

Teenage Driving Laws/Child Passenger Safety

Keeping our children safe is a top priority, especially when it comes to being a passenger or operating a vehicle. When they are children they must be seated in the proper seat and secured to keep them safe. When they grow into a teenager the stakes are higher when they get behind the wheel and learn to become a responsible licensed driver.

The Alsip Department wants you to be informed of the current Illinois Laws for Graduated Licensed Drivers and Child Passenger Safety. If you would like more information please follow these links:

https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/pdf_publications/dsd_a217.pdf

<https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/drivers/childsafety.html>

Graduated Driver Licensing Phases

Permit Phase — Drivers Age 15

- Parent/legal guardian consent required to obtain an instruction permit.
- Must be enrolled in an approved driver education course and must pass vision and written tests.
- Nighttime driving restrictions — Sun.-Thurs., 10 p.m.-6 a.m.; Fri.-Sat., 11 p.m.-6 a.m. (local curfews may differ).
- Permit must be held for a minimum of nine months.
- Must practice driving a minimum of 50 hours, including 10 hours at night, supervised by a parent or adult age 21 or older with a valid driver's license.
- Must not acquire any driving convictions during the nine-month permit phase.
- Number of passengers limited to one in the front seat and the number of safety belts in the back seat.
- Cellphone/wireless use while driving, including a hands-free device, is prohibited for drivers under age 19, except in the case of an emergency.
- Permit is valid for up to two years.

Initial Licensing Phase — Drivers Ages 16-17

- Parent/legal guardian must certify that a minimum of 50 hours of practice driving, including 10 hours at night, has been completed.
- Parent/legal guardian must accompany teen to provide written consent to obtain a driver's license OR complete and notarize an Affidavit/Consent for Minor to Drive form.
- Must have completed a state-approved driver education course.
- Nighttime driving restrictions — Sun.-Thurs., 10 p.m.-6 a.m.; Fri.-Sat., 11 p.m.-6 a.m. (local curfews may differ).
- Must maintain a conviction-free driving record for six months prior to turning 18 before moving to the Full Licensing Phase. A traffic conviction during the Initial Licensing Phase may extend restrictions beyond age 18.
- For the first 12 months of licensing or until the driver turns 18, whichever occurs first, the number of passengers is limited to one person under age 20, unless the passenger(s) is a sibling, stepsibling, child or stepchild of the driver. After this period, the number of passengers is limited to one in the front seat and the number of safety belts in the back seat.
- Cellphone/wireless use while driving, including a hands-free device, is prohibited for drivers under age 19, except in the case of an emergency.

Full Licensing Phase — Drivers Ages 18-20

- No age-related restrictions apply except in cases where a driver fails to move from the Initial Licensing Phase to the Full Licensing Phase.
- Cellphone/wireless use while driving, including a hands-free device, is prohibited for drivers under age 19, except in the case of an emergency.

Illinois Child Passenger Protection Act

The Child Passenger Protection Act requires that all children under age 8 be properly secured in an appropriate child safety restraint system. This includes the use of booster seats, which must only be used with a lap/shoulder safety belt. If the back seat of the vehicle is not equipped with lap/shoulder type safety belts, a child weighing more than 40 pounds may be transported in the back seat without a booster seat, secured with a lap belt only.

Child Safety Seat Guidelines

Always read and follow the child safety seat and vehicle manufacturer's instructions for installation and height/weight guidelines.

Newborn-12 months

Children under age 1 and weighing less than 20 pounds should always ride in a rear-facing infant seat or a convertible seat used rear-facing.

- Never install a rear-facing safety seat in front of an active airbag.
- Rear-facing safety seats should recline 30-45 degrees.
- The child's head must be at least 1 inch below the top of the safety seat when rear-facing.
- Use the harness straps/slots at or below shoulder level when rear-facing.
- Harness straps must be snug on the child; the harness clip should be at armpit level.

Ages 1-4

Children should remain in a rear-facing safety seat until age 2, or until they are at the upper height or weight limit of the seat. When a child out-grows a rear-facing safety seat, he or she may transition to a forward-facing seat with a harness system.

- Use the internal harness system until the upper height or weight limit is reached.
- Use harness straps/slots at or above shoulder level when forward-facing.
- Harness straps must be snug on the child; the harness clip should be at armpit level.
- The top of the child's ears should not be above the top of the car seat when forward-facing.

Ages 4-8

Children should be secured in a forward-facing safety seat with an internal harness system until they reach the upper height or weight limit allowed by the car seat manufacturer. When a child outgrows the forward-facing seat, he or she may transition to a belt-positioning booster seat.

- Booster seats must be used with the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt, never just a lap belt.
- The lap belt should lie low across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should rest snugly across the shoulder and chest, not across the neck or face.
- The top of the child's ears should not be above the top of the back of a booster seat with a back.
- If using a backless booster seat, the vehicle's head restraint must be positioned properly.
- Secure the booster seat with the vehicle's seat belt when not in use.

Ages 8-12

Children should stay in a belt-positioning booster seat until they are tall enough to properly fit in an adult lap/shoulder belt.

- The vehicle lap belt must lie low across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should rest snugly across the shoulder and chest, not across the neck or face.
- The child's back and hips should be against the back of the vehicle seat, without slouching.
- Knees should bend easily over the front edge of the vehicle seat with the feet flat on the floor.

Child Passenger Safety Tips

- Keep children in rear-facing safety seats as long as possible.
- Keep children in the back seat at least through age 12.
- Never place a rear-facing safety seat in front of an active airbag.
- A used safety seat may not be safe unless you know the history of the seat and all labels, parts and instructions are present.
- Always register your safety seat with the manufacturer so you can be notified of recalls.
- Do not use a safety seat that is more than six years old or past the expiration date stamped on the seat.
- Non-regulated products such as toys attached to the safety seat, mirrors, window shades and belt tightening tools are not recommended unless the safety seat manufacturer allows their use.
- All objects in the vehicle should be stowed in the trunk or tied down, as they can become projectiles if a crash or sudden stop occurs.

Endangering the Life or Health of a Child and Leaving a Child Unattended In a Car

- It is unlawful for any person to willfully cause or permit the life or health of a child under the age of 18 to be endangered or to willfully cause or permit a child to be placed in circumstances that endanger the child's life or health, except that it is not unlawful for a person to relinquish a child in accordance with the Abandoned Newborn Infant Protection Act.
- A person who leaves a child 6 years of age or younger unattended in a motor vehicle for more than 10 minutes is in violation of the law.
- Unattended means either: not accompanied by a person 14 years of age or older; or if accompanied by a person 14 years of age or older, out of sight of that person.
- A violation of this Section is a Class A misdemeanor which means up to one year in jail and up to a \$2,500 fine.
- A second violation is a Class 3 felony meaning 2 to 5 years in prison and up to a \$25,000 fine.
- A violation that causes the death of the child is a Class 3 felony for which a person, if sentenced to prison, shall be sentenced to a term of two years and up to 10 years.