

TEEN DRIVER STUDY COMMISSION

RECOMMENDATION REPORT UPDATE • OCTOBER 2009

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, MATRIX . 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 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 decal is currently under development by MVC. The law goes into effect 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.	Approved by the General Assembly in March, and now awaiting action in the Senate, A-3068/S-2848 would 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 sophomores) or parking privileges (juniors and seniors).
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 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 goes into effect 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.	Introduced in January 2009 and assigned to the Assembly Transportation Committee, A-3635 would 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 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 goes into effect 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.	A-870, which requires seat belt use by all passengers in a motor vehicle 18 years of age and older regardless of seating position, passed the Assembly in February 2008. S-18 was introduced in the Senate, but has not yet been heard in committee.
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 Department of Education (DOE) has approved new core curriculum content standards in traffic safety and driver education. The Division of Highway Traffic Safety, working with MVC and DOE, will convene a driver education work group to develop a classroom curriculum in support of the standards and that addresses teen crash causation factors.

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 is currently under construction and will provide teen driving 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 are up for re-adoption on November 5, 2009. As part of this process, MVC is incorporating 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

Currently under production, this GDL training video will be distributed to local law enforcement agencies later this year 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. In addition, the School Administrators Association and the New Jersey School Boards Association are alerting their members about this initiative.

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 last year in Bergen County and expanded in 2009 to Union County, the program, which ran from April 6 - 24, is designed to help increase teen driver awareness of the potentially deadly consequences of unsafe driving behaviors.
