



Learners Holding Period of 12 Months



Questions & Answers

1. Is it important that the learner period is 12 months?

Yes. GDL programs were designed to protect young novice drivers that are inexperienced and need the opportunity to learn to drive under supervision in a low-risk learner period. A 12-month learner period provides the time needed for young novice drivers to become comfortable behind the wheel and ensures they benefit from supervised driving practice in all four seasons, in good and adverse weather conditions, and on all types of roads.

2. Does a 12 month learner period have safety benefits?

Yes. Overall, research indicates that there is a crash reduction benefit associated with a longer learner permit period of 12 months. These safety benefits have been demonstrated in relation to young drivers aged 16 and 17 years. These safety benefits have also been shown to extend beyond the learner stage.

3. Why does a 12 month learner period produce safety benefits?

The safety benefits of a longer learner period likely result from novice drivers being supervised and not driving independently without supervision. Novice drivers aged 16 and 17 years in the learner



stage have a much lower crash risk compared to novice drivers age 16 and 17 in the intermediate stage, driving independently.

4. Does a 12-month learning period have safety benefits for the intermediate licensing age?

Yes. A 12-month learner holding period would increase the licensing age in about half of all U.S. states and increase safety benefits for teens. For example, teens can obtain a license at age 16 in states that have a learner starting age of 15.5 years and a learner holding period of 6 months. However, increasing the learner period to 12 months increases the licensing age to 16.5 years. There are safety benefits for teen drivers who begin the intermediate phase at an older age.

5. Do parents support a 12 month learner holding period?

Yes. A nationally representative online survey in 2010 showed that parents of teens aged 15 to 18 years old supported a longer learner period. In fact, more than half of parents surveyed agreed teens should stay in the learner stage for at least a year.

6. Are there states that already have a 12 month learner holding period?

Yes. There are 8 states that already currently require teen drivers complete 12 months in the learner stage: Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Mississippi, North Dakota, North Carolina, and Vermont. Most states require drivers complete just 6 months in the learner stage.

Traffic Injury Research Foundation

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