

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governor's Teen Safe Driving Task Force

FROM: Legislative Subcommittee (Brendan Campbell, Sherry Chapman, Tim Hollister, James MacPherson, Dean Pagani, and David Preusser)

DATE: January 9, 2008

RE: **Subcommittee Report on Short-Term Legislative Recommendations**

As requested, the Subcommittee met on December 21, 2007 to discuss short-term and long-term legislative recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature. The minutes of that meeting have been posted on the Task Force website.

At that meeting, the Subcommittee considered a preliminary memo prepared by Tim Hollister (copy attached to December 21 minutes) and heard a presentation on Connecticut's GDL laws from Dr. James Hedlund of Highway Safety North in Ithaca, New York. Dr. Hedlund presented his own memo (first attachment to this memo). The Subcommittee reviewed data from Dr. Hedlund that defines Connecticut's teenage driving problem; a "menu" of all of the potential aspects of driver training, licensure, restrictions, and enforcement (second attachment to this memo) and a preliminary list of recommendations for change. The Subcommittee then discussed the preliminary list. This memo presents the Subcommittee's consensus on (1) the key aspects of Connecticut's teenage driving safety issue; and (2) legislative changes that should be considered in the 2008 legislative session. Longer-term legislative, policy, administrative, and educational changes will require further discussion by the full Task Force and will be addressed separately.

(NOTE: In this memo, "teen" is defined as ages 16 – 19. Where data or a recommendation refer to something other than ages 16 – 19, this is stated.)

I. Defining Connecticut's Teen Safe Driving Problem

The Subcommittee reviewed several sources of data and articles. Data for 2006 for Connecticut were considered the most current, reliable, and pertinent. These data document the following:

- Driving is the greatest cause of injury and death among teenagers.

- The causes of, and conditions that cause, accidents, injuries, property damage, and fatalities among teenage drivers – and thus the prime candidates for legislative and regulatory change and improved education and awareness – are clear:
 1. inadequate driver training prior to solo operation and driving with passengers, both number of hours and type of training;
 2. speeding;
 3. issuing learner's permits, or intermediate or full licenses, at too young an age;
 4. repeat offenders not having their licenses suspended or revoked quickly enough, or long enough;
 5. operating under influence of alcohol or drugs;
 6. driving with passengers who are not supervising drivers;
 7. operating while using cell phone/electronic communications;
 8. night driving;
 9. bad weather driving; and
 10. non-use of seat belts.

The question is what we are willing to do to curb these known risk factors.

The following are also clear from the data:

- In Connecticut, in 2006, teenage drivers were involved in 50 fatalities: 24 teenage drivers (aged 16 – 19) died in traffic crashes, and an additional 26 people died in these crashes (14 passengers of the teen driver, 12 other road users).
- In Connecticut, in 2006, drivers aged 16 – 17 had 2,069 injury and fatal crash involvements, which, adjusted for population comparison, is 39 percent higher than the involvement rate for 35 – 49 year olds, which is the group with the safest driving record. (The higher per population crash rate occurred despite the fact that many 16 year olds, and some 17 year olds, are not yet licensed to drive, and once licensed, they tend to drive fewer miles.)
- In Connecticut, in 2006, drivers aged 18 – 19 had 3,221 injury and fatal crash involvements, which, adjusted for population comparison, is 25 percent higher than the involvement rate for 35 – 49 year olds.

- The first three months of unsupervised driving (after the learner's permit period) are the period of highest risk.
- Teenagers are biologically less mature and more prone to engage in high risk behavior than other drivers.
- Connecticut annually issues learner's permits to approximately 36,000 sixteen and seventeen year olds.
- When teens have even one passenger who is not a supervising driver, their crash rate is four times higher than 35 – 49 year old drivers.
- When teens are at 0.08 percent blood alcohol content, their crash rate is three times higher than it would be at 0.00 percent blood alcohol content and above 0.08 percent blood alcohol content, crash rates climb to five and ten times the comparable rate for teen drivers at 0.00 percent blood alcohol level.
- When teens use cell phones, even with a headset or earpiece, their crash rate is four times that of the 35 – 49 year old population.
- In 2006, teenage drivers had the most accidents, and the most serious, during the hours of 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m., and 9:00 p.m. to midnight.

II. Recommendations For 2008 Legislative Action

1. Eliminate "youthful offender" pleas for moving violations.
2. Strengthen penalties under the "Administrative Per Se" program for teenage drivers who fail alcohol, drug, or urine tests.
3. Amend Conn. Gen. Stat. § 14-36g(a)(4) [part of GDL requirements] to require (a) that all passengers in all seats in any vehicle operated by a driver under age 20 wear seat belts; and (b) increase penalties for drivers 16 – 19 years old who do not wear their seat belt, to provide for points toward license suspension/revocation.
4. Revise passenger restrictions for 16 – 19 year olds to sequential periods as follows:
 - (a) During the entire period that a teenage driver holds a learner's permit, except for students who are in the vehicle as part of driving school or driver education instruction, and the instructor, no passengers are permitted except a parent or guardian who is supervising the driver.
 - (b) For first six months after a teenage driver progresses from a learner's permit to a provisional/intermediate license, no passengers except

parent/guardian or one licensed driver over 20, licensed for four years or more, license currently valid.

(c) For next six months, add to allowable passengers immediate family members, no others.

5. Increase the penalties for moving violations committed by teenage drivers (using Massachusetts' newly-adopted and apparently successful matrix, reprinted below, of penalties, suspensions, and revocations as a model).

MASSACHUSETTS LICENSE VIOLATIONS MATRIX

Violation	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense
Passenger Restriction	60 day suspension \$100 reinstatement fee	180 day suspension Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course \$100 reinstatement fee	1 year suspension Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course Full Exam \$100 reinstatement fee
Time Restriction Violation 12:30am-5am	60 day suspension \$100 reinstatement fee	180 day suspension Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course \$100 reinstatement fee	1 year suspension Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course Full Exam \$100 reinstatement fee
Operating to Endanger/ Recklessly or Negligent	180 day suspension \$500 reinstatement	1 year suspension Full exam \$500 Reinstatement	1 year suspension Full exam \$500 Reinstatement
Drag-Racing	1 year suspension Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course & <u>SCARR*</u> Full Exam \$500 reinstatement fee	3 year suspension Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course & <u>SCARR*</u> Full Exam \$1000 reinstatement	3 year suspension Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course & <u>SCARR*</u> Full Exam \$1000 reinstatement
Speeding	90 day suspension Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course & <u>SCARR*</u> \$500 reinstatement fee Full Exam	1 year suspension Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course & <u>SCARR*</u> \$500 reinstatement fee Full Exam	1 year suspension Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course & <u>SCARR*</u> \$500 reinstatement fee Full Exam

MASSACHUSETTS PERMIT VIOLATIONS MATRIX

Violation	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense
Unaccompanied by Licensed Driver	60 day suspension \$100 reinstatement Reapply for Permit	180 day suspension Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course \$100 reinstatement fee Reapply for Permit	1 year suspension \$100 reinstatement fee Reapply for Permit
Drag-Racing	1 year suspension Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course & <u>SCARR*</u> Reapply for Permit \$500 reinstatement fee	3 year suspension Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course & <u>SCARR*</u> Reapply for Permit \$1000 reinstatement fee	3 year suspension Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course & <u>SCARR*</u> Reapply for Permit \$1000 reinstatement fee
Time Restriction Violation 12am-5am	60 day suspension \$100 reinstatement fee Reapply for Permit	180 day suspension Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course \$100 reinstatement fee Reapply for Permit	1 year suspension \$100 reinstatement fee Reapply Permit
Speeding	90 day suspension \$100 reinstatement fee Reapply for Permit	1 year suspension \$100 reinstatement fee Reapply for Permit	1 year suspension \$100 reinstatement fee Reapply for Permit

6. As soon as this can be accomplished administratively, increase the learner's permit period of required, supervised driver training/practice from the current 20 hours to 50 hours.
7. Amend night time driving curfew for drivers 18 and younger from midnight to 10:00 p.m.; retain current exceptions.

Approved by the Subcommittee: 1/9/08

Connecticut's GDL law: current provisions, potential improvements
Briefing material for Governor's Teen Safe Driving Task Force
Subcommittee on Preliminary Legislative Recommendations
J. Hedlund
Dec. 21, 2007

1. Learner's permit
 - A. Minimum age
current CT: age 16
no state has a later starting age (see table)
10 start at 16; 41 start earlier, with 15 the most common age (22 states)
later starting age would reduce crashes, but may well be unrealistic
 - B. Holding period
need substantial holding period to permit supervised driving practice
current CT: must hold for 6 months, reduced to 4 with driver ed
6 months is standard (41 states)
all states with longer holding period have earlier starting age
research shows longer holding periods delay licensure and reduce crashes
reduction in holding period for driver ed provision only in CT and SD
consider extending holding period to 6 months with driver ed, 8 months without
(recommended by CT Teen Safe Driving Partnership)
 - C. Supervised driving
need supervised driving to practice driving skills and safe driving practices
current CT: 20 hours, at home or in driver ed
of 41 states with a requirement, only 3 other states require 20 hours (table)
standard is 40-50 hours
requirement appears to produce more supervised driving
consider expanding to 40-50 hours
2. Intermediate license
 - A. Nighttime restriction
crash risk higher at night; restrictions reduce exposure to high-risk conditions
research shows restrictions generally obeyed, restrictions reduce crashes
current CT: midnight – 5 am
key is starting time
note 2006 data for CT drivers age 16-17 in injury crashes
108 between midnight – 5 am
70 between 11 pm – midnight
80 between 10 pm – 11 pm
85 between 9 pm – 10 pm
so each earlier restricted hour has potential to affect substantial
crashes

19 states currently start nighttime restrictions at 11 pm or earlier (table)
consider starting at 9 or 10 pm

- B. Passenger restrictions
 - crash risk higher with teen passengers; restrictions reduce crash risk
 - research shows restrictions generally obeyed at first, but less so over time
 - restrictions reduce crashes
 - current CT: first 3 months – none other than supervising driver and/or parent
 - next 3 months – family members only
 - longer restricted period may produce lower compliance rates
 - C. Belt use requirement
 - current CT: all front seat passengers age 7+ must wear belts, no rear seat requirement
 - no belt use requirement in GDL law
 - a few states have a belt use provision in GDL law
 - ex: DE – if a teen driver with learner's permit or their passenger under age 18 is unbelted, the learner's permit is suspended for 2 months
 - NC – fine for any unbelted passenger is \$100 (\$25 for regular belt use law), next licensing level delayed
 - research shows belts reduce injury in crashes
 - consider requiring belt use for all passengers of learner's and intermediate licensees
 - penalty could be suspended license, license points, and/or delayed next license stage (recommended by CT Teen Safe Driving Partnership)
3. Unrestricted license
- A. Minimum age
 - current CT is 18 (nighttime restrictions are lifted)
 - unrealistic to set higher minimum age
 - 9 other states have minimum age 18 (table)
 - no proposals on the table to change this

Selected resources

Current GDL requirements, by state: "U.S. Licensing Systems for Young Drivers," IIHS
www.iihs.org/laws/pdf/us_licensing_systems.pdf

Summary of GDL implementation, evaluations, and components, with references: J. Hedlund, Novice teen driving: GDL and beyond, *J. Safety Research* **38** (2007), 259-266.

Summary of research on GDL components: A. Williams, Contribution of the components of graduated licensing to crash reductions, *J. Safety Research* **38** (2007), 177-184.

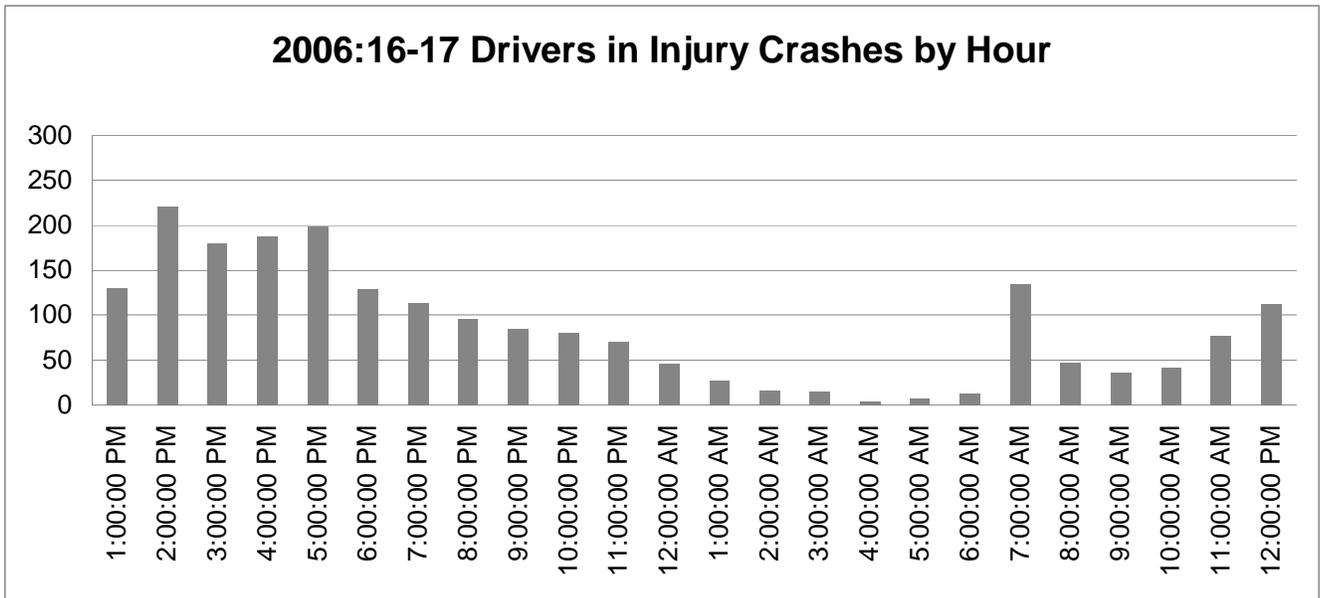
One-page discussions of GDL and components: "Countermeasures That Work," Chapter 6, Young Drivers. www.nhtsa.gov/publications/HS810710/index.htm

One-page fact sheets on learner's permit holding period, nighttime restrictions, passenger restrictions, technology and young drivers, key GDL influences and partners, and research-implementation-evaluation: National Safety Council. www.nsc.org/gdl/.

Graduated Driver Licensing Tool Kit, with one-page discussions of policy overview, what works, nighttime restrictions, passenger restrictions, alcohol restrictions, safety belt restrictions, parental enforcement issues, talking points, and resource list: Centers for Disease Control. www.healthystates.cdc.gov/Publications/

CT crash data: drivers age 16-17 in injury crashes, by hour

	2006	2005	2004
12-5 am	108	109	135
11-12 pm	70	65	80
10-11 pm	80	90	90
9-10 pm	85	98	107



State graduated driver licensing criteria as of December 2007

source: IIHS (www.iihs.org/laws/pdf/us_licensing_systems.pdf)

Minimum age for learner's permit

14	6 states
14-6 mo	2
14-9 mo	1
15	22
15-6	9
15-9	1
16	10, inc. CT

Minimum holding period for learner's permit

none	1 state
10 days	1
2 mo	1
6 mo	41 *, inc CT
9 mo	2 (IL – learner's permit at 15; VA – learner's permit at 15-6)
12 mo	5 (all with learner's permit at 15)

* reduced to 3 mos. in SD with driver ed, reduced to 4 mos. in CT with driver ed

Minimum age for intermediate license

14-6 mo	1 state
15	2
15-6	3
16	33
16-1	1
16-3	2
16-4	1, CT
16-6	7
17	1

Minimum age for unrestricted license (higher without driver ed in 3 states)

16	7 states
16-6 mo	10
16-9	1
17	19
17-1	1
17-6	1
17-9	1
17-11	1
18	10, inc CT

Supervised driving hours

none	10 states
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20 hrs	4, inc CT
30	5
35	1
40	10
50	19
69	2

Nighttime restriction starting time (earlier start on weekdays in 4 states)

none	5 states
sunset	1
8 pm	1
9 pm	2
10 pm	4
11 pm	11
midnight	19, inc CT
1 am	6

Passenger restriction

number of teen passengers allowed during initial intermediate license period

0	15 states, inc CT
1	21
2	2
3	2
no limit	11

length of any passenger restriction (unless minimum age comes first; see below)

3 mos	2 states
5 mos	1
6 mos	11, inc CT
12 mos	6

age at which any passenger restriction may be removed (some states require driver ed)

15-6 mos	1 state
16	1
16-3	1
16-4	1
16-6	13
16-8	1
16-9	1
16-10	1, CT
17	14
17-6	1
17-11	1
18	4
no limit	11

(from December 18, 2007 preliminary memo)

Categories And Options For Legislative Change (an effort to list completely the elements of teen driver regulation)

1. Minimum age for
 - a. Learner's permit
 - b. Intermediate/provisional license
 - c. Full license

2. Required hours of
 - a. Professional instruction
 - b. Parent/guardian-supervised instruction

3. Type of instruction
 - a. Rules of the road
 - b. Basic operations, turns, movements
 - c. Vehicle safety features (such as seat belts and air bags)
 - d. Safe driving best practices
 - e. Evasive maneuvers
 - f. Practice/training in difficult conditions
 - (1) at night
 - (2) rain
 - (3) snow/ice
 - (4) other limited visibility conditions
 - g. Higher/highway speed driving
 - h. Driving in heavy traffic
 - i. Effects of alcohol and drugs on driver performance
 - j. Effects of passengers on driver performance
 - k. Effects of cell phones/electronics on driver performance

4. Training of new drivers in applicable laws
 - a. Moving violations
 - b. Speeding
 - c. License suspensions
 - d. License revocations
 - e. Driver re-training
 - f. Investigatory stops
 - g. Court appearances
 - h. Financial penalties/fines
 - i. Criminal penalties/imprisonment
 - j. Penalties for alcohol, drugs, electronics use
 - k. Insurance requirements
 - l. License and registration requirements
 - m. Emission stickers
 - n. Curfews

5. Financial costs of driving
 - a. Licensing fees
 - b. Training course fees
 - c. Insurance costs
 - d. Fuel costs
 - e. Vehicle repair costs
 - f. Property damage from accidents
6. Types of vehicles driven by teens; is training appropriate to vehicles driven? (e.g., two door sedan vs. SUV vs. pickup truck)
7. Parent oversight/responsibility
 - a. Training supervision
 - b. Parent-teen contracts
 - c. Parent ability to obtain license revocation/suspension through DMV
8. Permitted hours of operation
 - a. Early morning (before sunrise)
 - b. Evening (6:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.)
 - c. Late night (12:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.)
9. Passenger limitations
 - a. Supervising drivers
 - b. Immediate family
 - c. Others – number and relationships
10. Exceptions to operating restrictions
 - a. Employment
 - b. Medical
 - c. Family
 - d. Religion
11. Law enforcement
 - a. License suspension
 - b. License restrictions
 - c. Investigatory stops
 - d. Parent-initiated suspensions/revocations
12. Technology
 - a. Global positioning systems (in cell phones or on board)
 - b. On board breathalyzer
 - c. One way cell phones (no outgoing calls once vehicle starts)
 - d. Mandatory seat belts (vehicle will not start)
 - e. On board speed monitoring and reporting (e.g., Safeco's Teensurance)

13. Other
 - a. Availability of "youthful offender" status plea/plea bargaining
 - b. Accelerated rehabilitation
 - c. Equalized penalties for failing substance abuse testing
 - d. Teen driver vehicle identification stickers

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