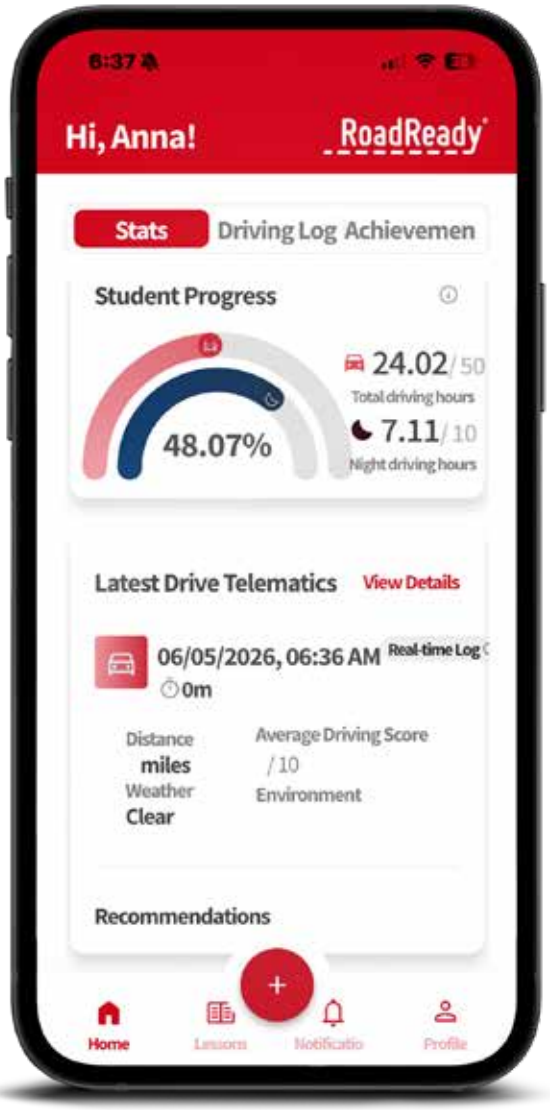

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A component of the PARENT'S Supervised Driving Program

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A message to parents and caregivers

Learning to drive is an exciting time and a great opportunity for teenagers to gain independence, but as your teenager reaches this important milestone, it comes with a great responsibility.

The Parent's Supervised Driving Program provides families with the tools you need to feel confident handing the keys over to your new driver. You'll find tips on how to explain basic driving skills and how to handle more complicated driving scenarios. It's a good refresher for all of us. As educators, motorists, and caretakers of young drivers, we have a shared responsibility to set a good example and be safe behind the wheel to prevent crashes and injuries on our roads.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation's mission is to provide leadership in the development and operation of a safe and efficient transportation system. We put safety first in every aspect of transportation, including our support for teen drivers.

Comprehensive driver education is an essential step to ensure our roads stay safe for all travelers. The Wisconsin Division of Motor Vehicles oversees about 200 privately-run driver training schools. We're also proud of the many programs, resources and services we have to make this a positive experience.

We administer a program that reduces barriers for income eligible teens by offering vouchers for free driver training courses. Through this program, we're shaping and developing more responsible drivers by investing in safe driving education and setting young drivers up for success.

Please take advantage of the educational resources on our website, wisconsindmv.gov, including practice tests and the Motorists' Handbook where you can learn more about the rules of the road. When your young driver is ready, taking the Signs and General Knowledge tests from home is an option. Only the road test must be taken at a DMV service center and our examiners will check their readiness to drive solo.

Our online resources also include the documents needed for their REAL ID instruction permit, how to schedule an appointment and eNotify for account activity alerts and renewal reminders.

We encourage you to use these resources to familiarize yourself with the licensing process and help your teen feel comfortable behind the wheel. Thank you for taking the time to prepare your family for this big step ahead.

Safe Driving,

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

LIFE'S BETTER WHEN YOU'RE READY FOR THE ROAD AHEAD

Time goes by fast. One minute you're teaching your kids to ride a bike, the next you're handing them the car keys. It's a milestone filled with pride and more than a little apprehension.

That's why American Family Insurance proudly supports and sponsors the **Parent's Supervised Driving Program** in Wisconsin. This important initiative encourages parents to take an active role in helping their teens become safer, more confident drivers.

Our commitment to driver safety is also reflected in **DriveMyWay**, a program that rewards your family's good driving habits. Because we know that helping protect your teen on the road means protecting all their dreams that lie ahead.

To learn more, talk to your local American Family Insurance agent or visit AmFam.com.

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Insure carefully, dream fearlessly.

DriveMyWay plans & discounts may vary by state. Rate will vary based on driving behavior. Unsafe driving behaviors may increase your rate. Products, pricing, and availability vary based on the way you purchase insurance and by state, vehicle type, policy form and company underwriting the auto policy. Some restrictions may apply. The DriveMyWay rate factor applies only to these coverages, which are typical for most auto policies: bodily injury liability, property damage liability, collision and comprehensive, medical expense and personal injury protection. Additionally, the rate factor does not apply to fixed fees that are part of the policy. Customer driving data from the DriveMyWay & KnowYourDrive program were used to inform rate structure. If you choose to unenroll any time after the trial period ends, we'll use your latest program score when calculating your rate at future renewals. American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. & its Operating Companies, 6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI ©2026 24512—8/26

LIFE'S BETTER WITH DRIVEMYWAY

Protect your family's dreams under our roof with **DriveMyWay**. This helpful app rewards safer driving with a personalized rate based on your family's driving habits.

You'll get a driving score that reflects behaviors like cell phone use, hard braking and speeding, along with useful tips and feedback designed to help lower your crash risk.

The safer you drive, the higher your score and the more you could save. Most customers receive savings between 10% and 35%.

So as your family heads down the road of life, enjoy greater peace of mind while personalizing what you pay with **DriveMyWay. To learn more, talk to your local American Family Insurance agent or visit AmFam.com.**

DriveMyWay plans & discounts may vary by state. Rate will vary based on driving behavior. Unsafe driving behaviors may increase your rate. Products, pricing, and availability vary based on the way you purchase insurance and by state, vehicle type, policy form and company underwriting the auto policy. Some restrictions may apply. The DriveMyWay rate factor applies only to these coverages, which are typical for most auto policies: bodily injury liability, property damage liability, collision and comprehensive, medical expense and personal injury protection. Additionally, the rate factor does not apply to fixed fees that are part of the policy. Customer driving data from the DriveMyWay & KnowYourDrive program were used to inform rate structure. If you choose to unenroll any time after the trial period ends, we'll use your latest program score when calculating your rate at future renewals. American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. & its Operating Companies, 6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI ©2026 24511—8/26

About this program

Developed by Safe Roads Alliance, a non-profit dedicated to promoting safer driving through education for drivers of all ages, *The Parent's Supervised Driving Program* is designed to improve teen driver safety by providing parents and guardians with a methodical approach to teaching the requisite driving skills. Each lesson concentrates on a particular sequential skill. Parents are in the best position to help their teens become safe, smart, and skilled drivers.

The Parent's Supervised Driving Program also includes a website, social media pages, and a mobile app, RoadReady®.

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This program is also available online at:

PSDPonline.com

The PARENT'S Supervised Driving Program

Welcome parents of teen drivers!

The Parent's Supervised Driving Program is a resource for parents to utilize when teaching their teen to drive.

1. This program is divided into core driving skills.
   - Read through each section at home before your teen starts a new skill.
2. Log your teen's driving time. This can be done 2 ways:
   - Carry this printed guide with you during the drive and use the printed log section – you or your teen can log the supervised driving hours once the drive is finished.
   - Download and use the free RoadReady® app to track your teen's driving time. RoadReady tracks their driving hours until they reach the state requirements.
3. Your teen can turn in their log when applying for their license.

Stay Connected with Us!

Follow *The Parent's Supervised Driving Program* for expert driving articles, program launch events, and additional safety resources.

Facebook
facebook.com/TheParentsSupervisedDrivingProgram

Join Our Parents Group on Facebook!
Talking Teens: A Parenting Support Group
facebook.com/groups/talkingteens

X (formerly Twitter)
twitter.com/PSDP_Info

Instagram
instagram.com/roadreadyapp

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WITH SUPPORT FROM

Quick tips for parents and caregivers…

Here are the most important tips that you should keep in mind as your teen starts their supervised driving journey. These tips apply on those very first days of driving, and into your child's young adulthood as independent drivers.

1. **Take it seriously:** Car crashes are the second leading cause of death for people ages 16–24. The more parents/caregivers are involved, the less likely it is that your teen will crash.

2. **Be a good role model** and remember that making your teen practice a skill over and over again is the best practice.

3. **Before you drive:** walk around the car with your teen, explain the importance of tire health, review seating position, mirror settings, identify blind spots, etc.

4. **Plan ahead:** consider when and where to start the first driving lesson — a large, level, and empty parking lot at a time when no one is stressed out. Review the necessary skills the night before planning to take your teen out for their first time behind the wheel.

5. **Progress through the skills:** follow this guidebook in order as your teen advances in their comfort and skill level. **Remember that they should not advance to the next skill/s until they have practiced the previous skills *many* times.**

6. **Encourage as much supervised driving as possible**, in many different conditions and on different road types. They will know how to steer into a skid on an icy road only if they have practiced it with you.

7. **GDL laws, such as passenger restrictions and curfews, are there for a reason:** Read through your state's restrictions for when your teen has their permit AND when newly licensed. These are in place to protect your teen!

8. **Download and use the RoadReady® mobile app** (roadreadyapp.com) to track your teen's driving hours. It's easy to use, completely free, and helps ensure that your teen completes the required number of hours.

About supervising teen drivers

The Parent's Supervised Driving Program gives you a simple, easy-to-follow plan you can use to help your teen be a safe and responsible driver.

Some thoughts as you begin this exciting experience together:

Make an effort to enjoy the learning process: Driving is a big step toward independence, and your teen is entering a new phase of life. You'll both remember this experience for years to come. Make it a good memory!

Practice, practice, practice: Studies show that the risk of a crash diminishes with experience. The more time you can spend driving with your teen, the less likely it is they'll crash when they begin driving alone. Driving in a variety of circumstances is equally important. While using this program, you and your teen should drive on all types of roads. Make sure your teen gets exposure to a variety of roadways, and in different conditions as well: at night; in rain, fog, and snow; and in heavy and light traffic.

Be a driving role model: It's not enough to say, "Do as I say." Children imitate their parents'/guardians' behavior, so your driving should set a good example for your teen to emulate. Be sure that you:

- Obey all traffic laws.
- Correct any unsafe driving habits (driving aggressively, rolling through stop signs, accelerating through yellow lights, speeding, etc.).
- Refrain from using your cell phone at all while driving.
- Always wear your seat belt, and remind your teen that buckling up is the law. This will need to be an ongoing conversation — buckle up every trip, every time.

Tips for teaching your teen

- **Seat belts** must always be worn properly by **everyone** in the vehicle.
- **Before each session,** discuss the goals of the day's lesson.
- **Before each new lesson,** review what was learned during the previous lesson.
- **Keep instructions simple and concise.** Say where to go and what action to take. For example: "Drive to the corner and turn right." Give the direction with enough time for your teen to process and safely execute the maneuver.
- **The feedback** you give should be calm, precise, and immediate. Be patient and alert at all times. Remember to give positive feedback when your teen succeeds!
- **When your teen makes a mistake,** which will happen often, do not criticize. Remain calm and simply repeat the maneuver until it's done correctly. To minimize their frustration, emphasize to your teen that mistakes are a normal part of learning.
- **These lessons should be consistent** with what is taught by your teen's driving instructor. If you teach something differently, your teen will be confused and learning will be more difficult. If the lessons in this program are different from the instructor's, contact them to clarify the discrepancy.
- **Remember that students learn at different paces.** Make sure your teen has mastered each skill before you move on to the next lesson, even if that means repeating a lesson several times. Patience and practice will pay off in the long run.
- **Integrate night driving** into as many lessons as possible.

Most importantly, make sure the vehicle you use for training is safe. Confirm that the brakes have been recently inspected, and check to make sure the tires have sufficient tread depth, and proper inflation. It's generally recommended that you do not train in larger vehicles that lack stability control.

Check your emotions

At the start of each driving lesson with your teen, leave your problems behind — and make an effort to stay focused. Bringing up touchy subjects such as grades, homework, boyfriends/girlfriends, etc. can distract either of you from the task at hand.

Video: Supervising teen drivers

Scan the QR code below to watch the video.

Vehicle control for supervisors

Teaching a new driver can be stressful, but knowing you have some control can help. Professional driver education instructors are taught emergency responses to potential hazards that can crop up with an inexperienced driver behind the wheel. Here are some skills you can learn to help you maintain control from the passenger seat while teaching:

Emergency shifting: In a quiet, large, level, empty area, practice shifting the transmission from drive to neutral. This would be necessary if the accelerator becomes stuck.

Taking the wheel: With an experienced driver in the driver's seat, in a quiet, large, level, empty area, practice steering the car with your left hand from the passenger seat.

Mirrors: Adjust the mirror on the passenger sun visor so you can use it as a rearview mirror. If the right side mirror is properly adjusted, you can use it to monitor traffic to the rear from the passenger seat.

Awareness: Never assume everything is okay. Always check and re-check mirrors before you give instructions to your teen. Remember that you are a second set of eyes and ears, and you need to be alert and ready to help your teen.

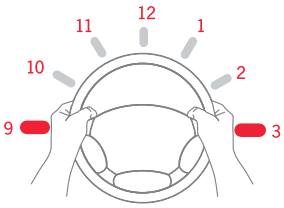
Emergency stopping: Practice stopping the car with the parking brake (if your vehicle's parking brake is located between the seats). This can be dangerous, even at low speeds, and should only be used as a last resort.

Driving has changed

Chances are, today's cars are not the same as they were when you learned to drive. To teach your teen effectively, you need to know about a few important recent changes in how cars work, how we drive, and how driving is taught.

Anti-lock Brake System (ABS): Most newer cars offer ABS as standard equipment. ABS is a dramatic safety improvement that works by letting the tires rotate, rather than lock up, when the brake is engaged. This allows drivers to steer the car in an emergency stop. ABS should be used with firm, continuous pressure. The brakes may shake and grind when applied, which often concerns users — but this is a normal function of ABS. To find out if your car has ABS, check the instrument panel after you turn on the ignition or read the owner's manual.

Note: When driving a car without ABS, the old rules still apply. Don't "slam" the brakes. Rather, press the brake pedal firmly. The intention is to stop quickly, but also to avoid locking the brakes and skidding. Skidding causes a loss of control.



Arms holding the wheel at 9 and 3 o'clock are not as likely to be hit by the air bag.

Air bags: Air bags are designed to work with seat belts, which must be worn for the air bags to be effective. The use of a seat belt allows the driver to stay behind the wheel in order to take advantage of the airbag. Since air bags deploy out of the wheel on impact, it's important to keep your hands and arms in the recommended position.

Steering wheel hand position: Most of us were taught to position our hands at 10 and 2 o'clock on the steering wheel. It's now suggested that you hold the wheel at 9 and 3 o'clock. This gives you better vehicle control and also lessens the risk of injury if the airbag was to deploy.

Commentary driving

Commentary driving is a great communication tool. Coach your teen to describe their actions, thoughts and observations out loud as they drive, similar to a sports commentator. Throughout the learning process, ask them to verbalize what they see around them, including potential risks and any steps they need to take to avoid those risks. Encourage your teen to verbalize an action they plan to make, such as turning, merging and approaching traffic lights.

Video: Vehicle control for supervisors

Scan the QR code below to watch the video.

Distracted driving and more

Distracted driving involves any activity that takes the driver's attention away from the primary task of driving. Distracted driving, impairment, speeding, and not wearing seat belts are all risky choices that can lead to serious injury and death. Teens, who are still learning the complex skills of driving, are particularly susceptible to distractions while behind the wheel. Don't let you or your teen become another statistic. Here are the facts:

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens. Mile for mile, teens ages 16–19 are involved in 3 times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers. And 1 in 3 teens who text say they have done so while driving.
- According to NHTSA, 3,308 people were killed in 2022 in distraction-related crashes nationwide, with teens having the highest rate of distracted driving crashes involving a fatality.
- A Virginia Tech Transportation Institute study revealed that physically dialing a phone while driving increases the risk of a crash as much as 6 times. Texting is riskier still, increasing collision risk by 23 times.

To combat this growing epidemic, we suggest the following:

- **Set a good example:** Kids observe and learn from their parents. Put your phone away while driving and only use it when you are safely pulled over. According to the Pew Research Center, 40 percent of teens aged 12 to 17 say they have been in a car when the driver used a cell phone in a way that put themselves and others in danger.
- **Talk to your teen:** Discuss the risks and responsibilities of driving and the danger of dividing their attention between a phone call and the road. Inform that in Wisconsin, using a cell phone while driving is against the law for any driver with an instruction permit or probationary license, except to report an emergency. Show them the statistics related to distracted driving and urge them to share what they learn with their friends. Encourage them to speak up if they are a passenger in a car with a distracted driver.
- **Establish ground rules:** Set up family rules about not using the phone or other electronic devices while behind the wheel. Inform them of the fact that texting while driving is against the law in Wisconsin for all drivers. Enforce the limits set by the graduated licensing program.
- **After receiving their license, drivers under age 18 have additional restrictions for the first 9 months:**
    - From 5 a.m. to midnight, your teen can drive alone and go anywhere. Any number of immediate family members can ride along as well as ONE non-family member.
    - From midnight to 5 a.m., your teen can drive alone only IF driving between home, school or work. If driving anywhere else, one of the following people must be seated in the front passenger seat: a parent or legal guardian, or a person 21 or older with a valid, regular license with two years of licensed driving experience. Any number of immediate family members and one other person may ride along.

These restrictions will be extended six months if your teen:

- is convicted of a moving traffic violation; *OR*
- violates any of the restrictions; *OR*
- has their license suspended or revoked for any reason.

- **Sign a pledge:** Have your teen take action by agreeing to a family contract about wearing seat belts, not speeding, not driving after drinking, and not using a cell phone behind the wheel. Agree on penalties for violating the pledge, including paying for tickets or loss of driving privileges. Wisconsin DMV offers a parent/teen driver contract in this guidebook and online at wisconsindot.gov/Pages/dmv/teen-driver/contract.aspx.
- **Other dangerous distractions:** In addition to cell phone use, distracted driving can include eating, grooming, drinking, listening to or adjusting the radio, using the GPS, talking to passengers, or watching a video, just to name a few activities. Inexperienced drivers are particularly susceptible to these kinds of distractions.

Eyes on the road

Teens tend to look away from the road and become distracted for longer periods than older drivers. It's important to train them to keep their eyes on the road ahead. While parked, test your teen on how long they look away when doing various tasks inside the vehicle, such as tuning the radio. Coach them repeatedly on the importance of focusing on the road ahead.

Teens' biggest dangers

Newly licensed teens crash much more often than older, more experienced drivers. Below are the circumstances that are the most common trouble areas for young drivers.

Speeding

We have seen a disturbing increase in speeding in the last few years. According to NHTSA, in 2022, speeding was a factor in 30 percent of fatal crashes among teen drivers 15-18 years. The rate of these fatalities among males was nearly double that of females. Spend time talking to your teen about speeding and model this by following the speed limit yourself. Lastly, studies show that teens are less likely to speed if they drive the family car, instead of having their own vehicle. Please visit NHTSA's website for more information www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/teen-driving

Seat belts

It's shocking, but 51 percent of teen drivers killed in 2022 were unbuckled. Seat belts stop you from being thrown out of the vehicle, and help you stay seated and in control of the vehicle. They also stop you from hitting the windshield, dashboard, steering wheel, or other hard parts of the vehicle. Hitting the windshield at 30 mph is like falling from the third story of a building and hitting the pavement. In 2019, 43 percent of high school students did not always wear a seat belt as a passenger. Whether sitting in the front or back of a car, buckle up every trip and remind other passengers to buckle up too. It could save their lives, and yours. Please visit NHTSA's website for more information www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/seat-belts

Drugs and alcohol

Teens are at far greater risk of death in an alcohol-related crash than the overall population. This is despite the fact that they cannot legally purchase or publicly possess alcohol in any state. When alcohol is added to the inexperience of teen drivers, the results can be deadly. In 2022, 19 percent of drivers aged 15 to 20 years who died in crashes had Blood Alcohol Contents of .08 g/dL or higher. Marijuana is the drug that's most commonly found in the blood of drivers who have been in a car crash. It is important to enforce a zero-tolerance policy at home. If your teen uses any alcohol or drugs, they cannot drive, nor should they ride with anyone who has been drinking or using drugs — in any amount. For more info, go to: tinyurl.com/48wj25dw

Fatigue

As teens get older their bedtimes get later, but waking times do not tend to change. From age 13 to 19, nightly sleep is reduced by 40–50 minutes. Teen drivers who sleep less than 8 hours a night are 33 percent more likely to crash than teens who get more than 8 hours of sleep. This lack of sleep results in depressive moods, more risk-taking behaviors, and lower grades. It further reduces a person's ability to process information, be attentive, and have good reflexes, which are all crucial to safe driving. Studies have shown that being awake for 18 hours has a similar impact to having a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level of 0.08.

Inexperience

Just as it takes years to perfect any skill — athletic, artistic, or otherwise — it also takes years to be a truly good driver. Until teens are much more experienced, they run a greater risk of crashing, getting hurt, and potentially dying. A driver license makes them a driver. Experience helps them become safer drivers.

Night driving

For teens, the most severe crashes occur at night and on weekends. Night driving is challenging for all drivers, but novice drivers do not have the experience to anticipate and react when visibility is reduced. When teens drive at night, it is more often with a lack of adult supervision, with other teen passengers, and at higher speeds — all of which are factors that increase risk.

Other teens

Research is clear on the fact that risky teen driving behaviors increase in the presence of teen passengers. A teen who is driving with other teens in the car is more likely to crash. And the more kids there are in the car, the greater the likelihood of a crash. This is the primary reason many states have passed laws that restrict the ability of teens to drive with their peers.

If you feel different, you drive different

If you're buzzed, drunk, or high, you are impaired and should never get behind the wheel. Marijuana, the drug most commonly found in the blood of people who have been in a car crash, can effect people differently. The best rule is this: if you plan to drive, have no drugs or alcohol.

AM I OKAY TO DRIVE?

BUZZED DRIVING IS DRUNK DRIVING

NHTSA

ad COUNCIL

Before you start the engine

Goal: Teach your teen vehicle basics before actual driving begins.

Location: Parked. This is a non-driving lesson.

Lesson one – touring the vehicle

Walk around the outside of the car with your teen. Instruct them to look for leaks and hazards such as broken glass, and to make sure it's clear behind the vehicle as well as in front of the vehicle.

Have your teen practice these basic skills until they don't need help:

- Starting and stopping the engine
- Naming and operating all dashboard controls
- Checking oil level
- Checking wiper fluid
- Checking tire pressure
- Checking tire tread depth

Proper mirror setting

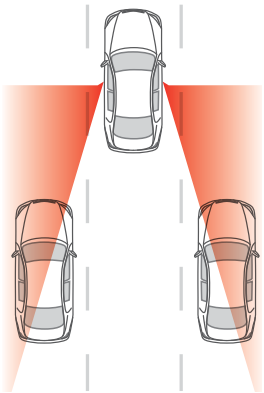
In the past, drivers were often taught mirror settings that created an overlap between the rear and side mirrors. This is actually less safe because it increases the size of the blind spots. This is a great opportunity to update your own driving skills while teaching your teen!

Lesson two – seating position

The proper seat position is important to safely control the vehicle. Your teen should sit with their back firmly against the seat. There should be at least 10–12 inches between the steering wheel and the driver's chest, with the air bag pointing at the chest. The top of the steering wheel should be no higher than the shoulders. Move the seat forward or backward so that the driver's heel touches the floor and can pivot quickly between the brake and accelerator. Shorter drivers may need a seat cushion or pedal extenders to sit safely 10 inches from the air bag. The head restraint should be at the center of the driver's head.

Lesson three – checking blind spots

Additionally, teach your teen how to look over their shoulder to check the blind spot on each side of the car that cannot be seen in the mirrors. Blind spots should be checked every time you change lanes.



The most effective way to deal with blind spots is to briefly turn and look.

Lesson four – mirror settings

The method below provides the best view of adjacent lanes, for maximum safety.

- **Inside mirror:** Have your teen sit up straight in the driver's seat and adjust the inside mirror so that it frames the entire rear window. This is the main mirror for viewing what is behind the vehicle.
- **Left-side mirror**: Have your teen lean their head toward the left-side window, and set the left mirror so they can barely see the side of the car. When they sit up straight, the car should no longer be visible in the mirror.
- **Right-side mirror:** Do the same to the right. Have your teen lean to the right over the car's center console, and set the right mirror so they can barely see the right side of the car.

Lesson five – proper footwear

Wearing the right shoes has an effect on operating a vehicle. Flip flops are dangerous to wear while driving, so encourage your teen to wear shoes that have a flat sole and a back. Driving barefoot is unsafe as well. Keep an extra pair of shoes in the car so your teen can remember to wear the proper shoes while driving. If they need to brake suddenly, the wrong footwear can make for an unsafe situation.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

Moving, steering, and stopping

Goal: Teach your teen to consistently start, stop, and turn smoothly with full vehicle control.

Location: A large, level, mostly empty area.

Everyone in the vehicle **must** be properly buckled up.

Before starting, coach your teen to always signal and check mirrors and blind spots before changing the speed, position, or direction of the car. Remind them when needed.

Have your teen drive around the perimeter of the lot several times at a slow speed. Have them stop and start frequently, practicing smooth hand-to-hand steering, braking, and accelerating.

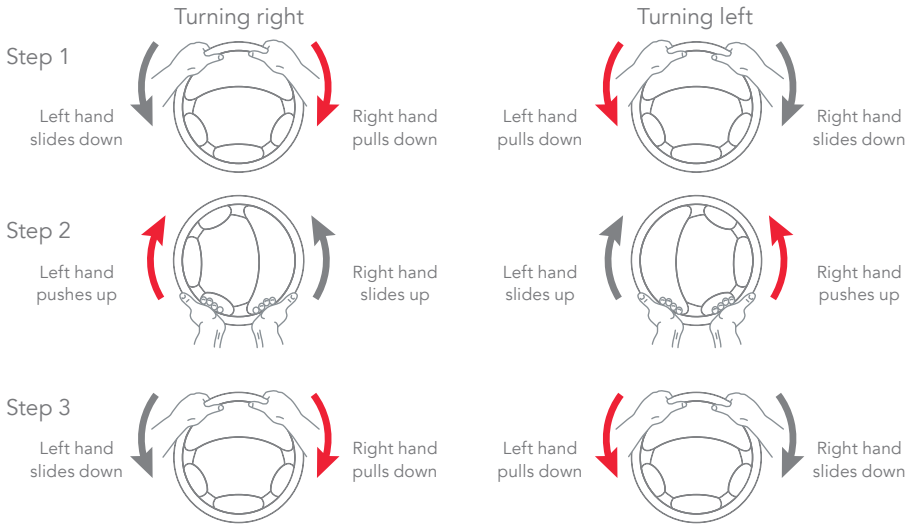
Pick several targets in the large, level, empty practice area, and have your teen drive to them at specific speeds. For example, "Drive to the stop sign at 15 mph." Focus on steady speed and smooth starts and stops.

Once your teen is braking smoothly, practice "hard, smooth stops" at slightly higher speeds (approximately 25–30 mph). *Hint: Curling toes back just before braking results in smoother stops. It eases the pressure on the brake.*

Controlling speed

New drivers tend to use the brake too much and the accelerator too little to control speed. Coach your teen about easing up on the accelerator as a way to reduce the car's speed.

Lesson one – steps toward turning



With hand-to-hand steering your hands do not cross each other.

Lesson two – turning techniques

- Ease off the accelerator or use the brake to reduce speed before entering a curve; use gentle acceleration to overcome inertia and pull the vehicle out of the curve.
- Use smooth, continuous steering wheel movements when approaching a turn and when returning (sliding) the wheel through the hands until the vehicle is in the proper post-turn position.
- Coach your teen to pick a target near the center of the intended travel path. This target can be used as a visual aid to aim at while steering through turns.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

How close are you?

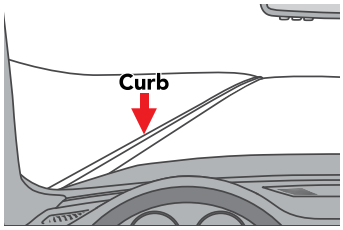
Goal: Teach your teen how to tell where their vehicle is in relation to other vehicles or objects.

Location: A large, level, mostly empty area with clearly painted pavement lines and curbs.

Lesson one – reference points

Explain to your teen that reference points are visual guides to help them judge the car's distance from curbs, lines, other objects, and vehicles.

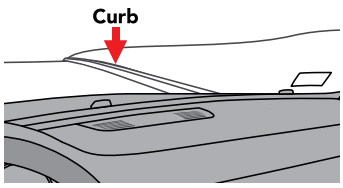
Lesson two – driver's side curb (or line)



View out the front windshield. Reference points will be different for everyone, depending on the vehicle and the height of the driver.

- Choose a pavement curb (or line), and tell your teen that the goal is to pull the driver's side of the vehicle 6–12 inches away. Coach them to slowly pull up parallel to the line, getting gradually closer, and stop when they think they are 6–12 inches away. Have them look at where the line intersects in the front window.
- Have your teen put the car in park and get out to check if the driver's side wheels are 6–12 inches from the line. If it's not the correct distance, have them do it again, checking the reference points.

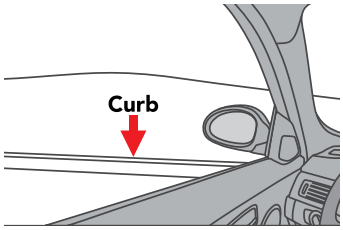
Lesson three – passenger's side curb (or line)



View out the front windshield. Reference points will be different for everyone, depending on the vehicle and the height of the driver.

- Choose another curb (or line) parallel to the passenger's side, again pulling up slowly to within 6–12 inches. Use the same gradual pull-up method, but for this side, coach your teen to stop when the curb appears to intersect the center of the hood.
- Again, have your teen get out of the vehicle to check whether the tires are 6–12 inches from the curb. Keep practicing and making adjustments, noticing the reference point, until they can do it consistently.

Lesson four – front curb (or line)



View out the driver's side window. Reference points will be different for everyone, depending on the vehicle and the height of the driver.

- Teach your teen to align the front bumper between 6–12 inches from a pavement curb (or line). Have them drive slowly straight toward the curb. Coach them to stop when the curb appears under the driver side mirror.
- Have your teen get out of the vehicle to check whether the front bumper is 6–12 inches from the curb. If not, have them adjust the reference point as needed and keep practicing.

Making your teen safer

It takes more than 15 minutes every day for 6 months to complete 50 hours of practice driving. For 100 hours, it's more than 30 minutes a day for 6 months. Studies show that the more time you drive together, the safer your teen will be when driving alone.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

Backing up

Goal: Teach your teen how to safely drive backwards in a straight line and while turning.

Location: A large, level, mostly empty area.

Lesson one – before moving the vehicle

- Coach your teen to first search around the vehicle before entering to identify potential hazards that may not be visible once they are in their seat. Then teach your teen that they must always turn around and look backwards through the rear window when backing up. They should also use their mirrors and back-up camera.
- Have your teen shift their hips and turn around until they get a good view behind the vehicle. When backing up straight or to the right, they should drape their right arm over the back of the seat and grasp the top of the steering wheel with their left hand. When backing up to the left they should look over their left shoulder.
- Review how to use the backup camera with your teen, including what the different lines mean. Always remember that a camera cannot be a substitute for your eyes — it is meant as an additional tool to use when backing up.

Lesson two – backing up in a straight line

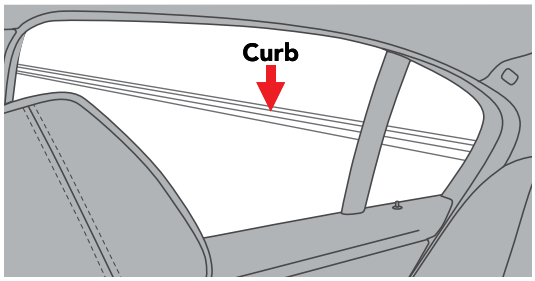
- Check all areas behind the vehicle prior to and while backing up.
- Grasp the steering wheel with the left hand and look over the right shoulder through the rear window.
- First release the brake, then use the accelerator gently, and only when necessary, to control speed. Keep it slow.

Lesson three – backing up in a turn

- If turning to the left, grasp the steering wheel with the right hand, or with the left hand if turning to the right. Remind your teen to turn the wheel in the direction they want the car to travel.
- Look in the direction the car is moving through the rear side windows.
- Back into the turn slowly, first releasing the brake, then using the accelerator if needed.

Lesson four – aligning the rear bumper to a curb

- Choose a curb (or line) for a target.
- Have your teen back up toward the target, coaching them to stop when the curb appears near the middle of the rear right window when looking over their right shoulder.
- Have your teen put the car in park and set the emergency brake.
- Have your teen get out of the car to see whether the rear bumper is close to the target.
- If adjustments are needed, have your teen try again, establishing a new reference point. Repeat as often as needed until your teen can consistently come within close proximity to the target.



The driver's view out of the back passenger window. Reference points will be different for everyone, depending on the vehicle and the height of the driver.

Slow and consistent

Emphasize that it is important to back up slowly and be prepared to stop. It is harder to maintain control of the car when it's in reverse.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

Driving on a quiet street – part one

Goal: Teach your teen to move and stop a vehicle safely and with confidence on quiet roads.

Location: Start in a large, level, mostly empty area. Move to a quiet neighborhood street when indicated. Out of respect to our neighbors, please do not use official state road test courses for practice.

Before moving out onto the road, make sure that your teen has reviewed the driver's manual and is familiar with street signs, signals, pavement markings, and right-of-way and speed laws.

Skill review

Starting in a quiet, large, level, empty area, review the skills learned so far. Have your teen drive several laps around the lot, practicing smooth braking and accelerating, maintaining steady speeds, steering into right and left turns, and using reference points to align the car with curbs (or lines).

Lesson one – commentary driving

Coach your teen to use "commentary driving" (see sidebar on page 3) throughout this lesson, if possible.

Lesson two – lane position

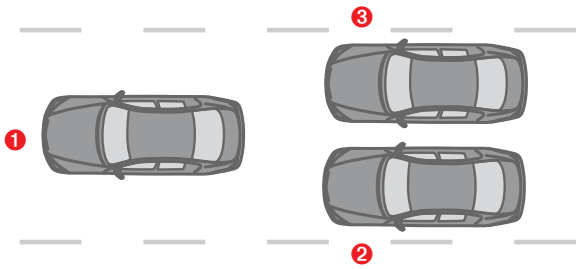
When you and your teen feel ready, move to a quiet street.

With your teen behind the wheel, first have them practice driving straight in three different lane positions. Do this for several miles, practicing each position at least 10 times:

Center position ❶: The most common position, with the vehicle centered within the lane. Coach your teen that they should stay in the center position under most circumstances.

Left position ❷: The vehicle positioned to the left side of the lane. This is best used when approaching parked vehicles and potential hazards on the right (if no oncoming traffic). It should be avoided on a hill or a curve.

Right position ❸: The vehicle positioned to the right side of the lane. This is usually done when making a right turn to allow for a safety margin on the left side of the vehicle.



Most driving is done in lane position number one.

Lesson three – intersections

Coach your teen on these techniques for safely approaching an intersection:

- Search for vehicles, pedestrians, signs, and traffic signals.
- Check the rearview mirror for any potential hazards behind the car.
- If it's an intersection identify who should be given the right of way.
- If turning, put on the turn signal four seconds before making the turn.
- If a stop is required, stop behind the white stop line or crosswalk, whichever comes first.
- Select the best lane for travel by reading signs and pavement markings.

Emergency vehicles

Make sure your teen understands what to do if they encounter emergency vehicles. First, turn down the radio to listen for the direction of the emergency vehicle(s). Stay calm and pull over to the nearest curb, clear of intersections, stop and wait for the emergency vehicle(s) to pass.

Move Over Law

When approaching law enforcement or other emergency vehicles stopped on or near a highway and using flashing warning lights, you must move into a lane furthest from the stopped vehicle and travel in that lane until you have passed. If it is unsafe to move over, slow down until you have passed.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

Driving on a quiet street – part two

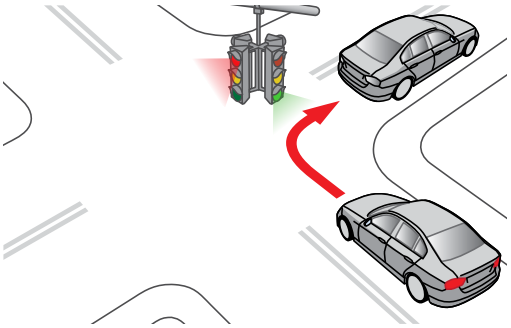
Goal: Teach your teen to turn both right and left safely and with confidence on quiet roads.

Location: A quiet block of single-lane roads, ideally without traffic signals at the intersections.

Lesson one – right turns

When your teen is comfortable with lane positions and intersections, it's time to practice turns. Start with right turns. Have your teen drive clockwise around the block until proficient:

- Pick a line at the center of the intended travel path while steering through a turn. Make sure your teen does not fixate on one specific spot, but instead focuses on a broader path.
- Focus on smooth braking into the turn and acceleration out of the turn, as previously practiced in the large, level, empty area.
- Always check mirrors before turns and signal at least 100 feet before your intended turn. Make sure to check for vulnerable users, such as bicyclists and pedestrians, before turning.



Have your teen drive around the block making right turns 10–12 times. When they are proficient, drive around the block 10–12 times making left turns.

Lesson two – left turns

When your teen is proficient at right turns, move on to left turns. Have your teen drive counterclockwise around the block until proficient, coaching them on these techniques for safe left turns:

- Position the vehicle close to the yellow line in the middle of the road.
- When required to stop because of a sign or signal, you must stop before the front of your vehicle reaches the stop line. If there is no marked stop line, stop before entering the marked crosswalk on the near side of the intersection. If there is no marked stop line nor a marked or unmarked crosswalk, stop at a point nearest the intersecting roadway
- Where you have a clear view of approaching traffic, but before entering the intersection.
- Search the intersection in all directions for vehicles, pedestrians, signs, and signals.
- Select a gap in traffic and pull straight forward toward the middle of the intersection. Coach your teen to avoid hesitating.
- Use the yellow line on the street being turned onto as a target. Turn into the travel lane closest to the yellow line, unless there is more than one turn lane.
- When the turn is complete, let the steering wheel slide back through the hands.
- Pick a new target 15–20 seconds ahead in the center of the travel path and accelerate gradually.

Be sure to practice with your teen in a variety of conditions, including at night and in inclement weather, as much as possible.

Focus ahead

Most drivers have a tendency to steer in the direction they look. If their eyes move to one side, the car may drift in that direction, too. Remind your teen to focus on a path line in the middle of their travel lane — and not fixate on lane lines or other objects. The rest of the area should be scanned quickly and frequently.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

Looking ahead

Goal: Teach your teen to develop defensive driving techniques and higher-level visual and anticipatory driving skills before moving on to more complex driving situations. In order to avoid last-second reactions and spot potential hazards, have your teen always look 12–15 seconds down the road. When they are looking far enough ahead, they will be able to spot hazards early and be well prepared to react to them.

Location: Start on a quiet neighborhood street. Out of respect to our neighbors, please do not use official state road test courses for practice. Move onto a road with light traffic when your teen is ready.

Don't tailgate

Rear-end collisions are the most common form of a car crash. Emphasize to your teen that increasing the following distance behind other vehicles is the single best thing they can do to minimize the risk of a crash.

Lesson one – IPDE system

Teach your teen the IPDE system, a simple system to help new drivers recognize, anticipate and avoid risks before they turn into problems. IPDE stands for:

Identify potential risks, like oncoming vehicles, pedestrians, obstacles, or intersections.
Predict when and where there will be a conflict or problem.
Decide on the best course of action.
Execute that action.

Have your teen use commentary driving as they practice the IPDE system. As they drive, ask them to verbally describe their thoughts, intentions, and actions in order to identify potential risks they see, predict problems these risks could cause, decide what to do to avoid a problem, and then execute the maneuver.

Lesson two – stopping-distance rule

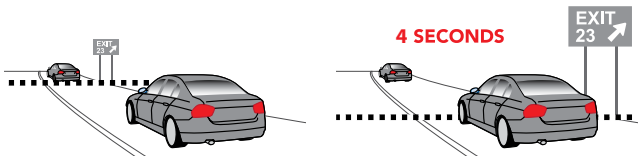
Teach your teen the stopping-distance rule, for the safest distance to stop behind another vehicle. When your vehicle stops, you should be far enough away from the car in front of you that you can see where its tires make contact with the ground. Any closer is too close.

Lesson three – four-second rule

Teach your teen the four-second rule for the appropriate following distance when driving behind other vehicles. The four-second rule is an important safety measure designed to give drivers enough time to safely steer or brake to avoid problems that occur in front of them on the road.

- Start counting when the rear bumper of the vehicle in front of you passes an object.
- Count "one thousand ONE, one thousand TWO, one thousand THREE, one thousand FOUR."
- Your front bumper should not pass that same object before you've reached "four."

Have your teen practice the four-second rule at least 10–12 times, counting out loud to check whether their following distance is appropriate. If the road is wet, add on an additional second. If you drive an SUV or heavier vehicle, add an additional 1–2 seconds, as it will take your car longer to stop. Always err on the side of caution and allow for more space in front of you.



Your front bumper should not pass before you've reached "four."

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

Turning around

Goal: Teach your teen the best ways to turn a vehicle around in various circumstances.

Location: Start on a quiet neighborhood street with accessible driveways. Please be respectful of neighbors and private property. Move to a multi-lane road for U-turns, if legally allowed in your area.

Lesson one – turning around safely

Start by coaching your teen that the safest and easiest way to turn around is to drive around the block. The less backing up, the better! Since that's not always possible, it's important to practice other ways to turn around.

Lesson two – two-point turns

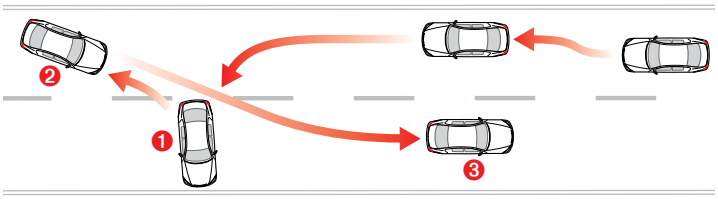
A two-point turn involves backing into a driveway to reverse direction. On a quiet street, have your teen identify an available driveway on the same side of the street as your car, at a point where they can see oncoming traffic clearly.

- Pull just ahead of the driveway, making sure there is no traffic behind the car, and signal.
- Make sure the road is clear behind the car and the driveway, put the car in reverse, and then back into the driveway.
- Shift back into drive and check the road for approaching traffic from both directions.
- When it's clear, turn back onto the road.

Lesson three – three-point turns

This more challenging turn should only be done when there is no available driveway. Three-point turns block both sides of a two-lane road, so coach your teen to make absolutely sure that the traffic is clear in both directions:

- Pull as far to the right as possible to maximize room to maneuver.
- Turn sharply across the road ❶ until the car is perpendicular, facing the curb.
- Continue checking for traffic in both directions.



Practice two-point and three-point turns at least 10 times each.

- Put the car in reverse and back up ❷, turning sharply in the other direction, into the original lane, but now facing the opposite direction.
- Shift into drive and pull forward ❸ into the correct lane, driving straight ahead.

Lesson four – legal U-turns

First explain that U-turns can be very dangerous, and should only be done where they are legal.

- Begin the U-turn in the left lane, closest to the center line or median.
- Be sure there is enough room to make the turn without hitting the curb or any parked cars.
- Signal to indicate the direction of the turn, checking carefully for traffic in both directions.
- Move forward, turning the wheel sharply to turn around.
- Finish the U-turn in the opposite direction and accelerate to an appropriate speed.

Legal U-turns

U-turns are illegal in many locations. Make sure you and your teen only practice legal U-turns. U-turns should never be made across a double yellow line or where a sign indicates that they are prohibited.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

Supervised driving log — use it!

Parents must certify that their teen has a minimum of 50 hours of supervised driving, with at least 10 hours at night. Keep track of driving time and experience with this log. The more time you spend practicing with your teen, the better driver they will be on their own.

Instruction permit restrictions

Once your teen holds an instruction permit, they may drive only when accompanied by a qualified person. The number of passengers is limited.

The person accompanying your teen must:

- Have two years driving experience
- Hold a valid regular (not probationary or occupational) driver license
- Sit in the front passenger seat
- Be one of the following:
    - A qualified instructor 19 or older (Up to three others may ride along if the car is equipped with dual controls)
    - A parent, guardian or spouse 19 or older (Immediate family members may ride along in the back seat)
    - A person 21 or older (This person must be designated in writing by a parent or guardian prior to accompanying your teen while your teen drives)

If your teen is at least 16 years of age, in addition to the licensed accompanying driver, one other licensed person 25 years or older, with at least two years driving experience may occupy a seat in the vehicle other than the front seat.

GDL systems

Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) systems are intended to provide teen drivers with practice under the safest conditions, exposing them to more situations only as their skills and experience grow.

Teen license requirements

Wisconsin residents UNDER 18 years of age must fulfill the following requirements to obtain a driver license:

- Be at least 16 years old
- Successfully complete an approved driver education course
- Have an adult sponsor
- Hold an Instruction Permit for at least six months
- Be violation-free for six months
- Have a minimum of 50 hours of driving experience (10 of which must be at night)
- Be enrolled in a school program or high school equivalency program and not be a habitual truant — or have graduated from high school or have been granted a declaration of high school graduation equivalency — or be enrolled in a home-based private education program
- Pass the driving skills test

Your teen can schedule a road test appointment online up to 11 weeks in advance at www.wisconsindmv.gov

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Teen driver restrictions – know and enforce them

All novice drivers receive restricted licenses to help keep them safe. This is called a probationary license — and it is valid for driving according to the restrictions on the back.

Drivers under 18 have additional restrictions for the first nine months.

- From 5 a.m. to midnight, your teen can drive alone and go anywhere. Any number of immediate family members can ride along as well as ONE non-family member.
- From midnight to 5 a.m., your teen can drive alone only IF driving between home, school or work. If driving anywhere else, one of the following people must be seated in the front passenger seat: a parent or legal guardian or a person 21 or older with a valid, regular license with two years of licensed driving experience. Any number of immediate family members and one other person may ride along.
- These restrictions will be extended six months if your teen:
    - Is convicted of a moving traffic violation; OR
    - Violates any of the restrictions; OR
    - Has their license suspended or revoked for any reason.

Demerit points double for moving traffic convictions after your teen's first conviction. Your teen's license will be suspended for six months if they accumulate 12 or more points within a 12-month period.

Your teen's license will expire two years from their next birthday. For example, if a new driver is 16 years old on the date they obtain their probationary license, the earliest that license would expire would be on their 19th birthday.

When your teen is driving, as a general rule, you can only have one passenger in addition to immediate family.

WITH SUPPORT FROM

AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE®

LOG YOUR DRIVES ON THE BELOW FORM
OR DOWNLOAD THE FREE MOBILE APP

RoadReady®

Date	Location of Practice (ex. rural, highway)	Day/Night	Weather	Skills Practiced	Driving Time	Adult's Initials
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SUPERVISED DRIVING LOG

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LOG YOUR DRIVES ON THE BELOW FORM
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RoadReady®

Date	Location of Practice (ex. rural, highway)	Day/Night	Weather	Skills Practiced	Driving Time	Adult's Initials
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I hereby affirm that I am the parent/guardian who has supervised my teen driver for the majority of the required driving hours, and that my teen has driven the hours listed above.

Total driving hours:

Day

Night

Signature

Date

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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Division of Motor Vehicles
DMV
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Parent-teen driving contract

I will obey all driving laws. I will observe and abide by posted speed limits. I will obey all rules established by my parents and will drive the car only with their permission. If I break the rules, I will forfeit the car keys with no argument or debate. Refusal to do so will result in the loss of my driving privileges.

1. I will not drive after using or ride with anyone who has used any "substance" including medications that may impair driving abilities.

   Breaking this rule results in _____ days/months of driving privilege loss.

2. I will wear my seat belt at all times and insist that all passengers wear theirs.

   Breaking this rule results in _____ days/months of driving privilege loss.

3. Under no circumstances will I use a cell phone or any other electronic device unless safely stopped on the side of the road.

   Breaking this rule results in _____ days/months of driving privilege loss.

4. I will respect all weather and road conditions, slowing down as needed for safety.

   Breaking this rule results in _____ days/months of driving privilege loss.

5. If I'm involved in a crash, no matter how minor, I will not leave the scene without the permission of police officers and my parents.

   Breaking this rule results in _____ days/months of driving privilege loss.

6. I will inform my parents about any tickets, crashes and encounters with police (including warnings).

   Breaking this rule results in _____ days/months of driving privilege loss.

7. I will not have any passengers or allow anyone to drive the car without specific permission.

   Breaking this rule results in _____ days/months of driving privilege loss.

8. All trips will be to agreed upon locations discussed beforehand. I will not make any unscheduled stops, side trips or changes without parental contact.

   Breaking this rule results in _____ days/months of driving privilege loss.

We agree to review (and possibly change) this agreement on_____(date) or earlier if needed.

Signatures:

New driver_____ (date)_____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)_____ (date)_____

We agree and understand that situations may arise that may conflict with portions of this contract; they will be discussed as needed.

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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Parking – part one

Goal: Teach your teen to master angle and perpendicular parking.

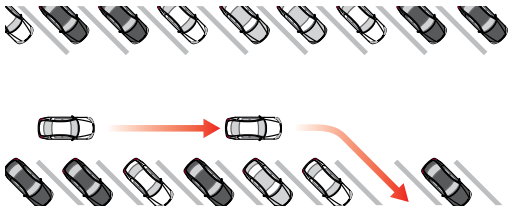
Location: Start in large, level, mostly empty areas. You will need angled and perpendicular spaces.

Before your teen starts parking practice, review "Skill three: how close are you?" and "Skill four: backing up."

Lesson one – angle parking

The gentler turn makes this the easiest type of parking for new drivers. *Hint: Choosing a parking spot on the left side of the car can provide more room to maneuver and a better view of traffic when backing out.*

- Signal to indicate intent to turn into a parking space.
- Move forward until the steering wheel is aligned with the first pavement line marking the space.
- Look at the middle of the parking space and turn the wheel sharply at a slow, controlled speed.
- Steer toward the center of the space, straightening the wheel upon entry.
- Stop when the front bumper is six inches from the curb or from the end of the space.

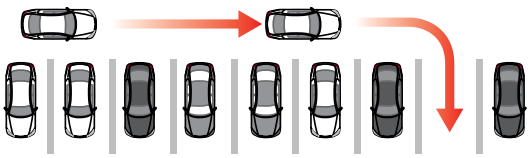


Turn when the front of your vehicle reaches the edge of the space. Stay alert for cars backing out to leave their space.

- After you've parked, put the gear in park for automatic transmissions (for manual transmissions, put the car either in first or reverse) and set the parking brake. Shut off the ignition and remove the key. Check for traffic prior to getting out. Lock the doors.
- Suddenly opening car doors can pose a very serious threat to bicyclists. When opening your car door, drivers and passengers are encouraged to check your rear-view mirror, side-view mirror, then open the door with your far hand.

Lesson two – perpendicular parking

The steps are the same as for angle parking, but the sharper turn into perpendicular spaces may require more practice.



Turn when your outside mirror reaches the edge of the space. Always finish with your wheels straight and your car centered in the space.

Lesson three – exiting spaces

- With a foot on the brake, shift into reverse, which will signal that you will be backing up.
- Before moving, search all around your vehicle using your mirrors, backup camera, and looking over your shoulder side-to-side and behind.
- For angled spaces, back up straight until the driver's seat is even with the bumper of the next vehicle on the turning side. For perpendicular spaces, back up straight until the windshield is aligned with the bumper of the next vehicle.
- Quickly turn the wheel in the direction that the rear of the car needs to go.
- Glance forward to make sure the front bumper is clear of the car on the other side.
- When the front bumper clears the other vehicle, stop, shift into drive, and pull forward to complete the exit.

Practice makes better

Plan to spend a good amount of time on parking practice with your teen — it's a difficult skill to learn. Many crashes happen in parking lots, and mastering parking skills is an important way to help avoid collisions. Have your teen practice angle and perpendicular parking until you and your teen feel comfortable with their skills.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

Parking – part two

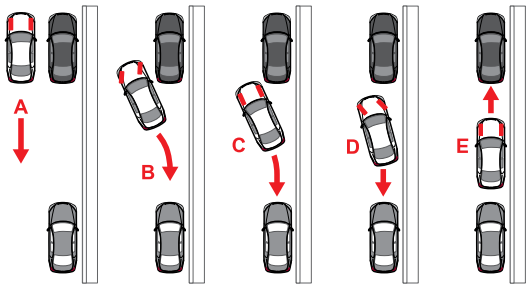
Goal: Teach your teen to master parallel parking.

Location: A street with marked parallel parking spaces at a time of day when traffic is light.

Lesson one – parallel parking

Parallel parking is a difficult maneuver for new drivers, so patience is key. Many drivers never learn to do it well, especially in areas where it's not common. Because of the difficulty of learning parallel parking, and because there are several different teaching methods, this skill is sometimes best taught by a professional driving instructor. Assess your own parallel parking skills and your teen's abilities before beginning.

- Select an available space on the passenger's side of the car.
- Signal when approaching the space and check mirrors for traffic behind the vehicle.
- Move forward past the space until lined up directly parallel to the car parked in front, 2–5 feet away. Being too close or too far away will make parking more difficult.
- With a foot on the brake, shift to reverse and turn around to check for traffic and make sure the travel path is clear.
- Release the brake, start backing up slowly, and start to make an "S" turn, turning first right and then left.



Start by practicing with cones before graduating to practicing alongside vehicles.

- Glance both forward and backward repeatedly to check the space around the car while turning.
- Once the rear of the car is mostly in the space, start turning in the other direction to straighten out.
- Adjust the vehicle's position as needed to center it in the space.
- Check to see if the wheels are 6–12 inches from the curb. If not, pull out and try again.
- Always check for passing vehicles and cyclists before you open your door, this is called the Dutch Reach.

Lesson two – exiting a parallel parking space

- With a foot on the brake, shift to reverse, turn around, and back as close as possible to the vehicle behind you.
- Check your side mirror and look over your shoulder for cyclists or fast-moving cars, then signal, and shift into drive.
- Make sure the travel path is clear, then move slowly forward while steering rapidly out of the space.

Lesson three – parallel parking on a hill

Make sure the vehicle is in park and the parking brake is properly engaged. To prevent the vehicle from rolling into traffic, instruct your teen to turn the front wheels as follows:

- Toward the curb when parking downhill
- Away from the curb when parking uphill

If there is no curb, have your teen point the wheel so that the car would roll away from traffic if it moved.

Have patience

When practicing parallel parking, your teen will probably hit the curb several times. Tell them not to worry — even the best parallel parkers do this sometimes. Coach them to pull out of the space and try again, adjusting their turning angle as needed.

Video: Parallel parking

Scan the QR code below to watch the video.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

Driving on rural roads

Goal: Teach your teen to drive safely and with confidence on two-lane rural roads.

Location: A two-lane rural road.

Lesson one – gravel roads

Gravel roads present their own special road safety challenge. The issue is traction. Driving on loose gravel is harder than driving on pavement because your tires don't have the traction needed to give you stable control. Slow down, avoid sudden turning, accelerate and brake slowly, and increase your following distance to six seconds. Be particularly aware of gravel "windrows," piles of gravel near the road edge, used for highway maintenance.

Lesson two – driving hazards

Large/slow vehicles: Slower trucks, farm vehicles, and road maintenance equipment are likely to make wide turns at unmarked entrances. Use caution and make sure the driver can see your vehicle before passing.

Sharp drop-offs and gravel shoulders: One of the most common driving hazards is running off the road. The urge to overcorrect is strong and often results in a serious crash. If you run off the road, follow these steps to ease your vehicle back onto the road:

- Do not turn the wheel; continue driving straight, unless something is blocking your path.
- Take your foot off the accelerator.
- Find a safe place to reenter the road.
- Turn on your turn signal and reenter the road when it is clear.
- In general, try to not apply brakes until regaining control of the vehicle.

Restricted visibility: Trees, cornfields, buildings, and hills can block a driver's view of oncoming traffic, or traffic entering from the side. Identify blind spots to better anticipate and be prepared for potential dangers.

Uncontrolled intersections: These are intersections not controlled by signs, signals, or pavement markings. Use caution, slow down, and check both ways twice. Proceed cautiously once there is no oncoming traffic.

Animals: If unable to stop for an animal crossing the road, do NOT swerve — swerving makes it hard to keep control. The most serious crashes happen when drivers swerve into oncoming traffic or roll into a ditch.

If you see an animal, slow down and be prepared to stop. Always be on the lookout, especially at sunrise and sunset. October and November are peak months for deer crashes. Deer travel in groups; if you see one, look for more.

Hills and curves: These are often steeper and sharper on rural roads than on highways. Before reaching the crest of a hill or entering a curve, slow down, move to the right side of your lane, and watch for traffic.

Railroad crossings: Always slow down, look both ways, listen and be prepared to stop. On rural roads, many railroad crossings are marked only with a round yellow 'railroad crossing ahead' warning sign and a white X-shaped railroad crossing. There may not be flashing lights, warning bells, crossing gates, or pavement markings. It is difficult to judge the speed of a train, so before you cross, make sure you don't see or hear a train either direction.

Gravel slide

Be ready for skids. A vehicle can become difficult to handle in heavy gravel. If the vehicle starts to skid, release the accelerator or brake. As you release them, look where you want to go, and steer in that direction.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

Multi-lane roads – part one

Goal: Teach your teen to drive safely and with confidence on busier, more complex, multi-lane roads.

Location: A busier, multi-lane road. When beginning, choose a time with limited traffic, such as a weekend morning.

Skill review

By now, your teen should be comfortable driving on quiet roads. Before starting multi-lane road practice, it's important to review some key information from previous lessons. The following skills are crucial to safe driving on busier, more complicated roads.

Lesson one – mirror positioning and blind spots

Refer to Skills one and two. Clearly seeing the adjacent traffic is especially important on multi-lane roads. Remind your teen to check the mirror positions when entering the car, and to constantly monitor the traffic around them.

Lesson two – stopping distance

Refer to Skill six. Remind your teen that when stopping their vehicle behind another one, they should be far enough back to see where the other car's tires meet the road.

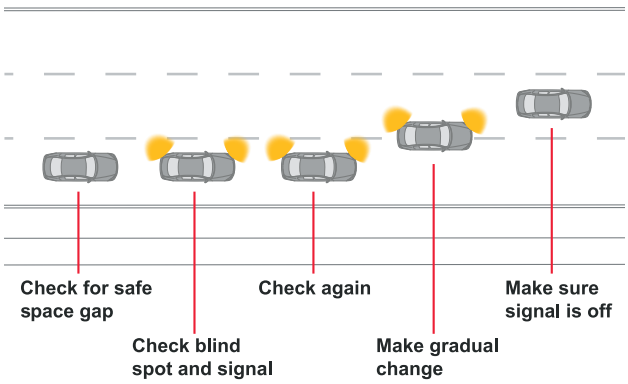
Lesson three – following distance

Refer to Skill six. Review the four-second rule with your teen, emphasizing that increasing following distance is the single best way to reduce crash risk. This gives the driver visibility, time, and space to avoid crashes.

Lesson four – safe lane changing

First, coach your teen not to change lanes unnecessarily. Studies show that while it may not look like it, most travel lanes flow at around the same rate. Changing lanes in an effort to save time doesn't actually save time, but it does increase crash risk.

Ask your teen to list valid reasons to change lanes. Good answers include: to make a turn, to avoid an obstacle, to exit the road, to park, or to pass another vehicle.



When changing lanes, always recheck traffic with a glance over the shoulder at the blind spot.

Have your teen practice these lane change steps until proficient:

- Check traffic to the rear and the sides for an appropriate gap.
- Signal to indicate intention to change lanes.
- Recheck traffic, including a glance over the shoulder at the mirror blind spot area.
- Maintain speed or accelerate slightly before and during the lane change.
- Gradually move into the new lane.
- Adjust following distance using the four-second rule.

Other road users

Motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians are more difficult to see than cars because they are smaller — and drivers tend to focus on looking for cars. Traffic, weather, and road conditions require cyclists to react differently than car drivers. It can be difficult for young drivers to judge and predict their actions. Always give motorcyclists and bicyclists a wide berth and **reduce your speed**.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

Multi-lane roads – part two

Goal: Teach your teen to drive safely and with confidence on busier, more complex, multi-lane roads.

Location: A busier, multi-lane road. Choose a time with limited traffic, such as a weekend morning.

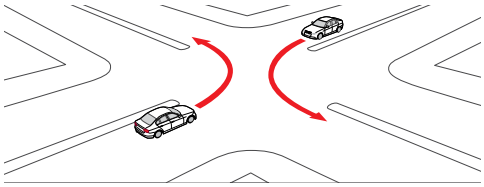
Lesson one – right turns

Start with right turns, which are fairly simple. Right turns are usually made from the right lane of the current road to the first, open lane of the new road. Look for signs and signals that indicate whether "right on red" is allowed. Practice right turns until you feel confident that your teen is proficient.

Lesson two – left turns

Left turns should almost always begin and end in the closest lane to the right of the yellow line. The yellow line in the lane being turned into should be your teen's target. There are three types of left turns:

- **Exclusive left turns** with a designated left turn lane and left turn signal
- **Shared left turns** made from a center or shared turn lane
- **Unprotected left turns** made from an active travel lane



Don't turn the wheel until you're ready to make the turn.

Protected left turns should be made from the designated lane when the left turn signal displays a green arrow, using the yellow line in the lane being turned into as the steering target.

For unprotected left turns, coach your teen on these steps:

- Make sure the vehicle is in the correct lane to make a left turn.
- Signal the turn and begin slowing down at least 100 feet from the intersection.
- Move carefully into the intersection. Don't turn the wheel until you're ready to make the turn.
- Yield to any vehicles, cyclists, or pedestrians.
- When there is sufficient space with no oncoming traffic, move ahead into the turn.
- Choose a steering path line in the middle of the closest lane to the right of the yellow line.

Lesson three – safe passing procedures

Discourage your teen from passing other cars unnecessarily. If passing is necessary, the following steps should be observed:

- Position your vehicle more than four seconds behind the vehicle to be passed.
- Check the passing lane ahead to make sure there's plenty of space before you try to pass.
- Check mirrors and blind spots for traffic behind you.
- Signal intent to pass and accelerate quickly to match the speed of traffic flow.
- While passing, monitor the space in front of and behind your vehicle and check the rearview mirror for the front of the car being passed. Make sure to not exceed the speed limit when passing.
- When you see the front of the passed car in the rearview mirror and your vehicle is well clear, signal intent, gently and slowly move back to the original lane, cancel the signal, and maintain speed.

Making left turns

Left turns are one of the hardest maneuvers for teens to master. Be patient. New drivers often have difficulty judging the speed and distances of multiple lanes of oncoming traffic. Have them practice judging oncoming vehicles' distance from your vehicle by counting out loud the time it takes for an oncoming vehicle to reach your car from a designated point.

Video: Multi-lane roads

Scan the QR code below to watch the video.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

City driving – part one

Goal: Teach your teen to drive safely and confidently in the complex environment of city driving.
Note: City driving takes hundreds of hours, if not several years, to master.

Location: Busy, urban streets. Start at times when traffic is light, moving on to heavier traffic times as your teen gains practice.

Skill review

Since the busy, crowded environment of city driving is challenging for new drivers, this is a good time to review key driving skills. **One of the most important skill for drivers is the ability to make good decisions.** City driving forces drivers to make lots of decisions quickly. The three things they need to drive safely in the city are:

- **Visibility:** To see potential problems in all directions, and establish a clear path of travel ahead
- **Space:** To maneuver around obstacles and avoid hazards
- **Time:** To anticipate risks and make adjustments to speed or position

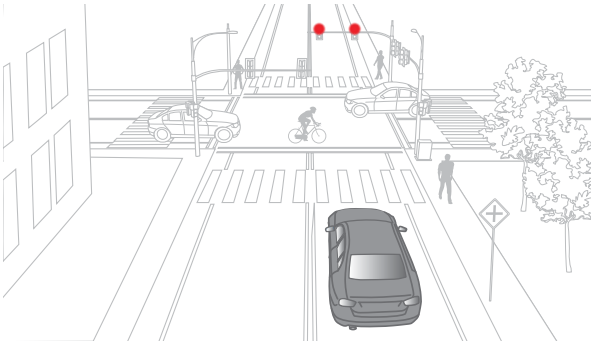
Scan first

Keep reminding your teen that constant awareness and looking ahead are the keys to learning to drive safely on city streets. Emphasize the idea that a green light means, "Scan the intersection first, then go."

Lesson one – maximizing visibility and space

As you practice, have your teen focus on making decisions that will maximize visibility and space around the vehicle, increasing the available reaction time.

- **Looking ahead (refer to Skill six):** Congested city driving leaves very little room for error. Identifying and anticipating potential problems is crucial.
- **Covering the brake:** Coach your teen that when they spot a hazard, they should "cover" the brake by taking their foot off the accelerator and holding it over the brake. This will prepare them to slow down or stop suddenly. Make sure they don't "ride" the brake. Riding the brake confuses other drivers and puts unnecessary wear on the brakes.



Looking ahead, identifying and anticipating potential problems is crucial for safe driving.

Lesson two – identifying hazards

As you begin city driving practice, have your teen drive through several blocks to identify and name common hazards on busy, congested streets. Ask them to describe how they will safely deal with each hazard they identify.

Such hazards may include:

- Parked cars, cars entering or exiting parking spaces, and car doors opening
- Delivery trucks stopping suddenly, with drivers racing to and from the trucks
- Buses making frequent stops, loading and unloading passengers
- Blind alleys, with cars or cyclists darting out
- Pedestrians and cyclists moving unpredictably, crossing streets outside of a crosswalk, etc.
- Limited visibility and intersections spaced at shorter intervals
- Aggressive drivers competing for lane space and parking spots
- Stop-and-go traffic flow

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

City driving – part two

Goal: Teach your teen to drive safely and confidently in the complex environment of city driving. *Note: This is not a goal that will be achieved in a single session. Spend as much time as possible with your teen practicing safe city driving skills.*

Location: Busy urban streets. Start at times when traffic is light, moving on to heavier traffic times as your teen gains practice.

Lesson one – avoiding obstacles

Focus on lane position to avoid obstacles: City driving involves many circumstances in which travel lanes are shared, congested, and partially or fully blocked. During practice sessions on busy city roads, have your teen identify these steps to safely avoid obstacles:

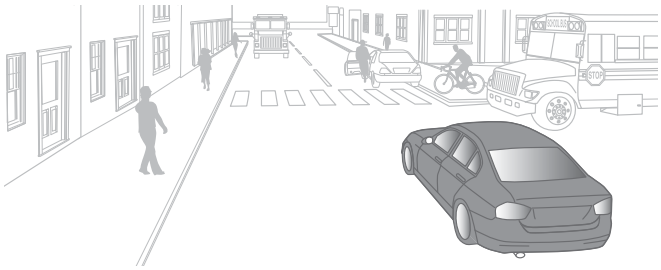
- Identify right-lane obstacles, such as stopped buses, parked cars, delivery trucks, and cyclists.
- Identify left-lane obstacles, such as vehicles waiting to make a left turn, or cars traveling in the opposite direction drifting over the center line.
- Identify the least-congested travel lane. *Hint: On a three-lane road, this is usually the center lane.*
- Position the vehicle in the lane at the greatest distance possible from any obstacles.

It can be tempting to pass vehicles on congested streets, when obstacles or traffic volume slow traffic. However, this can be dangerous, due to closely spaced intersections, irregular traffic flow, cars entering and exiting parking spots, etc. Coach your teen to avoid passing on busy city streets.

Lesson two – deadly distractions

What happens inside the car can be just as dangerous as what happens outside. **Engaging in distracting activities while driving can be deadly, especially for young drivers.** Ask your teen to list dangerous driving distractions. Their answers should include:

- Talking, texting, or dialing a phone
- Changing radio stations, or shuffling/streaming music
- Passengers, pets, or objects moving in the car
- Eating, drinking, or smoking
- Searching for an item
- Intense or emotional conversations, or cognitive distractions, such a trying to solve a problem
- Putting on makeup or looking in the mirror



Remind your teen to stay alert, scan their surroundings, and not fixate on any one thing.

Coach your teen to avoid distracting activities whenever possible, but especially in busy, congested environments. Remind them to focus on keeping as much space as possible around the vehicle at all times.

More is better

City driving skills take a long time to acquire. Spend as much time as possible driving in many circumstances with your teen. This should include driving at night and in inclement weather. Plan trips to less familiar places where you might not normally travel.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

Freeway driving – part one

Goal: Teach your teen freeway basics and how to safely enter and exit a freeway.

Location: Start on a multi-lane freeway with easily accessible exits, at a time when traffic is light, such as a weekend morning. Move on to practice at heavier traffic times when your teen is ready.

Lesson one – observation

Before your teen gets behind the wheel on the freeway, have your teen spend some time on freeways with you as the driver and your teen as the passenger. Emphasize the importance of looking ahead to anticipate potential problems, and explain key freeway features, such as:

- The different kinds of interchanges
- The meanings of freeway signs and signals
- The meanings of different lane lines and markings

Worthy of repetition

Practice merging and exiting many times, until you feel confident that your teen is proficient. Keep coaching your teen that constant awareness and looking ahead are the keys to learning to drive safely.

Lesson two – on-ramp segments

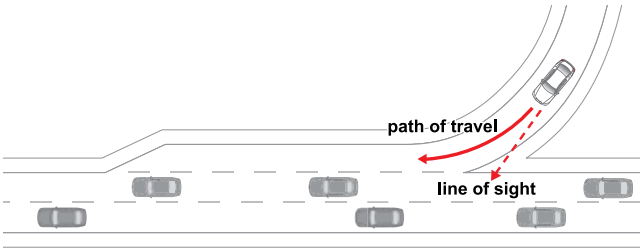
Explain the three segments of on-ramps, and how they're used:

- **Entrance area:** The driver searches the freeway and evaluates how much space they have to enter and what speed is needed.
- **Acceleration area:** The driver brings the vehicle up to the speed of freeway traffic flow.
- **Merge area:** The driver uses this space to merge into the traffic flow.

Lesson three – merging

Teach the steps for merging onto a freeway:

- Check for on-ramp speed signs.
- Before the entrance area, make quick glances at the freeway, scanning for vehicles and entry gaps.
- In the acceleration area, signal to show intent to enter the freeway and adjust speed to match the traffic flow.



There is plenty of time to merge. If a gap doesn't present itself immediately, adjust your speed as early as possible in order to find one.

- In the merge area, enter the flow of traffic, checking mirrors and blind spots.
- Turn off the turn signal and begin looking ahead to anticipate problems or upcoming lane changes.
- Do not completely stop in the entrance area unless absolutely necessary.

Lesson four – exiting

Teach the steps for exiting a freeway:

- Identify the exit well ahead of time.
- Search traffic for problems when approaching the exit, but don't slow down on the freeway.
- Start to signal four to six seconds before reaching the ramp.
- Upon entering the ramp, tap the brakes and begin to slow down to the posted exit ramp speed limit before reaching the curve. On some ramps, be prepared to rapidly reduce your speed.

Practice both merging and exiting 10–12 times each, or more if needed for your teen to feel comfortable.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

Freeway driving – part two

Goal: Teach your teen to maneuver safely in complex freeway driving environments at higher speeds.

Location: Start on a multi-lane freeway with easily-accessible exits, at a time when traffic is light, such as a weekend morning. Move on to practice at heavier traffic times when your teen is ready.

Lesson one – steering technique

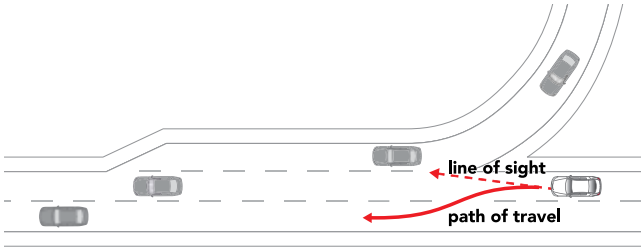
Once on the freeway, coach your teen on steering technique. At fast freeway speeds, excessive steering can be dangerous and lead to loss of control. Remind your teen to steer gently on freeways.

Lesson two – lane changing

In the high-speed, complex freeway environment, lane-changing skills are very important. Have your teen spend lots of time practicing the lane-changing and passing skills previously learned in "Skill ten: multi-lane roads," until they are comfortable performing them at freeway speeds.

Remind your teen to:

- Watch for merging vehicles and move one lane left to make space for them when needed.
- Change lanes one at a time only.
- Watch mirrors for tailgaters and move to another lane to let them pass. Grow comfortable with checking blind spots frequently to be aware of the traffic around you.



For the first several lane changes you may need to talk your teen through the decision-making process. Double-check all mirrors to make sure that the lane is clear.

Lesson three – four-second rule

Review the four-second rule for following distance, learned in "Skill six: looking ahead." At higher speeds it's recommended to add more following distance. Additionally, coach your teen to also use a four-second rule for these freeway driving circumstances:

- Merging onto a freeway
- Changing lanes
- Exiting a freeway

Lesson four – challenging road conditions

Coach your teen to adjust travel speed and vehicle position based on weather and road conditions. Once your teen is comfortable with and proficient at freeway driving in good conditions, spend some practice time on freeways under more challenging conditions, such as rain. Coach them to always use appropriate caution, as conditions can change quickly.

Lesson five – road trips

Consider planning some short day trips with your teen to a destination two to three hours away. Have them drive there and back. Find an event or place that you will both enjoy and have fun.

Higher order

Early in the training process, parental instruction tends to focus on vehicle handling. As your teen's skills improve, try to focus on "higher order" instruction, such as scanning ahead, hazard detection, and anticipating the other driver's behavior.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

Roundabouts

Goal: Teach your teen how to enter and drive roundabouts safely.

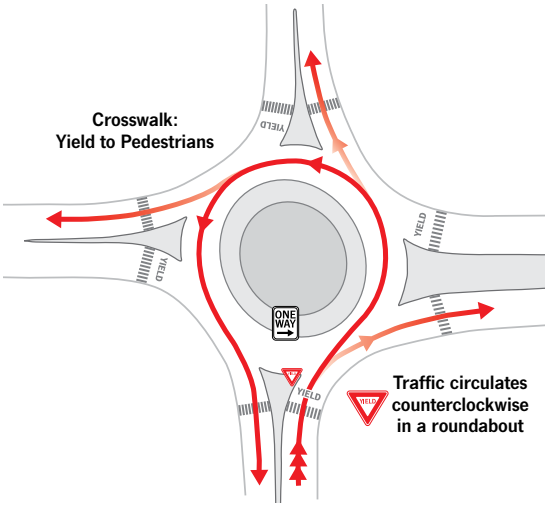
Location: A road that leads to a one-lane roundabout. Move on to practice at two or more lane roundabouts when your teen is ready.

Roundabouts are circular intersections designed to calm traffic, increase safety, reduce stop-and-go travel, and decrease traffic delays. Roundabouts have proven to be an efficient means to move traffic through congested intersections and have shown to reduce crashes by half (all but eliminating the more severe broadside and head-on collisions). Roundabouts also offer a safe environment for pedestrians, who only have to navigate one-way traffic flow.

Driving in a roundabout can be intimidating, but it's really quite simple when you know how it works.

Lesson one – five easy steps

- **Slow down:** Speeds of 15 mph or less are generally adequate in the roundabout.
- **Yield:** Vehicles entering must always yield to cars already in the roundabout. Look to your left for entering traffic.
- **Don't stop, stay in lane:** Don't stop once inside the roundabout. The vehicle in the roundabout has the right of way. Do not change lanes within the roundabout.
- **Follow signs:** Look for destination signs and exit in that direction.
- **Exit:** Look to your right, check your side mirror and use your turn signal.



This example shows the traffic movement patterns through a one-lane roundabout. The one-lane roundabout is known as one of the safest and most efficient intersections.

Lesson two – emergency vehicles

- If you have not entered the roundabout, pull over and allow emergency vehicles to pass.
- If you have entered the roundabout, continue to your exit, then pull over and allow emergency vehicles to pass.
- Avoid stopping in the roundabout.

Lesson three – two or more lane roundabouts

- As you approach, observe the signs and arrows to determine which lane to use before entering.
- Signs on the side of the road and white arrows on the road will show the correct lane to use.
- If you want to make a left turn, stay in the left lane or other lanes that are signed and marked as a left turn.
- To make a right turn, stay in the right lane or other lanes that are signed and marked as a right turn lane.
- If you want to go straight, observe the signs and arrows to see what lane is correct.

Yield the right-of-way

As a rule of thumb, when entering or driving through a roundabout, always yield to traffic on your left.

Video: Roundabouts

Scan the QR code below to watch the video.

Skill completed

Supervisor initials

Driver initials

#RoadReady

Adapting to new landscapes

Mountain driving

Some hazards you should be aware of are steep hills, changing weather, wildlife, and rocks in the roadway. If your vehicle experiences difficulty traveling up steep roadways, pull off the road at the first place you may do so safely, or stay in the right lane to allow other vehicles to pass. Here are some added tips:

- Pay special attention to speed limit signs and caution signs, such as those warning of curves, steep hills, or other hazards.
- Watch for bicyclists near the right edge of the road.
- Use lower gears to control speeds while going up or down long, steep hills.
- You must yield to vehicles going uphill if you are traveling downhill on a narrow road.
- Do not coast downhill by shifting into neutral or disengaging the clutch.

The higher the altitude, the less oxygen there is in the air. Some people may react to the decrease in oxygen. They may develop mild symptoms, such as headache, nausea, and fatigue. Remember, insufficient hydration can lead to the onset of symptoms of altitude sickness. Even if they are mild, they can affect your alertness as a driver.

Rural driving

When driving in rural or country areas, there are a number of special situations that require attention. Watch for driveways, farm equipment, railroad crossings that might not be marked, and bridges that are narrow and poorly surfaced. Some intersections may be hidden by trees, brush, and crops. Animals are often found wandering along the roadway. Extra care and slower speeds should be used when driving on gravel roads because of the reduced traction due to the road surface. The road surface can be affected by loose gravel, slippery conditions after rain or snow, ruts in the driving lanes, and washboard conditions. When approaching oncoming vehicles, watch for soft shoulders or the absence of shoulders.

Safety around snowplows

When you see lights from a snow plow, slow down and use caution.

- **Give snowplows room to work:** The plows are wide and can cross the center line or shoulder.
- **Do not tailgate and avoid passing, especially on the right:** If you must pass, be extremely cautious and beware of the snow cloud.
- **Keep your distance and watch for sudden stops and turns:** A snowplow operator's field of vision is restricted. You may see them, but they don't always see you.

Note: Four-wheel drive (4WD) vehicles do not stop faster on ice and snow than two-wheel drive (2WD) vehicles. The heavier the vehicle, the longer it takes to stop, no matter the vehicle's wheels.

Course of action

After becoming proficient in basic driving skills, teens can become overconfident and begin to drive faster, follow other cars more closely, brake abruptly, etc. Gently and continuously remind your teen to stay four seconds back from other vehicles and always drive with caution.

Continuing education

Learning doesn't stop when your teen has received their license. It's important to continue teaching and building upon the skills they have learned. As you continue the supervision process, think about these three areas of focus:

- **Spend as much time as possible driving** with your teen.
- **Drive in a wide variety of conditions** (weather, time of day, different traffic volumes, etc.).
- **Focus on "higher level" learning:** scanning ahead, recognizing hazards, and learning to anticipate the behavior of other drivers.

Now that your teen has become proficient in the basic operational skills of driving, it is essential that they be exposed to a wide variety of driving circumstances and conditions. "Make a point of driving with them in different conditions that they have yet to experience — quiet neighborhood streets, multi-lane roads, and highways. Drive with them at different times of the day, in poor weather, and with varying levels of traffic. It's much better that they experience these conditions with you, rather than alone or with other teens.

Much of what has been discussed to this point has related specifically to the basic skills your teen will need to be a safe driver. Now, your goal is to ensure your teen is thinking intelligently and making the right decisions as a driver. Sometimes after teens become proficient with the basic skills, parents/guardians will often "step back," becoming less involved in their teen's supervision. But there's still a lot to learn; their teen's education is not complete.

Be clear with your teen that the training process is ongoing and that you will continue to provide input into their development so that you both stay in the learning/teaching mode.

Even the best new drivers are likely to make mistakes. These mistakes are great teachable moments for "higher order" instructions. So instead of saying, "Stop sooner," advise your teen to try to focus on looking ahead and anticipating events, with an emphasis on good judgment, good decision making, and hazard perception. The shift from a basic comment to a more advanced focus is perhaps the most essential element of educating your teen at this point in the learning process.

As your teen drives, talk to them about specific hazard areas, possible areas of conflict, and blind spots where trouble may hide. Teens tend not to be as good at anticipating these trouble areas as experienced drivers. A good exercise is to have your teen describe the blind spots and possible areas of conflicts they see. It will let you know that they are thinking, anticipating, and driving intelligently.

Keep on coachin'

Even after your teen is licensed, use your time driving with them to instill habits of good judgment, accurate hazard anticipation, and smart decision-making. Remember that crash rates are highest in the first months of licensure. Your role is still vital even after your teen receive his or her license!

New vehicle technology

There is an ever-increasing amount of safety technology in today's cars. Features like automatic emergency braking, blind spot monitoring, and forward collision warning keep us all safer, but only if they're used correctly. It's important to understand how these advanced driver assistance features work and their limitations. **A key point is to remember these are driver "assistance" features and not driver "replacement" features.**

The easiest way to ensure you're using everything right is to carefully review your car's manual. Read about any features that are new to you and make sure you know how they work. If you still have questions, then reach out to the dealership so they can explain. Once you understand the technology, share that information with your teen driver so they understand it, too.

Check out this website for additional information: mycardoeswhat.org/safety-features

Practice in other conditions

For new drivers, it can be challenging to drive in new and unfamiliar conditions, such as in inclement weather, at different times of day, and with varying traffic volume. It's best that you provide guidance before they experience these conditions on their own.

Night driving

A driver's reaction depends on their vision, which is limited at night. This makes it more difficult to make judgments and see pedestrians, bicyclists, and other obstacles. Some tips to keep in mind:

- Glare from headlights makes it difficult to see. Looking toward the right side of the road and flipping the rearview mirror to the night setting can help to reduce glare.
- Low-beam headlights should be on at all times, but are required at night.
- High beams should only be used when other drivers won't see them, such as on roads with little traffic.
- To compensate for reduced visibility, drive more slowly and at a greater following distance.

Wet/slippery roads

Coach your teen to practice the following:

- Turn on the wipers as soon as the windshield becomes wet.
- Turn on the low-beam headlights; this helps others see you.
- Reduce your speed and increase your following distance to 5 or 6 seconds. When roads are wet following distance increases.
- Be more cautious, and slow down on curves and when approaching intersections.
- Turn the defroster on to keep windows from fogging over.

Hydroplaning

Hydroplaning occurs as a result of excessive speed and water on the road that is deeper than the tire tread. This reduces friction and you can lose control. If you can see deep water, reflections on the pavement, or if the car ahead leaves no tracks on the water, these are indications you could hydroplane. Prevent this by slowing down.

Fog

Use low-beam lights and fog lights if your vehicle has them. Don't use high beams — they reflect off the fog, causing reduced visibility. Slow down until your speed matches your ability to see, even if it means slowing to a crawl.

Snow

It's best to stay off the roads until they are cleared and treated. If you have to drive, make sure your vehicle is clear of snow and ice before driving. Driving can cause snow/ice to slide and block your view, or fly off and strike other vehicles.

- When starting to drive in snow, keep the wheels straight ahead and accelerate gently to avoid spinning the tires.
- Decrease your speed to make up for a loss of traction. Accelerate and decelerate gently, and be extra careful when braking.
- Stopping distances can be up to 10 times greater in ice and snow. Begin the slowing-down process long before a stop. Try to brake only when traveling in a straight line.
- Look ahead for dangerous spots, such as shaded areas and bridge surfaces that may be icy when the rest of the road is clear.
- Stay far behind the vehicle ahead so you will not need to come to a sudden stop, which can cause skidding.

Drowsy driving

Staying alert means focusing on the road and not driving when fatigued. Review signs of Drowsy Driving, such as difficulty focusing, frequent blinking, or drifting from lane. Remind your teen to take a break after driving for 2 hours, or after 100 miles. Teens should avoid driving at times they would normally be sleeping.

Sharing the road

When driving on the highway, you are at a serious disadvantage if involved in a crash with a larger vehicle. In crashes involving large trucks, the occupants of a car — usually the driver — sustain 78 percent of fatalities.

In order to keep you and your teen safe on the road, you should be extra cautious when driving around large vehicles. Sharing the road with larger vehicles can be dangerous, if you are not aware of their limitations. Here are a few tips to help you drive safer to prevent a crash and minimize injuries and fatalities if one does occur.

Speed is everything

When driving in highly trafficked areas, like urban and town centers, as well as arterial roads, your speed can be a matter of life and death for you, fellow motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. Follow speed limits and respect all road users.

Cutting in front can cut your life short

If you cut in front of another vehicle, you may create an emergency-braking situation for the vehicles around you, especially in heavy traffic. Large vehicles take much longer to stop in comparison to cars. When passing, look for the front of the truck in your rearview mirror before pulling in front, and avoid braking situations.

Watch your blind spots – the "no-zones"

Large trucks have blind spots, or "no-zones," around the front, back, and sides of the vehicle. These no-zones make it difficult for the driver to see. Avoid being caught in a truck's no-zones. If you can't see the truck driver in the truck's mirror, the truck driver can't see you.

Avoid squeeze play

Be careful of trucks making wide right turns. If you try to get in between the truck and the curb, you'll be caught in a "squeeze" crash. Truck drivers sometimes need to swing wide to the left in order to safely negotiate a right turn. They can't see cars directly behind or beside them. Cutting in between the truck and the curb increases the possibility of a crash. So pay attention to truck signals, and give them lots of room to maneuver.

Work zones

Work zones can be very dangerous, especially when traveling on the highway. It's important to be alert and prepared to slow down or stop in a work zone. Slowing down and allowing others to merge will ensure a safe passage through work zones. Here are a few tips on work zone safety:

- **Stay alert:** Work zones are busy places where construction vehicles and workers are always moving. Be alert, and stay on the safe path that is designated throughout the work zone.
- **Take your cues from trucks:** Work zones often pop up suddenly. If you are not paying attention to the signs, you could find yourself in a serious crash. Since trucks have a height advantage and can see ahead of traffic, their brake light activity can provide a good signal of a slow-down or work zone ahead. Truck drivers know the stopping limitations of their trucks and pay close attention to traffic.
- **Merge gently:** Aggressive drivers can be extremely dangerous while driving in work zones. Work zones require time and courtesy. For a smooth passage through work zones, allow others to merge in front of you. Be especially considerate of trucks. They require more space to merge and are the least maneuverable vehicles on the road.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

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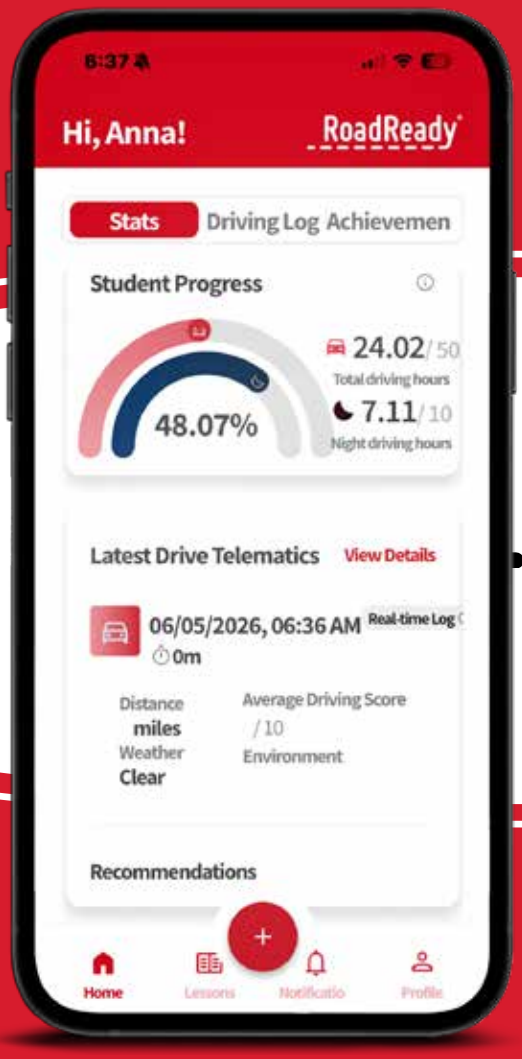

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Sharing the road with bicyclists and pedestrians

- **Scan the street for wheels and feet:** Be especially careful to look for people walking and biking before turning at intersections and driveways.
- **Yield to pedestrians:** Pay attention to the pedestrian signal and give people walking the right-of-way.
- **Double threat:** Never pass another vehicle that has stopped or is slowing down for a pedestrian. Remember, you might not be able to see the pedestrian when you approach a stopped vehicle so be aware.
- **Watch for bikes:** Bicyclists have the right to be on the road (and are often prohibited from riding on sidewalks), so respect their right to be there.
- **Passing safely:** Bicycles are vehicles, and are entitled to a full traffic lane. Give a bicycle (and other vulnerable road users, such as garbage collectors, police officers, and tow truck operators) *at least* three feet of room when passing, and don't return to the right until well clear of the person. If there isn't enough room to safely pass in the same lane, you must use another lane or wait for a safe opportunity to pass. Do not pass a person on a bike and then immediately turn right.
- **Avoid the "right hook":** Look for and yield to people biking on the right when turning right.
- **Avoid the "left cross":** Look for and yield to people walking across the street and yield to oncoming people on bikes when turning left.
- **Visibility:** Look for bicyclists at night and watch for their reflectors or lights.
- **Check blind spots:** Watch for bicyclists coming from behind, especially before turning right.
- **Doors are dangerous:** Before opening the car door, look in your mirror and physically turn your body to make sure no bicyclists are coming. Learn more here: dutchreach.org/dutch-reach-practice-tips-door-latch-reminders

Respect for all road users

Put yourself in the shoes of a person walking or biking. We are all trying to safely get to our destination. Respect and kindness towards other road users can go a long way.

Lowering speeds can save lives

Source: Impact Speed and a Pedestrian's Risk of Severe Injury or Death. Brian Tefft, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 2011

Final tips for parents…

1. The longer a teen holds their Learner's Permit, the less risk of crashing. Aim for 12 months instead of 6 months of supervised driving.

2. Consistent and varied practice can reduce your teen's crash risk. Practice driving regularly on different roads, even if you're going to and from the same place.

3. Think hard about your teen's access to a vehicle. Consider your teen sharing access to the family car, instead of getting them their own car. It is best for teens to have limited access to a car in the first months of licensure. This can reduce their risk of crashing.

4. Parents should continue to drive with their teens after they get their license! Stay involved, and try to be aware of each trip they're taking in that first year of independent driving.

Our thanks to Dr. Johnathon Ehsani and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health for these tips and their ongoing research to eliminate teen crashes.

NOTES

Slow it down

Wisconsin because when you speed, you lose.

In a hurry? Remember it's not always the fastest who wins. Ask yourself if it's worth the cost of a speeding ticket, plus increased insurance premiums or worse. On Wisconsin roads, speed-related crashes cause almost a third of all deaths so when you speed, you really lose. So remember to slow down and let's reduce fatalities on Wisconsin roadways.

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