

Preparing to Drive



Becoming a Driver

You are beginning one of the most exciting yet dangerous milestones of your life: learning how to drive and getting your driver's license! Nothing is more freeing, fun, and useful, or as deadly to teens as driving. Being aware of the risks and making wise choices will keep you and your passengers safe.

The entire Highway Transportation System relies on all three of its elements to work together: the people, vehicles, and roadways. You will be entering the system and your abilities, both physical and mental, will affect thousands of others over time. Think about how different people are as drivers: attentive, inattentive, drunk, stressed, tired, excited, angry, etc. All these types of drivers – and more – are out there on the roads right now! And think about how different all the vehicles are: motorcycles, trucks, small under-powered cars, fast sports cars, semi-trucks, trucks pulling boats and RVs, etc. Then think about how different the roadways are: dirt, gravel, paved, smooth, potholes, bumpy, curvy, wet, icy, steep, etc. Throw in different weather and lighting conditions and the situation gets even more complex.

“Responsibility”. The word might make you cringe but it's something that is earned over time and usually opens up additional rewards and opportunities if taken seriously. Driving may or may not be your first big responsibility but the driving task does require smart decision-making and is a privilege not a right in Idaho. That means it can be taken from you if certain rules are not followed. You must always have your driver's license with you when driving. You must not misuse or mutilate your license. You must not

drink or use drugs and drive. You must not allow an unlicensed driver to drive your vehicle. You must also take care of the vehicle you are driving - keeping it in a working and safe condition. Keep the windshield clean and free of distracting stickers and decals. Don't hang objects from the rearview mirror. Make sure lights, blinkers, and your speedometer are working correctly. Check your tires for damage, tread depth, and air pressure regularly. Protect the engine by keeping oil and coolant at appropriate levels.

The Thrill of the Open Road

Most new drivers can't wait to get their driver's license and hit the open road. And most parents can't wait to be free from having to haul their teenager around town in the station wagon. Oftentimes the family just wants to speed up the process. But wait. Don't be so anxious.

Take the time in driver education to learn everything you can. Don't have the attitude that you already know everything. Listen to your instructors and other drivers – even teens – for their advice and experiences.

Be as wide awake and alert as possible when you are behind the wheel. If you need to wear glasses or contacts to see better, wear them!

When learning to drive you might have tunnel vision – the ability to only see what's directly in front of you. Relax. Wiggle your fingers. Drop your elbows. Breathe. Slow down. Communicate with your driving instructor on how you are feeling. It might help to talk out loud while driving – something called “commentary driving” – to help you process what you are seeing, thinking, and planning to do. Remember that you are in a vehicle with a trained instructor who knows how to use the steering wheel and dual brake if necessary. Ask a lot of questions. Don't take criticism personally. Welcome to driver education!

Graduated Driver Licensing Program (GDL)

Because good driving takes time and practice (experience), most states, including Idaho, have a GDL program. This program exposes teen drivers to new conditions and situations gradually.

Idaho requires teens to drive for 6 hours during driver education and another 50 hours during the 6-month supervised instruction period. 10 of those hours must be at night. After completing the six months of supervised driving, the new driver must take both a written and driving test before being given a driver's license. Then, during the first 6 months of having a driver's license there can be only one non-relative in the vehicle while the new driver is behind the wheel.

If under the age of 16 the new driver cannot drive at night unless a licensed driver age 21 or older is in the vehicle.

2010 Idaho Crash Statistics

- 22,555 crashes
- 185 fatal crashes
- 209 fatalities
- 61% of crashes occurred in the city
- 77% of fatalities occurred in the country
- 46% of fatalities resulted from impaired driving
- 78% of Idaho drivers wore a seatbelt
- Only 47% of those killed in a crash were wearing a seatbelt
- Aggressive driving was a factor in 52% of all crashes
- Distracted driving was a factor in 26% of all crashes and caused 60 fatalities
- While every crash and fatality is one too many, fatalities have decreased 5.7% since 2006.

“95% OF AMERICANS BELIEVE TEXTING AND DRIVING IS DANGEROUS BUT 35% DO IT.” AAA IDAHO

2010 Idaho TEEN Crash Stats

- Idaho teens are involved in nearly 25% of all Idaho crashes
- Idaho teens are nearly 3x as likely to be in a crash than all other drivers
- Idaho teen crashes cost Idaho \$466 million dollars in 2010 alone
- Idaho teens were involved in 27 fatal crashes
- 1 in 5 Idaho teens involved in a fatal crash were impaired
- Idaho teens were involved in 5,177 crashes
- Idaho teens were involved in 274 fatal and serious injury crashes
- 14 Idaho teen drivers died in a car crash
- 43 Idahoans died in crashes with teen drivers.

“TEEN DRIVING DEATHS IN THE U.S. ARE AN EPIDEMIC.”

JEFFREY RUNGE, M.D., NHTSAA

Idaho Crash Clock 2010



- A traffic crash occurred every 23 minutes
- A person was injured in a traffic crash every 45 minutes
- A motorcyclist was injured every 18 hours
- A bicyclist was injured every 27 hours
- A pedestrian was injured every 44 hours
- A person was killed in a traffic crash every 42 hours
- A person was killed in an aggressive driving crash every 4.2 days
- An unbelted passenger was killed every 5.1 days
- A person was killed in an impaired driving crash every 3.8 days

Idaho Public Driver Education

REVIEW QUESTIONS HOMEWORK PACKET 1

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS: Answer the following questions based on what you learned from the homework packet.

1. Which of the following is part of the highway transportation system?
 - a. Passengers
 - b. Roadways
 - c. Vehicles
 - d. All of the above

2. Describe how the nearly unlimited variety in drivers makes the driving task more challenging.

3. List some of the responsibilities that come with having a driver's license.

4. List some of the responsibilities that come with operating a motor vehicle.

5. What is the purpose of the GDL program?

6. After driver education you must practice with a licensed adult (21 or older) for:
 - a. Four (4) months
 - b. Six (6) months
 - c. Forty (40) hours
 - d. None of the above

7. How many crashes occurred in Idaho in 2010?
 - a. 222,555
 - b. 14,038
 - c. 185

Idaho Public Driver Education

- d. 22,555
8. How many people died on Idaho roads in 2010?
- a. 199
 - b. 209
 - c. 2009
 - d. 14
9. Explain the difference between where non-fatal crashes occur in Idaho and where fatal crashes occur in Idaho and why that might be.
10. Do more Idaho traffic fatalities happen to those with a seatbelt on or off?
11. Which Idaho teen crash statistic caught your attention most? Why?
12. Which of the “Idaho Crash Clock” statistics occur most often?
13. Which of the following must you pass in order to successfully complete this course?
- a. Attitude
 - b. Driving skill
 - c. Classroom knowledge
 - d. All of the above
14. How can you adjust your outside door mirrors to minimize blind spots?
15. The majority of Idaho crashes are at least partially caused by:
- a. Aggressive driving
 - b. Drugs
 - c. Older vehicles
 - d. Texting and driving