



L I F E S K I L L S TM
H A N D B O O K S

Car *and Driver*

Becoming a Good Driver
Buying a Car
Maintenance and Repair
Driving and the Law



21st CENTURY

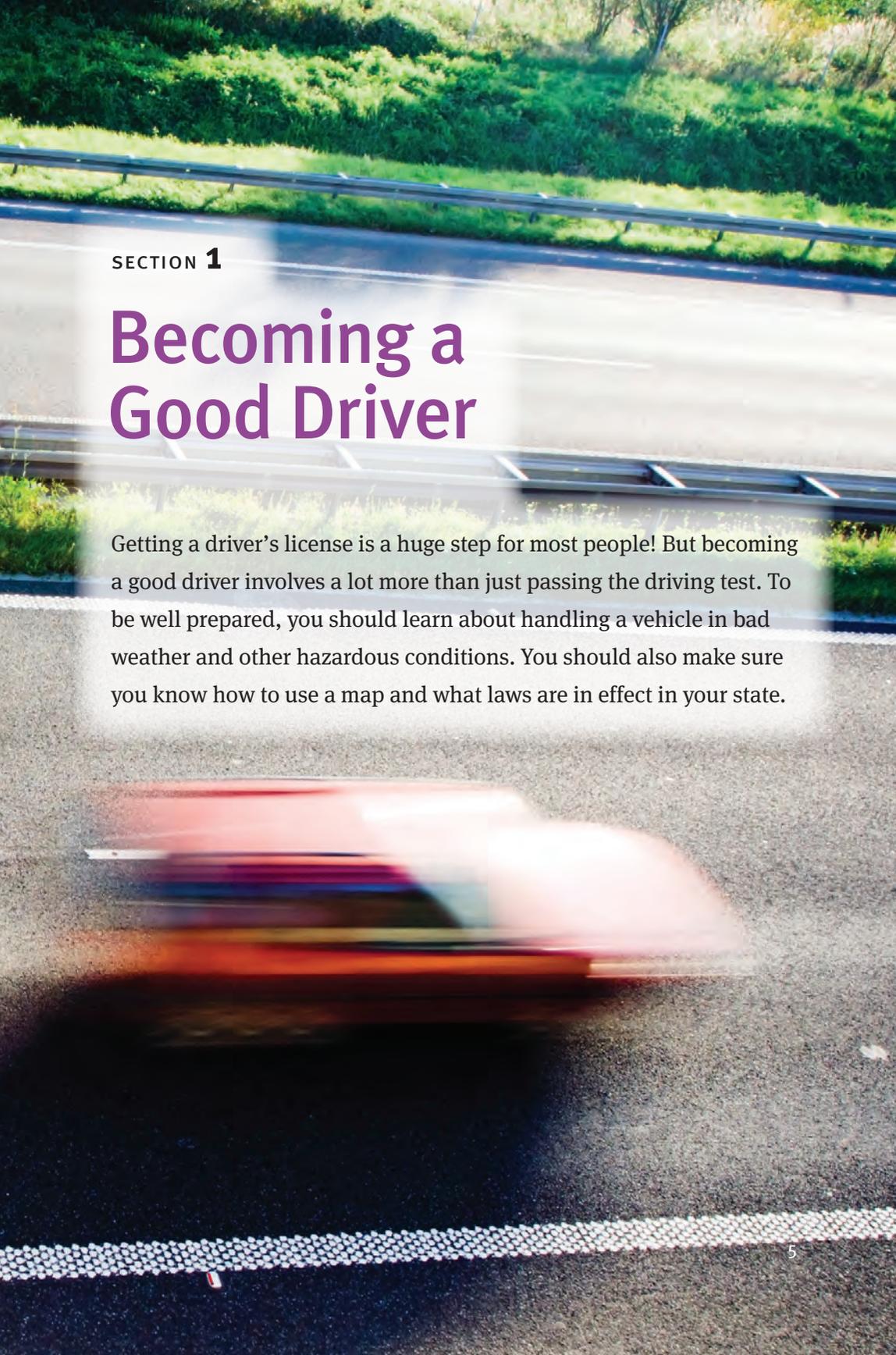
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SECTION 1

Becoming a Good Driver

Getting a driver's license is a huge step for most people! But becoming a good driver involves a lot more than just passing the driving test. To be well prepared, you should learn about handling a vehicle in bad weather and other hazardous conditions. You should also make sure you know how to use a map and what laws are in effect in your state.



What's Your Story?

Meet Diego

Diego is almost 16 years old, and he wants to learn how to drive. In the state where he used to live, he could already have had a license. He and his family lived in a rural area. The state allowed people there to begin driving when they're 14. But where Diego lives now, the laws are different. He can get a learner's permit when he's 15, but he can't get his license until



he's 16. Also, he must complete classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction taught by professionals.

Meet Kaylee

Kaylee is 18 years old. Like Diego, she wants to get a driver's license. But because she's an adult and lives in a different state, the laws for her are different. Kaylee doesn't



have to take professionally taught classroom or behind-the-wheel instruction. But she does have to get a learner's permit and practice driving before taking her test.

Meet Megan

Megan is 25 years old. She's lived most of her life in a big city. Like many people there, she has never had a driver's license. She's always counted on public transportation to get around. But in a few months, she will be moving to an area where things are really spread out and there are few buses. She will have to drive to work, to shop, and so on. The area is also well known for its bad weather—lots of rain and fog. Because of her age, Megan doesn't have to take driver training. But she thinks she will be a better driver if she does.





CHAPTER 1

Learning to Drive

Diego's Plan

Like most states, Diego's state has **graduated licensing laws**. Those laws require him to get a learner's permit before being able to get a driver's license.

In Diego's state, getting a learner's permit requires taking a class in driver education. Diego's high school offers this class, so he's decided to sign up for it. In this one-semester course, he will learn the rules of the road and get some tips on safe driving.

The class will prepare him for taking the written test needed to get a learner's permit.

After Diego gets his learner's permit, he will be able to take behind-the-wheel training. For that, he will attend a driving school. A professional instructor will give Diego four 90-minute lessons.

Graduated Licensing Laws

Laws that provide different levels of privileges and restrictions for drivers. They are usually based on drivers' ages and levels of training and experience.





Taking Your Driving Test

Visit the Web site of your state's Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to find out what to bring when you take your driving test. You might need to have any or all of the following:



- A completed driver's license application (signed by a parent or guardian, if you're under 18)
- Your learner's permit and proof of having completed training
- One or more valid forms of identification
- Payment for the license fee
- Proof of having auto insurance
- Your glasses or contact lenses (if needed to pass the vision test)
- A parent or guardian (if you're under 18)

To get a license in Diego's state, a driver under age 18 must complete 50 hours of supervised driving practice. Also, 10 of those hours must be at night. Diego's parents will help him complete the required time behind the wheel. Then, he will take his driving test at the local testing station.

Because Diego is under 18, his driver's license will be restricted. In his state, that means he won't be able to drive between 11:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. He also won't be able to have more than one passenger with him.



[FACT]

Restricted Licenses

Drivers under 18 usually have restrictions on the hours they can drive. Most states forbid teens to drive late at night and early in the morning. Exceptions are sometimes made when driving with an adult or when going to work or school. In addition, most states don't allow teen drivers to have more than one or two teenage passengers. This restriction usually applies for the first six months or more after getting a driver's license. Exceptions are sometimes made if an adult is present or the passengers are family members.

Risk Factors for Teen Drivers

Teens make up only 7% of all drivers, but they account for 14% of all car accident deaths. Why is this age group at such high risk for accidents?

- Don't often recognize hazards
- Bad at identifying risks
- Eager to take risks
- Don't always use seatbelts
- Have little driving skill and experience
- Tend to use alcohol and drugs
- Often have passengers
- Have little experience driving at night





Kaylee's Plan

To get her learner's permit, Kaylee will read the driver handbook and take the written test. After she has her permit, she will take behind-the-wheel training from her sister. By law, Kaylee can practice driving only with a person who is over age 25 and has a valid driver's license.

Kaylee's state doesn't require her to complete a certain number of hours of behind-the-wheel practice. Nor does the state require her to have a learner's permit for a certain length of time. She can take the driving test as soon as she feels ready. And because she's 18, her license will be unrestricted.



Underage Drinking and Driving

In many states, the penalties for getting a DUI (driving under the influence of alcohol) are harsher for drivers under 18 than for older drivers. For example, teen drivers often have their licenses automatically suspended for a year. They also face other penalties, such as fines and community service. Several states have also increased DUI penalties for drivers ages 18 to 21. These states want to enforce a zero-tolerance policy for underage drinking. (The legal drinking age is 21 in all states.) Penalties may include a license suspension and even the sale of the vehicle involved in the DUI.





Megan's Plan

Megan's state doesn't require her to take behind-the-wheel training from a professional instructor. She's worried, though, that she won't be able to pass the driving test unless she does. Getting professional instruction won't be cheap, based on the prices she's found. Even so, Megan thinks it will be worth it.

Finding a Driving School

Search online or in the phone book to find a professional driving school in your area. Most driving schools offer several kinds of programs. Some programs provide the minimum training required by the state. Others provide extra services, such as pick-up/drop-off and practice tests. Usually, the greater the number of services provided, the higher the cost of the program.

Before you sign up for a program, be sure to get in writing how much it costs. Also make sure you understand the number and length of sessions. Finally, make sure the school and its instructors have the licenses required by the state.

