

## Just the FAQs – Part 1 in the Series *Approved Driver Education Programs*

### **W**hy choose a driver education program that appears on the Approved Provider list?

Teen driver education programs are not all the same. If a provider appears on the Approved list, it means they have met minimum standards that have been proven to reduce teen driving risk. Their instructors have attended a minimum of 80 hours specialized training through Western Oregon University and are state certified.

Approved Providers require each student to participate a specific number of hours in the classroom and in the car. There is no substitute for time spent with instructors, whether in the classroom or in the vehicle, so don't let anyone offer "shortcuts." In addition, vehicles are equipped with safety equipment including instructor mirrors and an instructor brake. Approved Driver Education Providers are periodically inspected to assure they continue to meet these high standards.

Some Driver Education Providers deliver both the Approved program and their own independent program. Be sure to ask for the Approved program. Selecting an Approved program is the best way to assure your teen will experience a lifetime of safer driving.

**Some Approved Providers may be a better match for your teen than other Approved Providers. Don't let schedules, commitments and convenience distract you from making the best choice for your teen.**

### **H**ow can I know whether a program on the Approved Provider list is teaching Approved program standards?

There are basic requirements all Approved programs must meet:

- Students must attend a minimum of 30 hours classroom instruction. This means your student is learning in the presence of a state certified instructor.
- Students participate in a minimum of 12 hours in the car with an instructor: 6 hours driving and 6 hours observing another student driver.
- To help students retain what they learn, instruction is delivered over a minimum of 35 days.
- Parental involvement is a key element of an Approved program. This includes a required parent meeting and five hours guided practice with your teen before the end of the course.

#### **Red Flags:**

*The provider tells you homework can substitute for classroom seat time.*

*The provider tells you the summer course can be shortened to accommodate your schedule.*

*The provider tells you they can provide one-on-one classroom instruction instead of meeting with other students.*

*The provider tells you classroom sessions meet in a public location*

*The provider offers classroom instruction one time of year, and driving at a different time.*

#### **ODOT Response:**

Homework cannot substitute for any portion of the required 30 hours classroom seat time.

All courses must last a minimum of 35 days from the first day of classroom instruction to the last drive

Since driving is highly interactive, classroom sessions include many activities with other students to help develop these skills and to reinforce instruction.

The quality of interaction may be compromised if instruction is held outside a classroom-type setting.

For maximum student learning and retention, Approved programs are required to run concurrent programs, with classroom and in-car instruction well integrated.

We appreciate hearing how Approved Providers are doing. If you see a red flag, let us know so we can help ensure every teen who selects an Approved Program has the best opportunity to learn life-long safe driving skills.