

Governor Ernie Fletcher's Communications Office

Graduated Drivers' License Law Reducing Teenage Fatalities

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Governor Fletcher's priority on highway safety is saving the lives of teenagers

FRANKFORT, Ky. – Kentucky's Graduated Driver's License (GDL) law is reducing the teenage highway fatality rate and greatly decreasing the number of crashes involving teen drivers.

Fatality statistics for the six months following implementation of the "intermediate phase" of the license for new drivers show that 10 fewer teenagers were killed on Kentucky highways. At the same time, the number of crashes involving new drivers decreased by 275. The significant decrease is attributed to the more stringent GDL process for new drivers.

"We are seeing a decline in the number of teenage fatalities on our highways because we are better equipping our young people with the skills they need to safely handle driving situations," said Governor Ernie Fletcher. "The six month intermediate driving period is allowing teenage drivers to gain valuable experience in a more controlled environment before earning that unrestricted license. The end result is a reduction of fatalities and safer highways for all of us."

The new law creates an intermediate period of six months between the learner's permit and a full, unrestricted license. During this period, a teenager will have a license with three restrictions:

No driving from midnight to 6 a.m., except for an emergency or work.

No more than one unrelated passenger under 20.

Completion of the six-month intermediate phase without any traffic violations. To obtain an unrestricted driver's license, the new driver must have a clean driving record.

Thirty-six teen drivers were killed on Kentucky highways in the six-month period from March to August 2006. With the new graduated driver's license law in place, the number of teen fatalities declined to 26 for the same period of 2007. The new GDL law also is credited with having a significant impact on the number of wrecks involving teens. Kentucky had 275 fewer highway collisions involving 16-year-old drivers from March to August 2007 than during the same period in 2006.

"Kentucky has traditionally had one of the highest teenage crash rates in the nation," said Transportation Safety Commissioner Tim Hazlette. "Teenage drivers account for only 6 percent of the overall driving population in Kentucky, but they are involved in 18 percent of the state's fatal crashes and more than 20 percent of all highway crashes. This new law, championed by Governor Fletcher, is going a long way in helping to reduce new teen driver collisions and fatalities."

House Bill 90 expanded Kentucky's Graduated Driver's License program (GDL). The goal of this law, which took effect on October 1, 2006, is to curb the overall number of crashes involving teenage drivers, especially those that result in death. Last year, 88 motorists of ages 16 to 19 were killed. As of today, highway crashes this year have claimed the lives of 63 teenagers.

For more information about graduated driver's license please visit <http://gdl.kytc.ky.gov/> or the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Web site at <http://www.transportation.ky.gov>.