

ENGLISH

# CALIFORNIA PARENT-TEEN TRAINING GUIDE



**Edmund G. Brown Jr., Governor**  
State of California

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Business, Transportation and Housing Agency

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## GETTING STARTED

Teen drivers tend to be high-risk drivers. Teens receive more traffic citations and are hurt and killed at a higher rate than other drivers. As a parent/guardian (terms used interchangeably in this guide), you want to keep your teen safe.

### THE PROVISIONAL DRIVER LICENSE

To decrease motor-vehicle collisions involving teens, a special “provisional” license and instruction permit is issued to a driver under the age of 18 (minor).

Minors may keep their driver license as long as they obey the following “provisions”:

- Obey the traffic laws and drive without a collision.
- During the **first 12 months**, a teen cannot drive between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. **and** cannot transport passengers under age 20, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian, a licensed driver 25 years of age or older, or a licensed or certified driving instructor.

## PRINCIPAL LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

**Obtain parental consent.** As a parent, you may revoke your consent at any time by completing a Request for Cancellation or Surrender of a Driver License or Identification Card (DL 142) form. The form is available online at the DMV website [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) or from any DMV office. Revoking your parental consent will cancel the minor’s driver permit or license.

**Complete driver education** (classroom training) and **driver training** (behind-the-wheel training) in a public or private high school, or in a state-licensed professional driving school. (The hours required for driver education and driver training classes are defined in the *California Education Code* §§51851 and 51852.) Internet, correspondence, or other distance-based driver education training must be the equivalent of an approved classroom instruction.

**NOTE:** If you use the services of a professional driving school, ask to see the instructor’s identification card and confirm that the school is licensed by DMV. Professional driving schools and instructors in California are licensed by DMV after meeting qualifying standards.

**Pass the written law test.** If your teen incorrectly answers 9 or more of the 46 questions on the law test, he/she must wait one week before retaking the test.

**NOTE:** A provisional instruction permit is valid only if the teen is taking a driver training class and his/her permit is signed by the instructor.

**Complete at least 50 hours of supervised driving.** It will take more than 15 minutes of practice time every day for six months to complete 50 hours of practice driving, of which at least 10 hours must be night driving practice. You (the parent) **and** the instructor must sign the statement on your teen's permit certifying that he/she has completed the supervised training. The signed permit must be returned to DMV before the driving test may be taken.

**NOTE:** What you teach your teen should agree with what is taught by the driving instructor. If your teen states that your instructions are different from the instructor's, contact the instructor to be sure you are correct.

**Your teen must "hold" his/her permit longer (six months)** than other drivers and practice the driving skills listed on page 7 of this guide before he/she can come to the DMV for the driving test.

**Pass the driving test.** If your teen fails his or her driving test, he/she must wait two weeks before taking another test. Information regarding the law and driving tests are found in the *California Driver Handbook*, which is based on the *California Vehicle Code*.

## PARENTS' ROLE

While California law sets the requirements for teen driving, you as an informed parent and role model can enhance your teen's safety by assuring that he or she has adequate instruction. This *Parent-Teen Training Guide* helps you provide your teen with additional driving practice. This guide DOES NOT contain all of the licensing requirements.

Before you begin the driving practice sessions, please:

- Take the time to familiarize yourself with the *California Driver Handbook*, which contains **all** the licensing requirements.
- Discuss with your teen the terms of a Parent-Teen Driving Contract that clearly identifies the roles and expectations of you and your teen. You may either use the contract in the centerfold of this guide or develop your own.
- Complete a Parent-Teen Driving Contract.
- Read pages 1–7 of this guide.

## KNOW THE RISKS

Driving is potentially dangerous for everyone, but more so for young drivers. Teen drivers are involved in more motor-vehicle collisions than any other age group for a variety of reasons, including:

**Young age/lack of maturity:** Teens make more judgment errors than other age groups. Your teen may drive differently and take more risks when you are not in the vehicle.

**Risky driving behaviors:** Teens may engage in risky driving behaviors, such as speeding, running red and yellow lights, running stop signs, tailgating, weaving in-and-out of traffic, and misjudging the capability of their vehicles.

**Distractions:** An inexperienced driver is challenged by driving distractions. Music, cell phones, pets, and passengers are best left at home while your teen is learning to drive.

**NOTE:** While driving a motor vehicle, it is illegal for a minor to talk on a cell phone or use a wireless telephone (including a hands-free device) and/or a mobile service device (pager, texting device, laptop, etc.). Fines are \$20 for the first offense plus administrative court fees and \$50 for the second or subsequent offense plus administrative court fees.

**Exceptions:**

- Emergency calls may be made to a law enforcement agency, health care provider, fire department, or other emergency service agency.
- Calls may be made while driving on private property.

**Driving inexperience:** It takes a lot of practice to be able to safely maneuver in everyday situations. Teens show the most improvement within the first year and 1,000 miles of driving. They continue to improve through their first 5,000 miles of driving.

## **BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL**

The best teacher is a good role model. Obey all traffic laws in a courteous manner. Whenever you have a practice driving session, be in the “practicing mood,” which means you are ready, well rested, and have sufficient time.

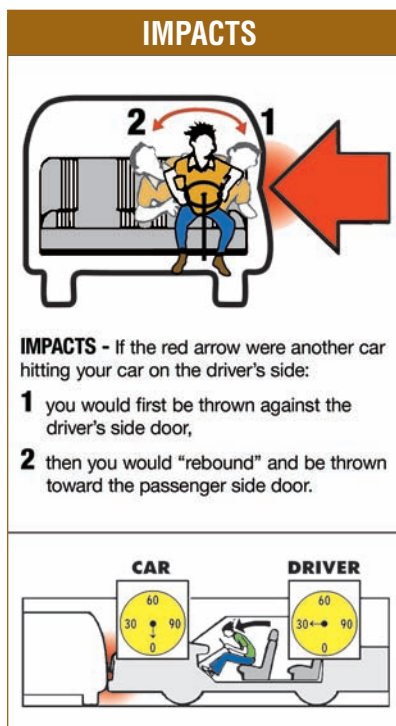
## **HIGH-RISK CONDITIONS**

Talk to your teen about avoiding the following high-risk driving situations:

- **Driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs** – Drinking any amount of alcohol impairs a person’s judgment. Illicit drugs and/or alcohol (for minors) are illegal. The combination of driving and alcohol and/or drugs can be deadly.
- **High speeds** – Teen (especially male) drivers involved in severe collisions were usually driving at high speeds.
- **Passengers** – As the number of teen passengers increases, the risk of collision increases. Passengers can be a major distraction for teens.

- **Driving at night** – The highest crash risk for teen drivers occurs on weekend nights. Before allowing your teen to drive at night, have your teen extensively practice driving at night in varied types of weather with you in the vehicle.
- **Visual obstructions** – Anything that restricts or obscures the driver’s view and ability to gather accurate information poses a danger. Examples include curves in the road, hill crests, bushes, signs, parked vehicles, large vehicles, and inclement weather, such as heavy fog or rain.
- **Seat belt non-use** – If your vehicle suddenly stops and you do not have your seat belt fastened, your body keeps moving at the speed of travel until you hit the dashboard or windshield. A sudden stop after traveling at 30 miles per hour (mph) is like falling to the ground from the top of a three-story building. If you were struck from the side, the impact could push you back and forth across the seat. The use of shoulder harnesses with lap belts helps protect the driver and passengers from serious or fatal injuries in the event of a crash.

The graphics below illustrate what can happen in a collision:



**NOTE:** Lap-only belts increase the chance of spinal column and abdominal injuries—especially in children. The use of a seat belt reduces the chance of being thrown from a vehicle in case of a collision.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

1. Review and agree to the terms of a Parent-Teen Driving Contract, such as the model contract in this guide. After agreeing to the terms, you and your teen should initial the responsibilities that apply and sign the contract.



2. The suggested lesson plan on page 7 lists the driving skills your teen driver should practice. These skills are divided into four different levels.
3. Read the directions for the skill you wish your teen to practice and log them on the Supervised Driving Log on pages 28–30.
4. Discuss the directions with your teen.
5. Check the directions in this guide to be sure the skill is performed correctly.
6. Demonstrate how to perform the skill correctly, such as backing up.
7. Have your teen practice the skill.
8. When you decide that your teen can perform a certain skill easily and well, double-check the directions and note the driving skill on the Supervised Driving Log on pages 28–30.
9. Review with your teen the high-risk conditions listed on pages 3 and 4 and the advice on special driving problems and emergency situations in this guide (pages 20–24).
10. Use the Safe Driver Checklist on pages 24 and 25. When you decide that your young driver is ready to apply for a license, take him/her on a “test” drive. Make sure that your teen performs all the items on this list correctly. Spend more practice time with your teen on any item missed.
11. Before your teen takes the driving test, read, “Is Your Teen Ready for a License?” on page 26. You may have overlooked some important practice your new driver needs.

## WHEN YOU AND YOUR TEEN START PRACTICING

- Review your teen’s instruction permit. It may contain additional instructions.
- Take this guide along.
- During the first lesson or two, practice only during daylight hours in a quiet, uncongested area when weather conditions are good. As your teen’s skills increase, **gradually** expose him/her to different roads, weather conditions, varying traffic conditions, and times of day.
- Be familiar with the practice area and any hazards, signs, or signals.
- Be patient, sympathetic, and understanding.
- Keep your voice calm.
- Sit in a position where you can grab the steering wheel or step on the brake, if necessary.
- Before starting the engine, have your teen:
  - Consult your owner’s manual to determine whether your vehicle has an antilock brake system (ABS) on all four wheels or ABS just on the rear wheels. (ABS prevents wheels

on a motor vehicle from locking while braking). If in doubt, contact the dealer.

- Adjust the seat, if necessary.
- Adjust the mirrors.
- Fasten the seat belt(s). For the best protection, the lap belt or lap and shoulder belts should be adjusted to fit the driver and/or passengers.
- Show you the location of the following controls: 4-way flashers, emergency brake, heater/defroster, horn, headlights, and windshield wipers.
- Explain how each control works.
- Show your teen how to properly start the engine and what to do to start driving.
- Stop practicing when your teen becomes tired or upset and show him/her how to turn off the engine when safe.
- If you see a bad traffic situation ahead (one your teen cannot handle), pull over and stop.
- Until your teen has learned the traffic rules and how to control the vehicle, practice in a vehicle with an automatic transmission, if possible, because it is easier to drive.

**NOTE:** Children 8 years of age and older must be properly secured with an appropriate safety belt. Children under 8 years of age, who are less than 4 feet 9 inches tall, must

be properly secured in a child passenger restraint system that meets federal safety standards. However, children under 8 years of age, who are 4 feet 9 inches tall or taller, may be secured with an appropriate safety belt instead of a child passenger restraint system.

A child may not ride in the front seat of an airbag-equipped vehicle if the child:

- Is less than one year of age.
- Weighs less than 20 lbs.
- Is riding in a rear-facing child passenger restraint system.

## GIVING DIRECTIONS DURING PRACTICE

1. Give directions in a clear, calm voice well in advance. Allow your teen enough time to follow them.
2. Tell your new driver where you want something done **before** you say what you want done. For example, you should say, “Up ahead, at the next corner, turn right.” If you say, “Turn right at the corner,” your teen may react before you have completed your instructions.
3. When answering questions, use the word “correct,” rather than “right,” which may be mistaken as a direction for a turn rather than an answer to a question.
4. Avoid using only the word “stop” because it often panics a beginning driver. Instead say, “Bring your vehicle to a stop.”

## LESSON PLAN FOR PRACTICE SESSIONS

### *Level I*

Your teen should practice controlling the vehicle during the first lessons. No time plan is given here. These driving sessions should give your teen practice in the basic skills listed below:

- Backing Up the Vehicle (page 8)
- Driving a “Stick” (page 8)
- Lane Choice (page 13)
- Lane Changes (page 13)
- Left Turns (pages 10 and 11)
- Right Turns (pages 9 and 10)

### *Level II*

Only after your teen can shift gears (if necessary, in your vehicle), back-up, and turn easily and safely should you begin practicing the skills listed below:

- Intersections (pages 11–12)
- Keeping Space Around the Vehicle (pages 13 and 16)
- Lane Changes (pages 13 and 16)
- Practicing in Traffic (pages 16 and 17)

### *Level III*

After the Level I and Level II skills are mastered, the skills listed below can be practiced:

- Parallel Parking (page 18)
- Parking on Hills (page 17)
- U-Turn (page 19)

### *Level IV*

Only after your teen has mastered control of the vehicle and the skills in Levels I, II, and III, should he/she practice night driving and freeway driving.

- Freeway Driving (pages 19 and 20)
- Driving at Night (page 20)
- Special Problems and Emergencies (pages 20–24)

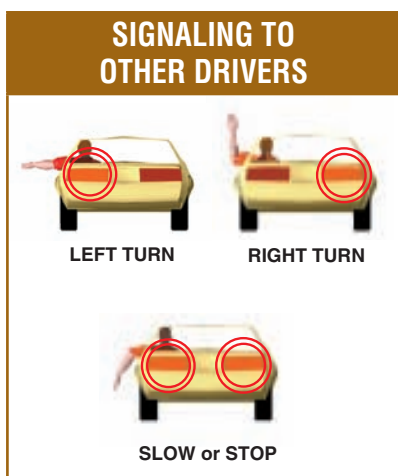
### *Take a Check Ride*

When your teen has finished practicing the skills in Level IV, look at the Safe Driver Checklist on pages 24 and 25. Read the directions. Make sure you and your teen go on the “test ride” described. This test ride should show you if your new driver needs more practice.

## DRIVING SKILLS

### SIGNALING TO OTHER DRIVERS

Teach your teen how to signal for left and right turns, slow down, and stop. Have your teen demonstrate arm signals and electric turn signals as shown in the diagram. During the driving test, your teen must use the vehicle's turn signal during the last 100 feet before turning. At highway speeds, it is best to signal at least five seconds before changing lanes.



### DRIVING A “STICK”

A vehicle with an automatic transmission is recommended because it is easier to operate. If your teen has problems shifting, practice the steps below without releasing the parking brake. With the ignition off, have your teen:

1. Depress the clutch pedal to the floor. Hold it there.
2. Practice shifting through all the gears.

3. Practice until shifting is automatic.
4. Practice pressing down the clutch and shifting to a gear you have chosen. After shifting becomes easy, have your teen practice shifting in and out of first gear when stopping and starting.

### Shifting into First Gear

1. Place the gearshift into neutral.
2. With the clutch firmly depressed and a foot on the brake pedal, start the engine.
3. Release the parking brake.
4. Move the gearshift lever from neutral to first gear.
5. Let the clutch come up very slowly until it reaches the point at which the engine takes hold and begins to pull the vehicle forward.
6. Move your foot from the brake to the gas pedal and press down gently.
7. Slowly let the clutch pedal come up all the way.

**NOTE:** Do not allow your teen to push in the clutch and coast to a stop.

### BACKING UP THE VEHICLE

Practice on a wide residential street with little or no traffic, or in a parking lot with no obstacles or vehicles. Before starting to back up, have your teen turn his/her head to survey the area rather than relying just on the rearview and/or side mirrors, which may not show all hazards. Avoid

backing around corners or sharp curves unless there is good visibility in all directions. If your teen seems to have problems backing, have him/her follow the steps below:

1. Put left hand at the top of the steering wheel.
2. Place foot on the brake.
3. Shift to reverse.
4. Check in all directions for traffic, children, animals, and objects in or moving toward his/her path.
5. Release the parking brake.
6. Place right hand on the back of the seat and look over right shoulder through the rear window.
7. Release the foot brake slowly and apply the accelerator if needed — be ready to brake to control the speed of the vehicle.
8. Occasionally look quickly to the left.
9. Move slowly and avoid sudden movement of the steering wheel.
10. Turn the steering wheel to the right if you wish to back to the right. Turn the steering wheel to the left, if you wish to back to the left.
11. Press the brake gently to stop.
12. Shift into park.

## PRACTICING TURNS

Practice turning in a large, open parking lot, or other area without traffic or pedestrians. The first few times, give directions on steering throughout the turn. Be ready to grab

the wheel if necessary. Practice right turns first.

## RIGHT TURNS

Give the instruction to turn at least 200 feet (more than one-half city block) before turning. This will allow the teen enough time to signal,

**MAKING A RIGHT TURN**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**(1)** About 100 feet from corner:

- Reduce speed.
- Begin signaling.

**(2)** STOP BEHIND LIMIT LINE:

- Look over right shoulder.
- When safe, move as close to the right curb as possible. Enter bicycle lane when it is safe.
- Look both ways.

**(3)** If safe, turn into right lane.

check traffic, and start the turn. Approach the turn in the right lane, turn into the right lane, and remain in that lane until the turn is completed.

**NOTE:** Do not turn wide to avoid creating a hazard with oncoming traffic. If your teen has difficulty turning right, try the following step-by-step instructions:

1. Slow down as you approach the turn.
2. Give a right turn signal.
3. Check the traffic ahead, behind, and to the sides. At the intersection, look left, right, and left again. If you are merging into a bike lane, look over your right shoulder before merging.
4. Obey all the signs and/or traffic signals.
5. Yield to pedestrians.
6. If possible, place the front of the vehicle two or three feet from the curb before beginning the turn.
7. Steer hand-over-hand to the right when the front bumper enters the intersection.
8. End the turn in the lane closest to the curb.
9. Unwind the steering wheel as the front end of the vehicle enters the proper lane, and then straighten the vehicle in the lane.

## LEFT TURNS

After your teen can make a right turn well, practice left turns. If your teen has difficulty making left turns correctly, follow these steps:

1. Slow down when approaching the turn.

**MAKING A LEFT TURN**

**(1) About 100 feet from corner:**

- Reduce speed.
- Begin signaling.

**(2) STOP BEHIND LIMIT LINE:**

- Look left, then right, then left again.
- If safe, make turn.

2. Obey the signs and/or traffic signals.
3. Check traffic to the left, right, front, and rear.
4. Yield to pedestrians.
5. Signal a left turn as soon as possible without confusing other drivers.
6. Glance over your left shoulder.
7. Steer the vehicle into the left turn lane, the left part of the lane, or the left turn center lane.
8. Slow to a safe speed.
9. Glance left, ahead, right, and left again.
10. Never turn the wheel until you are ready to make a left turn.
11. Glance left and turn the steering wheel to the left to enter the new street.
12. Glance right. Place your foot over the brake pedal (without pressing down) while turning, even if you can make the left turn without stopping first.
13. Press the gas pedal as you allow the wheel to straighten in the new street (end the turn in the inside lane).

**NOTE:** Do not cut the corner to avoid creating a hazard with oncoming traffic.

## **INTERSECTIONS**

When you decide your teen is ready to begin driving through intersections, discuss the following step-by-step directions for signal-controlled

intersections and for uncontrolled or “blind” intersections.

### ***Directions for Signal-Controlled Intersections***

1. When approaching an intersection with a signal light, be ready to brake and keep plenty of room between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead. Even when the light is green, it is against the law to enter an intersection when there is not enough space to completely cross before the light turns red. If heavy traffic (gridlock) causes you to block cross traffic, you can be cited.
2. Signal if you plan to turn.
3. Look left, right, and left again for vehicles on the cross street before entering the intersection.
4. Check for pedestrians and yield to any pedestrian crossing at a corner or other crosswalk.
5. Watch oncoming traffic for any vehicles making illegal left turns.

### ***When the Light Turns Yellow***

Teach your teen how to decide when it is safe to stop at a yellow light. As your teen approaches the green light, have him or her tell you, at regular intervals, whether it would be safe to proceed if the light were to turn yellow. Continue until your teen reaches the point at which he or she feels unable to safely stop for a yellow light. Make certain that your teen consistently identifies the point at which a safe stop could be made.

## **Directions for Uncontrolled (No Signs or Signals) and Blind Intersections**

Encourage your teen to develop the skills to:

- Judge the speed and distances of other vehicles at or approaching an uncontrolled intersection.
- Safely select an appropriate space for entering an intersection where there is cross traffic.

A blind intersection means that a driver cannot see traffic on the cross street for at least 100 feet in each direction during the last 100 feet before crossing because a building or other object blocks the view. When approaching a blind intersection:

1. Slow to a speed, such as 15 miles per hour, which will let you stop safely.
2. Look for pedestrians and cross traffic.
3. Look for approaching vehicles on side streets.
4. Look left, right, and left again for traffic on the cross street before entering the intersection.
5. When entering the intersection, look right, and ahead, for approaching traffic.
6. If the road is clear, cross the intersection.

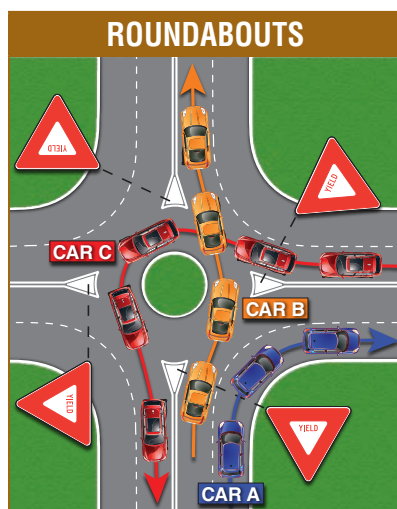
## **Roundabouts**

A roundabout is an intersection where traffic travels around a central island in a counterclockwise direction. Vehicles entering or exiting the

roundabout must yield to vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

1. Slow down as you approach the intersection.
2. Yield to pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the roadway.
3. Watch for signs and pavement markings that guide you or prohibit certain movements.
4. Enter the roundabout when there is a big enough gap in traffic.
5. Drive in a counterclockwise direction. Do not stop or pass other vehicles.
6. Use your turn signals when you change lanes or exit the roundabout.
7. If you miss your exit, continue around until you return to your exit.

If the roundabout has multiple lanes, choose your entry or exit lane based on your destination. For example:





1. To turn right at the intersection, choose the right-hand lane and exit in the right-hand lane (Vehicle A).
2. To go straight through the intersection, choose either lane and exit in that lane (Vehicle B).
3. To turn left, choose the left lane, continue around, and then exit (Vehicle C).
3. Check the blind spot by looking over your shoulder into the lane you wish to occupy.
4. Signal.
5. Check the mirror and look over your shoulder again to make sure the space is empty.
6. Change lanes by moving into a break in traffic flow.
7. Steer to center the vehicle in the new lane.
8. Turn off the signal.

## **LANE CHOICE**

When instructing your teen, note the importance to choose the lane that is:

- Appropriate for the driving maneuver, such as turning or parking.
- The least congested.

**EXCEPTIONS:** Turning or stopping would require the appropriate lane regardless of congestion in that lane.

If a roadway has two lanes in the same direction, select the right lane. If you can choose among three lanes, pick the middle lane. To pass or turn left, use the left lane.

## **LANE CHANGES**

You may discover your teen has difficulty changing lanes in a smooth, continuous movement. Have your teen follow the steps below to make sure that a lane change is made safely.

1. Check the traffic ahead.
2. Glance in mirrors for breaks in the traffic.

### ***Problems to Watch for:***

1. Failing to check the rearview mirror.
2. Failing to look over shoulder.
3. Checking over shoulder too long while the vehicle drifts from its path or gets dangerously close to vehicles ahead.
4. Not knowing if there is enough room to change lanes. At first, you should make the judgment for your teen. When your teen is able to look over his or her shoulder and still stay in the lane, have your teen tell you when it is safe to change lanes. Continue requiring a verbal check until you agree with his or her decision.

## **KEEPING SPACE AROUND THE VEHICLE**

Most drivers do not see “the big picture” as well as they should because they follow too closely, and the vehicle ahead blocks their view of the road.

We, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Teen Driver \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_

Initial if applies	Teen Driver's Responsibilities
	I will tell a parent my destination, who will be the passengers, and when I will return.
	I will call home if my plans change.
	I will notify a parent if I think that I will be more than 30 minutes late.
	I will respect and obey all driving laws and safely drive so as not to endanger my life or the lives of others.
	Everyone in the vehicle will wear a seat belt at all times.
	I will never drink alcohol and/or use drugs and drive.
	I will never ride in a vehicle where alcohol or drug use is occurring.
	I will not be a passenger in a vehicle whose driver appears impaired to drive.
	I will not drive aggressively, such as speeding, tailgating, or cutting others off.
	I will call home if I cannot get home safely.
	I will not let anyone else drive or use the vehicle entrusted to me.

## Vehicle Costs and

\_\_\_\_\_ will be responsible for the  
 Name of Teen Driver \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Vehicle Cost \_\_\_\_\_ Fuel Cost  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Vehicle Registration \_\_\_\_\_ Maintenance Cost

### Check all that apply:

\_\_\_\_\_ Check oil and other fluids regularly \_\_\_\_\_ Report unusual performance  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Clean all windows \_\_\_\_\_ Refuel when tank is less than ¼ full

\_\_\_\_\_ Additional conditions or responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

We understand and agree to the terms of this contract, which may be

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Teen Driver

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

# Driving Contract

\_\_\_\_\_, agree to the following conditions:  
Name(s) of Parent(s) or Guardian

Initial if applies	Parent's Responsibilities
	I will listen in a respectful manner to the explanations or concerns expressed by my teen regarding the operation of a vehicle or terms of the contract.
	I will provide respectful feedback when accompanying my teen driver in a vehicle.
	I will serve as a good role model when operating a vehicle.
	I will respect and obey all driving laws and safely drive so as not to endanger my life or the lives of others.
	Everyone in the vehicle will wear a seat belt at all times.
	I will never use alcohol and/or use drugs and drive.
	I will never ride in a vehicle where alcohol or drug use is occurring.
	I will not be a passenger in a vehicle whose driver appears impaired to drive.
	I will not drive aggressively, such as speeding, tailgating, or cutting others off.
	I (we) agree to come and get you at any hour from any place, with no questions asked, or I (we) will arrange transportation to bring you home safely. I (we) expect that a discussion of such incident would follow at a later time.

## and Maintenance

the following (indicate the dollar amount or percentage of the cost):

_____ Vehicle Damage	_____ Vehicle Insurance
_____ Fines/Penalties	_____ Other
_____ Inspect tires and check air pressure	_____ Keep interior and exterior clean
_____ Perform normal maintenance	_____ Other

\_\_\_\_\_ renegotiated and revised later.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

Good drivers maintain a safe “space cushion” to see more of what is happening in traffic. The more space they allow between their vehicle and the vehicle ahead, the more time they will have to see a hazard or collision down the road. They will have more time to stop, or to avoid the problem.

Encourage your teen to keep enough space between his/her vehicle and the vehicle ahead, to the sides, and to the rear. Your teen will then have a “bigger picture” of his/her driving environment. Steering will be easier and the vehicle can travel in the center of the lane instead of hugging one side of the lane or the other.

Teach your new driver how to keep at least a **three-second “cushion”** of space when following other vehicles. When the vehicle ahead passes a signpost or other object near the road, count “one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three.” If you pass the same object before completing this count, you are too close. Allow more space.

When crowded by a tailgater, your teen should allow extra room between his/her vehicle and the vehicle ahead. Allowing more following distance gives him/her and the tailgater more time to react in an emergency. When the way is clear, your teen can slow to let the tailgater pass.

Inform your teen that when you follow too closely and another driver “cuts” in front of you, the normal reaction is to slam on your brakes

and swerve out of the way. Swerving out of the way most often results in cutting someone else off or possibly driving off the roadway. It might also result in the vehicle behind you crashing into you or other vehicles around you.

If another driver “cuts” in front of you, it is better to just take your foot off the gas. This will give you space between your vehicle and the other driver without swerving into another lane. Do **not** overreact if you are cut off. Plan your emergency escape route before the emergency happens.

Tell your teen to avoid driving in the blind spot of other drivers. The other driver may not see your teen’s vehicle and could change lanes, causing a collision.



## PRACTICING IN TRAFFIC

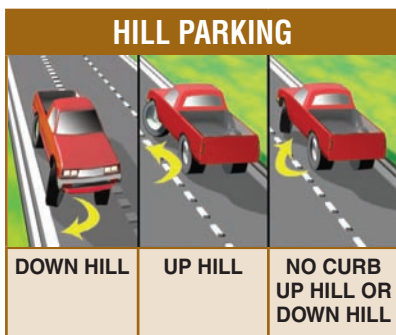
- Make sure your teen driver signals when necessary. Discuss why it is important for other drivers to know what your teen intends to do.
- See that your teen driver slows down or speeds up when necessary.
- Encourage your teen driver to keep a “cushion” of empty space around the vehicle. Discuss the

importance of staying a safe distance behind the vehicle ahead.

- Describe how to be a courteous driver, yielding space to drivers trying to change lanes, etc.
- When you first begin practicing in traffic, point out hazards and warn your teen until he/she becomes comfortable in the new situation.
- Make sure all traffic lights and stop signs are obeyed. Warn your teen if the vehicle ahead is not slowing down when it should.

## PARKING ON HILLS

Practice parking on hills with little or no traffic. At first, park in areas without other parked vehicles. If you are unable to practice parking on hills in your area, practice on a flat road and discuss the procedures for parking on hills. Make sure that your teen driver will be able to safely park on a hill, if needed.



### *Parking Downhill With a Curb*

1. Stop your vehicle about 6 to 8 inches from the curb.

2. Shift to neutral and allow the vehicle to roll forward slowly, controlling speed with the brake.
3. As the vehicle moves, quickly turn the steering wheel toward the curb.
4. Stop when the front wheel touches the curb, or when the wheel is 4 to 6 inches from the shoulder.
5. Set the parking brake, shift into park, and release the foot brake.
6. Shut off the engine.

**NOTE:** When parking downhill on a street without a curb, instruct your teen to turn the wheels clockwise so the vehicle will roll away from the center of the road if the brakes fail.

### *Parking Uphill With a Curb*

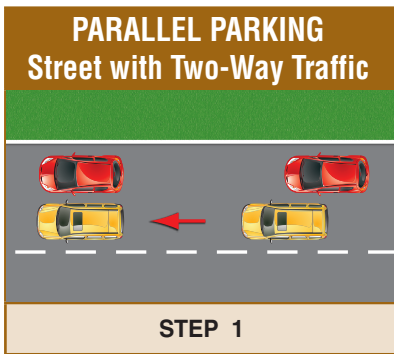
1. Stop the vehicle about 6 to 8 inches from the curb.
2. Shift to neutral and let up a little on the brake. At the same time, turn the steering wheel away from the curb. Allow the vehicle to roll backward slowly, controlling speed with the brake.
3. Stop when the back part of the front right tire touches the curb.
4. Set the parking brake, shift to park, and release the foot brake.
5. Shut off the engine.

**NOTE:** When parking uphill on a street without a curb, turn the steering wheel clockwise, so the vehicle will roll away from the center of the road if the brakes fail.

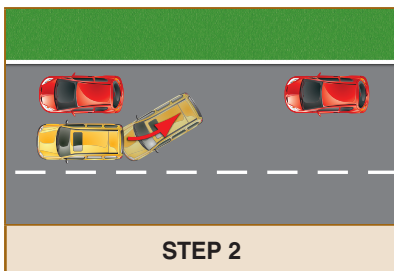
## PARALLEL PARKING (STREET WITH TWO-WAY TRAFFIC)

At first, practice parallel parking in a large, open parking lot. Later practice on a quiet, residential street until your teen is capable of practicing in normal traffic.

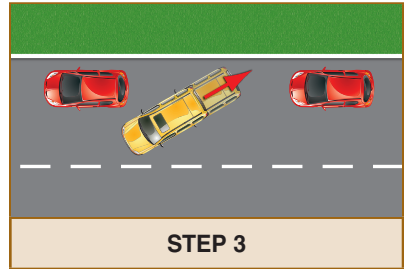
1. Check traffic and signal. Pull up about 2 feet away from, and parallel to, the vehicle ahead of the parking space (back bumpers must be even).



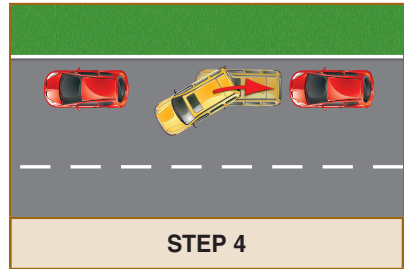
2. Check traffic and shift into reverse. Turn the steering wheel sharply to the right while backing.



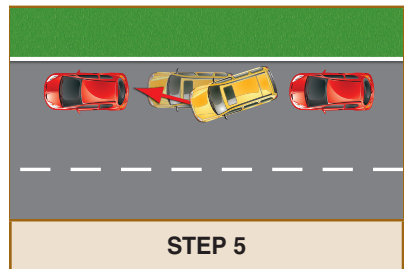
3. As your front door passes the back bumper of the vehicle ahead, quickly straighten the wheels and continue to back straight.



4. When clear of the vehicle ahead, turn the wheels sharply to the left and back slowly in the direction of the vehicle behind you.



5. Shift into drive. Turn the wheels sharply to the right and pull toward the center of the parking space. The wheels should be within 18 inches of the curb.



6. Shift into park, shut off the engine and release the foot brake.
7. Set the parking brake.

## **U-TURN**

1. Practice U-turns on a wide, residential street with little or no traffic. Do not make a U-turn in heavy traffic.
2. During the first practice session, act as your teen's eyes while he or she concentrates on making the turn.
3. When your teen can make the turn easily, encourage him or her to look in all directions for traffic before turning and while making the turn. (If you are near an intersection, a vehicle can come around the corner in just a few seconds.)

## **FREEWAY DRIVING**

When your teen is ready for freeway driving, try to choose long on-ramps and off-ramps to practice entering and exiting the freeway. The following are freeway driving directions:

### ***Entering the Freeway***

1. Be in the proper lane for the on-ramp you want.
2. While still on the ramp, check your mirror. Watch traffic in the lane you will be entering. Also, watch for vehicles to the rear and sides if there is more than one lane merging. Remember—you do not have the right of way.
3. Turn on your signal.
4. Look for a gap in the traffic. Adjust your speed to match that of vehicles on the freeway.
5. Do not slow or stop unless necessary.

6. When you reach the freeway, look over your shoulder before moving into a gap in the first lane.
7. Do not cross over any solid lines while merging.

### ***On the Freeway***

1. Keep up with traffic as much as possible without exceeding the speed limit. Yield to faster traffic. Stay to the right, as much as possible.
2. Maintain a proper “space cushion.” Use the three-second rule described on page 16 for following distance, and adjust your lane position as needed for traffic conditions.
3. Watch for merging traffic at on-ramps.
4. Signal and look over your shoulder before changing lanes.
5. If you see traffic slowing ahead, “tap” your brake pedal several times to warn drivers behind you. Do this even though you do not need to brake yet. This “tapping” will warn drivers behind you to slow down.

### ***Leaving the Freeway***

1. When planning to exit a freeway, well before the exit, scan for signs indicating which lane to use.
2. Move into the proper exit lane at least one-half mile before the exit. Do not wait until the last minute. You may cause a collision if you change lanes in a hurry.

3. Signal four or five seconds before the off-ramp.
4. After entering the off-ramp, slow to the posted speed limit.
5. Do not cross over any solid lines when exiting.

## DRIVING AT NIGHT

**Do not start** night driving until your teen has mastered all driving skills during the daylight hours. Begin night driving in a familiar, low traffic area. Below are the directions for driving at night:

1. Turn the headlights on when darkness makes it harder to see (no later than one-half hour after sunset). It is illegal to use parking lights rather than headlights.
2. Drive more slowly. Your teen should be able to stop the vehicle within the distance that he/she can see ahead.
3. Increase the space cushion to the front and rear of your vehicle.
4. Signal well in advance of every move.
5. Avoid looking into the headlights of an oncoming vehicle. Look to the right edge of the road. Your teen must learn to maintain the vehicle's direction of travel when the headlights of oncoming traffic make it hard to see.
6. Practice all of the skills described for a minimum of 10 hours of night driving.

## SPECIAL PROBLEMS AND EMERGENCIES

### WHAT TO DO IF A COLLISION OCCURS

Talk to your teen about what to do in the event of a collision. What to do as a witness or as someone involved in a collision is noted in the *California Driver Handbook*. Make sure your teen knows what to do if a collision happens.

### WHEN YOU HEAR A SIREN



When a fire truck, ambulance, police vehicle, or other emergency vehicle approaches from behind with its siren on, pull over as far as practical to the right side of the road. Stop until the emergency vehicle passes. However, never stop in an intersection. Continue through the intersection and then pull to the right as soon as you can. Failure to pull over may result in a violation citation. Sometimes, the driver of an emergency vehicle will use a loudspeaker to direct a driver blocking the road.



## **MOTORCYCLES, BICYCLES, SCOOTERS, ETC.**

Be aware that because they are small—motorcycles, bicycles, scooters, and skateboards—can be difficult to see.

## **WHEN YOU SEE A SCHOOL BUS**

When you see flashing red lights on a school bus, stop at a safe distance away from the school bus, and remain stopped until the red lights stop flashing. Traffic in both directions must stop unless the roadway is divided by a median. School buses are required to flash the red lights at all stops.

Be cautious around stopped school buses, even if the red lights have stopped flashing. Assume a child might dart out in front of you. **Suggestion:** Treat school buses as school zones. Drive 25 mph or less when children are present.

## **RAILROAD CROSSINGS**

When you drive close to a railroad crossing, look and listen for trains in both directions. Be ready to stop, if necessary. You should expect a train on a track at any time, day or night. Never stop on a railroad track. Usually by the time a train sees you, it will be too late for it to stop. When traffic is heavy, wait off the tracks until you are sure you can drive over the tracks without stopping.

## **WHEN YOU CANNOT SEE BECAUSE OF FOG, RAIN, OR SNOW**

The best advice for driving in the fog is “DON’T.” Do not use your high-beam headlights in the fog because they create glare and reduce visibility. Only use your low-beam headlights in the fog. Consider postponing your trip until the fog clears.

If you must drive, slow down and turn on your low-beam headlights. Never drive with just your parking or fog lights. Increase your following distance and be prepared to stop within the space you can see in front of your vehicle. Avoid crossing or passing lanes of traffic unless absolutely necessary. Listen for traffic you cannot see. Use your wipers and defroster as necessary for best vision.

If the fog becomes so thick that you can barely see, pull completely off the road. Do not continue driving until you can see better. Turn off your lights or someone may see your taillights and drive into you.

In a very heavy rain or snowstorm, you may not be able to see more than 100 feet ahead. When you cannot see any farther than that, you cannot safely drive faster than 30 mph. You may have to stop from time to time to wipe mud or snow off your windshield, headlights, and taillights.

When you drive in snowy areas, carry chains in case you find yourself in conditions where you cannot drive

without them. Make sure you carry the correct number of chains and that they will fit your drive wheels. Learn how to put the chains on before you need to use them.

Slow down at the first sign of rain, drizzle, or snow on the road. This is when many road pavements are most slippery because oil and dust have not been washed away.

Turn on your lights when visibility is poor—even in the daylight hours.

**NOTE:** You must turn on your headlights if snow, rain, fog, or low visibility (1,000 feet or less) require the continuous use of windshield wipers.

## DRIVING ON SLIPPERY ROADS

When you drive on wet, icy, gravel, or dirt roads you should:

- Drive more slowly and stay farther behind the vehicle ahead.
- Slow down as you approach curves and intersections.
- Avoid quick stops. “Pump” the brakes to slow or stop.
- Avoid fast turns.
- Shift into a lower gear before going down a steep hill.
- If your brakes get wet, dry them by pressing the gas and brake pedals at the same time so that the vehicle drives against the pressure of the brakes.
- Avoid especially slippery areas, such as ice patches, wet leaves, oil, and deep puddles.

## DRIVING IN WIND

Drive slower than normal when it is very windy. Lighter vehicles, vans, and trucks with broad, high sides are sometimes blown out of their lane. House trailers are in special danger of shifting. If possible, avoid driving next to other vehicles. Grasp the steering wheel firmly. Be prepared to correct steering as wind force changes. Keep the windows closed.

## QUICK STOPS AND SKIDS

Avoid sudden stops. If your vehicle has four-wheel ABS, apply firm pressure on the brake pedal.

**NOTE:** To determine if a vehicle has ABS, review your owner’s manual. There may also be an illuminated ABS symbol on your dashboard immediately after starting the engine.

If you stop quickly or your vehicle begins to skid, and your vehicle:

- Has just rear-wheel ABS (common in light trucks), ease up on the brake pedal with just enough pressure to allow the front wheels to roll again so you can steer.
- Has rear-wheel drive and goes into a skid, stop braking and turn the steering wheel into the direction of the skid.
- Has front-wheel drive, steer where you want to go and carefully accelerate to keep the vehicle moving.
- Does **not** have ABS, lightly and briefly “pump” the brakes. To pump the brakes, you should:

1. Push the brake pedal hard.
2. As the vehicle begins to skid, quickly let up on the brake. Push it down again quickly.
3. Use this quick, pumping action until the vehicle is stopped.

## **IF YOUR BRAKES FAIL**

If your brakes fail, you should:

1. Downshift into a lower gear.
2. If your vehicle:
  - Has four-wheel ABS, apply firm pressure on the brake pedal.
  - Has just rear-wheel ABS (common in light trucks), ease up on the brake pedal with just enough pressure to allow the front wheels to roll again.
  - Does not have an ABS, pump the brake pedal.
3. Apply the parking brake, but be ready to release it if the vehicle begins to skid.
4. Remember you can still steer and swerve. You could steer into bushes or something soft.
5. Sound your horn and flash your lights to warn other drivers.
6. When you no longer need to change direction and have stopped, turn off the ignition. (Turning off the key locks the steering wheel of many vehicles, so do NOT turn off the ignition until you come to a complete stop.)

## **DRIVING IN EXTREME HEAT**

- Watch the temperature gauge for overheating.
- Avoid driving at high speeds for long periods.
- Use low gear in “creeping” traffic.
- Turn off the air conditioner, if the engine is overheating.

## **HYDROPLANING**

If water on the road is deeper than the tread of the tires, a fast moving vehicle may glide over the water and not touch the road surface. This condition is called hydroplaning. If you can see reflections on the pavement, or the vehicle ahead leaves no tracks on the water, your vehicle could hydroplane. To avoid hydroplaning:

- Drive slowly.
- Maintain good tire tread.
- Have your tires properly inflated.
- If possible, steer around water.
- If you hear a sloshing sound from the tires, especially when changing directions, slow down.

## **DRIVING IN EXTREME COLD**

If you have not added antifreeze, the water in the radiator may be freezing. Your engine will overheat if this happens. After starting the engine, watch the temperature gauge for signs of overheating. Use the defroster or slightly open your windows to keep them from “fogging up.”

## TIRE BLOWOUT

Teach your teen to always keep both hands on the wheel. If a tire goes flat suddenly, you need both hands to control the vehicle. If you have a sudden tire blowout, you should:

1. Hold the steering wheel tightly and steer straight ahead.
2. Slow down gradually. Take your foot off the gas pedal slowly, but do not hit the brakes.
3. Let the vehicle slow to a stop, completely off the road.
4. Apply the brakes when the vehicle is almost stopped.

## WHEN YOU ARE STUCK IN SNOW OR MUD

1. Shift into a low gear and keep the front wheels straight.
2. Gently step on the gas pedal.
3. Avoid spinning the wheels. Drive forward as far as possible.
4. Shift into reverse and slowly back up as far as possible. Do not spin the wheels.
5. Shift into a low gear again and drive forward.
6. Repeat a forward-backward motion until the vehicle rolls free.
7. In deep mud or snow, put boards, tree branches, etc., under the tires. Never do this when the tires are spinning.

You may avoid getting stuck if you always carry chains in your vehicle. Put chains on the tires before driving in snow or mud.

## STUCK ACCELERATOR

If your accelerator becomes stuck, you should:

1. Shift to neutral.
2. Apply the brakes.
3. Keep your eyes on the road.
4. Look for a way out.
5. Warn other drivers by honking and flashing your emergency lights.
6. Try to drive the vehicle safely off the road.
7. When you no longer need to change direction and have stopped, turn off the ignition. (Turning off the key locks the steering wheel of many vehicles, so do NOT turn off the ignition until you come to a complete stop.)

## SAFE DRIVER CHECKLIST

Use the checklist on the next page when your teen has finished practicing all the driving skills discussed in this guide. Take your teen on a long “test” ride. As you ride, check your teen’s driving against the checklist. Be sure that your teen is following the safe driving habits listed. Check (✓) each item you see your teen doing correctly. This list should tell you where your teen driver still needs practice or help. Your teen should, as a habit, do all of the things listed before taking the driving test at the DMV.

### **Locate the Controls**

Your teen locates the following controls and explains how they work:

- 4-way flashers.
- Emergency and parking brakes.
- Headlights.
- Heater/defroster.
- Horn.
- Windshield wipers.

### **Before Starting the Vehicle**

- Adjusts the mirrors.
- Fastens safety belt.

### **Starting the Vehicle**

- 1. Vehicle is in “Park” or “Neutral.”
- 2. Foot is on the brake pedal.
- 3. Starts vehicle smoothly.

### **Moving Forward**

- 1. Signals.
- 2. Looks over shoulder before pulling into traffic.
- 3. Uses both hands on opposite sides of the steering wheel.

### **Stopping**

- 1. Stops when necessary behind crosswalks or limit lines.
- 2. Uses correct foot on the brake pedal.

### **Turns**

- 1. Signals and slows for turns.
- 2. Begins and ends turns in the correct lane.
- 3. Yields right-of-way, when necessary.
- 4. Accepts legal right-of-way, when safe.
- 5. Sees and reacts to hazards.

### **Backing**

- 1. Before moving, surveys the surroundings for possible obstacles.
- 2. Looks back over right shoulder when backing.

- 3. Checks the mirrors and glances quickly to the side while backing.

### **Changing Lanes**

- 1. Signals.
- 2. Checks the mirrors.
- 3. Checks over shoulder.
- 4. Changes lanes safely.

### **Parking on Hills**

- 1. Signals.
- 2. Curbs the wheels properly.
- 3. Sets the parking brake.
- 4. Signals and checks over shoulder before entering traffic.

### **Parallel Parking**

- 1. Signals.
- 2. Looks over shoulder while backing.
- 3. Yields to other vehicles, when necessary.

### **Entering the Freeway**

- 1. Checks traffic flow.
- 2. Signals.
- 3. Times entry onto freeway.
- 4. Checks over shoulder when accelerating into gap in traffic.
- 5. Signals early and slows down on the exit ramp to posted speed limit.
- 6. Adjusts speed to road conditions.

### **Defensive Driving Techniques**

- 1. Checks the mirrors frequently and before braking.
- 2. Checks the cross streets before entering intersections.
- 3. Checks the signal lights and signs.
- 4. Keeps eyes “moving” (watching sides and middle of road).
- 5. Keeps a “space cushion” around the vehicle.
- 6. Follows at a safe distance.

## IS YOUR TEEN READY FOR A LICENSE?

When your teen drives well enough to pass the DMV driving test for a provisional driver license, ask yourself the questions below to confirm that you have not overlooked some necessary driving practice or knowledge:

- Have we discussed high-risk conditions, such as driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs? (See pages 3 and 4.)
- Does my teen know what to do if he/she feels it is unsafe to drive because he/she has been drinking alcohol and/or using drugs, or is fatigued?
- Have we practiced in heavy city traffic?
- Have we practiced on one-way streets and at intersections with three-way signals?
- Have we practiced using a center left turn lane?
- Have we practiced on small country roads, on gravel roads with potholes, and on hills?
- Have we practiced in bad weather?
- Have we practiced at night?
- Have we practiced entering, exiting, and driving on a freeway?
- Have we discussed what to do if an emergency occurs? (See pages 20–24.)
- Have we discussed what to do if a collision occurs?

- Does my teen know I can cancel his/her license at any time and for any reason? Does my teen know I **will** cancel the license if he/she drives irresponsibly or violates traffic laws?

When you are sure your teen is ready for a license, confirm that the required hours are logged on the “Supervised Driving Log” on pages 28–30. Then, sign the certifying line of his/her instruction permit. Your teen is now ready to take a driving test with a DMV examiner if he/she has held his or her permit for at least six months from the day it was issued. (The waiting period is mandatory even though your teen may have already practiced all the driving skills listed on page 7.) Your teen must not drive to the DMV office alone on the day of the driving test.

## TIPS FOR YOUR TEEN ABOUT DMV’S TESTS

### *Vision and Law Tests*

- Make a morning appointment, if possible.
- Be rested after a good night’s sleep.
- Bring your glasses or wear your contact lenses.
- Be sure the lenses of your glasses are clean.
- Visit the DMV website at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) to use the Driving Knowledge Tutorial and take one or more of the sample written tests.

- Take a couple of days to study the information in the *California Driver Handbook*.
- Read the test questions carefully. Do not read anything extra into the questions. There will be one correct answer. The other two answer choices will be either obviously wrong or not appropriate for the question asked.
- All the questions are taken from the *California Driver Handbook*. If you miss a question, a DMV employee can show you on which page of the current *California Driver Handbook* to find the correct answer.
- Do not be nervous.
- You are allowed to take three law tests before a new application fee must be paid.
- If you fail the law test, you must wait one week before taking the test again.

### **Practice First**

- You must have practiced for 50 hours, including 10 hours of night driving, *before* going to the DMV for the driving test.
- Practice making left and right turns at busy intersections, as well as, in residential neighborhoods.
- Remember to look over your right shoulder for a right lane change and over your left shoulder for a left lane change.
- Use your turn signals for all lane changes and turns.

### **Driving Test**

- Make a morning appointment, if possible.
- Be sure your vehicle is properly registered and bring proof of financial responsibility (insurance).
- Confirm that your instructor has signed your permit.
- Make sure your parent has signed your permit verifying the 50 hours of training.
- Bring a licensed driver, who is 25 years old, or older and has a valid California driver license.
- Be sure you are thoroughly familiar with the vehicle you use for the driving test. You must know where all the controls are located and how to use them. Do not borrow a vehicle for the driving test, unless necessary. It will be one more thing to make you nervous.
- Relax!
- If you fail the driving test, you must wait two weeks and pay a retest fee before taking the test again.

## SUPERVISED DRIVING LOG

A parent, guardian, spouse, or an adult 25 years of age or older, who has a valid California driver license may use this log to track the required 50 hours of supervised driving practice (10 hours must be night driving) for teens. The supervised driving practice is in addition to the driver training requirements. The use of this log is optional and is provided for your convenience. If needed, photocopy this driving log before use.

Date	Driving Skills Practiced	Driving Time Hours/Minutes 30 min, 1hr, etc.		Skills need- ing more practice  (use abbrev.)	Adult's Initials
		DAY	NIGHT		
<i>1/16</i>	<i>Sample - SSC, LC, BUC, RT, LT</i>	<i>1 hr.</i>	<i>30 min.</i>	<i>BUC, LC</i>	<i>Mom</i>
TOTAL PRACTICE TIME					

## DRIVING SKILLS TO PRACTICE

All skills in each level should be mastered before attempting the next level. See page 7 for more information. The abbreviations listed below can be used to identify the driving skills practiced and those that need more practice.

### **Level I**

- Backing Up the Car (BUC)
- Driving a “Stick” (DS)
- Lane Choice and Control (LCC)
- Left Turn/Right Turn (LT/RT)
- Looking Ahead in Traffic (LAT)
- Starting and Stopping the Car (SSC)

### **Level II**

- Intersections (I)
- Keeping Space Around the Car (KSAC)
- Lane Changes (LC)
- Practicing in Traffic (PT)

### **Level III**

- Parking on Hills (PH)
- Parallel Parking (PP)
- U-Turn (UT)

### **Level IV**

- Freeway Driving (FD)
- Night Driving (ND)
- Special Problems and Emergencies (SPE)



## SUPERVISED DRIVING LOG

Continue to use this log to keep track of your teen's behind-the-wheel practice and their progress toward safe driving.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Driving Skills Practiced</i>	<i>Driving Time Hours/Minutes 30 min, 1hr, etc.</i>		<i>Skills need- ing more practice  (use abbrev.)</i>	<i>Adult's Initials</i>
		<b>DAY</b>	<b>NIGHT</b>		
<b>TOTAL PRACTICE TIME</b>					

## SUPERVISED DRIVING LOG

Continue to use this log to keep track of your teen's behind-the-wheel practice and their progress toward safe driving.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Driving Skills Practiced</i>	<i>Driving Time Hours/Minutes 30 min, 1hr, etc.</i>		<i>Skills need- ing more practice  (use abbrev.)</i>	<i>Adult's Initials</i>
		<b>DAY</b>	<b>NIGHT</b>		
<b>TOTAL PRACTICE TIME</b>					



When a car is  
no longer a toy...

Visit [dmv.ca.gov](http://dmv.ca.gov) for the  
Parent-Teen Training Guide



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