



# **GRADUATED DRIVER'S LICENSING PROGRAM (GDL)**

**Prince Edward Island**



Department of Transportation and Infrastructure  
*Highway Safety Division*

## **Congratulations!**

By committing to the **Graduated Driver Licensing Program**, you are supporting Prince Edward Island's objective of creating the safest roads in Canada by learning the necessary skills to reduce the number of traffic fatalities, serious injuries and collisions on our highways.

To obtain a driver's license in Prince Edward Island, applicants must complete the Graduated Driver Licensing Program.

Please be advised that **ALL** new drivers residing in PEI, regardless of age, who are applying for their first car license (Class 5) or motorcycle license (Class 6) must first apply to enter PEI's Graduated Driver Licensing system, which begins by achieving an Instruction Driver's Permit (Class 7).

**Parent or Legal Guardian consent is mandatory for drivers under the age of 18. Parents and Guardians are encouraged to read the brochure before signing the consent form which can be found in the [Co-Pilot brochure](#).**

[https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/hsd\\_co-pilot\\_brochure.pdf](https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/hsd_co-pilot_brochure.pdf)

The information in this brochure should be used to supplement the Prince Edward Island Driver's Handbook.

Updated: December 2022

## **What is the purpose of the GDL Program?**

The purpose of the GDL program is to improve road safety by extending the timeline for new drivers to achieve a Class 5 driver's license. PEI introduced the *Newly Licensed Driver Program* in 1980 and the three-stage *Graduated Driver Licensing Program* in 2000.

The rationale for the new program was that drivers of all ages are at risk because of their inexperience and the GDL is a system designed to deal with inexperience.

In Prince Edward Island, the total number of traffic related collisions decreased by 37% between 2000 and 2020 while the overall number of licensed drivers increased by 26% during the same time frame.

The GDL system provides the foundation for new drivers to gain the necessary experience for driving and handling a vehicle under low-risk conditions. Under the supervision of an experienced licensed driver, new drivers will gain the required skills to become proactive and responsible drivers.



## **When can I start the GDL Program?**

If you are 16 years of age or older, you may apply for an Instruction Driver's Permit, also called a Beginner's Permit (Class 7 license), which allows you supervised operation of a motor vehicle for the purpose of driving instruction during Stage 1. This permit is valid for two years from date of issue. All individuals who received their Instruction Permit are required to wait 365 days or if enrolled in Driver Education, 275 days before they have their first Road Test.

## *Graduated Driver Licensing Program*

### **What are the 3 stages of the GDL Program?**

**Stage 1 (L) - Instruction Permit:** New Drivers can operate a motor vehicle but only under the supervision of a licensed, adult driver with a minimum of four years driving experience. Only immediate family members of the supervising driver are allowed as passengers.

**Stage 2 (G) – Class 5 Driver’s license with restrictions:** New Drivers can drive without supervision under lower risk driving conditions. Restrictions include limits on nighttime driving and one non-family member of the new driver is permitted as a passenger.

**Stage 3 (G) – Class 5 Driver’s license with reduced restrictions:** New Drivers can drive independently, and Stage 2 restrictions are lifted.

### **What is meant by "immediate family"?**

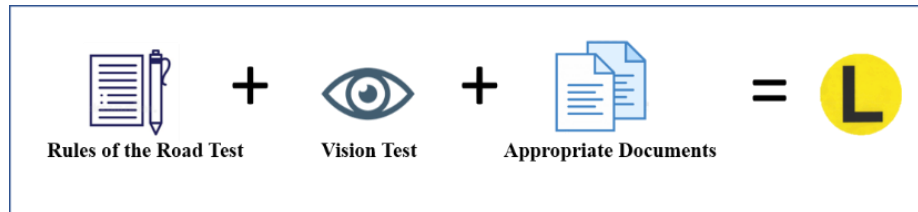
In the Highway Traffic Act, "immediate family member" means:

- (a) the spouse of the newly licensed driver;
- (b) a parent of the newly licensed driver and the spouse of the parent of the newly licensed driver”;
- (c) the children of the newly licensed driver and the children of the newly licensed driver’s spouse;
- (d) the grandchildren of the newly licensed driver;
- (e) the brothers and sisters of the newly licensed driver;
- (f) the grandfather and grandmother of the newly licensed driver;(g) a parent of the spouse of the newly licensed driver and the spouse of a parent of the newly licensed driver; and (h) any relative of the newly licensed driver who resides permanently with the newly licensed driver or with whom the newly licensed driver permanently resides.

*(Highway Traffic Act, s 92.1(1))*

## STAGE 1

### *Minimum Age of Entry is 16 Years of Age*



With your Instruction Permit, you will be issued an identifying decal which is to be placed on the inside of the windshield just above the motor vehicle inspection sticker. The decal is a bright yellow sticker with a large black “L” in the center. It is designed to be removed and replaced on a windshield so you can transfer it to any vehicle you are driving during this first stage.

A Stage 1 Driver may operate a motor vehicle if that driver is supervised at all times by an individual who is qualified to act as an accompanying driver when instructing the driver in the operation of the vehicle. Under the Highway Traffic Act, an **Accompanying Driver** is:

A person is qualified to act as an accompanying driver for a Stage 1 driver who is operating or has care or control of a motor vehicle if the person

- (a) is a fully licensed driver;
- (b) has held a valid driver’s license in the province or another jurisdiction for at least four years;
- (c) holds a class of driver’s license that authorizes the person to operate or have care or control of a motor vehicle of the class of motor vehicle that the Stage 1 driver is operating; and
- (d) meets any conditions as required on the person’s driver’s license.



## Stage 1: Rules & Restrictions

- The new driver must be at least 16 years of age and has passed a written, vision and road test.
- If you are under 18 years of age, parental/guardian consent is required before an Instructions Permit will be issued.
- When operating a motor vehicle, the new driver must be supervised by an accompanying driver who holds and has held a valid and subsisting driver's license or its equivalent from another jurisdiction recognized by the Registrar for a period of at least four years.
  - An equivalent driver's license means the accompanying driver is from a county in which PEI has a Reciprocal Licensing Agreement or allows a Unilateral Exchange.
  - See link for Driving with an Out-of-Province License for a list of approved countries:  
<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/transportation-and-infrastructure/driving-with-an-out-of-province-license>
- The accompanying driver must ride in the front seat at all times while the **Stage 1 driver** is operating the vehicle.
- The Stage 1 driver's blood alcohol concentration **and** blood drug concentration shall be zero while the driver is operating or has care or control of the motor vehicle;
- The accompanying driver's blood alcohol concentration shall be less than 50 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood while the Stage 1 driver is operating or has care or control of the motor vehicle;
- The only other passengers allowed in the vehicle are the immediate family of the accompanying driver who is providing instruction.
- The **Stage 1 driver** shall ensure that he or she is not accompanied by more passengers than may be accommodated in a seating position that has an available seat belt.
- If the **Stage 1 driver** is under the age of 21, they are prohibited from operating motor vehicles between the hours of 1 a.m. and 5 a.m.



- **Stage 1 drivers are** prohibited from using a hand-held cellular telephone, headphones or any other hand-held electronic device while operating or having care and control of a motor vehicle.
- Any violations that carry demerit points will suspend the Instruction Permit of the **Stage 1** driver for a minimum of 30 days.

### **Stage 1: Car or Light Truck Decal**

- Stage 1 drivers are required to have a Learner's Decal displayed on any motor vehicle while they are operating that vehicle.
- The Stage 1 driver will receive this decal at the time their photo is taken for the Instruction Permit.
- The decal is to be placed on the inside of the windshield just above the motor vehicle inspection sticker. The decal is free of charge.

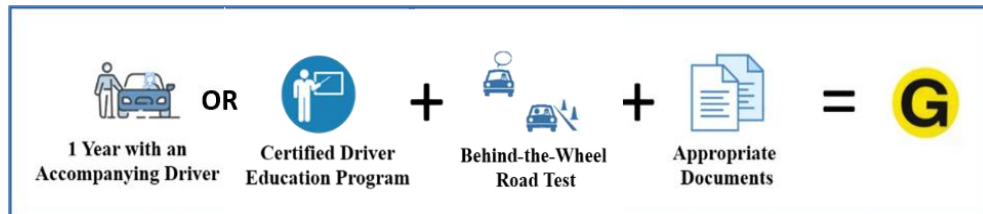
### **Stage 1: Motorcycle Decal**

For those who operate motorcycles, a small yellow Learner's Decal is to be placed on the back of the motorcycle operator's helmet.



## STAGE 2

*Minimum Age of Entry is 17 Years of Age*



When an individual has met all the requirements of Stage 1, including a successful road test, they will graduate into Stage 2 of the GDL Program and receive a Class 5 Driver's license.

**Stage 2 Drivers** will be issued a Graduated Decal (G) which they are required to display on any motor vehicle they operate.

If the **Stage 2 Driver** is 16 years of age and successfully completed a Certified Driver Education Course, a Stage 2 License will be granted to a person aged 16 years + 275 days.

### Stage 2: Rules & Restrictions

- **Stage 2 Drivers** may have only one non-family member as a passenger. The other passengers must be members of the Stage 2 driver's immediate family.
- There cannot be more passengers in the vehicle than the number of seatbelts in the vehicle. You can be fined for any passenger not wearing a seatbelt in a vehicle you are driving.
- **Stage 2 drivers** must have a blood alcohol content (BAC) of zero when operating a motor vehicle.
- **Stage 2 drivers** must maintain a blood drug concentration of 0% while operating a motor vehicle.
- **Stage 2 drivers** are prohibited from using a hand-held cellular telephone, headphones, or any other hand-held electronic device while operating or having care and control of a motor vehicle.
- **Stage 2 Drivers shall not operate** a motor vehicle between the hours of 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. unless accompanied by a fully licensed driver who has



held a Driver's license for at least four years and the accompanying driver does not have a BAC level of .05 or more (**this rule does not apply to individuals who are 21 years of age or older**).

- The **Stage 2 Driver** may apply for an exemption from the driving curfew for work purposes.
- Exemption forms are available at all Access PEI locations and on the government website at [www.princeedwardisland.ca](http://www.princeedwardisland.ca) by searching "night-time driving restriction".



## Stage 2: Car or Light Truck Decal

- **Stage 2 Drivers** are required to have a Graduated Decal displayed on any motor vehicle they operate.
- The **Stage 2 Driver** will receive this decal at the time their photo is taken for his/her Class 5 driver's license.
- The decal is to be placed on the inside of the windshield just above the motor vehicle inspection sticker.
- The decal is free of charge.



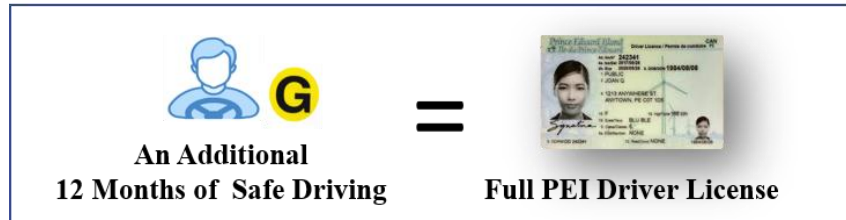
## Stage 2: Motorcycle Decal

For those who operate motorcycles, a small yellow Graduated Decal (G) is to be placed on the back of the operator's helmet.



## STAGE 3

*Minimum Age of Entry is 18 Years of Age*



When the GDL driver has spent the appropriate time in Stage 2, they will automatically graduate to Stage 3 of the GDL Program.

You are still required to display your identifying “G” decal on the windshield of the vehicle you are driving.

If the **Stage 3 Driver** is 17 years of age and successfully completed a Certified Driver Education Course, a Stage 3 License will be granted to a person aged 17 years + 275 days.

Stage 3 is the last year of the Graduated Driver Licensing Program (GDL) and lasts for one year (365 days) with the following restrictions.

### Stage 3: Rules & Restrictions

- You are allowed as many passengers as there are available seat belts in the vehicle. You can be fined for any passenger not wearing a seatbelt in a vehicle you are driving.
- Stage 3 drivers must have a blood alcohol content (BAC) and a blood drug concentration of zero when operating a motor vehicle.
- Stage 3 drivers are prohibited from using a hand-held cellular telephone, headphones, or any other hand-held electronic device while operating or having care and control of a motor vehicle.
- At the conclusion of the appropriate time in Stage 3, the “G” decal can be removed from the vehicles you have been operating.
- Obtaining a replacement driver license Class 5 is not required.
- A Stage 3 driver who holds a valid Stage 3 driver’s license is eligible to

apply for a Class 4 driver's license that is restricted to the operation of an ambulance.

### **Stage 3: Decal**

- **Stage 3** drivers are required to have a Graduated Decal displayed on any motor vehicle that they operate.
- This is the same decal the driver received in Stage 2.
- The decal is to be placed on the inside of the windshield just above the motor vehicle inspection sticker.
- The decal is free of charge.
- For those who operate motorcycles in **Stage 3**, the small yellow decal is still to be worn on the back of the motorcycle operator's helmet.

### **Damaged or Lost Decal**

- If a decal becomes lost or destroyed during any of the GDL Stages, the Registrar of Motor Vehicles may issue a replacement.
- A replacement decal may be obtained at any Access PEI location. There is no charge for the replacement decal.
- If a replacement decal cannot be obtained, such as on evenings or weekends, or if the decal was left on another vehicle, an individual may place a temporary paper decal on the windshield (see page 14).

While restrictions apply at each stage of the GDL Program, the GDL drivers must adhere to the following throughout the Program:

**Blood-alcohol content:** GDL drivers must maintain a blood- alcohol concentration of 0% while operating a motor vehicle.

**Blood-drug content:** GDL drivers must maintain a blood-drug concentration of 0% while operating a motor vehicle.

**Passenger limit:** GDL drivers are responsible for making sure the number of passengers does not exceed the number of seatbelts in the vehicle.

**Electronic devices:** GDL drivers cannot use a cell phone or other hand-held device while driving. A hands-free cell phone is permitted.

**Penalties:** GDL drivers are subject to license suspensions and vehicle impoundments for any offence under the Highway Traffic Act (e.g. excessive speeding, alcohol and drug related violations).

**Please note,** like the Driver's Handbook, this brochure is intended as a guide. For exact wording on items related to Statutes and/or Regulations under the Act, please consult the PEI *Highway Traffic Act* and associated Regulations by visiting:

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/legislation/all/all/a>

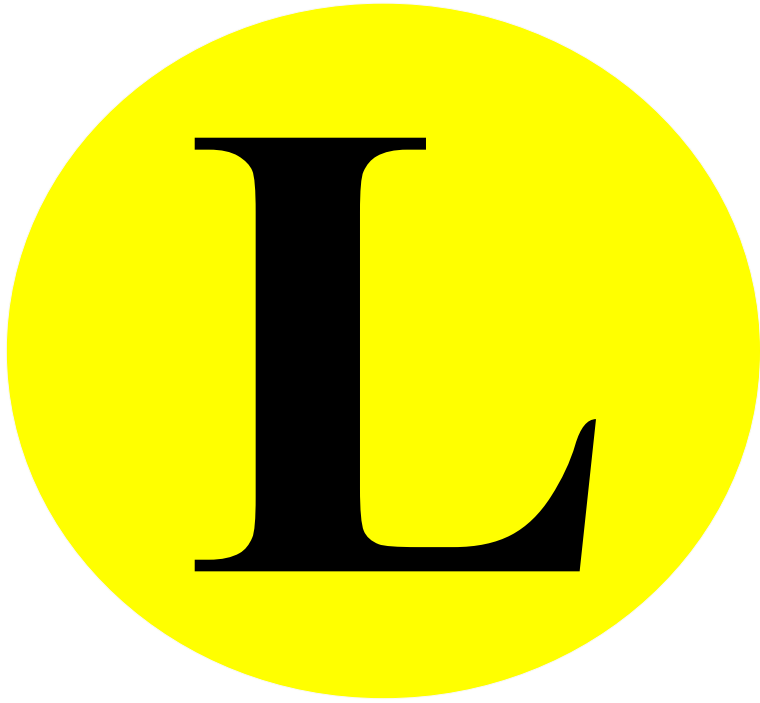
### Demerit Point System Table (partial list) \*

Points	Explanation	Legislation
12	○ Criminal negligence involving the use of a motor vehicle	CC: 219, 220, 221, 320.13(1)
12	○ Motor manslaughter	CC: 236
12	○ Failing to stop at scene of accident	CC: 320.13(2)
12	○ Dangerous driving	CC: 320.13(3)
12	○ Operation of conveyance causing bodily harm, accident resulting in bodily harm	CC: 320.13(2), 320.14(2), 320.15(2), 320.16(2)
12	○ Defacing or altering driver's license	HTA: 89(a)
12	○ Lending driver's license	HTA: 89(b)
12	○ Operates a vehicle with blood alcohol concentration exceeding 0 mg of alcohol in 100 ml of blood	HTA: 89(e.4)
12	○ Driving - 80 or more kilometres per hour over the posted maximum speed limit	HTA: 176(3)(b)(v), 176(3.1)(b)(v)
12	○ Failing to stop for a school bus when the flashing red lights are displayed on the school bus	HTA: 202(1)
9	○ Driving while racing with another motor vehicle	HTA: 231(1)(a)
9	○ Driving a motor vehicle while performing a stunt	HTA: 231(1)(b)
9	○ Driving - 60 or more kilometres per hour over the posted maximum speed limit but less than 80 kilometres per hour	HTA: 176(3)(b)(iv), 176(3.1)(b)(iv)
3	○ Improper passing	HTA: 155(1),(2)
3	○ Passing bicycle without leaving required distance	HTA: 155.1(1)
3	○ Driving - under 30 kilometres per hour over the posted maximum speed limit	HTA: 176(3)(b)(i), 176(3.1)(b)(i)
3	○ Failing to yield the right of way	HTA: 185, 186, 187, 188, 190
3	○ Failing to report an accident	HTA: 232(3)
3	○ Driving over the posted maximum speed limit on the Confederation Bridge	HTA: 176(3)(b)(i), (ii), (iii), (iv) or 76(3.1)(b)(i),(ii),(iii), (iv)

\*For a full list of demerit points, please refer to the [Highway Traffic Act Demerit Point System Regulations](#)

## **Graduated Driver Licensing Program Checklist**

- You are at least 16 years of age.
- You have applied for an Instruction Permit.
- You have the required identification documents.
- You have paid the required fee.
- You have passed the written and road signs test.
- You have passed the vision screening test.
- You have had your photo taken.
- You have entered the GDL Program and issued an “L” decal.
  - You adhere to the Stage 1 driving restrictions.
  - You are practice driving with a qualified accompanying driver.
- You have completed the Novice Driver Course (NDC) delivered by Highway Safety or a Certified Driver Education Program.
- You have waited the appropriate number of days.
- You have scheduled a road test with Highway Safety.
- You have successfully passed a road test.
- You have been issued a Class 5 Driver’s license, given a new “G” decal and entered Stage 2.
  - You continue to adhere to the GDL driving restrictions.
  - After 365 days, you enter Stage 3.
- At the conclusion of 365 days, you automatically exit the GDL Program.



## Quick Facts:

- The Program applies to all new drivers regardless of age.
- Stage 1 begins when the applicant receives their Instruction Permit.
- To be eligible for a Class 5 road test and move to Stage 2, drivers must wait 365 days and complete a Novice Driver Course. The waiting period to take a road test is reduced to 275 days if enrolled in a certified driver education program.
- It takes a minimum of three years to complete the program. Drivers enrolled in a certified driver education program may complete the Program sooner, in a minimum of two years plus 275 days.
- Drivers may not apply for a Class 1, 2, 3 or 4 driver`s license until they have successfully completed the GDL Program, except a Stage 3 driver who may apply for a Restricted Class 4 driver`s license to operate an ambulance when the Stage 3 driver is enrolled in a paramedic training program.
- Where a driver in Stage 1, 2 or 3 is convicted of any offence under the Act or any regulations in which demerit points are placed on the driver`s driving record, a suspension and/or probation term will be applied according the *Highway Traffic Act*.
- **Zero Tolerance** for drugs and alcohol includes all drivers under 22 years of age even if the driver has exited the GDL program prior to turning 22 years of age.

It is extremely important for new drivers to understand their responsibility and it is just as critical for parents or guardians to allow the beginning or newly licensed driver to drive at every opportunity possible under supervision. Whenever possible, each time you get into your vehicle with a novice or newly licensed driver, encourage them to do the driving.



## Department of Transportation and Infrastructure

Access PEI locations:

- [Access PEI Alberton](#): 16 Dufferin Street
- [Access PEI Charlottetown](#): 33 Riverside Drive
- [Access PEI Montague](#): 41 Wood Islands Road
- [Access PEI O'Leary](#): 45 East Drive
- [Access PEI Souris](#): 15 Green Street
- [Access PEI Summerside](#): 120 Heather Moyse Drive
- [Access PEI Tignish](#): 103 School Street
- [Access PEI Wellington](#): 48 Mill Road

<b>Department of Transportation and Infrastructure</b>	3rd Floor, Jones Building 11 Kent Street, P.O. Box 2000, Charlottetown, PE C1A 7N8  Tel: (902) 368-5100 Fax: (902) 368-5395
<b>Highway Safety Head Office</b>	33 Riverside Drive Charlottetown, PE C1A 9R9  Tel: (902) 368-5271 Fax: (902) 368-6269
<b>Highway Safety Summerside Office</b>	120 Heather Moyse Dr. Summerside, PE C1A 5Y8  Tel: (902) 432-2714 Fax: (902) 432-2529

For more information, please consult the following links:

Prince Edward Island Driver's Handbook (being updated)

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/publication/drivers-handbook>

*Highway Traffic Act*

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/legislation/highway-traffic-act>

Highway Traffic Act Graduated Driver Licensing Program Regulations

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/legislation/all/all/h>

Graduated Driver Licensing Program

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/transportation-infrastructure-and-energy/graduated-driver-licensing-program>

Getting an Instruction Driver's Permit

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/transportation-and-infrastructure/getting-a-pei-drivers-license>

Co-pilot Guide for Parents and Guardians

[https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/hsd\\_co-pilot\\_brochure.pdf](https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/hsd_co-pilot_brochure.pdf)







Prepared by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure  
Highway Safety Division  
December 2022

