

FAQ: ROAD TEST WAIVER PILOT PROGRAM

Q: What is this new road test waiver pilot program?

A: The DMV's road test waiver program will allow 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 30 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 wisconsindmv.gov/testwaiver. There is no need to visit a DMV.

Q: When does this begin?

A: DMV's new road test waiver begins online Monday, May 11.

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 30 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

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 30 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 30 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.

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 30 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 (wisconsindmv.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.

To serve as many customers as possible who require an in-person visit while maintaining safe social distances in lobbies, DMV customer service centers will have expanded hours May 11 to May 22, Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Customers will be able to go in for their

Instruction Permit, Knowledge Test or other driver related services. All vehicle related services should be done online, by mail and/or at a 3rd party.

Q: How has the pandemic impacted DMVs and what are you doing to keep people safe?

A: Our DMV service centers typically serve more than 40,000 customers in person per week. The pandemic has created a backlog of more than 80,000 people waiting to renew their licenses and 16,000 young people waiting to get their probationary license. We are working hard to provide those services, while at the same time keeping both customers and our employees safe. When customers visit DMVs, they will look like many other businesses who serve the public with social distancing, plexiglass shields and other safety measures.

Q: How will DMV accommodate the health and safety of drivers who are ineligible for the waiver or choose to take the road test?

A: Drivers taking the road test will see modifications to ensure the health and safety of both the examiner and driver. Road tests are by appointment only. DMV examiners will use seat covers, masks and face shields to do these safely. Those taking the test will also wear masks. To further limit exposure, the driver does not need to enter the DMV after the test. The driver can go online 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.

Q: How long will the road test waiver program be available?

A: The road test waiver program will likely run through calendar year 2020. This limited duration pilot will allow the DMV to measure any difference in outcomes between those receiving the waiver and those who take the road test. Those taking the waiver will be informed that they may be subject to testing after licensure if the DMV makes that determination.

While this program is different than what has been done for many years, the DMV has determined that this is an appropriate pilot program given all the required training, practice hours, and GDL restrictions. This pilot will not become permanent unless there is a law passed changing these requirements.

Q: What other changes have occurred?

A: DMV will resume issuing instruction permits May 11. No appointment will be needed to visit a DMV customer service center after that date for anyone requiring license or ID card services.

Please be advised that vehicle transactions are not yet allowed at DMV offices because they can all be done online, by mail and/or at 3rd parties. [Road test appointments](#) can be made online beginning Friday, May 8. Road testing, by appointment only, begins May 26.

DMV customer service centers open Monday through Friday will have expanded hours May 11 to May 22, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Drivers may come in without an appointment to take knowledge and vision tests and to receive instruction permits. All road tests are by appointment only and scheduled online.

