

761—634.3(321) Driver education course standards and requirements.

634.3(1) Course approval. Any school district, area education agency, merged area school, or other entity planning to offer a driver education course must apply for and receive departmental approval, including approval of all teachers, instructors, and course curriculum. Approvals remain valid for a calendar year, expiring December 31, and must be renewed annually. The application for course renewal shall be submitted to the department within 60 days of the expiration date unless otherwise approved by the department.

634.3(2) Course requirements.

a. The instruction provided under Iowa Code section 321.178(1)“*a*” is to be performed in a dual-controlled motor vehicle and exclusive of observation time.

b. Except upon showing of good cause, laboratory instruction shall not conclude later than 45 days after classroom instruction has been completed. When the driver education course provider determines there is good cause, the laboratory instruction shall not conclude later than 90 days after classroom instruction has been completed. For the purpose of this paragraph, “good cause” means an unanticipated event causing a delay in the student’s ability to complete the laboratory instruction if the event is beyond the student’s control.

c. Behind-the-wheel instruction shall be limited to a maximum of 30 minutes per student per session and a maximum of 60 minutes in a single day.

d. Two or more students shall be scheduled for all behind-the-wheel instruction to ensure that appropriate observation time is experienced.

e. Routine maintenance and operation of motor vehicles to maximize energy efficiency and safety will be included in classroom instruction.

f. Each school district will provide students who are absent from instruction an opportunity to make up a reasonable amount of time and coursework.

g. When driving simulators are used for part of the behind-the-wheel driving experience, four hours of simulator experience will be considered equal to one hour of behind-the-wheel driving in the car. However, in addition to simulator time, a minimum of three hours of on-street, behind-the-wheel driving must be completed.

h. When driving ranges are used in driver education courses, two hours of range experience will be considered equal to one hour of on-street, behind-the-wheel driving. However, in addition to range time, a minimum of three hours of on-street, behind-the-wheel driving must be completed.

i. Motor vehicles that are designed primarily for carrying nine or fewer occupants, excluding motorcycles and mopeds, are the only motor vehicles approved for use in driver education courses, and each shall be equipped with a dual control. Vehicles must bear a manufacturer’s label pursuant to 49 CFR §567.4 effective as of October 1, 2023.

j. The driver education teacher or instructor is to verify at the beginning of each course that each student possesses a valid instruction permit or driver’s license. Each student is responsible for possessing an instruction permit or driver’s license throughout all laboratory instruction and is to report any suspension, revocation or cancellation of the instruction permit or driver’s license to the driver education teacher or instructor prior to attending laboratory instruction.

634.3(3) Experimental program. The department may approve an experimental program based on student or school district need for improved instruction. The maximum duration of an experimental program is three years. Annual documentation of the effectiveness of instruction must be submitted to the department.

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