



What is the problem? Teens obtaining a permit between the ages of 16 and 18 are not required to complete any formal driver education or training before obtaining a learners permit or driver license. In Colorado today, driver education and training requirements are completely dependent on the age at which a teen obtains a permit. Practically speaking, this has created some problems. For instance, a teen who obtains a permit between ages 15 and 15 ½ must complete a 30 hour class instruction to qualify for the permit, then complete 6 hours of professional in-car instruction before obtaining a license, regardless of age at the time of licensure. On the other hand, a teen who waits 6 months to obtain the permit is not required to complete comprehensive (30 hour) driver education and is not required to complete any formal in-car instruction. The teen who obtains the permit before 15 ½ is effectively penalized.

The chart below shows the requirements for minor permitting and licensing when the permit is obtained at given ages.

Age at time of permit	15 to 15 ½	15 ½ to 16	16 to 18
Driver Education Requirement to obtain a learners permit	Complete a 30 hour driver education program licensed and regulated by the Department of Revenue	Complete a 30 hour driver education program or Complete a 4 hour pre-licensing driver awareness class licensed and regulated by the Department of Revenue	No driver education necessary to obtain a permit
Driver Training Requirement to obtain a driver's license.	Complete 6 hours of professional in-car instruction through a driving school licensed and regulated by the Department of Revenue unless individual lives more than 30 miles from the nearest driver training school.	No professional in-car instruction is required.	No professional in-car instruction is required.
Parent Supervised Driving	Complete 50 hours of parent supervised driving Or Complete 62 hours of parent supervised driving if individual lives more than 30 miles from the nearest driver training school.	Complete 50 hours of parent supervised driving.	Complete 50 hours of parent supervised driving.
Permit Holding Period	1 year or until age 18	1 year or until age 18	1 year or until age 18

Why is this important? Colorado's law is confusing and unfair. Teens who obtain a permit at the earliest allowed age must undergo stringent and appropriate qualification measures. Teens who wait a mere 6 months are exempt from 26 hours of study and 6 hours of formal in-car instruction. The law must be revised to create cleaner, more consistent standards that are fair for all Colorado minors. Additionally, the 4 hour pre-licensing awareness classes should be required for all minors (one could argue all first time drivers regardless of age) as a pre-requisite for a license, not for the permit.

Additionally, GDL laws have reduced 16 year old collisions by 11% (according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Association FARS 2004) but 17 to 19 year olds are still a high risk group.

**4432 Austin Bluffs Parkway, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80918
1-800-942-2050 www.USDriverTraining.com**



Compared to 20 to 49 year olds, 17 -19 year olds are:

- 25% more likely to cause a crash due to driver error
- 43% more likely to crash due to excessive speed
- 15% more likely to cause a single vehicle crash

The late teen years (17 to 19 years old) are the forgotten years-typically not addressed by graduated driver licensing laws. Some states, like Virginia, already have provisions for older teens in their GDL laws, but most states have overlooked this crucial age group.

What is the solution to this problem? Teenagers between 15 and 18 should have mandatory driver education in addition to the current 50 hours of practice with parents. Teenagers who desire to obtain a driver license before age 17 should complete 6 hours of formal in-car instruction regardless of the age at which they obtain a permit. The 4 hour pre-licensing awareness program (such as Alive at 25 and other state approved 4 hour classes) should be completed by all teens in the last 6 months before obtaining a license. Re-classifying the 4 hour course as a pre-licensing program will provide a valuable reinforcement of driver education principles and practices. This program could also be expanded to adult first time drivers. Under the provisions of this law, the requirements for permitting and licensing would change to match the table below:

To obtain a permit between ages 15 and 18			
All Minors must complete a comprehensive (30 hour) driver education program licensed and regulated by the Department of Revenue			
Permit Holding Period	1 year or until age 18		
Age at time of license	16 to 17	17 to 18	18 +
Driver Training Requirement	Complete 6 hours of professional in-car instruction through a driving school licensed and regulated by the Department of Revenue unless individual lives more than 30 miles from the nearest driver training school.	No professional in-car instruction required	None
Driver Awareness Class	Complete a 4 hour pre-licensing driver awareness class no more than 6 months before obtaining the license.	Complete a 4 hour pre-licensing driver awareness class no more than 6 months before obtaining the license.	<i>Potential expansion: complete a 4 hour pre-licensing driver awareness class no more than 6 months before obtaining the license.</i>
Parent Supervised Driving	Complete 50 hours of parent supervised driving Or Complete 62 hours of parent supervised driving if individual lives more than 30 miles from the nearest driver training school.	Complete 50 hours of parent supervised driving.	None