The Road To Getting Your License

If you’re under 18 and getting your license for the first time, here’s what you need to do.

1. The First Leg of the Trip
GET YOUR OREGON INSTRUCTION PERMIT. You have to have your permit for at least six months before you can get a license. (To get your permit — if you haven’t already — you need to be at least 15 years old and pass a written test.)

2. Practice, Practice, Practice
Serious. You have to be able to show that you’ve had at least 50 HOURS of supervised driving practice.

3. And Practice Some More
DO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:
Complete a driver education course that’s approved by the Oregon Department of Transportation. OR Complete an additional 50 HOURS of driving practice with a supervising driver who’s at least 21 years old and who’s had a valid license for at least three years. (Hint: Like Mom or Dad. Believe it or not, it’s pretty likely that they actually know more about driving than you think. Besides, it’s a chance to do that whole bonding thing. Humor them — you may need to borrow money someday.)

4. The Big Test
PASS THE DRIVING TEST AND GET YOUR PROVISIONAL LICENSE. (This is where all that practice starts to pay off.)

5. Entering the Restricted Zone
YOU’RE OFF AND ROLLING, but there are still some restrictions after you get your provisional license. These are designed to keep you safe (and alive) during that crucial first year of licensed driving.

6. Covering New Territory — The First Six Months After You Get Your License
For the first six months, you can’t drive with a passenger under the age of 20 who isn’t a member of your immediate family.
Why? You still need time to get used to driving solo, without a lot of distractions. It’s hard to focus on them all if your friends are bugging you to change the radio station or stop and get nachos. For right now, concentrate on getting into safe driving habits.

7. Getting Comfortable — The Second Six Months After You Get Your License
For the second six months, you can’t drive with more than three passengers who are under the age of 20 who are not members of your immediate family.
Makes sense. At this point, you’re still getting comfortable handling the car safely and following traffic rules. Besides — how big is your car anyway?

8. The Home Stretch
For the first year, you can’t drive between midnight and 5:00 a.m. unless you are:
- a) driving between home and work.
- b) driving between home and a school event for which there is no other transportation available.
- c) driving for employment purposes.
- d) accompanied by a licensed driver who is at least 25 years old.
- e) driving for employment purposes.
The reason for this is simple. As a young driver, your greatest risk of being involved in a fatal or injury crash is at night.

All of the restrictions listed are only for the first year or until you turn 18, whichever comes first. Then you’re off driving in the real world. But remember to play it smart. There are a lot of cars out there. So drive safely — for life.

Passenger restrictions do not apply while driving with an instructor as part of a certified driver education course or with a parent or stepparent who has valid driving privileges (see ORS 807.322(3) a & b).

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