

February 1, 2014



N.C. Dept. of Transportation

Division of Motor Vehicles

**A Report to the Joint
Legislative Transportation
Oversight Committee**

**Session Law 2011-0385
Senate Bill 636 Study**

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**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2011
SESSION LAW 2011-385
SENATE BILL 636**

AN ACT TO MODIFY THE LEVEL 2 RESTRICTIONS FOR PROVISIONAL LICENSES; TO REQUIRE A DRIVING LOG SHOWING SIXTY HOURS OF DRIVING TIME BY A PERSON WITH A LIMITED LEARNER'S PERMIT BEFORE A LEVEL 2 PROVISIONAL LICENSE MAY BE ISSUED; TO REQUIRE A DRIVING LOG SHOWING TWELVE HOURS OF DRIVING TIME BY A PROVISIONAL LICENSEE BEFORE A LEVEL 3 PROVISIONAL LICENSE MAY BE ISSUED; TO REQUIRE AN IMMEDIATE REVOCATION OF A PROVISIONAL LICENSE IF THE PROVISIONAL LICENSE IS CHARGED WITH CERTAIN MOVING VIOLATIONS; AND TO REQUIRE THE DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES TO REPORT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT.

Section 5: The Division of Motor Vehicles shall study the issue of teen driving and the effectiveness of the provisions of this act. In conducting the study, the Division shall determine if, since the effective date of this act:

1. The number of property damage crashes involving provisional licensees has decreased
2. The number of personal injury crashes involving provisional licensee has decreased
3. The number of fatal crashes involving provisional licensees has decreased
4. The number of moving violations by provisional licensees has decreased
5. The number of seat belt violations by provisional licensees has decreased

The division shall also include in its study any additional statistics or information it finds relevant to evaluating the effectiveness of this act and any recommendations for improving the safety of teen drivers.

Study Results:

Senate Bill 636 went into effect October 1, 2011. From January 1, 2011 until September 30, 2011, teens advanced to their next level of graduated license without submitting a driving log. Effective October 1, 2011, teens who received an issuance under the Graduated Driver License program were required to submit a driving log to advance to the next level Graduated Driver License. The driving logs requirement is designed to ensure that a teen driver gain significant behind-the-wheel training prior to advancing to the next level. Teens who obtained an issuance under the Graduated Driver License program on or after October 1, 2011 until October 1, 2013 are included in this study.

The data provided in this report covers a period of approximately 2 years leading up to the implementation of Senate Bill 636 and the immediate 2 years following implementation of this Bill. Data in this report was obtained from the State Automated Driver License System (SADLS) and the Division of Motor Vehicles' crash reporting system.

The time frame captured in this study includes teens that were issued a Graduated Level 1 Limited Learner Permit, a Graduated Level 2 Limited Provisional License and a Graduated Level 3 Full Provisional License. Prior to advancing to a Level 2 Limited Provisional License, driving logs must be submitted that reflects 60 hours of driving involving at least 10 hours of night driving. Prior to advancing to a Level 3 Full Provisional License, driving logs must be submitted that reflects 12 hours of driving with at least 6 hours involving night driving. This study provides a snapshot of the driving habits of these teens.

Data also shows the three largest counties, Guilford averaging over 8,000 teen drivers, Mecklenburg averaging over 14,000 teen drivers, and Wake County with over 18,000 teen drivers contributed the largest volume of crashes, moving violations and seatbelt violations. Also included in the data are the out-of-state violations committed by North Carolina provisional licensees.

Crash Data:

Table (1) below shows there has been a decline in crashes involving property damage and personal injury, as well as a significant decline in fatal crashes among provisional licensees since the law was implemented. In fact there were 69 fewer teen fatalities in 2013 than in 2010.

Table (1)

Number of Teen Drivers Statewide	Year	Number of Fatalities	Number of Injuries	Number of Fatality & Injury Crashes	Total Number of All Crashes (Property)	Percentage Of Teens Involved
182,598	2009	177	24,456	14,528	40,738	22%
174,694	2010	183	22,116	13,154	38,011	22%
175,653	2011	149	21,225	12,484	36,103	21%
171,051	2012	129	21,238	12,688	35,875	21%
166,677	2013	114	19,415	11,857	35,117	21%

*For additional details see reports section

Moving Violations:

Although data in Table (1) show there has been a steady decline in the number of crashes among provisional licensees, data in Table (2) below show an increase in the number of moving violations for the same period of time. There were more than 175,000 active teen drivers post SB636 as of September 2011. Two percent of those drivers received moving violations. There were 166,677 active drivers September 2013. Table (2) shows that approximately 5% of teen drivers received moving violations in the second year after the implementation of the SB636. This data suggests that a greater focus should be placed on highway regulations in driver education programs.

Table (2)

Year	Time Period	Moving Violations	Number of Drivers at the end of Time Period
October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010	Before S636	2,204	175,653
October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011	Before S636	3,916	
October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012	After S636	5,957	166,677
October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013	After S636	8,060	

*For additional details see reports section.

Seatbelt Violations:

Like Table (2), Table (3) below also reflects a steady increase in the number of seatbelt violations among provisional licensees since 2009. This data also suggests the need for continued focus on highway regulations in driver education programs.

Table (3)

Year	Time Period	Seat Belt Violations	Number of Drivers at the end of Time Period
October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010	Before S636	166	175,653
October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011	Before S636	272	
October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012	After S636	320	166,677
October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013	After S636	498	

*For additional details see reports section.

Additional Information:

As additional research, the Division compared teen road test data to determine the possible impact the driving log requirement may have had on the pass/fail rate for road tests administered to provisional licensees at DMV. As illustrated below, the number of road tests administered to teen drivers by DMV has been steadily declining since 2009.

Data also show that the percentage of teen drivers failing the road test has steadily declined since 2009. The intent of this Bill is to ensure that teen drivers and their supervising driver spend documented time behind the wheel prior to advancing to the next level license within the Graduated Driver Licensing program. It is a reasonable assumption that this requirement of the Bill has directly contributed to the steady decline in the percentage of road test failures.

Table (4)

Year	Road Tests Administered	Road Tests Passed	Road Tests Failed	Failure Rate
2009	110,023	64,825	45,198	41%
2010	93,573	65,057	28,516	30%
2011	91,522	66,510	25,042	27%
2012	83,578	66,670	16,908	20%
2013	74,409	65,747	8,662	12%

Division of Motor Vehicles Recommendations:

North Carolina data reveal an increase in moving violations and seatbelt violations since this Bill was implemented. The majority of violations and crashes in this report occurred after the teen completed the first 12 months of supervised driving. During the teen's second level of graduated driving, the teen is not required to have a supervising driver 5am to 9pm and to and from work. There are no restrictions once the teen advances to the third level of the graduated driver license program. Data collected shows that most traffic offenses committed by teens occur while the teen is driving without supervision. The Division recommends the standardization of instructions and testing within the State driver education program with a focus on critical skills that teens need in order to demonstrate positive behavior while operating a vehicle. Knowledge tests and road tests administered by State driver education courses should be designed to measure the teen's ability to not only operate a vehicle safely but also measure the teen's awareness of traffic violations, crashes and the associated penalties.

Additionally, the Division feels that programs geared towards the greater involvement of parents in the training of their teens will garner safer driving habits. In fact in December, 2013, the Division of Motor Vehicles, in partnership with Safe Roads Alliance¹, kicked off an initiative called the "Parent's Supervised Driving Program". The program focuses on the role of the parent in the teen driver education process and encourages parents and teens to drive together in a variety of weather conditions and unfamiliar settings, and in a variety of conditions and times of day. According to data provided by Safe Roads Alliance, teen drivers whose parents are highly involved in the teen driver education process were half as likely to get in a car crash, 71% less likely to drive intoxicated, 30% less likely to use a cell phone while driving, and twice as likely to wear seatbelts. "Parent's Supervised Driving Program" handbooks are made available to parents at all North Carolina Driver License offices.

A March 2012 study sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)² noted parents may not keep close track of how much driving practice their

teens actually obtain during the learner stage. Safe Roads Alliance offers a driving log application for the iPhone. This free app, called “RoadReady”, provides an easy, efficient way for parents and their teens to accurately log their driving time. It also keeps track of road type and weather conditions and features an exportable driving log for printing out. The Division plans to explore ways to promote this application to help parents keep an accurate account of their teens driving experience.

There are several other teen safety driving programs available to parents, such as Toyota’s TeenDrive 365, designed to assist parents in guiding teens through that first critical year behind the wheel. Although the Division does not have a partnership with these organizations, we believe they are valuable resources available to parents and teens. And we applaud those efforts which get parents more involved with educating their teens about safe and responsible driving.

1. Safe Roads Alliance is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving highway safety by improving driver education with particular emphasis on behind-the-wheel training.

2. Foss, R. D., Masten, S. V., Goodwin, A. H., & O’Brien, N. P. (2012, March). The Role of Supervised Driving Requirements in Graduated Driver Licensing Programs. (Report No. DOT HS 811 550.) Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.