



DDOE Driver Education 2020-2021 School Year Guidance Document

Driver education is one class with two components worth .25 credit. The first component is a 30-hour class which includes a statewide 100 question final exam. The second component is behind-the-wheel instruction that includes seven hours of student driving and seven hours of student observation. Driver education must be taught by certified and licensed driver education teachers.

30-hour class

As a continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic for the 2020 – 2021 school year, student classroom hours may be completed utilizing in-class, hybrid or virtual instruction. All high schools will be required to adhere to Title 14 Administrative Code 540. The link to administrative code 540 is here: <https://regulations.delaware.gov/AdminCode/title14/500/540.shtml#TopOfPage>.

Teachers must document how they are completing at least 30-hours of **synchronous** structured learning experiences. Teachers will also want to carefully assess students' knowledge and skills as outlined in the *Curriculum Guide for Driver Education Teachers in Delaware*.

If the 30-hour class is entirely virtual, it is **recommended** that enrollment in each class be limited to 30 students.

The state final exam must be done in a face-to-face proctored environment. If the State of Delaware closes to all in-person instruction, then the final exam guidance issued in May 2020 will be followed. This document is located in Appendix A.

Behind-the-Wheel Instruction

Driving simulation, behind-the-wheel instruction and student observation must be done in a face-to-face proctored environment. Driving range also may be implemented, however, the driving instructor is not in the vehicle with the student during this type of instruction.

Driving simulation is allowed as long as your school is following all Delaware Department of Education and Division of Public Health return-to-school guidance.

Behind-the-wheel instruction is allowed at this time, per Governor John Carney's Executive Order No. 24. Below is the set of health protocols for behind-the-wheel driving instruction issued by the Delaware Division of Public Health.

Protocols for Students and Instructors

- No more than two students (one driver and one observer) and an instructor may be in the car together.
- Everyone in the car must wear cloth face coverings in accordance with the State of Emergency Executive Order.
- Individuals should wash their hands before getting into the car and after getting out (or use hand sanitizer if handwashing facilities are not available).
- Students and instructors **must stay home when sick or if they have been exposed to the virus.**
- Individuals in higher risk groups, such as those with underlying health conditions or over 65 years old, should not participate.
- To the extent practicable, instructors should maintain air flow in the car, such as by leaving windows open as much as possible.
- Individuals should maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet when not in the vehicle with student drivers.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Cars and frequently touched surfaces (if in a building or classroom) should be cleaned and disinfected between each student driver, if feasible, using CDC's cleaning and disinfecting guidance.

If the State of Delaware is again forced to halt behind-the-wheel instruction by the Delaware Division of Public Health guidance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, then the driving range option will be followed using the guidance issued in June 2020. This document is located in Appendix C.

It is highly recommended high schools consider and immediately implement the driving range option if behind-the-wheel instruction is suspended at any time during the 2020-2021 school year. Driving ranges occurred in all three counties in June and July 2020. The feedback received from the students, families and driving instructors was positive.

Schools and programs where the driving range option was implemented during the summer of 2020 significantly reduced the backlog of behind-the-wheel instruction for students.

Appendix - A

Delaware Department of Education 2020-2021 Driver Education Guidance during COVID-19 Statewide Driver Education Final Exam Options for LEA's

Effective – May 12, 2020

Below are four options the Delaware Department of Education recommends to high schools that will allow flexibility when offering the state final exam during the COVID-19 crisis only. The current Delaware Department of Education state-approved driver education final exam must be used. Giving the driver education state final exam in an online computerized format poses many test security challenges. There is a certain amount of core content knowledge that accompanies actual behind-the-wheel driving skills that new drivers need to know prior to being issued a graduated driver's license.

The current final exam options are:

- **Option 1** – Districts/charters create a testing area in the high school parking lot. Parent/guardian drives the student to school, the parent/guardian exits the vehicle and the student remains in the car to take the exam. Students, families, and instructors would need to remain 6 feet apart and wear face coverings. Appointments would have to be staggered so people come and go quickly and no group greater than 10 would be gathered at any one time. The exam is proctored by the driving instructor(s) while remaining properly socially distanced outside of the vehicle. Schools must follow all protocols from the Delaware Division of Public Health.
- **Option 2** – If students are allowed to be physically in school, high schools could set up an area in building for small groups of students to be scheduled during multiple exam periods. Desks must be properly socially distanced to take the driver education exam. Schools must follow all protocols from the Delaware Department of Public Health.
- **Option 3** – High schools have the option to wait until students return to school to take the final exam.
- **Option 4** – If students are unable to complete options 1, 2 or 3, Districts/charters may permit driver education instructors to offer the state final exam in an oral format through remote learning. Both the instructor and student would need to adhere to specific test taking guidance provided by the Delaware Department of Education. This document is located in Appendix B. The oral exam would be a voluntary option for the student. The driver education final exam review committee only recommends this option if it is an absolute necessity for the student.

Appendix – B

Delaware Department of Education 2020-2021 Driver Education Guidance during COVID-19 Statewide Driver Education Oral Final Exam Guidance and Suggestions for District/Charters

May 12, 2020

Below is a list of guidelines for the driver education oral format state final exam option. These oral exam guidelines are only in effect during a period of the COVID-19 school closure.

- The oral exam format is an optional choice for the student.
- Both the student and instructor must be able to view each other by synchronous video throughout the entire exam via computer, cell phone or another mobile device.
- The student must take the exam in a test taking area in their home with no driver education materials present.
- The student may not have another individual present in their test taking area during the exam.
- The student may be asked to slowly turn their camera 360 degrees so the instructor may make sure the testing area is secure.
- The student will be asked all 100 questions.
- If the student fails the oral exam, they will have the option to retake the test but it must be taken in the written format.
- The oral exam must be conducted by a certified Delaware driver education instructor.

Other suggestions for driver education instructors proctoring the exam.

- The 100 questions may be asked in any order.
- It is up to the professional judgment of the instructor on how to ask the matching questions.

Appendix - C

Delaware Department of Education 2020-2021 Driver Education Guidance during COVID-19 Statewide Driver Education Driving Range Option for LEAs

Rationale – DOE introduced driving ranges for students enrolled in driver education during June and July of 2020. Students with previous behind-the-wheel instruction time and students with no behind-the-wheel instruction time were both eligible to participate. Driving ranges occurred in all three counties in June and July of 2020. The feedback received from the students, parents and driving instructors was all very positive. Schools and programs where the driving range option was implemented significantly reduced the backlog of behind-the-wheel instruction for its students.

What is a driving range? A driving range is a defined roadway course closed to public traffic and allowing for the re-creation of various basic driving scenarios. See page 7 for samples of driving ranges.

Are Delaware driver education instructors allowed to use driving ranges? Yes, regulation 540 Driver 2.0 Requirements for Class Time states;

2.3 Off the street driving ranges or multiple driving ranges that are off the street may be substituted for actual behind the wheel laboratory instruction up to three (3) hours' time at the ratio of two (2) hours of range instruction time to one (1) hour of actual behind the wheel laboratory instruction time.

2.4 Driving simulation and off the street driving range time shall not be taken from or cause a reduction of classroom instruction time.

2.5 Driving simulation and off the street driving range time shall not be substituted for more than one half (1/2) of the total required seven (7) hours of actual behind the wheel laboratory instruction and only at the ratios defined in 2.0. This includes individually or in any combination.

Would driver education students be allowed to use their parent's car during COVID-19 on the driving range? Yes. The parents would have to provide their insurance card to show that an insurance policy is in place. We would also suggest that the parents make sure their insurance agent is aware that this is happening so there is no issue with coverage.

Would a parent be allowed in the car during the driving range lesson during COVID-19? Only if it is the parents' vehicle.

May driver education programs use the driver education car on driving ranges during COVID-19? Yes, however after each use during COVID-19, the vehicle must be cleaned. Guidelines on cleaning of the driver education vehicle are referenced on page 2. Parents **cannot** be in a Fleet Services driver education vehicle with their children while on the driving range.

Fleet Services has offered to make some of their older cars available for the driving range. If there is an incident where damage is done to the driver education vehicle, Fleet Services would not be concerned as these cars will be going to auction in the near future.

What other COVID-19 safety requirements should be in place during driving range lessons?

- Individuals should remain 6 feet apart from each other (such as teacher from student).
- Cloth face coverings must be worn when interacting with one another (coverings can be safely removed to facilitate communication but should be put back on when interacting), using hand sanitizer before and after – below is a link to a good poster for this: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/downloads/cloth-face-covering.pdf>
- Cleaning and disinfecting of the driver education vehicles in between usage.
- The number of individuals that can be at the driving range should be limited, with groups of people together no more than 10, including staff, however given the recent guidance allowing for gatherings up to 250 after June 1, 2020 it is allowed to have more than 10 total people as long as they are all spread far apart and maintaining social distancing.
- Hand sanitizer should be available on-site and used before and after driving.

How will the instructor communicate with the student while on the driving range during COVID-19? Driver education instructors are not in the vehicle with the student while on the driving range. As with most traditional driving ranges the teacher introduces the skill to the student prior to or at the beginning of the lesson and the student practices the skill on the driving range under the supervision of the driver education instructor. A student and their driving instructor would be permitted to use a hands-free cell phone or blue tooth option to communicate only while on the driving range.

What driving skills will be taught on the driving range? All driver education instructors received DOE approved general safety guidelines and lesson plans for the driving range component. As the driving range scenario is new to our instructors these guidelines and lesson plans will be continually updated and modified.

Where will the driving ranges be located? Driving ranges must be on school property. Third party venues such as the Blue Rock Stadium parking lot or Dover Downs parking areas are not recommended. This is the case because the state does not have to buy insurance and parents do not have to provide the third parties with insurance information. If a student does do damage to school property it would be much easier handle rather than with a third party. This holds true even if it is a Department of Education private school student using a private school driving range at a location such as St. Mark's High School.

One idea we would like to promote is having teachers from multiple high schools working together in several stations to deliver the driving range lessons.

Would driver education instructors be allowed to substitute a golf cart for instruction rather than a driver education vehicle? No, students are learning to drive a car, therefore they must use a car.

What about observation time for a student taking driving range during COVID-19? Driving range is done at a rate of 2 hours of driving range time equal to 1 hour of behind-the-wheel time. The observation time is already built into this scenario.

For any questions please contact michael.wagner@doe.k12.de.us.



