

*Traffic Safety Education  
Life Long Learning Process*

**Recommendations on the  
Delivery of Driver Education**

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## **DELIVERY OF DRIVER EDUCATION**

Historically, driver education has consisted of a minimum of thirty (30) clock hours of classroom instruction and six (6) clock hours of laboratory instruction. This framework was developed in the 1930s, primarily to fit the “Carnegie Unit” of instruction that school systems use for graduation requirements.

With the passage of the “Highway Safety Act of 1966,” driver education became one of the primary countermeasures in combating collision and fatality rates on the nation’s highways. Since that time, professional driver educators have taken the position that the “30 and 6” time period was insufficient for the amount of knowledge and skill instruction necessary to prepare a new driver for the complex driving task. Population increase, road-building and new vehicle technologies have made the task of driving even more complex and challenging in the new millennium.

States that have adopted “Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL)” laws include additional on-street practice time for new drivers. This additional practice time, with a supervising licensed driver, is showing positive results in the reduction of collisions by newly licensed drivers. With GDL, states have had the opportunity to include strong educational components as part of the law. States that have implemented new or improved existing driver education programs are in need of sound methods to deliver these programs.

Program content is an essential element for improved driver education. However, improved content alone will not change the behaviors necessary for new drivers. The delivery of this program must be enhanced. Increased time in classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction is the first step in providing more experience for new drivers. The second step is to schedule the learning experiences so that new drivers have a long enough time frame to learn and practice the behaviors necessary for driving a motor vehicle safely.

Increased time in classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction alone will not assure that the novice driver gains sufficient amount and quality of knowledge and skill necessary to become a safe driver of a motor vehicle. Driver education prior to or during the learning phase of a comprehensive Graduated Driver Licensing System is an important part of a comprehensive highway safety effort. Driver education programs must be enhanced so that content is certifiable as comprehensive, meeting acceptable established standards. Teachers/instructors should be certified to teach these students. Programs should be periodically evaluated and certified as meeting established standards.

This document will make minimum recommendations about delivering driver education on a number of important topics including:

- Program Definitions
- Program Approval

- Program Scheduling
- Recommended Time Frames
- Teacher Certification/Licensing
- Program Enhancements
- Classroom/Equipment Specifications
- Training Vehicle/Equipment Specifications
- Evaluation Criteria
- Record keeping
- Parent/Guardian/Mentor Involvement
- Serving Students with Special Needs
- Funding Alternatives
- Conclusion

States and local agencies are encouraged to deliver driver education beyond these recommended minimums.

## ***DEFINITIONS***

**Approved Course-** The driver education course of instruction that is approved by the state agency designated the responsibility for approving such course.

**Behind-the-Wheel Instruction-** That portion of the driver education laboratory instruction where the enrollee is actually seated behind the wheel of a vehicle or simulated vehicle, operating it either in real or simulated traffic situations, through the direct guidance of a certified driver education teacher.

**Certified Driver Education Teacher-** Those persons authorized by the state agency responsible for administering the driver education program to conduct any and all phases of the approved driver education course, or, those persons that hold a current “National Driver Education Teaching Certificate/Credential” as administered by the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association (ADTSEA).

**Classroom Instruction-** That portion of the driver education program, occurring in a classroom environment, under the direct guidance of a certified driver education teacher, that enables student learning to occur through varied instructional methodology.

**Clock Hour-** Instructional time equal to sixty (60) minutes.

**Commercial School Program-** An approved driver education program offered by a for-profit agency where the program is financially supported primarily by fees paid by enrollees.

**Concurrent Scheduling-** Scheduling the driver education course so that there is no significant break of instruction between the classroom and laboratory phases.

**Driver Education Program-** The course of study, under the direct guidance of a certified driver education teacher that, upon successful completion, enables an enrollee to acquire the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to safely operate a motor vehicle within the highway transportation system. As defined in this document, the recommended driver education course of study shall consist of at least forty-five (45) clock hours of classroom instruction and eight (8) clock hours of on-street instruction or, the course of study approved by the state agency responsible for administering a particular state’s driver education program.

**Driving Range Instruction-** That portion of the driver education laboratory instruction that enables the certified driver education teacher, positioned outside multiple cars and using electronic or oral communication, to teach and supervise several students simultaneously, each of who is operating a car on an off-street driving range designed specifically for such instruction.

**Driving Simulation Instruction-** That portion of the driver education laboratory instruction, under the direct guidance of a certified driver education teacher, that uses a system of which includes vehicle simulator units with an instructor unit. The system includes multiple programs that present driving situations (scenarios) likely to occur in actual driving performance on the street and which require the student to evaluate risk and make decisions and responses applicable to the situation presented.

**Integrated Scheduling-** Classroom and laboratory driver education shall be scheduled to include a mix of instruction in both phases throughout the duration of the driver education course.

**Laboratory Instruction-** That portion of the driver education program, under the direct guidance of a certified driver education teacher, that enables students to learn through practice driving experiences, either real or simulated through the use of a multiple-car, off-street driving range or driving simulator system.

**National Driver Education Teaching Certificate/Credential-** The certificate issued by the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association to those persons successfully completing the requirements for the National Driver Education Teaching Certificate/Credential.

**Observation Time-** The time an enrollee in a driver education course spends in the vehicle, under the direct guidance of a certified driver education teacher, observing another driver operate the controls of the vehicle.

**On-Street Instruction-** That portion of the driver education laboratory instruction where the student is driving the car on local streets and highways, in real and varied traffic situations, under the direct guidance of a certified driver education teacher seated in the car directly beside the student.

**Public School Program-** An approved driver education program, offered in a public school, by a non-profit agency that is supported in whole or part by public education funds.

**Restricted Instructional Permit-** An optional first stage in driver licensing whereby a permit for only driver education instruction is issued by a state licensing agency.

**Segment One Driver Education-** In a two-stage driver education program as recommended in Graduated Driver Licensing, stage one is the acquisition and practice of basic driving knowledge, skills and attitudes by the student under the direction of a certified driver education teacher.

**Segment Two Driver Education-** In a two-stage driver education program as recommended in Graduated Driver Licensing, stage two is the further acquisition safe driving practices under the direction of a certified driver education teacher.

## ***PROGRAM APPROVAL***

**General Availability-** The approved driver education course should be available to all physically and mentally qualified individuals who meet licensing requirements in a state.

Every qualified individual should have an equal opportunity to enroll. This opportunity to enroll should be extended no more than six (6) months prior to licensing age in a state. The course should be available twelve (12) months a year through public schools, private schools, parochial schools and commercial driving schools. Persons under age 18 should be required to obtain enrollment consent from the legally responsible parent or guardian.

**Permits/Licenses-** It is recommended that states adopt a three-stage licensing process as described in the NHTSA publication titled Saving Teenage Lives: The Case for Graduated Driver Licensing (Publication DOT HS 808 801, November, 1998). The first stage is the **learner's permit**, the second stage is the **intermediate license** and the third stage is the **full license**. Successful progression through the stages is dependent upon the new driver abiding by the restrictions and rewards within each stage. States may also wish to implement a stage prior to the learner's permit called **restricted instructional permit**, for use in approved driver education instruction only.

**Approving Agency-** States should designate one agency that is responsible for the approval and oversight of that state's driver education program. That agency should establish and adopt rules and regulations for every component of the program. These components include but are not limited to:

- The program approval process
- Curriculum development and approval
- Teacher certification
- Facility approval
- Vehicle procurement and/or inspection and approval
- Instructional equipment
- Enrollment regulations
- Program enhancement approval
- Program funding
- Quality assurance
- Scheduling of the program
- Data collection

## ***PROGRAM SCHEDULING***

This section will address several scheduling alternatives for the driver education course. Each of these is considered an acceptable method of offering the driver education course. Scheduling of driver education is recommended to be integrated and concurrent (see program definitions).

**Time Frames-** The driver education course shall consist of a minimum of forty-five (45) clock hours of classroom instruction and eight (8) clock hours of behind-the-wheel instruction, or equivalent (excluding observation time). If the program is an integrated one, enrollees should take behind-the-wheel instruction in conjunction with classroom instruction. Otherwise, enrollees should complete the classroom instruction before taking

the behind-the-wheel phase. Appropriate classroom instruction must precede any behind-the-wheel instruction.

**Classroom Instruction:**

- Should be integrated with laboratory instruction (or)
- Should be concurrent with laboratory instruction (not more than 30 days should lapse between phases)
- Shall not exceed 90 minutes in a 24-hour period
- Shall not be completed in less than 30 days
- Should have no less than 12 nor more than 30 students per class period
- Should be guided by a state-approved curriculum

**Behind-the-Wheel Instruction:**

- Should be integrated with classroom instruction
- Shall be concurrent with classroom instruction
- Should have not less than two and not more than four students in the car
- Each student should drive no more than 60 minutes and observe no more than 60 minutes per 24-hour period
- Should be integrated with driving simulation and/or driving range instruction if available
- May be in addition to classroom instruction in one 24-hour period

**Scheduling Options** – Driver education may be scheduled in a number of different ways. Several options are presented and considered acceptable, based on the guidelines presented above.

- **Option 1:** Regular School-day Class Elective – Driver education may be scheduled as a regular class during the school day in public and private schools. Classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction, including simulation and/or driving range instruction, occur at times when school is in session. These courses may be credit-bearing courses counting towards graduation credits if so desired by a local and/or state education agencies.
- **Option 2:** “Healthful Living” Class – As traffic safety is justifiably a health issue, driver education classroom instruction may be scheduled as a part of health education. Behind-the-wheel instruction may occur either during the regular school day, with students pulled from regularly scheduled classes on an alternating basis, or conducted before or after school and on weekends.
- **Option 3:** Combination Elective Class – Driver education may be a component of an elective course coupled with another subject such as consumer economics, daily living, transportation issues, 20<sup>th</sup> century innovations, or the like and offered as a credit-bearing class towards graduation.
- **Option 4:** Extended Day Class – Driver education classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction may be conducted before and/or after the regular school day. Limitations must be set and followed on the maximum amount of time for this instruction as this extends the instructional day for the student. This scheduling alternative may also be coupled with regular school day instruction.

- Option 5: After School, Weekend and Summer – Driver education classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction may occur outside the regular school day, on weekends and in the summer months.
- Option 6: Internet or On-line Driver Education – Driver education classroom instruction may be set up to be offered in part or totally through the internet using computers. This type of scheduling is addressed more completely in a later section of this document. A certified teacher with an acceptable scheduling plan would then conduct the behind-the-wheel and/or on-street phases. Behind-the-wheel driver education should not be offered via the internet or through the use of computers, except computers used in driving simulation systems.

## ***TEACHER CERTIFICATION/LICENSING***

This section consists of recommendations for driver education teacher/instructor certification requirements that apply to all teacher/instructors. Specialized course content in driver education teacher preparation should be made available through colleges/universities, community colleges, technical colleges or a national driver education teacher certification/credentialing organization such as the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association (ADTSEA). Driver education teacher preparation courses may be offered for either college credit or continuing education units (CEU).

**College Credits** – A prospective driver education teacher/instructor should complete at least the equivalent of nine (9) semester credits in specialized driver education teacher preparation coursework.

**Continuing Education Units** – A prospective driver education teacher/instructor should complete at least 14.4 continuing education units (144 contact hours) in specialized driver education teacher preparation coursework.

**Specialized Driver Education Teacher Preparation Courses** – The following guidelines identify the courses of instruction that prospective driver education teachers/instructors should complete:

- Driver Task Analysis – or the equivalent of a basic content course in the safe and efficient operation of a motor vehicle (3 credits or 4.8 CEUs)
- Developing Vehicle Operational Skills – or the equivalent of a methodology course in how to teach behind-the-wheel instruction (3 credits or 4.8 CEUs)
- Developing Classroom Knowledge – or the equivalent of a methodology course in how to teach driver education classroom instruction (3 credits or 4.8 CEUs)

**Additional Coursework** – The following recommendations include additional coursework that may be required by the state agency responsible for the driver education program to complete driver education teacher/instructor certification:

- Driver Education Program Management – or the equivalent of a course in state-specific administrative rules, regulations, forms and curriculum (3 credits or 4.8 CEUs)
- Accident Causation and Prevention – or the equivalent of a course in the theories of accident causation and how to prevent them (3 credits or 4.8 CEUs)
- Driver Education for the Physically/Mentally Challenged – or the equivalent of a course in methodology and content for providing driver education to physically or mentally challenged students (3 credits or 4.8 CEUs)
- First Aid and Safety – or the equivalent of course in basic first aid, CPR and other personal safety considerations (3 credits or 4.8 CEUs)
- General Safety Education – or the equivalent course dealing with content in and prevention strategies for home, work, school, transportation and farm accidents (3 credits or 4.8 CEUs)
- Other – additional coursework as approved by the state agency responsible for administering the driver education program

**Continuing Education** – To maintain driver education teacher/instructor certification, states should require periodic continuing education in driver education, safety or methodology instruction. It is recommended that teachers/instructors be required to complete at least a total of six (6) semester credits, or 9.6 Continuing Education Units (96 contact hours) or complete the continuing education requirement prescribed by a national driver education teacher certification/credentialing organization such as the ADTSEA “National Teacher Certification Program” within a subsequent, continuous time period (e.g. three years, five years) to maintain the driver education certificate. The credits or CEUs must be approved by the state agency responsible for the driver education program or the agency may opt to participate in a national organization program such as the ADTSEA program.

**Levels of Certification** – The following identifies minimum levels of certification for delivering driver education specific phases of the program content:

- **Level A** (Driver Education Classroom Teacher/Instructor) – successfully completes six (6) credits or 9.6 continuing education units (96 contact hours) in basic driver education content, methodology for teaching driver education classroom instruction and continuing education requirement. Persons completing this requirement could teach only driver education classroom instruction.
- **Level B** (Driver Education Behind-the-Wheel Teacher/Instructor) – successfully completes six (6) credits or 9.6 (96 contact hours) continuing education units in basic driver education content, methodology for teaching behind-the-wheel instruction and continuing education requirement. Persons completing this requirement could teach only driver education behind-the-wheel instruction.
- **Level C** (Fully Certified Driver Education Teacher/Instructor) – successfully completes nine (9) credits or 14.4 (144 contact hours) continuing education units in basic driver education content, methodology for teaching driver education classroom instruction, methodology for teaching behind-the-wheel instruction and

continuing education requirement. Persons completing this requirement could teach either driver education classroom or behind-the-wheel instruction.

### **Additional Certification Requirements**

Agencies in charge of the driver education program should require persons wishing to teach driver education in a state to meet the following:

- Possess a valid driver license
- Possess at least 5 years of acceptable (as identified by the state agency responsible for the driver education program) driving experience prior to initial certification
- Maintain a state-specified acceptable driving record and provide a copy annually to the agency
- Be of good moral character
- Successfully complete a state-specified physical exam bi-annually
- Provide a state-specified criminal history check annually

### ***PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS***

There are a number of ways to enhance the driver education program. Traditional driving simulators, multiple-car off-street driving ranges and recently developed computer programs are typical methodologies to accomplish enhancement. Additionally, new curriculum materials may be developed to enhance and improve an existing driver education curriculum or create a new one.

#### **Driving Simulation (see “Definitions” section)**

Traditional, fixed-based driving simulators provide a valuable tool in instruction, diagnosis of driver problems, remedial instruction and, practice in perceptual and procedural skills. Additionally, interactive driving simulators provide an equally valuable tool to enhance a driver education program.

If driving simulators are used to enhance a program, a fully certified driver education teacher trained in the proper role and use of simulators should teach the instruction. Simulation instruction should proceed from simple to complex and follow a designed curriculum.

If simulation instruction is used to replace a portion of the on-street instruction, a substitution ratio of four hours of simulation instruction to one hour of on-street instruction (4:1) should be used. Simulation instruction may be used to replace a maximum of three (3) hours of on-street instruction.

#### **Driving Range (see “Definitions” section)**

Multiple-car, off-street driving ranges provide a means of instructing new drivers in basic skill exercises such as starting and stopping, turning, parking, merging and some

perceptual skills. Advanced maneuvers such as passing, skid control, off-road recovery and others may be taught on the range.

If a driving range is used to enhance a program, a fully certified driver education teacher trained in the proper use of the driving range should teach the instruction. Range instruction should proceed from simple to complex and follow a state-approved curriculum.

If range instruction is used to replace a portion of the on-street instruction, a substitution ratio of two hours of range instruction to one hour of on-street instruction (2:1) should be used. Range instruction may be used to replace a maximum of two (2) hours of on-street instruction.

No combination of driving range and/or driving simulation instruction should be substituted for more than three (3) hours of on-street instruction.

### **Computer Programs**

There have been a number of computer software programs developed for use in driver education classes that have access to computers. State governments and commercial vendors have made these available either at no charge or for a fee. These include instructional-type narrative programs, decision-making programs and situational-type driving programs that present an array of scenes for the driver to negotiate. General topics include basic control maneuvers, advanced maneuvers, making choices about alcohol/drug use and driving, and other traffic safety-related categories.

The decision to use computer programs to enhance a driver education program should be based on several criteria:

- The program directly meets and helps achieve the goals and objectives of the driver education program.
- The program is user-friendly and accessible to all students.
- The program includes consequences for making incorrect skill, knowledge or attitudinal decisions or actions.
- The program provides remedial attempts and eventual success for all students.

Computer programs of this nature should be used to enhance, not replace classroom driver education. Use of these programs should be guided by a fully certified driver education teacher, trained in the use of computers in education/training applications or with the assistance of a person trained in the use of computers and computer programs.

### **Internet or “On-line” Driver Education Programs**

Offering driver education classroom instruction “on-line” is a method of accomplishing the classroom time requirement. This type of instruction should be based upon the most

up-to-date curriculum available and include current resources accessible by all students. A typical driver education course being offered on-line should:

- ✓ Include a site map
- ✓ Be interactive and engaging
- ✓ Contain a calendar of events
- ✓ Contain a course syllabus
- ✓ Specifically state instructional objectives
- ✓ Include course content and a glossary of terms
- ✓ Contain course material and present a variety of mediums to accomplish the objectives (video, graphics, web pages, links to resources, etc.)
- ✓ Utilize on-line discussion boards
- ✓ Utilize teacher/student e-mail for communication purposes
- ✓ Utilize chat rooms for teacher/student interaction
- ✓ Provide students instant feedback as to class progress and grading
- ✓ Contain assessment and progress tools such as assignments, self-tests and quizzes
- ✓ Contain specific on-line practice quiz and testing components
- ✓ Contain prescribed validation and security measures to ensure accuracy and privacy.
- ✓ Testing for successful completion of the program should take place in-person at a designated testing center.

There should be an appropriate amount of face-to-face classroom time with a certified driver education teacher upon completion of an internet-based classroom program, but before behind-the-wheel and/or on-street instruction begins. The behind-the-wheel instruction phase of driver education should not be attempted by computer-assisted methods. It should occur only in a car.

### ***CLASSROOM/EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS***

The classroom phase of driver education should be taught in a facility that is conducive to learning and equivalent to any other subject discipline. The facility should meet at least minimum state, OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Act) and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements for all classrooms. Space should accommodate a maximum of 30 individuals per class. Seating and writing space for each enrollee should be provided. Specifications should include requirements for proper heating, cooling and ventilation; sanitary facilities; lighting and electrical; exits; fire suppression; accommodations for the physically challenged.

#### **Classroom Instructional Equipment**

Each student should receive an approved driver education textbook that may be taken home and returned to class each day. Driver education textbooks should be replaced every five years so that the most up-to-date information is conveyed. A state driving manual or handbook is not considered a textbook but serve as an excellent resource tool

for instruction. Instructional equipment should be available to accommodate the resources necessary for the delivery of the classroom curriculum. This list includes:

- TV/VCR (minimum 25-inch diagonal display)
- Cart, stand, electrical cords, power strip
- Overhead projector
- Screen
- Chalkboard, marker board, flipchart

Additional equipment that could be provided include:

- Slide projector
- Computer(s)
- Instructional software
- Laptop computer/LCD projector, connectors
- Traffic board(s)
- State/local maps
- Laser pointer
- Traffic templates

The instructor should be provided with a desk, chair, access to a filing system for record keeping and typical instructional support equipment such as pens, paper, tape, stapler, transparency masters, copying resources, bookshelves, corkboards/push-pins, mailing resources, telephone, scheduling book, calendar, grade book and the like.

### ***TRAINING VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS/EQUIPMENT***

Behind-the-wheel instruction is the most crucial phase of driver education. This is where the student applies what he/she has learned in the classroom and through enhancements. Cars used for driver education behind-the-wheel instruction should meet state inspection standards or, if none exist, be inspected at least annually by a state-approved inspection facility or the agency responsible for the state's driver education program. The size of the car should comfortably accommodate up to four adult-sized individuals. It is recommended that cars be in the "compact" or "intermediate" size classification. It is recommended that cars used for behind-the-wheel driver education be no older than five years from the current year of use or should not exceed 100,000 miles of instructional use in the program.

In addition to the standard equipment and safety features that are included on most cars, minimum vehicle specifications for driver education purposes should include:

- Automatic transmission (standard transmission vehicles may be available on an as-needed basis for students wishing/needing to learn manual shifting)
- Power or power-assisted steering

- Power or power-assisted brakes
- Anti-lock brake system
- Air conditioning
- Two side view mirrors (driver and passenger side)
- Bucket or split-bench front seats
- Center-pull parking/emergency brake
- Air bags

Vehicles used for driver education purposes should be used for instruction only. They are considered an extension of the driver education classroom.

### **Vehicle Procurement**

Most major vehicle manufacturers offer incentives to car dealers who provide training vehicles for use in local driver education programs. Acquiring vehicles for use in driver education may come from one of several sources:

- Vehicle leasing
- Free-loan vehicles
- Vehicle purchase
- Donations

### **Vehicle Insurance**

Driver education vehicles must be insured above and beyond what is usually the minimum amount required by individual state statutes for liability and property damage. It is recommended that liability and property damage amounts be at a minimum \$250,000/\$500,000/\$100,000 (interpreted as \$250,000 for a single individual's injuries/\$500,000 for multiple individual's injuries/\$100,000 for damage to property). The same amounts are recommended for states with "no-fault" insurance statutes. It is recommended that additional optional insurance coverage be purchased to cover the repair to the driver education vehicle from other circumstances. It is also recommended that optional medical payments insurance be purchased to cover injuries that may occur to persons within the driver education vehicle. It is recommended that programs work with local insurance providers to provide the most complete coverage.

### **Vehicle Instructional Equipment**

The following list includes equipment that is essential to safe, efficient and proper delivery of behind-the-wheel instruction:

- Dual instructor brake
- Dual instructor rear-view mirror
- Identification sign(s)
- First aid kit (administer first aid only if qualified)

- Fire extinguisher (at least UL rated 5-B:C)

The dual instructor brake and rear-view mirror are necessary for the safety of the occupants in the driver education car and the on the roadways. Identification signs on the car provide a means to other roadway users of understanding that instruction is taking place and a possible warning of unexpected maneuvers by the driver. These may be either car-top, magnetic-type or rubber holder-type signs that contain the words “DRIVER EDUCATION” and/or “STUDENT DRIVER.” If magnetic-type signs are used, it is suggested that they be on all four sides of the vehicle. It is recommended that the sign background color be light, with the lettering a dark color (e.g. yellow/black, white/red or the likes). Lettering should be a minimum of three inches high to a maximum of six inches.

Additional instructional equipment that should be considered for use in behind-the-wheel instruction includes:

- Eye-check mirror
- Instructor clipboard/in-car traffic board
- Observer activity sheets
- Hand-held audio cassette recorder/player
- Timing device (e.g. stopwatch)
- Hand-held computer device for instruction/record keeping (e.g. “Palm Pilot” or similar)
- Brake and accelerator pedal extensions
- Appropriate seat cushion(s)

## ***EVALUATION CRITERIA***

Evaluation of driver education will be addressed in three ways. The first is evaluation of driver education as a subject discipline. The second is the evaluation of the individual driver education course itself. The third is evaluation of each new driver progressing through an individual driver education course.

### **Driver Education Program Evaluation (Introduction)**

Novice driver education as a discipline provides a service to all those who wish to obtain a driver license. It provides the knowledge, skills and attitudes for basic driving skills in a complex transportation system. Lifelong driver education provides a service to those who wish to improve their driving skills and maintain knowledge and skills to deal effectively in a complex transportation system. In conjunction with other crash reduction programs and efforts, a primary goal of driver education is to help reduce crashes and resulting injuries and fatalities. Traditionally public information and education campaigns and courses, aggressive and innovative enforcement efforts and improved vehicle and roadway engineering programs have been the three-pronged approach used to reduced injuries and fatalities on the nation’s highways. This combined effort has been

effective in improving the total traffic safety picture. Driver education is an integral part of the total education package.

### **Evaluating the Individual Driver Education Course**

In establishing and evaluating individual driver education courses, states must adopt quality assurance standards and evaluate courses based on these standards. It is recommended that states adopt standards and evaluate courses based on the following general criteria:

- Course curriculum – Does the program use the most up-to-date, state-approved curriculum based on national standards? Does the curriculum provide objectives, learning activities, content, resources and measurable evaluation criteria to make delivery and completion successful?
- Teacher certification – Have minimum teacher certification standards been established based on national standards? Do all driver education teachers meet these standards? Are continuing education/professional development standards in place and monitored?
- Facilities and equipment – Is the course delivered in an approved classroom? Are there sufficient and proper classroom equipment, texts and supplies for successful delivery of classroom instruction? Do the driver education vehicles meet standards? Are the vehicles properly equipped for safe, successful learning to occur?
- Record keeping – Does the program meet standards established for record keeping, both for the course itself and individual student records? Does each student receive at least the minimum time required? For students who complete the course, is there documentation regarding successful and unsuccessful completion?

### **Evaluating the Individual Driver Education Student**

Evaluation of the student should be based on the objectives stated in the driver education curriculum. There are two types of evaluation that need to occur with each student enrolled in a driver education course. The first is ongoing evaluation as the student is progressing through the course. Students should receive immediate feedback on progress made or remedial instruction needed both in classroom and behind-the-wheel phases (including both range and simulation instruction). The second is summative or end of phase (classroom and behind-the-wheel) evaluation. Driver education classroom evaluation should be based on the content included in the national standards document titled “Traffic Safety Education Life Long Learning Process Defining Driver Education.” Behind-the-wheel evaluation should be based on the skills and processes identified in the document titled “ADTSEA Minimum Standards for In-Car Performance” developed by the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association. This end-of-course evaluation should not be based on driving range or driving simulation “scores” or grades.

On-going classroom evaluation may be accomplished in several ways. Evaluation of homework assignments, worksheets, reports, verbal feedback to class questions and role-playing activities or demonstrations, and end-of-unit tests are all successful ways to accomplish on-going classroom evaluation. On-going behind-the-wheel evaluation may occur through verbal feedback from the instructor to the new driver on skills and processes practiced in the car. In-car activity sheets, used by student observers, may be evaluated. Record keeping is essential to continuous progress reports in behind-the-wheel instruction.

An end-of-course behind-the-wheel evaluation should be conducted for each student. The skills evaluated must be based on the objectives stated and accomplished in this phase of the course. Thorough evaluation of a new driver must be based on a comprehensive, quality driver education curriculum.

## ***RECORD-KEEPING IN DRIVER EDUCATION***

In that minimum time and performance standards have been set or recommended for driver education, accurate record keeping is essential to quality assurance. It can also be an important factor from the standpoint of program liability. These records should be reviewed periodically by the state agency responsible for the driver education program. Records should be kept for all phases of the driver education program, including program enhancement (e.g. driving simulation, driving range, computer-assisted programs and the like) that include time and performance results.

### **Program/School Records**

The individual driver education program/school should keep, at a minimum, the following records:

- Instructor certification, renewal, continuing education, etc.
- Instructor driving record
- Payroll
- Individual class summary records
- Individual student records (classroom, simulation, range and in-car)
- Program income (if any) and expenses
- Real property inventory
- General insurance records
- Vehicle procurement, maintenance, insurance and inspection
- Final certificate records (course completion)
- Curriculum (classroom and in-car) and assessments
- Route plans and descriptions

States should decide the length of time records must be maintained before disposal. It is recommended that this be a minimum of five years. If computerized, records may be kept indefinitely.

## **Individual Student Records**

General records for each student enrolled in the driver education program should include:

- Parental/guardian permission form to take the course
- General information sheet giving student's name, address, phone and emergency contact person (legally responsible parent/guardian) address and phone
- Eye exam
- Physical exam (if required)
- Restricted instructional permit (if required)
- Course completion certificate (copy)

Individual student classroom records should include:

- Attendance records (including program enhancements)
- Hours completed
- Remedial instruction records
- Assessment results (quizzes and assignments)
- Instructor name

Individual student in-car records should include:

- General biographical information
- Permit/license number
- Permit/license restrictions (if any)
- Date and time of each in-car instruction lesson
- Brief in-car lesson description of each lesson
- Progress report section for each lesson
- Assessment results (ongoing and final)
- Instructor(s) name
- Student signature (or initials verification) of lesson

## ***PARENT/GUARDIAN/MENTOR INVOLVEMENT***

The involvement of the parent/guardian/mentor in the driver education program is crucial to the success of the program. Parents/guardians have legal responsibility for any minor that is enrolled in the program. Mentors volunteer responsibility by providing the student, regardless of age, with additional on-street driving practice time that is mandated with state Graduated Driver Licensing Laws. States must determine the age and driving experience of a mentor. It is recommended that mentors have at least five years of driving experience.

Parents/guardians/mentors are not expected to replace the instructor, but rather to encourage, supplement and assist in developing a skilled, safe driver. It is the duty of the driver education program to provide the parent/guardian/mentor with the resources necessary for each to successfully participate in the development of the new driver.

These resources may be developed either by a state agency or by the local driver education program. They should include but are not limited to:

- Parent/guardian/mentor meeting with program instructors and administrative staff
- Rules, regulations and expectations of the program
- Schedule(s) for the driver education course
- Classroom guide to assist with the new driver's knowledge of traffic safety
- A "Parent-Teen" contract regarding the use of a family vehicle
- A detailed in-car guide to provide simple to complex additional in-car practice
- Progress reports throughout the course sent to P/G/M
- A final assessment report which includes recommendations for additional skill and perceptual practice

### ***SERVING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS***

In that driver education teachers typically are not trained to provide instruction to persons with special needs (physical or psychological disabilities that may effect a person's driving capabilities), it is recommended that driver education teachers refer these individuals to specially-trained professionals and/or specialized agencies for evaluation and possible training. These resource professionals and agencies include:

- Public school special education teacher
- Occupational therapist
- Audiologist
- Physician
- Psychiatrist/Psychologist
- Vocational rehabilitation specialist
- Public health departments
- Specialized centers for assessment, rehabilitation and training

If a driver education program provides a course for a person who is physically or mentally challenged with special needs, it is recommended that the driver education teacher be provided specialized training in working with a person with a particular disability before the instruction begins. It is also recommended that the teacher be provided the resources necessary to make the course a successful experience for the individual.

### ***FUNDING ALTERNATIVES***

If funding is provided through the state, only programs that have been approved by the agency responsible for driver education should receive the funds. Students completing the approved program would be reported to the agency. The agency would then reimburse the local program for enrollee that completed the course. States have the option of partial or full per student reimbursement.

There are several methods for funding driver education programs and courses that historically have proven effective for providing the resources necessary to operate a driver education program or course. "User fees" have been the most widely accepted of these methods. "User fees" are defined as monies paid by persons directly involved in the instruction or the results of the instruction, or users of the highway transportation system. This would include all those persons receiving the instruction or the benefits of the instruction. Examples include enrollees in the program, licensed drivers and vehicles and insurance providers.

Another source of funding for the driver education program would be "penalty fees." These fees would come from fines collected from users of the highway transportation system for convictions of moving traffic violations that occur within the system.

### **User Fees**

If a state funds driver education through "user fees," several alternatives are available. They include:

- ✓ Full-course tuition paid by the enrollee (laboratory fee)
- ✓ Partial-course tuition (laboratory fee) paid by the enrollee with additional funds provided by the state through other sources
- ✓ The state provides full or partial funding through a dedicated dollar amount added to the cost of the driver license or permit for every license driver
- ✓ The state provides full or partial funding through a dedicated dollar amount added to the cost of each vehicle registration processed in the state
- ✓ The state provides full or partial funding through a dedicated dollar amount added to each insurance policy written by an insurance provider for vehicles registered in the state (assuming that insurance is required to operate a motor vehicle in the state)

### **Penalty Fees**

When a fine is levied against a driver, pedestrian or bicyclist (highway transportation system user), a dedicated dollar amount is attached to the fee to fund the driver education program. The state judicial system would then transfer this amount to the agency responsible for administering and funding the driver education program.

Any method of funding/reimbursement for driver education requires a full accounting system be established for quality assurance purposes. This should be the responsibility of the agency in charge of the state driver education program.

## ***CONCLUSION***

This document addresses recommendations for delivery of driver education. Many options are available to ensure a successful program. The success of driver education depends on the quality of the:

- ✓ Teacher
- ✓ Curriculum
- ✓ Facilities and equipment
- ✓ Administration of the program

There still exists a need for a national curriculum “model” to be developed that would include objectives, learning activities, content information and resources. From this “model” curriculum, states could refine the information to include state-specific rules, regulations, laws and resources. Quality driver education is one part of a total national effort to improve traffic safety in the United States.