Driving is a complex and often demanding task, even for the best drivers. More supervised practice helps young drivers become more skilled behind the wheel and gives parents greater peace of mind.

Some resources to help teens practice their driving skills include:

- New Mexico Department of Transportation. Traffic Safety Division's website for graduated driver licensing: www.transportation.com/autobr/CDL.htm or call (800) 541-7952

- New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department. Motor Vehicle Services website is www.mvd.state.nm.us

- AAA’s Teaching Your Teen to Drive is available for purchase by calling (800) 222-4357.

This 10 lesson program includes a 40 minute video and handbook that helps new learn driving such as:

- Basic vehicle control
- Position and speed adjustments
- Passing and changing lanes
- Right signal and turn control
- Following distance
- Driving on slippery surfaces
- Reducing risks

Consult your local teen driver education program for more information.
The Solution: A Licensing System
New Mexico’s graduated driver licensing system deals with the biggest problems facing teen drivers.

Because teens are so highly over-represented in traffic crashes, the base requires young drivers to spend more time behind the wheel to gain the experience needed for safe driving. Teens must hold an instructional permit for six months before applying for a provisional license. During this time, they must log 30 hours of adult-supervised driving practice.

Because nighttime driving poses a greater risk for teens, the instructional permit requires the teen to have a 90-hour total of practice before occurring during the dark hours. The law also restricts late-night driving while holding a provisional license.

Because the risk for teen passengers is greater with teen drivers, the base limits under-age 21 passengers who are not members of the teen’s immediate family for the duration of the provisional license, until the teen gains more driving experience.

Because teens receive more traffic citations than older drivers, those applying for a provisional license must not have been convicted of a traffic violation during the previous 90 days. Those applying for a full-unrestricted driver license must not have been convicted of a traffic violation during the previous 90 days or have a violation pending as of the time of application.

Once a permit is obtained, a teen must:
• Hold the provisional permit for at least six months, unless 30 days is added for each adjudication or conviction of a traffic violation.
• Complete a state-approved driver education program.
• Drive with an adult 21 or older who has been licensed for a minimum of 2 years.
• Complete 50 hours of supervised driving practice, including 10 hours at night. A parent or guardian who certify is writing time should have been completed.
• Not drive and drink. Even a .02 percent concentration of alcohol in your blood—berly one drink—could make you a one-ounce license revocation for drivers under age 21.

Stage 2: Provisional License
To obtain a provisional license, a teen must:
• Complete Stage 1 successfully.
• Be at least 16 1/2 years old.
• Pass a behind-the-wheel driving test.

Once the provisional license is issued, the three-stage system to obtain a driver’s license.

Stage 3: Instructional Permit To obtain a provisional, a teen must:
• Be at least 15 years old.
• Obtain parent or guardian consent.
• Provide identification and other documentation required by NMVD.
• Have completed and be enrolled in a state-approved driver education program.
• Pass a written and vision test.
• Pay an application fee.

Stage 3: Full License
To obtain a full-unrestricted license, a teen must:
• Complete Stage 2 successfully.
• Have not had any traffic violations pending at the time of application for a driver’s license.
• Have not been involved in any alcohol or drug offenses pending involving the use of alcohol or drugs during the provisional period.