

Michigan's safety belt and child safety passenger laws have helped reduce the number of deaths and crippling injuries on our state's roads. Always wear your safety belt whether you are the driver or a passenger.

How do the most recent drug and alcohol laws affect me?

In several ways! Most of the alcohol laws relating to "zero tolerance" or "minor in possession" carry a requirement that a driver's license be **suspended upon conviction**. This suspension may not only cause you inconvenience, but can result in more expensive automobile insurance premiums and extensions to your probationary license period.

Learning to drive safely requires your full concentration. Driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs greatly increases the risk of crashes, injuries or death to you and others. Therefore, penalties are severe. Do not risk a crash or loss of your driving privileges; do not drive when using drugs or alcohol.

Reducing your crash risk

Remember that driving is not only a privilege, but also a large responsibility. You can reduce your risk of being involved in a crash by keeping your mind on the task at hand: driving. Safety experts estimate as many as one-third of all vehicle crashes are due to driver distraction.

Distraction can come in many forms. Changing the radio station, talking to passengers, eating or using a cell phone or other electronic device are all examples of distractions that take the driver's focus away from driving.

Teen drivers are especially vulnerable to distractions due to their inexperience. For your safety, and the safety of other motorists, exercise good judgment and do not let other activities divert your attention from the road.

If you need additional information

If you have questions about your probationary license or need additional information about your Graduated Driver License, please call the Department of State Information Center toll-free at (888) SOS-MICH; (767-6424) or visit the Department of State website at www.Michigan.gov/sos.

Disability access:

The Department of State is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you need an accommodation or have been denied service, please call this toll-free number: (888) SOS-MICH (767-6424).

Hearing-impaired customers may access the department's telephone number by calling the Michigan Relay Center at (800) 649-3777.

An alternative format of this printed material may be obtained by contacting the department at (888) SOS-MICH (767-6424).

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Nearly 3,000 Michigan residents are waiting for a lifesaving transplant. You can help by adding your name to the Organ Donor Registry at www.Michigan.gov/sos today.




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Your Probationary License



Questions & Answers

What is the probationary licensing program?

The Secretary of State monitors the performance of new drivers through the probationary licensing program. **All new drivers, regardless of age, are on probation for at least three years** while they gain experience.

What is Graduated Driver Licensing and how is it affected by probation?

Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) is a program that integrates classroom instruction and on-the-road experience for young drivers. Teens are eligible to begin GDL at age 14 years, 8 months. The program ends when teens turn 18.

The GDL program reduces your risk by limiting driving privileges while you gain experience. The probationary program monitors your performance through your driving record, allowing the Secretary of State to help you improve if you drive unsafely.

Graduated Driver Licensing and probation work together to control your driving risk.

Violations or crashes posted to your record show you are not progressing satisfactorily. The Secretary of State may further restrict or even suspend your driving privileges, no matter what your licensing level is!

Does the Secretary of State know if I have been driving unsafely?

Yes! Unsafe drivers are identified by the number of traffic violations and crashes posted on their driving records. Any time you are convicted of a traffic violation or have a crash, the Secretary of State is notified of the violation by the court and adds it to your driving record.

The Secretary of State constantly reviews the records of probationary drivers because they are at higher risk of having a crash than most groups of drivers.

What will happen to my driving privilege if I drive unsafely?

The Secretary of State will contact you if you are in a crash or receive a traffic conviction. You may receive a warning letter, or you may be required to appear at a Driver Assessment office for a personal review of your driving performance.

A driving record that shows unsafe driving behavior will definitely be cause for a personal review, which is called a Driver Assessment re-examination. Examples of unsafe driving include speeding convictions, stop sign violations and crashes.

At this review, your driving privilege may be restricted (limiting your full driving privilege) or a suspension may be ordered stating you are not to drive for any reason. You may also be given a combination of restrictions and suspension.

If you are under age 18, your parents or legal guardians must also be notified if you violate the driving privileges of your Graduated Driver License. Violating your Graduated Driver License restrictions is also cause for a Driver Assessment re-examination, and your driving privileges may be suspended.

How long will I be on probation?

At least three years. It may last longer than three years if you drive unsafely.

To end your probationary period, you must drive the last 10 months of your probation

without having an “at fault” or “had-been-drinking” crash, a driver’s license suspension or a traffic conviction.

For example: If you drive two years and 10 months of your three-year probationary period without a crash or traffic conviction and then you receive a speeding ticket (no matter how fast you were driving over the posted limit), your probationary period will be automatically extended until you demonstrate you can drive **10 consecutive months without a ticket, crash or license suspension.**

Must I wear a safety belt?

Yes, and for good reason! Since 1985 all front-seat occupants in Michigan have been **required by law** to wear a safety belt. All youths under age 16, whether in the front or back seat, must wear a safety belt. Children 4-7 years old who are less than 4 feet, 9 inches tall must be in an approved child restraint system. Children younger than 4 years must be in an approved child restraint system in the back seat. A child under age 4 may be placed in the front seat only when all rear seats are occupied by children under age 4 – otherwise an older child or adult should move to the front and the child under age 4 seated in the back. The front passenger air bag must be turned off whenever a rear-facing child restraint system is used in the front seat. The safest place for a child is the back seat.

The law allows police officers to stop a motorist solely for not wearing a safety belt in the front seat of a vehicle. Police officers may also stop a motorist if a child under age 16 is not properly restrained, no matter where they are riding in a vehicle.