

Connecticut's Graduated-Driver-Licensing Law

What is the Connecticut law for teen drivers and when did it go into effect?

In May 2008, the Teen Safe Driving Task Force was established, in response to the higher incidence of deadly motor vehicle crashes involving teen drivers in Connecticut. As a result, new teen driver restrictions went into effect in August of 2008. These laws establish required tests, training, passenger restrictions, cell phone/electronic device restrictions and curfews for teen drivers.

Who does this effect?

The law affects any learner-permit holder and licensed driver, 16 or 17 years old up to their 18th birthday.

What are the restrictions?

All 16- and 17-year-old **learner-permit holders** are held to the following restrictions:

- they may not have any additional passengers other than a parent/legal guardian or a certified trainer;
- they may not use a handheld/hands-free cell phone or mobile electronic device while driving;
- all passenger vehicles must use permanently installed seat belts;
- a parent or guardian must attend a two-hour parent training course prior to the teen's road test for their driver's license.

All **drivers license holders** age 16 or 17 are held to the following restrictions:

- during the first six months, no passengers are permitted other than a parent/legal guardian who holds a valid driver's license, a licensed driving instructor, or a person providing instruction who is at least 20-years-old, and who has held a license without any suspension for at least two consecutive years;
- during the second and sixth months (through the seventh), they may only have one passenger noted as a family member (brother, sister, or parent);

• they may not drive between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. unless their parent/legal guardian or a certified trainer is in the vehicle;

• they may not have any passengers who are permanently disabled and do not use seat belts; and

- they may not use a handheld/hands-free cell phone or mobile electronic device while driving.

Who is considered a qualified trainer?

A person 20 years of age or older who has held a valid license for at least four years and has received no suspensions within the last four years could be a qualified trainer.

Qualified trainers may include:

- the spouse of the married minor;
- a parent, grandparent, foster parent, legal guardian; or

- if none of the above, a person who has given training, a stepparent, foster parent, uncle or aunt by blood or marriage, may train, if qualified.

What are the curfew exemptions?

The curfew restrictions do not apply to the members of a volunteer fire company or ambulance service who are responding to an emergency or an assigned driver in the Safe Ride Program. The curfew restrictions do not apply to those traveling for employment, school, religious activities or medical necessity. A letter of verification is *not* necessary.

What are the fines associated with failure to comply?

The 16- or 17-year-old driver and each passenger cited for failure to wear a seat belt can be fined \$75.

A 16- or 17-year-old driver who drives under the influence of alcohol with a blood alcohol content equal to or more than 0.02, will have their license suspended for at least one year; and if they refuse to submit to a test, the suspension will be 18 months. According to Connecticut Statute Section 14-111(e), anyone under age 21 convicted of underage alcohol possession, **even if they were not driving**, will have their driver's license or their nonresident driving privileges suspended for 30 days.

Any 16- or 17-year-old driver who does not adhere to any of the passenger, curfew and cell-phone restrictions and anyone under the age of 24 with two or more moving and/or suspension violations is required to complete a DMV-certified driver re-training program.



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