

- State Traffic Safety Laws -

AAA Key Recommendations

January 2014

TRAFFIC SAFETY LAWS								
State	GRADUATED DRIVERS LICENSING ¹			OCCUPANT PROTECTION			DISTRACTED DRIVING	
	Practice Driving Hours	Night Restrictions	Passenger Restrictions	Booster Seat Law ²	Standard Seat Belt Law	All-Rider Motorcycle Helmet Law ⁵	Teen Driver Complete Wireless Ban	Text Messaging Ban
Alabama	⊗	⊗	●	⊗	●	●	⊗ ⁶	●
Alaska	⊗	⊗	●	●	●	⊗	○	●
Arizona	⊗	⊗ ³	⊗ ³	●	⊗ ³	⊗	○	○
Arkansas	○	⊗	●	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗ ³	○
California	●	⊗ ³	⊗ ³	●	●	●	⊗ ³	● ⁴
Colorado	●	⊗ ³	⊗ ³	●	⊗ ³	⊗	●	● ⁴
Connecticut	⊗	⊗	●	⊗	●	⊗	●	● ⁴
Delaware	●	●	●	●	●	⊗	●	● ⁴
D.C.	●	⊗	●	●	●	●	●	● ⁴
Florida	●	⊗	○ ³	○	●	⊗	○	⊗ ³
Georgia	⊗	⊗ ³	⊗ ³	●	●	●	●	● ⁴
Hawaii	●	⊗	⊗	●	●	⊗	●	● ⁴
Idaho	●	●	⊗	⊗	⊗ ³	⊗	○	●
Illinois	●	⊗	●	●	●	○	●	●
Indiana	●	●	●	●	●	⊗	●	●
Iowa	⊗	⊗	⊗ ⁶	⊗	●	○	●	⊗ ³
Kansas	●	●	⊗	●	●	⊗	●	●
Kentucky	●	⊗	⊗ ³	⊗	●	⊗	●	●
Louisiana	●	⊗	⊗	⊗	●	⊗	●	●
Maine	●	⊗	●	●	●	⊗	●	●
Maryland	●	⊗	⊗	●	●	●	⊗ ³	●
Massachusetts	⊗	⊗	⊗	●	⊗ ³	●	●	●
Michigan	●	●	●	●	●	⊗	⊗ ⁶	●
Minnesota	⊗	⊗	●	●	●	⊗	●	●
Mississippi	○	⊗	○	⊗	●	⊗	⊗	○
Missouri	⊗	⊗	⊗	●	⊗ ³	●	⊗	○
Montana	●	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗ ³	⊗	○	○
Nebraska	⊗	⊗ ³	⊗ ³	⊗	⊗ ³	●	⊗ ³	⊗ ³
Nevada	●	⊗ ³	⊗ ³	⊗	⊗ ³	●	○	● ⁴
New Hampshire	⊗ ¹	⊗	●	⊗	○	○	○	●
New Jersey	○	⊗	●	●	●	●	●	● ⁴
New Mexico	●	⊗	●	⊗	●	⊗	●	○
New York	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	● ⁴
North Carolina	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
North Dakota	●	●	○	⊗	⊗ ³	●	●	●
Ohio	●	⊗ ³	⊗ ³	⊗ ³	⊗ ³	⊗	⊗ ⁶	⊗ ³
Oklahoma	●	●	●	⊗	●	⊗	⊗ ⁶	○
Oregon	●	⊗	●	●	●	●	●	● ⁴
Pennsylvania	●	⊗	⊗	●	⊗ ³	⊗	○	●
Rhode Island	⊗	⊗	●	●	●	⊗	○	○
South Carolina	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	●	⊗	○	○
South Dakota	○	●	○	○	⊗ ³	⊗	⊗	○
Tennessee	●	⊗	⊗	●	●	●	●	●
Texas	⊗	⊗ ³	⊗ ³	●	●	⊗	●	○
Utah	⊗	⊗	⊗ ³	●	⊗ ³	⊗	●	●
Vermont	⊗	○	●	●	⊗ ³	●	●	●
Virginia	⊗	⊗ ³	⊗ ³	●	⊗ ³	●	⊗ ³	●
Washington	●	⊗ ³	⊗ ³	●	●	●	●	● ⁴
West Virginia	⊗	●	●	●	●	●	●	● ⁴
Wisconsin	⊗	⊗	●	●	●	⊗	○	●
Wyoming	● ¹	⊗	⊗	●	⊗ ³	⊗	○	●
TOTAL (incl. D.C.) <small>(states w/laws / states meeting recommendations)</small>	47 / 29	50 / 12	47 / 22	49 / 32	50 / 34	48 / 20	40 / 28	42 / 38

1 All states have some form of 3-stage GDL; New Hampshire does not set a minimum holding period for learner's permits; Wyoming's learner's permit holding period is only 10 days long

2 All states have laws requiring child restraints for children up to age 4 and/or 40 lbs. that are standard enforcement

3 Secondary enforcement

4 State also has handheld cell phone ban for all drivers

5 In states without all rider helmet law, helmets may be required based on age, novice licensure, or insurance coverage.

6 Teen wireless ban permits hands-free use.

LAWS MUST BE STANDARD ENFORCEMENT TO MEET AAA RECOMMENDATIONS

LEGEND	
●	Meets AAA recommendation
⊗	Has law but does not meet AAA recommendation
○	No law

Since its founding over a century ago, AAA has actively represented the interests of motorists and other travelers by campaigning for safer roads and vehicles, improved traffic safety laws, and better driver education and awareness programs.

GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSING

Automobile crashes are a leading cause of death for teens. In 2010, drivers ages 15-20 accounted for over six percent of licensed drivers, but represented over 10 percent of drivers involved in fatal crashes. These teen driver crashes pose a safety risk to all road users – teen drivers and their passengers, people in other vehicles, pedestrians, and others.



Research shows that Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) and parent involvement can play key roles in reducing teen crashes. Safety experts credit GDL for much of the 57 percent decline in traffic fatalities for 16- and 17-year-old drivers between 1995 and 2010. In 1997, AAA set an ambitious goal of establishing GDL systems in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to ensure teens advance through a learner's permit phase and a restricted license phase before earning full licensure. While all states now have some form of 3-stage GDL, most state's systems need to be strengthened to include important measures shown by research to save teen lives.



teendriving.aaa.com

Practice Driving Hours	AAA recommends novice drivers have at least 50 hours of certified practice, with 10 hours at night
Night Restrictions	AAA recommends no driving after 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. for at least first 6 months of licensure
Passenger Restrictions	AAA recommends no more than 1 non-family passenger under age 20 for at least first 6 months of licensure

OCCUPANT PROTECTION

Restraint use is a major factor in motor vehicle crashes and many deaths and injuries can be prevented if proper restraint and safety equipment is used. AAA launched its *Seated, Safe and Secure* campaign in 2002 to raise awareness of child passenger safety and strengthen occupant protection laws for everyone under age 18. Since that time, 48 states have strengthened these laws by including requirements for booster seat aged children.

The majority of the passenger vehicle occupants killed in traffic crashes in 2010, when restraint status was known, were unrestrained. Research has shown that when lap/shoulder belts are used, the risk of injury to front-seat occupants is reduced by 45 percent. Further, in states with standard enforcement seat belt laws, belt usage increases 10 – 13 percent more than in states with secondary enforcement.



Motor vehicle crashes remain a leading cause of death for children. Studies show that children ages 4 to 8 who ride in booster seats placed in rear vehicle seats are 45 percent less likely to be injured in a crash compared with those of like ages riding only in seat belts. Research also shows that booster seat laws lead to increased restraint use.

Motorcycle helmet laws strongly encourage helmet use. An analysis of fatal crash data from 2008 to 2010 showed that 12 percent of motorcyclists killed in states with universal helmet laws were not wearing helmets, compared to 64 percent of riders killed in states with partial helmet laws and 79 percent of riders killed in states without helmet laws.

aaa.com/carseat

Booster Seat Laws	AAA recommends requiring booster seats for children at least up to age 8
Seat Belt Laws	AAA recommends a standard seat belt enforcement law
Motorcycle Helmet Laws	AAA recommends motorcycle helmets for all riders

DISTRACTED DRIVING

In 1984, AAA was among the first organizations to draw attention to the potentially distracting power of cell phones and has since worked to address the issue through advocacy, public outreach, and research.

Accurately estimating the extent of the problem remains a challenge. Research shows that taking your eyes of the road for two seconds doubles crash risk. According to NHTSA, nine percent of fatal crashes and 18 percent of injury crashes in 2010 were reported as distraction-affected.

In 2009, AAA launched a national campaign calling on all states to adopt bans on text messaging while driving. AAA has called on states to incorporate wireless device bans for teens into their graduated driver licensing systems. AAA also supports comprehensive distracted driving laws (in place in four states and D.C.), which enhance penalties for drivers who cause crashes or otherwise commit traffic violations as a result of engaging in distracting behavior.



aaa.com/distraction

Teen Wireless Bans	AAA recommends complete wireless device bans for all drivers under age 18
Texting Bans	AAA recommends texting while driving bans for all drivers