

## Driving Lesson Timeline

### Beginning Driving Lessons

A teen must log 50 or more hours of varied adult-supervised practice before taking the driving test to acquire a probationary or junior license. An empty parking lot or industrial lot is a good place to begin driving lessons. First, park the car to introduce the features and controls of the car.

#### **Review these controls and features of the car:**

- Dashboard controls
- Steering wheel and seat adjustment
- Mirror adjustment
- Turn signals
- Headlights
- Wipers
- Emergency lights
- Parking brake/ release
- Safety features like air bags and seat belts
- Starting/turning off engine
- Gas, brakes (especially anti-lock braking system-ABS)
- Warning indicator lights on dashboard (such as low fuel, oil, temperature indicator)

Also point out where the vehicle registration, insurance card, and car manual are located. Teach the teen good habits such as wearing the seat belt and making sure the mirrors and the seat are adjusted properly each time he/she gets in a car.

Then, the teen should practice applying gas and brakes, driving straight, turning, and reversing. Also teach the teen to develop the following good habits:

- Looking ahead
- Checking mirrors

**When the teen is comfortable with the basic operation of the car, lessons can move to a quiet, residential neighborhood.** Be sure to stick to roads that have slower speed limits (under 25 m.p.h.). Stress that the posted limit is only a guide for an acceptable speed in excellent conditions. A driver may need to drive even slower during inclement weather or in high-traffic areas. Vary the routes to practice:

- Braking smoothly: gradually slowing to a stop
- Accelerating smoothly: steadily increasing to safe speed within posted limit
- Approaching intersections controlled by stop signs or lights
- Turns: speed and use of signals

- Determining right of way
- Maintaining appropriate speed
- Keeping a safe following distance
- Scanning for and identifying hazards
- Sharing the road with cyclists, pedestrians, and school buses
- What to do when an ambulance or other emergency vehicle approaches

**Also, remind the teen to:**

- Scan continuously for hazards such as children running across the street and bicyclists
- Keep a clear "safety space" or "safety bubble" around the car to provide room to react to hazards

## Intermediate Driving Lessons

When the teen can confidently handle simple traffic situations, lessons can move to roads with more interaction with other drivers and higher speed limits. Select a road (speed limit under 40 m.p.h.) that has some traffic but is not a commercial or school zone. Some sections should have two lanes in each direction.

**Before turning the key in the ignition, discuss what may cross the teen's driving path:**

- Buses
- Crosswalks
- Turning lanes
- One-way streets
- Parked vehicles along the street
- Increased car, truck, and bicycle traffic

**During this stage of learning, the teen should master the following skills:**

- Keeping a safe following distance
- Approaching intersections (with and without traffic signals)
- Turning from the proper lane
- Adjusting speed
- Merging with traffic from a ramp or turning lane
- Scanning and identifying hazards
- Determining right of way

The teen will need to learn how to maneuver a two-lane or four-lane road, which can be particularly risky for new drivers.

**When the teen has sufficient practice driving in this two-lane or four-lane road, the lessons can move on to an urban area, such as a downtown section or business district. Identify a road that has moving traffic, parking lots, parked cars along the sides, pedestrians, cyclists, and gas stations.**

**Specific skills to work on include:**

- Entering traffic from a parking lot
- Getting in and out of a parking space
- Adjusting speed according to moving and foot traffic

## Advanced Driving Lessons – Highways

Begin by driving on highways at quieter times of the day (**not during rush hour**) to practice merging into traffic, staying in the lane, and using higher speeds and safe following distances. The speed limit is typically between 55 to 65 m.p.h.

**Before heading out, the teen should prepare for:**

- Driving at higher speeds that call for longer stopping distances
- Needing to check blind spots before changing lanes
- Driving near large trucks
- Anticipating interchanges by reading signs
- Keeping a clear "safety space" or "safety bubble" around the car to provide room to react to hazards
- Looking for traffic stopped or slowing ahead

**During this stage of learning, the teen should master the following skills on a high-speed highway:**

- Merging into traffic
- Identifying road signs and exits
- Maneuvering through tollbooths and work zones
- Passing
- Maintaining proper speed
- Being courteous to others trying to pass or change lanes
- Keeping a safe following distance
- Using features like the defroster, fog lights, and bright headlights

**For more information on teens and driving visit: [www.teendriversource.org](http://www.teendriversource.org)**