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DMV to waive drive test for those with new “Driver Education” card

SALEM — Beginning in January 2014, Oregon DMV will waive the drive test for “Provisional Driver Licenses” if the applicant completes a state-approved driver education program. Students who pass the rigorous driving test in the driver education program will receive a plastic card certifying their successful completion, and when they bring that card to DMV and meet all the other requirements for driving privileges, they won’t be required to take the DMV drive test. (Note: there may be a period of transition where some approved providers haven’t brought their driver tests into compliance with the DMV requirements that authorize the drive test waiver.)

“It’s important to understand that the driving test our young drivers take through our approved driver education courses meets or exceeds the DMV test content,” said Troy E. Costales, Safety Division administrator for the Oregon Department of Transportation. “We want to reward those who take approved driver education programs, because studies consistently show those drivers are safer, receive fewer tickets and experience fewer suspensions.”

Oregon’s driver education program and graduated license program have combined to significantly reduce crashes, fatalities and injuries involving young drivers. Over the past decade in the state, the number of 16-year-old drivers involved in fatal and injury crashes has been reduced by almost 57 percent. 17-year-old drivers involved in fatal and injury crashes are down 46 percent.

“If we can get more teens and parents to understand the value of formal driver education, and get the young drivers into these classes, we will continue to save lives and reduce crashes and injuries involving young drivers,” Costales said.

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A 2005 study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that the crash rate for teens taking formal driver education was 11 percent to 21 percent lower than for those getting 100 hours of practice driving with a parent. A 2007 study by the Texas Transportation Institute found that teens taught to drive by their parents were nearly three times more likely to be involved in serious crashes than young drivers taught by professionals.

Beginning in January in Oregon, driver education providers approved by ODOT will be able to issue a plastic card certifying that a student has completed the course successfully. The applicant can present that card to DMV when applying for a Provisional Driver License and waive the drive test at DMV. A Provisional Driver License is Oregon's standard passenger car driving privilege for drivers younger than 18 years. Provisional drivers have additional restrictions on their driving that phase out completely when the driver turns 18.

Applicants for provisional driving privileges who qualify for the drive-test waiver still must meet all other requirements. They must:

- Have had an instruction permit for at least six months
- Certify that they have at least 50 hours of driving experience with a driver who is older than 21 and has had driving privileges for at least three years
- Pass the safe driving practices test at DMV
- Pay the application fee

Oregon does not require a driver education course in order to obtain a driver license. Instead of taking a driver education course (and completing the 50 hours of driving experience included in the course), young drivers may obtain 100 hours of supervised driving experience. In the best scenario, young drivers successfully complete a driver education program, gain at least 100 hours of supervised driving experience with parents, and move smoothly through the graduated license program. This path will build foundational skills and good driving behavior – and make Oregon's roads safer for everyone.

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Myths...and truths about driver education

- Myth: Driver education just covers basic driving skills and isn't very effective.
 - Truth: Oregon's successful driver education programs use research-based education in the classroom, combined with in-depth hands-on practice. This type

of curriculum takes into account young drivers' habits and traits, as well as the common errors new drivers make.

- Myth: Driver education instructors usually just present whatever they want in the course.
 - Truth: Oregon has a mandatory curriculum framework that instructors must use, and a system of checks and balances ensures that skilled instructors are delivering quality instruction; clear expectations, biannual reviews, and regular audits ensure consistency.
- Myth: Parents teaching their children to drive is the best way to go.
 - Truth: The best driver education programs do include an element of parent participation, but studies show parent instruction alone is not enough. Driving is a technical skill; instructors who have the technical knowledge to teach good driving skills can provide a level of instruction that someone without that knowledge cannot.

Want to learn more about Oregon's driver education programs? Visit "Why Drive with Ed?" at <http://whydrivewithed.com/>.

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