

321.178 Driver education — restricted work license — reciprocity.1. *Approved course.*

a. An approved driver education course as programmed by the department shall consist of at least thirty clock hours of classroom instruction, of which no more than one hundred eighty minutes shall be provided to a student in a single day, and six or more clock hours of laboratory instruction of which at least three clock hours shall consist of street or highway driving. Classroom instruction shall include all of the following:

(1) A minimum of four hours of instruction concerning substance use disorder and distracted driving.

(2) A minimum of twenty minutes of instruction concerning railroad crossing safety.

(3) Instruction relating to becoming an organ donor under the revised uniform anatomical gift Act as provided in [chapter 142C](#).

(4) Instruction providing an awareness about sharing the road with pedestrians, bicycles, and motorcycles. The instruction course shall be first approved by the state department of transportation. Instructional materials creating an awareness about sharing the road with pedestrians, bicycles, and motorcycles shall also be distributed during the course of instruction.

b. (1) To be qualified as a classroom driver education instructor, a person shall have satisfied the educational requirements for a teaching license at the elementary or secondary level and hold a valid license to teach driver education in the public schools of this state.

(2) (a) To be qualified to provide street or highway driving instruction, a person shall be certified by the department and authorized by the board of educational examiners. However, if the person is a peace officer, as defined in [section 801.4, subsection 11](#), paragraph “a”, “b”, “c”, or “h”, with five or more years of experience as a peace officer, or a retired peace officer who holds a driver’s license that is valid for more than two years from the date of issuance, the person shall not be required to be authorized by the board of educational examiners. A person shall not be required to hold a current Iowa teacher or administrator license at the elementary or secondary level or to have satisfied the educational requirements for an Iowa teacher license at the elementary or secondary level in order to be certified by the department or authorized by the board of educational examiners to provide street or highway driving instruction. For purposes of this subparagraph division, “retired peace officer” means a person retired under [chapter 97A](#) or [411](#), or [section 97B.49B](#) or [97B.49C](#), after service as a peace officer, as defined in [section 801.4, subsection 11](#), paragraph “a”, “b”, “c”, or “h”.

(b) The department shall adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) to provide for certification of persons qualified to provide street or highway driving instruction. The board of educational examiners shall adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) to provide for authorization of persons certified by the department to provide street or highway driving instruction. The department may disqualify a person from providing street or highway driving instruction without concurrent or further action by the board of educational examiners, and the board of educational examiners may withhold or withdraw authorization to provide street or highway driving instruction without concurrent or further action by the department.

(3) The department shall not disqualify a person from providing street or highway driving instruction and the board of educational examiners shall not withhold or withdraw authorization to provide street or highway instruction for the sole reason that the person was involved in a motor vehicle accident, unless either of the following circumstances exist:

(a) The person contributed to the motor vehicle accident and the accident caused the death or serious injury of another person.

(b) The person contributed to the motor vehicle accident and it was the person’s second or subsequent contributive motor vehicle accident in a two-year period.

(4) A person who provides street or highway driving instruction shall hold a driver’s license valid for the vehicle operated.

c. Every public school district in Iowa shall offer or make available to all students residing in the school district, or Iowa students attending a nonpublic school or receiving competent private instruction or independent private instruction as defined in [section 299A.1](#), in the district, an approved course in driver education. The receiving district shall be the school

district responsible for making driver education available to a student participating in open enrollment under [section 282.18](#). The courses may be offered at sites other than at the public school, including nonpublic school facilities within the public school districts. An approved course offered during the summer months, on Saturdays, after regular school hours during the regular terms or partly in one term or summer vacation period and partly in the succeeding term or summer vacation period, as the case may be, shall satisfy the requirements of [this section](#) to the same extent as an approved course offered during the regular school hours of the school term. A student who successfully completes and obtains certification in an approved course in driver education or an approved course in motorcycle education may, upon proof of such fact, be excused from any field test which the student would otherwise be required to take in demonstrating the student's ability to operate a motor vehicle. A student shall not be excused from any field test if a parent, guardian, or instructor requests that a test be administered. A final field test prior to a student's completion of an approved course shall be administered by a person qualified to provide street or highway driving instruction under paragraph "b", subparagraph (2).

d. "Student", for purposes of [this section](#), means a person between the ages of fourteen years and twenty-one years who satisfies the preliminary licensing requirements of the department.

e. Any person who successfully completes an approved driver education course at a private or commercial driver education school licensed by the department shall likewise be eligible for a driver's license as provided in [section 321.180B](#) or [321.194](#).

2. *Restricted work license.*

a. A person between sixteen and eighteen years of age who has completed an approved driver education course and is not in attendance at school and has not met the requirements described in [section 299.2, subsection 1](#), may be issued a restricted work license only for travel to and from work or to transport dependents to and from temporary care facilities, if necessary for the person to maintain the person's present employment. The restricted work license shall be issued by the department only upon confirmation of the person's employment and need for a restricted work license to travel to and from work or to transport dependents to and from temporary care facilities if necessary to maintain the person's employment. The employer shall notify the department if the employment of the person is terminated before the person attains the age of eighteen.

b. The department may suspend a restricted work license issued under [this subsection](#) upon receiving a record of the person's conviction for one violation and shall revoke the license upon receiving a record of conviction for two or more violations of a law of this state or a city ordinance regulating the operation of motor vehicles on highways, other than parking violations as described in [section 321.210](#). After revoking a restricted work license under this paragraph, the department shall not grant an application for a new driver's license or instruction permit until the expiration of one year or until the person attains the age of eighteen, whichever is the longer period.

3. *Driver's license reciprocity.*

a. The department may issue a class C or M driver's license to a person who is sixteen or seventeen years of age and who is a current resident of the state, but who has been driving as a resident of another state for at least one year prior to residency within the state.

b. The following criteria must be met prior to issuance of a driver's license pursuant to [this subsection](#):

(1) The minor must reside with a parent or guardian.

(2) The minor must have driven under a valid driver's license for at least one year in the prior state of residence. Six months of the one year computation may include driving with an instruction permit.

(3) The minor must have had no moving traffic violations on the minor's driving record.

(4) The minor must pass the written and driving skills tests as required by the department, but is not required to have taken a driver education class.

[C66, §321.177; C71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §321.178; 82 Acts, ch 1215, §1, 2, ch 1248, §1]
84 Acts, ch 1022, §3; 86 Acts, ch 1220, §28; 89 Acts, ch 266, §1; 90 Acts, ch 1230, §25; 91 Acts, ch 128, §1, 2; 92 Acts, ch 1163, §75; 92 Acts, ch 1231, §44; 94 Acts, ch 1102, §1; 98 Acts,

ch 1112, §2, 14, 16; 99 Acts, ch 13, §11; 2000 Acts, ch 1133, §3; 2001 Acts, ch 33, §1; 2002 Acts, ch 1140, §32, 33; 2003 Acts, ch 108, §55; 2005 Acts, ch 8, §15; 2006 Acts, ch 1021, §1; 2007 Acts, ch 44, §28; 2007 Acts, ch 214, §40; 2010 Acts, ch 1075, §1, 2; 2010 Acts, ch 1105, §1; 2011 Acts, ch 25, §28, 29; 2011 Acts, ch 38, §8; 2013 Acts, ch 121, §99; 2014 Acts, ch 1092, §74; 2019 Acts, ch 77, §1; 2021 Acts, ch 88, §9; 2021 Acts, ch 121, §1; 2023 Acts, ch 7, §1; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §1059; 2024 Acts, ch 1166, §3; 2025 Acts, ch 14, §1, 2

Referred to in §321.177, 321.178A, 321.180B, 321.191, 321.213B, 321A.17

Driver education courses to include instruction relating to energy efficiency and safety; 90 Acts, ch 1252, §54

Department of health and human services to cooperate to provide materials and information relating to becoming an organ donor; 94 Acts, ch 1102, §3; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §1358

Subsection 2 amended