

Braking News From DRIVE SMART!

By Jackie Mohr, DRIVE SMART Evergreen/Conifer

As the summer comes to a close and we all go back to our routines of the 'school year' we see many changes in the community. Those of us who go to work in the mornings will start to see the big yellow school buses again on the roads bright and early. More cars will be joining them as students start back to their own version of the daily grind. The bottom line is, we are all affected by local driving practices and with more people on the road during the school year we all could stand for a little driving education here and there.

Drive Smart Evergreen/Conifer and The Canyon Courier would like to take this time to update our mountain community about current driver and passenger laws from birth through 18 years old.

Colorado Child Passenger Safety Law:

The law requires infants to ride in a rear-facing child safety seat until they are at least one year old AND weigh at least 20 lbs. Safety advocates recommend that infants continue to ride in a rear-facing position as long as possible for the best protection in a crash. Many larger convertible type child safety seats will allow children to ride rear facing up to 30 or 35 lbs.

The law requires that children ages one to four that weigh 20 lbs up to 40 lbs be restrained in a forward facing child safety seat. Safety advocates recommend restraining your child in a harness restraint that meets all of your child's needs until they are at least 40 lbs. The use of top tether straps is strongly recommended.

The law requires that children who weigh over 40 lbs or who are at least four years old be properly restrained in a child booster seat or with a child safety belt-positioning device, unless they are 55" tall. Safety advocates recommend keeping children in booster seats until they are about 57" tall.

The law requires that a child who is at least six years old or is at least 55" tall, must be properly restrained with the motor vehicle's safety belt. It is recommended that a proper seat belt fit be achieved when the child meets the 5-Step Test:

- (1) The child can sit all the way back against the auto seat.
- (2) The child's knees also bend comfortably at the edge of the auto seat.
- (3) The belt crosses the shoulder between the neck and arm.
- (4) The lap belt is as low as possible touching the thighs.
- (5) The child can stay seated like this for the whole trip.

Colorado's Graduated Drivers Licensing (GDL) Law has three stages:

(1) Instruction Permit (2) Restricted License (3) Full Privilege License

(1) Instruction Permit

All new drivers under age 18 require a parent/legal guardian's signed Affidavit of Liability to get a instruction permit, which allows them to drive - with restrictions - under the supervision of a parent or guardian for one year. **Whoever signs the affidavit is responsible for any financial liability.**

How old does your teen need to be to apply?

16, or 15-year-olds who have completed and passed the classroom portion of a state-approved driver's education course within 6 months of applying for their permit **15 years and 6 months to 16 years** and have completed a 4-hour driver awareness course

Laws for Teens with Instruction Permits

No talking or texting on cell phones while driving.

Who can ride with them:

If they're under 18, they may not drive with anyone except their driving instructor, parent or legal guardian. If they're 18 and older, they may drive with any licensed driver 21 years of age or older.

Teen passengers can be major distractions. They may unintentionally encourage teen drivers to speed, show off, play loud music or not pay enough attention to driving. They may also challenge teen drivers to do risky things, including running red lights or racing other vehicles.

er teens get their instruction permits, what do they need to do before they can apply for their driver's license?

Id an instruction permit for at least one year.

Log 50 hours of driving time with a responsible, licensed parent, legal guardian, or alternate permit supervisor. Ten of those hours must be nighttime driving.

Any minor issued a driver's education permit (the permit for minors 15 years up to 15 years and 6 months) on or after April 23, 2007, must complete behind-the-wheel training prior to applying for their driver's license. They may complete either 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training with a driving instructor from an approved school or 12 hours of behind-the-wheel training with their parent, guardian or alternate permit supervisor if there is no approved school offering at least 20 hours of behind-the-wheel training per week located within 30 miles of the permit holder's residence.

- Driving Log (http://www.revenue.state.co.us/mv_dir/formspdf/2324.pdf)

(2) Restricted License Laws for Licensed Drivers Under Age 18

After fulfilling the instruction permit requirements, teens may apply for a driver's license. This first driver's license is a restricted license, the only type of license they may receive until they turn 18.

A restricted license means:

- No passengers under age 21 until driver has held a driver's license for at least six months. No more than one passenger under age 21 until driver has held a driver's license for at least one year. (Siblings and passengers with medical emergencies are exceptions.)
- All passengers with drivers under 18 must wear seatbelts. This is a primary, enforced law.
- Only one passenger may ride in the front seat.

No driving between midnight and 5 a.m. until teen has had a driver's license for at least one year, unless accompanied by an instructor, parent or legal guardian. *EXCEPTIONS:*

Driving to school or school-authorized activity and the school doesn't provide transportation. Signed statement from school required.

Driving to/from work. Signed statement from employer required.

Medical emergency.

- o You're an emancipated minor.

- No drinking and driving. Colorado has a **ZERO TOLERANCE** law for minor drivers.

- Obey all traffic laws.

- Carry proof of insurance.

- Buckle up. Seatbelts save lives.

(3) Full Privilege License

When your teen turns 18, restrictions are removed from their license. Then they have a full privilege license. As a parent or legal guardian, you can pull your teen's license if they are under 18.

Drive Smart Evergreen/Conifer invites you to volunteer with us as you will witness first hand the gratification of keeping our mountain community a safe place to live and drive in; one car seat at a time...one booster seat at a time...one seat belt at a time...one stop light at a time...one crosswalk at a time...one life at a time. . To quote Leslie Feurborn, Director of Safe Kids Denver, "It must be nice to live in a small community where you can actually see that you are making a difference in your community".

DRIVE SMART Evergreen/Conifer is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to work in partnership with local businesses, education, civic, community, and governmental agencies to develop solutions to transportation safety issues and to change attitudes and behaviors, in order to reduce traffic related injuries and deaths. This may sound like a mouthful so we'd like to share with you what our committees at DRIVE SMART actually do.

We provide car seat checkpoints to educate parents, children, and caregivers about proper use and installation of child safety seats and other vehicle safety issues. We are a state sponsored fitting station through CPS Team Colorado and are available to check car seats all year round. We perform monthly car seat checkpoints at the Drive Smart office on the first Wednesday of the month (by appointment) from 10 am to 2 pm.

We offer a BUCKLE BEAR Program at preschools, elementary schools, day care, and Head Start centers that educate children about the importance of staying in their booster seat and staying buckled up. This BUCKLE BEAR program is taught by middle school mentors from Evergreen and Conifer area Schools.

We work in partnership with Evergreen and Conifer High Schools to educate students about the Graduated Drivers License Laws and to promote safe driving practices with the students. This coming year we will be expanding into Platte Canyon and Clear Creek High School!

We offer Driver's Education Scholarships to local students. Applications can be downloaded from our website and are due by February 28th 2010.

We promote Alive-at-25 defensive driving class and Teen Driver Survival parent & teen seminars.

We are working to form an alliance with AARP to promote their Level 1 driver safety class.

We are working to form an alliance with Mountain Area Pregnancy Center and Mountain Resource Center to educate the parents that use their services about proper use and installation of child safety seats.

DRIVE SMART Evergreen/Conifer is completely self sufficient, reliant on volunteers, local fundraisers and grants and are not a governmental or law enforcement agency.

We are the proud hosts of our community based annual Skate The Lake New Years Eve Celebration, the Evergreen Lake Plunge and our annual Golf Classic which help fund the DRIVE SMART programs as well as other nonprofits in the area.

- We are the proud recipients of the Evergreen Chamber 2008 Non Profit of the Year and the 2009 Public Health Champion Award given by Jefferson County Department of Public Health & Environment.

We would love to meet you! Please stop by and visit us or contact Jackie Mohr, Executive Director, DRIVE SMART Evergreen/Conifer at 303-674-9683, staff@drivesmarte-c.org, or www.drivesmarte-c.org. We invite you to join us for one of our board meetings! We are recruiting new board members and volunteers at this time. All board meetings are open and are always the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm at the DRIVE SMART office (3560 Evergreen Pkwy, Evergreen Forum Building).