

May 19, 2005

New, tougher road test coming May 20

New advanced road test critical part of Graduated Driver Licensing

Edmonton... Alberta's tough graduated driver licensing system is about to get a little tougher as the province's first class of GDL drivers gets set for final exams.

The latest piece of the GDL program-the Advanced Road Test-goes into effect May 20, 2005.

That means drivers who obtained a Class 5 or 6 GDL probationary licence on or after May 2003 must now pass an advanced road test to earn their full licence.

"The Graduated Driver Licensing program helps new drivers to develop their skills in a more controlled environment," said Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. "The Advanced Road Test confirms they are ready to demonstrate safe driving skills and responsible decision-making under challenging conditions-with no strings attached."

To be eligible for the test, drivers must:

- spend a minimum of two years in the GDL probationary stage
- be suspension-free for 12 consecutive months just prior to the test

New drivers who choose not to take the Advanced Road Test will remain in the GDL system at their current level, and may continue to drive, subject to GDL conditions.

Advanced Road Tests will only be conducted at approved city and town locations. For more information on locations, visit www.saferoads.com. Class 6 (motorcycle) probationary drivers opting to complete a Class 6 Advanced Road Test must contact a Driver Program Administrator. For information on the Advanced Road Test, contact a Licensed Driver Examiner or Registry Agent's office, or call Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation at (780) 427-8901, toll-free in Alberta at 310-0000.

- 30 -

backgrounder attached

Media enquiries may be directed to:

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To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

Background

More on the Advanced Road Test

The Advanced Road Test will be 20 to 30 kilometres in length and will take about 60 minutes to complete. The driving portion will last 40 to 50 minutes, and the remaining time will cover pre-trip inspection, test instructions and the test summary.

The intent of the advanced road test is to assess knowledge, motor and perceptual skills. Drivers taking the advanced road test will be required to perform the following:

- making numerous right and left turns
- handling 'through' intersections
- stopping at pedestrian crosswalks
- entering and exiting high-speed roadways
- changing lanes
- handling controlled and uncontrolled intersections
- driving in moderate and congested traffic
- handling right and left road curves
- handling controlled and uncontrolled railway crossings
- driving in various speed zones
- driving through playground and school zones
- angle parking
- hazard preparation exercises

Graduated Driver Licensing

- The Traffic Safety Act (TSA) provides for a graduated licensing program for first-time drivers, regardless of age, to meet certain requirements prior to obtaining an unrestricted driver's licence. This program is designed to allow new drivers to gain the experience and skills in a controlled environment before graduating to more demanding driving conditions.
- Driver inexperience is the common factor in collisions involving new drivers. Alberta introduced this program because statistics show that the approximately 46,000 new drivers entering the licensing system each year have a much higher collision risk than experienced drivers.
- All provinces that have implemented a GDL program have experienced significant decreases in the collision rates of new drivers.
- There is strong support for GDL in Alberta and throughout North America. Albertans recognize the program can save lives and reduce injuries by reducing the chance of collisions.



To obtain a Learner's Licence (Class 7) you must:

- Be 14 years of age or older
- Pass a vision test and a written knowledge test on the rules of the road
- Have parental consent if you are younger than 18 years of age

Learner's Conditions

- Must hold a Learner's Licence (Class 7) for at least **1 year**
- Must be accompanied by a fully licensed (non-probationary) driver who is **18 years** of age or older and who is seated next to the driver
- Have a zero alcohol level
- Not permitted to drive from midnight to 5 a.m.
- No more passengers than seat belts
- Fewer demerit points (8) are allowed than for fully licensed drivers

To become a Probationary Driver you must:

- Be **16 years** of age or older
- Pass the standard Alberta road test

Probationary Conditions

- Must spend a minimum of **2 years** as a Probationary Driver
- Have a zero alcohol level
- No more passengers than seat belts
- Fewer demerit points (8) are allowed than for fully licensed drivers
- No upgrading to a commercial licence
- Cannot serve as an accompanying driver to a Learner

To become a fully licensed driver (Class 5) you must:

- Have been suspension-free for the last year of the **2-year** Probationary Stage
- Pass an advanced road test

- Under the GDL program, learners and probationary drivers shall not consume any alcohol before driving. Driving is a very complex skill that requires full attention. Alcohol impairs skill and judgment, especially for new drivers who may already be experiencing driving challenges. Consuming even a small amount of alcohol can be dangerous.
- The GDL program calls for an immediate 24-hour suspension under the zero alcohol tolerance provision, followed by a 30-day suspension.
- It will take a minimum of three years to complete both stages of GDL, four years for drivers who get their Learner's Licence at 14 years of age.
- Drivers must show responsible driving behavior, sound driving skills and must pass road tests to graduate from the learners and probationary stages.
- Violating any program condition may result in a new driver being charged with an offence as outlined below:

• Zero tolerance for alcohol	• Immediate 30 day suspension
• No more passengers than seatbelts	• \$100 fine & 2 demerit points
• Driving after midnight	• \$100 fine & 2 demerit points
• Accompanying driver	• \$200 fine & 2 demerit points

- The Graduated Driver Licence looks different from a regular operator's licence. The letters GDL clearly identify the licence to ensure that law enforcement is aware that you are subject to driving conditions.

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