

How to Prepare for Your Driver Education Program Compliance Review

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I. Introduction

This document provides an overview of the Driver Education Program compliance review process. This guidance document describes your responsibilities as a Driver Education Provider and recommends actions that you may take prior to your compliance review to minimize both disruption and review time.

Idaho State Department of Education (hereafter called SDE) requires each driver education provider to meet quality standards for curriculum, motor vehicles and materials, instructor qualifications, recordkeeping, and reimbursement.

The provider is responsible for meeting all requirements of the applicable Idaho Public Driver Education Program Operating Procedures. Please see the Resources section at the end of this document for additional references that will help you prepare for your compliance audit.

II. Scope of the Driver Education Program Compliance Review

During each review, SDE will assess the provider's compliance with Idaho Administrative Rule. During the course of the review, the following may be evaluated:

- Curriculum
- Policies
- Motor vehicle crash records
- Instructor records
- Student records
- Reimbursement records
- Classroom course instruction
- Behind-the-wheel course instruction
- Motor vehicles used for Driver Education

III. Public Providers That Outsource Program

A public school/educational facility that qualifies for reimbursement may contract with an approved driving school to provide classroom instruction and/or behind-the-wheel instruction.

In cases of outsourcing, the public school/educational facility remains responsible for the curriculum and must retain all required records (curriculum guide, policies, student records, instructor records, etc.) To be eligible for reimbursement, the students' DE instruction fees must be paid directly to the public school that is requesting reimbursement. (The public school pays the drive school per their contract).

It is advised that the public school monitor the curriculum and instructors to assure quality and

compliance with their program.

IV. Prior Notification

Normally, SDE will provide advance notice of at least thirty days prior to a review. While scheduling, we will attempt to both minimize inconvenience to provider and to use state resources efficiently.

If follow-up visits are performed, prior notification may not be provided.

V. Compliance Review Duration

For a smaller program, the average on-site review time is half a day. Compliance review time will increase with the size of the operation, number of instructors and number of sites.

To minimize interference to your program, SDE suggests that you organize and consolidate all records we will need, and have them readily available on the day of your review.

VI. Compliance Review Process

SDE will first meet with the provider's Driver Education Coordinator, or other representative designated by the provider. At that time, the Coordinator should request any special sequencing of the records review, classroom/behind-the-wheel observation, and vehicle inspection.

At the close of the review, SDE will again meet with the provider's representative(s) for an exit interview and to provide an Observation Summary Report.

Your help by pre-planning, and your assistance coordinating the various portions of the compliance review, will help assure that the review is performed with minimal disruption. If you foresee issues, please contact SDE.

Staff may conduct their usual duties during the compliance review, but should be available for questions and assistance. It may be to your benefit to hire a substitute during the visit so you may dedicate full attention to the review, however this is not required.

VII. Compliance Review Details

Following is a description of program elements that may be evaluated during the review. **Be prepared to demonstrate compliance. Provide documentation.**

A. Curriculum- Idaho Teen Driver Education and Training Program Content Standards and Benchmarks.

- **Driver Education Program Coordinator.** Be sure to advise SDE when contact information for your program coordinator changes.

• **Curriculum Guide.** Prior to implementing your program, the full curriculum must be submitted to SDE for approval. Thereafter, the curriculum must be reviewed and updated every three years. The Curriculum guide must include the following:

- Philosophy
- Goals and objectives
- Scope & sequence
- Major instructional activities
- Suggested teaching strategies
- Lists of available materials and resources
- Procedures for student and program evaluation
- Written lesson plan for each classroom session
- Written lesson plan for each behind-the-wheel session
- A flow chart showing integration between classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction
- Written drive routes that support each behind-the-wheel lesson plan with specific driving behaviors to be practiced, directions and strategies to improve student performance and habit development. Assure that your instructors are using your approved routes!

• **Lesson Plan.** Both classroom and behind-the-wheel lesson plans must be present, and used by the instructors. Elements listed in Idaho teen driver education and training program content standards and benchmarks must be present.

Idaho Program Timelines

| | Minimum Required | Do Not Exceed |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Classroom seat time | 30 hrs | 10 hrs./week 3.2 hrs ./day |
| BTW | 6 hrs | 90 minutes/day |
| Observation | 6 hrs | 3 hrs/day |
| Program Length | 35 days | 180 days |
| At Home Practice | | No limit |

Summer Only:

| | Minimum Required | Do Not Exceed |
|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Classroom seat time (may be completed over 3-week period) | 30 hrs | 10 hrs/week 3.2 hrs/day |
| BTW | 6 hrs | 90 minutes/day |
| Observation | 6 hrs | 3 hrs/day |

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------|----------|
| Program Length | 35 days | 180 days |
| At Home Practice | | No limit |

- **Classroom and Behind-the Wheel Concurrency.** Concepts must be taught in the classroom before they are practiced or observed behind the wheel. At least 4, but no more than 10 hours classroom instruction must be completed before in-car lessons begin. Your flowchart should reflect this and concurrency should be apparent upon review of student records.

- **Parent Involvement.**

- A parent meeting is required. Be sure to maintain documentation of follow-up you provide for parents who do not attend.
- At least five hours supervised home practice must be performed by a student before completion of the course.

You cannot issue a certificate before you have this documentation, which should be maintained with student record files. A copy of each student’s driving log is an easy way to accomplish this.

- **Assessment.** Skill assessment of each student driver is required. Sample assessment forms are provided by SDE. Assure the assessment meets all requirements of Idaho teen driver education and training program content standards and benchmarks, and the assessment is meaningful. Simply checking off topics is not the same as assessing a student’s performance. Maintain all drive assessments with your student record files.

- **Other Required Elements.** See Idaho teen driver education and training program content standards and benchmarks for a list of classroom and behind-the-wheel required topics.

B. Written Policies

The following policies must be in writing and adopted. Most programs simply incorporate the policies into their parent letter or registration form. It’s in your best interest to make policies very clear to parents.

- Enrollment criteria
- Student fees and refunds
- Course failures and repeats
- Minimum and maximum course duration

C. Crash Records

- All motor vehicle crashes that involve a driver education motor vehicle must be reported to local Police, Sheriff or State agency and a report filed with a case number. All motor vehicle crashes must be reported to SDE within 3 days of the crash. The official IMPACT report must

be submitted to SDE when it becomes available.

- A crash resulting in serious injury or death must be reported as soon as possible to SDE.
- Assure that the glove box of each of your DE vehicles has an Idaho Driver Education Vehicle Crash Form.

D. Instruction Materials and Equipment

DE Motor vehicles must meet the following requirements:

- Instructor brake
- Regular maintenance
- Safety and equipment standards of Idaho Vehicle Code
- Seat belts for driver and all passengers
- Functional heater and defroster
- Emergency equipment: fire extinguisher, first aid kit, 3 flares
- Sign reading: "Student Driver".
- Registration
- Proof of Insurance (current and in the vehicle)
- Instructor rear view mirror
- Headlights used at all times during instruction

E. Driving Simulators

- No behind-the-wheel hours may be substituted by a driving simulator.
- Driving Simulation may be used to supplement the program.
- Instructor must have appropriate documented training in student records.

E. Instructor Qualifications

- For the purpose of compliance review, have available all records of instructors who have worked since the last review (whether or not they are still employed).
- An instructor cannot teach until they have provided their employer a copy of a valid Approved Instructor certificate. Maintain the copies with instructor qualification files.
- It is strongly recommended to maintain records for three years after separation.

F. Student Records

The following must be documented and retained for each student, whether or not they complete the course.

- Dates of the course
- Final grade
- Verification student had permit on first day of class (photocopy permit or record permit issue date)
- Student progress (grades, skill assessments)
- Time involvement, showing 30 hours classroom, 6 hours BTW and 6 hours practice driving

observation.

- Evaluation results (quiz and test grades, skill assessments)
- Attendance for both classroom and behind the wheel. Include date and amount of time attended each session. Include the date and amount of time of makeup sessions.

G. Records Retention

- 3 years for instructor records
- 5 years for all other records

H. Reimbursement

- All public driver education programs, including those contracting with a private driving school, must submit an *Annual Program Plan* to the Idaho State Department of Education for approval no less than thirty (30) days prior to the start of the first class of the fiscal year. (July 1-June30).
- All public driver education programs, including those contracting with private driving schools, must report all income generated by student fees and expenses to the Idaho State Department of Education on the *Reimbursement Form*.
- The Annual Program Plan must be approved in writing from SDE prior to conducting driver education classes.
- Individual Instructors must be approved in writing from SDE and hold a current Idaho DE instructor license prior to instructing DE classes
- The request is due at minimum once per year.
- Documentation of program costs must be made available during compliance review and otherwise upon request. **Be prepared to show where the figures on your reimbursement request came from.**
- Reimbursement is allowed only once per pupil. If a student was claimed previously, even by a different provider, you will not be eligible for reimbursement for that student.
- Private providers claiming reimbursement must observe all policies and procedures set forth in annual contractual agreement and IDAPA Rule.
- The purpose of reimbursement is to reduce cost to the parents, thereby making driver education more accessible to teens. If you are claiming less than \$125 per student state reimbursement, please take a look at your numbers. Consider reducing your parent cost and/or making needed program improvements, in order to request the full \$125 from the state. Contact the State Driver Education Coordinator for program help. We want you to receive the full benefit we can offer.

I. Classroom/Behind-the-Wheel Observation

- SDE may observe a portion of classroom or a behind-the-wheel lesson.
Please provide a copy of the lesson plan at the time of the classroom observation. For a behind-the-wheel lesson, provide the lesson plan and a copy of the drive route.
- SDE will observe only a portion of the lesson(s).

Please advise the behind the wheel instructor to adjust the observed drive route the day of the review so the instructor will be dismissed at the starting location after 15-20 minutes (or arrange for transportation to return). There are other options. Let us know if you have questions.

J. Vehicle Inspection

- Motor vehicles used for driver education instruction will be inspected. If vehicles are kept off-site, please make arrangements to have them available at the compliance review site. Contact SDE if circumstances make this difficult. Review Operating Procedures for vehicle requirements.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the provider to deliver to SDE any required records or materials that were not available at the time of compliance review.

VIII. Exit Interview/Compliance Reports

During the exit interview the Idaho State Department of Education will review the results of the inspection with the School Driver Education Program Coordinator, and provide an Observation Summary Report.

If deficiencies are noted during the compliance review, correct them as soon as possible to bring your program into compliance. **A corrective action plan shall be submitted to SDE within 30 calendar days of the compliance review date.**

• **Observation Summary Report.** The Observation Summary Report is a courtesy report provided at the time of the exit interview. It serves as a reminder of observations that were discussed. The Observation Summary Report must be signed by the provider's DE Coordinator or other representative.

Following compliance review, the provider has a 5-day grace period for taking corrective action and reporting that action to SDE. If a deficiency is corrected and sufficient documentation is received by SDE within 5 days of the compliance review, the deficiency will not be noted on the Compliance Report. Note that repeated violations (those noted at the previous inspection) may remain on the report.

"Five days" refers to five business days (M-F, excluding major holidays)

• **Compliance Report.** After SDE has evaluated all data collected, the Compliance Report will be prepared and sent to the program coordinator and appropriate supervisor.

The Compliance Report provides a formal report of deficiencies and details any necessary corrective action. Because the Compliance Report is prepared after full evaluation of the data, and after the program has documented any corrective action, it is possible that the Compliance Report will differ

from the Observation Summary Report that was provided at the time of compliance review.

IX. How to Respond to Deficiencies Noted on the Compliance Report

If no deficiencies are noted on the Compliance Report, no corrective action is required. However, please direct attention to any recommendations or items of concern as they represent best practice.

Your written response to noted Observations is due within **30 calendar days of your compliance review date**. Please include the following in your response:

- A detailed letter demonstrating that corrective action is complete. If applicable, include photocopies of records and/or receipts. Appropriate correction may mean making changes to your program to assure the deficiency does not happen again. If so, describe the changes you have made.
- Signature of a responsible person
- Description of corrective action for each Observation noted on the report. (See the ACTION item(s) on the report for guidance).
- For items that cannot be corrected within 30 calendar days due to cost or time constraints, submit a detailed plan including timelines for completion.

Mail, email, or fax your response to:

Audra Urie
Idaho State Department of Education, Driver Education Coordinator
Idaho Traffic Safety Commissioner
State Department of Education
650 W. State St., P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID. 83720-0027
aurie@sde.idaho.gov
208-332-6984
Fax: 208-334-2228

When satisfactory response has been received, SDE will respond with a letter closing the compliance review.

Be aware that SDE may perform follow-up visits without prior notification.

X. Resources

- Idaho State Department of Education, Driver Education Website

<http://sde.idaho.gov/student-engagement/driver-ed/index.html>