

Driving Range - Stage 1

Rationale – DOE would like to introduce driving ranges for students enrolled in driver education who only need one more hour of behind-the-wheel driving to complete the entire 44 hour driver education course. We would like to start at this point as “driving ranges” have not been used in our driver education program and working with our experienced student drivers is a great first step in introducing this new type of driving instruction. Students would complete Lessons 7A and 7B with a driver education instructor on a driving range.

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 3 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 the insurance card to show that an insurance policy is in place. We would also suggest that the parents make sure that 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 will be provided. No parents can be in a fleet 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 car fleet would not be concerned as these cars will be going to auction.

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 doing so - here's a good poster for this: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/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, 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 will be given 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 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 the school property it would be much easier to deal with 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 location such as St. Mark's High School.

One idea we would like to promote is have two driving ranges at selected high schools in each county. Teachers from multiple high schools could work together in several stations to deliver the driving range lessons. Also fleet could send the specific vehicles allocated as driving range cars to those locations.

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.

