

# FACT SHEET

## IOWA'S YOUNG DRIVERS

Every U.S. state has a graduated driver's licensing (GDL) law that phases in full driving privileges for drivers under age 18.

Strong GDL laws are associated with substantially lower fatal crash rates. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), teen drivers are 4x as likely to crash per mile driven as drivers age 20 or older.

Compared to national best practices and recommendations from the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA), Iowa's GDL law fails to meet minimum safety standards.



### INSTRUCTION PERMIT AGE

Iowa is one of only 6 states that offers an instruction permit to minors at age 14 (others are AK, AR, KS, ND, SD). AAMVA recommends a minimum age of 16, and the vast majority of states offer instruction permits at age 15 or older.



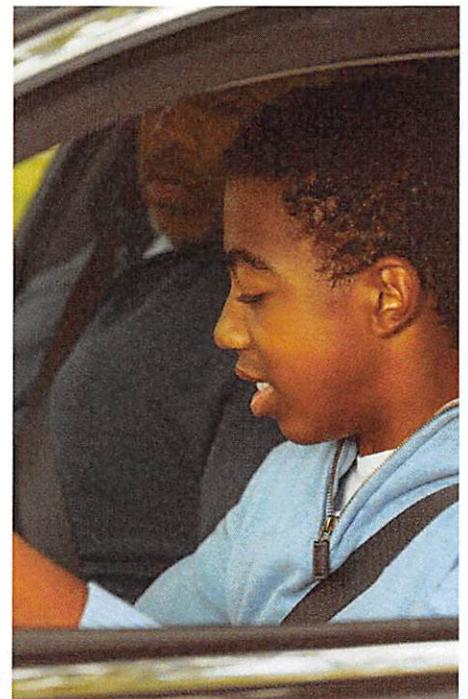
Increasing Iowa's minimum permit age from 14 to 15 years old could produce a 13% reduction in fatal young driver crashes (IIHS).

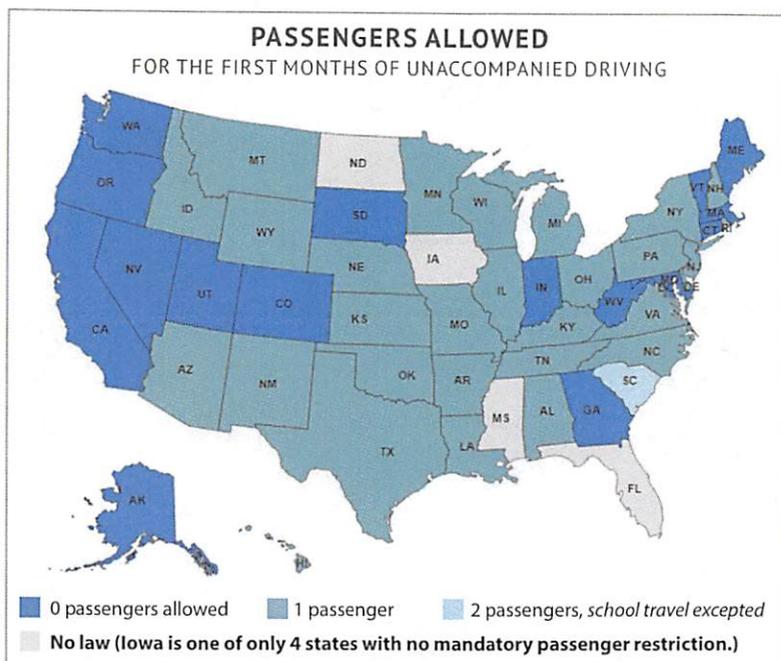
### 14- AND 15-YEAR OLD UNACCOMPANIED DRIVING

Iowa's minor restricted license (MSL) allows 14- and 15-year-olds to drive unaccompanied for school, extracurriculars, and farm work. AAMVA recommends a minimum unaccompanied driving age of 16.5 years.

The only other states that regularly allow 14-year-olds to drive unaccompanied are Kansas (for farm work only), Nebraska (for school only), and Oregon (for school, extracurriculars, or work). Only five other states allow 15-year-olds to drive unaccompanied for school or work purposes (KS, ME, MN, TX, and ND).

16% of crashes involving 14- or 15-year-olds resulted in an injury or fatality (compared to 11.9% of older driver crashes) over the last 5 years.





## PASSENGER RESTRICTION

Iowa is the only state in the U.S. that allows parents to waive the passenger restriction. **Most states impose a one or zero passenger limit restriction for the first months of unaccompanied driving.** 80-90% of Iowa parents waive the passenger restriction when their teen gets an intermediate license.

**Among 16-year-olds, passenger restrictions are associated with a 16% reduction in fatal passenger crashes.**

## INEXPERIENCE

**Teen crashes happen because of inexperience more so than any other factor.** Of all 14-17 year old crashes in Iowa over the last 5 years, 92% of young drivers were in “apparently normal” condition (compared to 85% of other drivers). *“Apparently normal” means driver was not experiencing any medical, physical, or alcohol/drug-related condition that may have contributed to the crash.*

Teen’s lack of behind-the-wheel experience contributes to underdeveloped hazard perception skills and increased risky habits. **The proven ways to increase driving experience includes lengthening the time period required to hold an instruction permit prior to obtaining unaccompanied privileges.** Currently in Iowa, teens drive 6 months before obtaining unaccompanied privileges, compared to the nationally recommended 9-12 months. The number of supervised driving hours required prior to full licensure is currently 30 hours compared to the nationally recommended 70 hours.

## DISTRACTION

Compared to other drivers, young Iowa drivers are more likely to be distracted by a variety of factors contributing to their crashes, not just texting.

