



GOVERNOR'S TEEN DRIVING TASK FORCE


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Short-Term Recommendations to the Governor

The following is a summary of the actions taken by the task force on January 25, 2008:

On January 18, 2008, Governor Rell proposed strengthening laws pertaining to underage drinking and driving.

- Upon a referral to the Department of Motor Vehicles by the arresting officer for operating under the influence, the license of a 16 or 17 year old will be suspended for a period of not less than one year. The 16 or 17 year olds still have right to a hearing, but there will be no discretion on the length of the suspension. This is an entirely separate and distinct process from the criminal proceeding.
- If the license of a 16 or 17 year old is suspended for operating under the influence by DMV, the 16 or 17 year old must complete a mandatory Substance Abuse Training Program (SATP). Again, this is an entirely separate and distinct process from the criminal proceeding. DMV contracts with private entities to administer the SATP program.

The task force made seven recommendations, including one that endorsed the Governor's proposal above. The strongest among the remaining six is the new suspension penalties for teen drivers – both with learner's permits and provisional licenses – convicted of violating the core laws designed to prevent accidents and increase safety. At present the law does not provide for suspensions in convictions for carrying passengers, talking on cell phones, text messaging, speeding, and street racing.

The recommendations are for driver-license suspensions beginning with the first conviction and varying in length from 30 days to 1 year, depending on the nature of the offense, for violating these laws. The task force also recommended increasing the license restoration fee from \$125 to \$250 for second and other offenses after a suspension. For full explanation, see [chart of proposed violations and penalties](#) (pdf).

The task force also recommended revisions to the passenger restrictions for 16 – 17 year old drivers.

- During the entire period that a teenage driver holds a learner's permit, except for students who are in the vehicle as part of driving school or driver education instruction, and the instructor, no passengers are permitted except parents or guardian who is supervising the driver.

- o For first six months after a teenage driver progresses from a learner's permit to a provisional/intermediate license, no passengers except parents/guardian or one licensed driver over 20, licensed for four years or more, license currently valid.
- o For next six months, add to allowable passengers immediate family members, no others.

In addition, the task force recommended to Governor Rell that the driving curfew time be rolled back to 11 p.m. from the present midnight deadline for teens to be off the road except for certain situations.

The other recommendations were:

- . Eliminate "youthful offender" pleas for moving violations. It eliminates the opportunity for teenager drivers to apply for a more lenient penalties than would normally be given under similar circumstances.
- . Require (a) that all passengers in all seats in any vehicle operated by a driver under age 20 wear seat belts; and (b) increase penalties for drivers 16 – 17 years old who do not wear their seat belt to provide for points toward license suspension/revocation.
- . Increase the learner's permit period of required, supervised driver training/practice from the current 20 hours to 50 hours.

The task force approved a special short-term recommendation to Governor Rell from the Parental and Public Awareness Subcommittee. It involves sending educational materials to all public and private high school principals in the state and requesting that within the next 60 days they hold assemblies for all students at or near driving age to review safety issues and the current laws on passenger restrictions.

[Long-Term Legislative Recommendations](#)

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