

FOR PARENTS:

28 hours in the car

Parental assistance serves to complement both class and the practice-driving portions of Driver Education. Parents need to encourage students to study and drive at home while taking the course in school and after its completion. The parents' role is one of reinforcing skills introduced by the Driver Education instructor. For every hour of driving time scheduled at school, the student should have a minimum of four hours of driving time at home. Don't worry, you are not expected to replace the Driver Education instructor. Your job is to help your teen practice what he/she learns and encourage him or her to develop safe habits and skills.

Here are a few tips for supervising your teen's driving practice:

- **Plan routes that allow your teen to practice different skills.** Driving to and from the same grocery store every week will not adequately prepare your teen to be a skilled, licensed driver.
- **Take your teen out for driving practice under as many different conditions as possible.** Safe drivers are experienced in responding to changing weather, visibility, traffic volume, and speed.
- **Take your teen to get a license only when you and your teen feel the time is right.** Even though they are eligible to get a license after six months of holding an instructional permit and a minimum age of 16, many teens may not be ready for a license that quickly. *You need to decide when your teen has demonstrated the skills and attitude to drive without an adult.* You can help keep track of which skills your teen has performed well and which need more practice.
- **Set a good example when you drive.** Your teen is much more likely to be a calm and courteous driver, wear a safety belt, and obey the speed limit if you do it first.
- **Provide a safe motor vehicle for practice sessions.** If your car needs a tune-up, take your teen along for a lesson in car maintenance. Now is the time to talk about costs of having a car and whether or not your teen needs to contribute.
- **Fill out a contract with your teen that makes all your rules and consequences very clear.** Be sure to enforce the rules, even when your teen protests. Offer your teen praise and rewards for responsible driving.
- **Work with your teen's Driver Education Instructor.** Find out how your teen is performing in class and which skills he/she needs to work on.
- **Meet your insurance agent.** Your agent should discuss costs, responsibilities, and safety issues of driving with you and your teen. Research shows that teens who pay for a portion of the maintenance and insurance of the family car are more likely to be safe drivers.