

TEEN DRIVER STUDY COMMISSION

RECOMMENDATION REPORT UPDATE • JULY 2010

14 ESSENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDATION UPDATE
Develop an event-based GDL monitoring program that includes sanctions (training, suspension and postponement) that effectively deter GDL and non-serious and serious motor vehicle violations.	MVC will address these recommendations as it builds its new computer system, MATRX. Ultimately, a legislative change will be required to implement these recommendations, which would most likely occur after the new computer system is in place.
Implement the programming changes necessary to ensure that MVC's current and pending computer system can accommodate all components of the GDL law.	
Until event-based monitoring and enhanced sanctions are implemented, ban plea agreements for traffic offenses committed by GDL holders.	New Jersey Attorney General Anne Milgram issued a directive banning municipal prosecutors from offering plea agreements to GDL holders seeking to eliminate motor vehicle penalty points from their driving record. GDL holders who accumulate three or more points must attend a 4-hour Probationary Driver Program and, following successful completion, are monitored for 12 months. Any accumulation of points during that 12 month period will result in a 90-day license suspension. The ban became effective on September 17, 2008.
Develop a GDL identifier that must be affixed to a vehicle when driven by a permit or provisional license holder.	Kyleigh's Law, named in honor of Kyleigh D'Alessio, was signed by Governor Jon Corzine on April 15, 2009, making New Jersey the first state in the nation to require the use of an identifier on vehicles driven by permit and provisional license holders. The law became effective on May 1, 2010.
Require a parent/guardian to attend a teen driver orientation program with his or her teen prior to applying for a permit.	Legislation must be re-introduced to require a teen to attend an orientation with a parent or guardian as a prerequisite for obtaining a permit; require permit holders to log a minimum number of supervised practice hours; ensure that a 6-hour, behind-the-wheel training program involves one-on-one, private instruction; and extend the permit from a minimum of six to 12 months. Many high schools are providing (some are mandating) an orientation program tied to the start of driver education (typically for sophomores) or parking privilege (juniors and seniors). The Division of Highway Traffic Safety has also developed a parent/teen orientation which will be piloted by NJ State Police in the Fall of 2010.
Require teens to complete a minimum number of hours of certified practice driving during the permit phase.	
Extend the permit phase from a minimum of six to 12 months for all new drivers under 21 years of age.	
Amend the GDL law and the corresponding regulations to clearly define six hours of behind-the-wheel driver training.	
Limit the number of passengers in the provisional phase to one regardless of the passenger's relationship to the driver.	On April 15, 2009, Governor Jon Corzine signed legislation implementing this recommendation, which will limit a GDL holder under 21 years of age to one passenger regardless of family affiliation, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. This law became effective on May 1, 2010.
Sanction, in addition to the teen driver, all passengers 16 to 20 years of age on a permit, provisional or basic license, who violate the GDL passenger and safety belt restrictions.	Legislation must be re-introduced to cite not only the permit or provisional license holder for committing a passenger, nighttime driving or seat belt violation under the GDL law, but all teens holding a permit or provisional license as well.



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Lower the nighttime driving hours restriction from 12 a.m. to 11 p.m. for provisional license holders.	On April 15, 2009, Governor Jon Corzine signed into law legislation which prohibits provisional license holders under 21 years of age from driving between 11:01 p.m. and 5 a.m. A waiver is available for employment and religious activities and/or emergency situations. The law also renames the provisional license “probationary.” This law became effective on May 1, 2010.
Close the loophole in the seat belt law to ensure all back seat passengers 18 years of age and older buckle up.	On January 18, 2010, Governor Jon Corzine signed into law legislation requiring all occupants to buckle up, regardless of their seating position in a vehicle. A secondary offense, the new law allows police to issue summonses to unbuckled back seat occupants, 18 years of age and older, when the vehicle they are riding in is stopped for another violation. The law is effective immediately.
Appropriate funding for driver education through the GDL-mandated Driver Education Fund.	This recommendation is currently under review.
Develop and deliver to public and private schools a standardized traffic safety/driver education curriculum and incorporate it into New Jersey’s Core Curriculum Content Standards for students in grades K-12.	The Division of Highway Traffic Safety is partnering with Kean and Rowan Universities to develop and pilot test traffic safety and driver education materials that compliment the state’s Core Curriculum Content Standards for grades K-12. Lesson plans and modules will be posted on www.njdrivereducation.com in early 2011.

The following areas were also addressed in the Commission Report and a brief update on their status is provided below.

Web-based Driver Education Resources

Two new web sites provide information to teens and parents. Developed and maintained by the Brain Injury Association of New Jersey, with funding from the Division of Highway Traffic Safety, the teen site, www.ugotbrains.com, talks directly to teens about a variety of issues relevant to young people, including teen driving. A second site, www.njteendriving.com, provides information to parents on a variety of topics related to teen driving. In addition, a third web site, www.njdrivereducation.com provides information and resources for driver education professionals.

Social Marketing

In 2008, the Division of Highway Traffic Safety launched a public awareness and education campaign entitled “Don’t Drive Stupid.” Adapted from materials developed and tested with teens in Utah, the program provides promotional banners and other items for use in and around high school campuses. To reinforce the effort on a statewide basis, high schools throughout New Jersey received banners and posters to display at sporting events, prom and graduation celebrations, and other school-based functions. Local law enforcement, as well as the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association, (NJSIAA) and New Jersey Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (NJAPERD) also support and promote the program.

Driving School Regulations

The regulations governing certified driving schools and instructors were re-adopted on November 5, 2009. MVC incorporated the following recommendations from the Commission into the proposed regulations: enhancing training requirements for driver education instructors, requiring driving schools to obtain a parent or guardian’s signature (for teens under 18) on service agreements, and limiting the number of students in the vehicle to ensure one-on-one, private instruction.



Statewide Driver Education Forum

A third forum was held in May 2009, bringing together more than 300 driver education teachers, school resource officers, State and local law enforcement agencies, and traffic safety officials. Sponsored by Rutgers University, the one-day event updated participants on the work of the Teen Driver Study Commission, changes to the Graduated Driver License (GDL) Law, driver education core curriculum content standards, and new web resources.

Police Roll-call Video

A GDL training video has been distributed to local law enforcement agencies for use during roll call. The video includes information on the current GDL law, as well as teen driving statistics that will help to reinforce the importance of enforcing the law for the safety of teens and everyone on the road.

GDL Training for Prosecutors

The Division of Highway Traffic Safety is working with County and Municipal Prosecutors Associations to keep them abreast of changes to the GDL law.

Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials

In September 2009, Attorney General Anne Milgram and Department of Education Commissioner Lucille Davy distributed a model paragraph that may be added to the current *Uniform State Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials*. The paragraph, which addresses sharing student traffic offense information, states: “The Chief of Police or Station Commander agrees to notify the chief school administrator or his or her designee of any Graduated Driver Licensing law or traffic violation, committed within the school district, by a student enrolled in the school district.”

Several schools, including those in the Holmdel and Freehold Regional High School districts in Monmouth County, have adopted this model and are temporarily rescinding their students’ parking privileges based on traffic violation information they receive from local police.

Best Practices for Communities

Through partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, traffic safety organizations and the education community, the Division of Highway Traffic Safety continues to share best practices for fostering safe driving behaviors for teens. A “How To” guide for implementing the National Safety Council’s “Alive at 25” teen-parent safe driving program in the community was developed and is posted on the Division’s web site.

GDL Checkpoints

In April 2009, law enforcement agencies in Bergen and Union Counties conducted checkpoints near high schools and other locations frequented by young drivers, to ensure that teens are driving safely and in compliance with the State’s GDL law.

Launched in 2008 in Bergen County and expanded in 2009 to Union County, the program, is designed to help increase teen driver awareness of the potentially deadly consequences of unsafe driving behaviors.
