



FAQ: Road Test Waiver Pilot Program

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Q: What is the road test waiver pilot program?

A: The DMV's road test waiver program allows drivers ages 16 and 17 who have met all requirements, which include holding their learner's permit for at least six months, completing 30 hours of classroom instruction and additional hours of behind the wheel training with a driving instructor and logging an additional 50 hours of driving with a parent or guardian, to move directly to a probationary graduated driver license without taking the road test.

The process to complete the waiver can be done online at wisconsin^{dmv}.gov/testwaiver. There is no need to visit a DMV.

Q: When did this begin?

A: DMV's road test waiver pilot program launched May 11, 2020.

Q: When will it end?

A: The road test waiver pilot program will end December 31, 2023.

Q: Who is eligible for the waiver?

A: Drivers, ages 16 and 17, are eligible for the road test waiver if they:

- Have held an instruction permit (also known as a learner's permit or "temps") for a minimum of six months with no violations
- Have completed an approved Driver Training Education Course
- Have completed behind-the-wheel training with a licensed instructor
- Have completed 50 hours of supervised driving with their parent/sponsor
- Have a parent or guardian's permission to receive the road test waiver

Please note: The restrictions of a probationary graduated driver license still apply for at least nine months for all drivers under 18, whether they take the road test or use the waiver program.

Q: Who is not eligible for the road test waiver?

A: The following drivers do not qualify for the road test waiver:

- Any person 18 years of age or older whether or not they completed driver education. Those 18 years of age and older have fewer requirements to obtain a license. These drivers only need to pass the knowledge test, have their permit for seven days and pass the road test. They also are not subject to the restrictions of a graduated driver license.
- Drivers ages 16 and 17 who have not completed all the requirements to take a road test
- Any person who has previously failed a road test

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Q: What role do parents/guardians play?

A: Parents or guardians are vital to ensuring that their young drivers are equipped to drive safely. Part of this training process is the requirement for parents/guardians to spend at least 50 hours in the car with the permit holder over the course of six months. They are in an excellent position to assess their teen's readiness for independent driving. They now have the option to waive the road test requirement for their minor driver. We understand that the road test has traditionally been a rite of passage for many drivers. If parents want their teen to take a road test, we will provide it.

Q: Why is the focus of this pilot on drivers ages 16 and 17?

A: After successfully completing classroom, behind-the-wheel and other practice requirements, nearly 98 percent of 16 and 17-year old drivers passed the DMV road test on their first or second attempt in 2019. These training requirements are key to preparing these drivers to pass the road test. They also operate under the restrictions of the graduated driver license for at least nine months. This preparation is only required for those aged 16 and 17. Those over age 18 need only pass the knowledge test and hold their permit for seven days before being allowed to take the road test. They are not required to have the same level of preparation as 16 and 17-year olds and have a 68 percent pass rate on their first attempt.

Q: Do other states waive road tests?

A: In the Midwest, Iowa and Nebraska have had similar waiver programs for decades with no reported negative impacts.

Q: Why did DMV create the pilot?

A: DMV stopped doing all road tests in mid-March due to COVID-19. DMV typically conducts approximately 2,100 road tests per week, and now has a considerable backlog of drivers eligible for a road test. By waiving the road test, the DMV can provide additional flexibility, without compromising highway safety, for the protection of both customers and employees.

Nearly 65 percent of DMV road tests are taken by drivers under the age of 18 and 98 percent passed their road test on their first or second attempt. Drivers are well-prepared due to the training and practice requirements. Drivers over age 18, with far fewer training requirements, have a 68 percent pass rate on their first attempt.

Drivers ages 16 and 17 are appropriate for the waiver pilot program due to the required training and the additional restrictions of the Graduated Driver License (GDL) program.

Q: Why can't drivers over age 18 get the road test waived?

A: Those aged 18 and older have no training requirements. They need only take the written knowledge test, hold their permit for one week, and then pass a road test. They also don't operate under the GDL restrictions.

This is significantly different than 16 and 17-year olds who must hold their instruction permit for at least six months, complete 30 hours of classroom instruction, perform additional hours of behind the wheel training with a driving instructor and complete another 50 hours of driving with a parent or guardian – 10 of which must be during hours of darkness. After completing these requirements, 16 and 17-year olds qualify for the probationary graduated drivers license, with operating restrictions for nine months.

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Q: What is a Graduated Driver License (GDL)?

A: During the first nine months of driving with their probationary license, those under age 18 must follow operating restrictions under Wisconsin's Graduated Driver License (GDL) law. These include restrictions on the number of passengers and driving times. The details are available on our [webpage](#). These requirements can be extended for moving violations or non-adherence to restrictions. Teen fatal crashes have decreased 60 percent since Wisconsin enacted the law in 2000.

Q: Can anyone over age 18 use the road test waiver if they completed some or most of the requirements?

A: This pilot program is designed for only those ages 16 and 17 who have completed all the rigorous training and have their parent or guardian sign the waiver.

Q: What if a teen completes all the qualifications except for a few hours behind the wheel with an instructor? Can they use the waiver?

A: The instructor courses are an important part of the training program. They are proven to increase safety for teens and must be completed to be eligible for the waiver.

To qualify for the road test waiver, drivers need to meet all the requirements, just like they would to apply for a road test. We know there is a challenge completing the training with an instructor. But, just as we can't issue a road test without meeting the requirements, we can't issue a waiver without meeting those same requirements.

Q: What are the requirements to get a probationary license for someone under age 18?

A: To get a probationary license, a driver must:

- Hold the instruction permit (also known as a learner's permit or "temps") without any violation for a minimum of six months before applying for a probationary License
- Complete all required driver education classes (classroom and behind-the-wheel)
- Have at least 50 hours of behind-the-wheel driving experience with their parent/guardian, 10 of which must be driving experience at night.
- Pass the road test – or under this pilot program, receive a waiver from parent/guardian.

Q: If a driver is ineligible for the road test waiver, what steps should they take to get a license?

A: Drivers under the age 18 who may be ineligible to use the road test waiver program still need to meet the same qualifications to take a road test.

Drivers over age 18 need to complete the Wisconsin Driver License application form [MV3001](#), visit a DMV to take the knowledge test and vision test. An instruction permit will be issued to practice driving with an experienced driver. After at least seven days, the driver can [schedule an appointment online](#) for a road test. After successful completion of the road test, the driver can go online (wisconsin.dmv.gov/testwaiver) to order their probationary license. DMV will email a PDF copy of the license to use until a new license arrives by mail within a week.