



# Oregon Driver Education Fact Sheet April 2008

## About Oregon's Driver Education Program

The goal of Oregon's Driver Education (DE) program is to develop a system that results in measurably safer new drivers with fewer injuries and deaths. The program seeks to develop safe and efficient drivers who understand that all young drivers should become competent, caring, productive and responsible traffic safety citizens, committed to continually improving their driving skills.

The Driver Education program manages statewide efforts to improve driver education by:

- coordinating DE course curriculum and instructor training curriculum;
- certifying public and private DE providers;
- providing public information, education programs and resources;
- overseeing the student driver training fund for public school reimbursement; and
- coordinating train-the-trainer curriculum development.

In 2000, the Legislature moved the Driver Education program from the Department of Education to the Oregon Department of Transportation's Safety Division. ODOT established four task forces that conducted public forums throughout the state looking at curriculum, instructor standards, public outreach and operation. As a result, an action plan was formulated to address the task forces' major finding that the program needs established standards.

## Improving the Program

- In 2005, House Bill 2112 raised the Driver Education student reimbursement from \$150 to \$210 for public providers.
- Implementing HB 2112 requires changing the Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR 737-015).
- Since efforts are being undertaken to update the OAR, it was determined that additional changes to the OAR are appropriate. These changes aim to:
  - create consistent statewide standards and eliminate inconsistencies in language and programming in DE providers;
  - establish standards with the onset of new DE programs being established throughout the state;
  - respond to non-compliant issues concerning learning and teaching and student safety;
  - align state program and providers to quality standards in light of education reform and NHTSA/ADTSEA National standards for traffic safety education;
  - add language for inspection, record keeping and legal issues; and
  - clarify language concerning instructor training requirements.

## Successes and Accomplishments

1. Created the Oregon Parent Involvement Resource Guide: developed in partnership with the Oregon Traffic Safety Education Association, this guide provides material for teachers and guidance for parents.
2. Developed the Oregon Driver Education Risk Prevention Curriculum CD: this resource includes classroom and in-car lesson plans, homework assignments, entrance and exit exams and more. It brings together materials from the WOU-ODOT Trainer of Trainers Curriculum, National Driver Training Credentialing Program of the American Driver and

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Traffic Safety Education Association (ADTSEA), and the National Institute for Driver Behavior (NIDB) Driver Risk Prevention Curriculum.

3. Established the Driver Education Advisory Committee: developed to give advice on driver education issues, the duties of the committee include reviewing and updated guidelines for the operation of the program and stimulating public awareness of driver education needs.
4. Created instructor training standards: more than 475 instructors have gone through training established by minimum standards of competency.
5. Increased safety in teen driving: a national study completed in January 2005 showed that the crash rate for teens taking formal driver education was 11-21% lower than those taking 100 hours of practice time with their parents; the traffic conviction rate for teens taking formal driver education was 39-57% lower than those taking 100 hours of practice time with their parents; and the driver license suspension rate for teens taking formal driver education was 51-53% lower than those taking 100 hours of practice time with their parents.
6. Increased funding for driver education: in 2005, the Legislature increased funding to \$210 per student completing an approved driver education program.
7. In 2006 “The Oregon Parent Guide to Teen Driving” was completed in a joint partnership with Transportation Safety Division and Driver and Motor Vehicles Services. The Guide supports the important partnership between state driver licensing, driver education, teen drivers and their parents.
8. In 2007 the Legislature provided ODOT-TSD with two new staff members to support the vision and mission of the driver education program. One position was a full time administrative assistant and the other was program coordinator responsible for compliance auditing of the new OARs governing driver education.
9. In 2007 the Oregon Transportation Safety Committee recommended two concepts dealing with driver education for the 2009 legislature session. The concept of requiring driver education and reimbursement for all ODOT-TSD approved providers of driver education was approved.
10. In AASHTO Strategic Highway Safety Plan Volume 19: A Guide for Reducing Collisions Involving Young Drivers Oregon was featured as an agency or organization implementing the strategy of improving the content and delivery of driver education and training.
11. Three states Vermont, Washington and New Hampshire are in the process of modifying the Oregon Driver Risk Prevention Curriculum to their state.
12. In 2007 Washington’s Department of Licensing has completely adopted and modified the Oregon Parent Guide to Teen Driving printing 150,000 copies.

## **Recommendations**

The Oregon Transportation Safety Action Plan (OTSAP) envisions a future where Oregon’s transportation-related death and injury rate continues to decline. The OTSAP encourages

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partnerships among state and local governments, community groups and businesses to achieve a safer transportation system. Its comprehensive list of actions can be considered Oregon's transportation safety agenda for the next twenty years. Driver education is highlighted as one of the nine key actions and it is scheduled to receive the highest priority for implementation by the year 2010. Specifically, ODOT will focus on these priorities:

- Complete the OAR Revision Process. **Done 4/07**
- Assist providers in marketing, curriculum development and instructor training. **On going**
- Continue to partner with DMV to support quality driver and traffic safety education. **On going**
- Promote and work with school/communities to offer driver education through schools, community colleges and/or educational service districts. **On going**
- Update the Oregon Driver Risk Prevention Curriculum. **Done 4/07**
- Conduct regional curriculum workshops in the spring. **4/07**
- Conduct and monitor Trainer of Trainers activities. **4/07**
- Monitor providers of driver education (conduct at least 25 on site inspections). **Began 1/08**
- Implement strategies of the Oregon Transportation Safety Action Plan for improving the quality and delivery of driver education. **On going**
- Provide a public awareness campaign to gain support for requiring driver education by using the recent research studies and data analysis. **Done Fall 07**
- Create legislative concepts:
  1. requiring Driver Education for all new young drivers under 18; **09**
  2. providing reimbursement for all approved Driver Education providers; **09**
  3. extending GDL restrictions from 6 to 12 months;
  4. providing low income incentives for the Driver Education Program; and
  5. regulating cell phone usage in GDL. **Done 1/08**

## Driver Education in Oregon 2002-2007

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
DMV Licenses Issued (Ages 16-17)	27,800	28,195	28,290	27,731	27,688	27,500
Public Schools Providing						
ODOT-TSD Approved DE	109	94	94	87	80	78
Community Colleges Providing						
ODOT-TSD Approved DE	9	8	8	8	7	7
Commercial Vendors Providing						
ODOT-TSD Approved DE	14	14	14	15	12	15
DE Students completing DE	11,682	10,156	9,046	9,542	9,327	8,989
Students that did not complete an ODOT-TSD approved DE program before licensing	16,018	18,039	18,250	18,189	17,804	18,511

Source: Oregon Department of Transportation – Division of Motor Vehicle Services  
Oregon Department of Transportation – Transportation Safety Division

- ☞ **2002-04** – This drop in DE enrollment was caused by the Attorney General Ruling that the person must not have a license before completing the class in order for the school to be eligible for reimbursement. Local districts also chose to increase fees for student participants, hampering accessibility.

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- ☛ **2002-06** – This drop in public providers was due to local districts outsourcing DE service to community colleges and Education Service Districts. For example, one provider conducts DE in 25 school districts in 13 counties in 52 high school areas; in another district, site-based management changes combined five provides into one.
- ☛ **2006** – This increase in enrollment was due to increased reimbursement, from \$150 to \$210.
- ☛ **2006** – Only 12 of the 25 DMV private commercial driving schools offered approved TSD driver education programs.
- ☛ **2007 - Research on Parent Taught Driver Education** - Teen-agers taught to drive by their parents are nearly three times more likely to be involved in serious accidents than young drivers taught by professionals, a study unveiled by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) concludes. Since 1997, Texas moms and dads have had the option of teaching their kids how to drive using state-approved curriculum, rather than relying upon public or private driving schools. “What this research means is that the very popular Parent-Taught Driver Education Program may not be the wisest public policy for Texas and is not in the best interest of traffic safety,” TTI researcher Val Pezoldt said in a statement. “This is not to say that all parents are poor driving instructors,” he said. “But the evidence suggests that without some significant modifications to the program, granting parents the sole responsibility for meeting the education and training requirements of our youngest novice drivers serves neither highway safety, parents nor, especially, young drivers well. The institute based at Texas A&M analyzed 1.4 million driver records, conducted a mail survey of young drivers and held teen-driver focus groups. The study was conducted for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and is online at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/> (keyword “parent-taught”).

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