

## Driver Education Bills

The following summary reflects changes that affect the Texas Department of Public Safety and driver education.

- The number of required hours of driver education instruction increases from 14 to 34 hours, effective September 1, 2009. Driver education programs have until May 1, 2010 to adopt the changes. [See HB 2730 and HB 339]
- After March 1, 2010, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) may not issue a license to anyone under the age of 25 unless they have completed a driver education course as approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). [See SB 1317]
- The Texas Education Agency (TEA) will develop a six hour driver education course exclusively for adults, effective September 1, 2009. [See SB 1317 and HB 339]
- Beginning September 1, 2009, all license applicants under the age of 18 will be required to take a driving skills test administered by DPS. [HB 2730 and HB 339]
- DPS may waive the highway signs and traffic law test for an adult applicant “if those parts have been successfully completed as determined by a licensed driver instructor.” This applies to applications made after March 1, 2010. [SB 1317 and HB 339]
- Beginning September 1, 2009, DPS may not issue a driver license to anyone under 18 years of age unless they present written permission from a parent or guardian to access their TEA school enrollment records. [HB 2730 and HB 339]
- Foster parents have been added to the list of individuals who may conduct a parent taught driver education program if that individual’s driver license has not been suspended or revoked in the preceding three years “for an offense that involves a motor vehicle” or has 6 points or more on his or her driver license record. [HB 2730 and HB 339]
- By October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year DPS must issue a publication listing the collision rate for students taught by each driver education entity and the collision rate for students educated through the Parent Taught Driver Education program. The first report is required to be published by October 1, 2011. [HB 2730 and HB 339]
- Provisional licenses are currently issued for up to one year and expire on the next birthday of the license holder. The expiration date for provisional licenses and instruction permits will now be the license holder’s 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. This change applies to licenses issued after September 1, 2009. [HB 2730 and HB 339]

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- The fees for provisional licenses and instruction permits have been changed from \$5.00 to \$15.00. This change applies to licenses issued after September 1, 2009. [HB 2730 and HB 339]
- Beginning September 1, 2009, license holders under the age of 18 are restricted from using a wireless communication device while operating a motor vehicle, except for emergency situations. [HB 2730 and HB 339]
- Beginning September 1, 2009, license holders under the age of 18 are restricted from operating a motor vehicle between midnight and 5 a.m. or with more than one passenger under 21 who is not a family member for twelve (12) months following the issuance of a license. This restriction applies to licenses issued after September 1, 2009. [HB 2730 and HB 339]