

Sec. 14-78-33. Classroom instruction and full course offering for students

(a) No commercial driving school shall offer any classroom instruction intended to meet the driver education requirements for persons under the age of eighteen (18) years, as provided in section 14-36 of the Connecticut General Statutes, unless such school has been licensed by the commissioner to give such instruction.

(b) Each commercial driving school offering a full course of driver education shall provide such course of instruction as defined in subsection (11) of section 14-78-20 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. The commercial driving school may offer classroom instruction only, which shall consist of a minimum of thirty (30) hours of such instruction, but such course is not a full course of instruction. At any time, the commissioner may require the review and approval of any curriculum used by the licensee. An approved curriculum shall include the following:

(1) The development of driver skills which shall be presented in a simple-to-complex structure of concepts and behavioral patterns;

(2) A variety of instructional methods which shall demonstrate student centered activities for participative education and include low-risk driving values, knowledge for development of safe driving habits, and mental readiness for correct in-vehicle performance;

(3) Presentation of content in the classroom which parallels the presentation of in-vehicle content. The driving related skills and concepts presented in the classroom shall be conducted in a motor vehicle as soon after the classroom activities as possible. All concepts, and where possible, skills to be practiced in the motor vehicle, shall first be presented in the classroom; and

(4) Appropriate content for the classroom and in-vehicle sessions which shall include the following topics: the highway transportation system; analysis of crashes; roadway designs and markings; Connecticut motor vehicle laws and regulations; basic control tasks; parking maneuvers; the structure of driving tasks; restraint systems; risk management; perceptual skills development; space management; natural laws and vehicle control; winter driving techniques; handling vehicle emergencies; night driving techniques; effects of alcohol and drugs on driving, emotions and operator fitness; interacting with other vehicle types; the purpose and procedures of procurement organizations, as defined in section 19a-289a of the Connecticut General Statutes; and managing high risk locations, including intersections and curves.

(c) Each commercial driving school licensed to conduct classroom instruction in accordance with subsection (a) of this section may provide, with prior written approval of the commissioner for any student to whom a youth instruction permit was issued on or after August 1, 2008, a safe driving practices program of the eight (8) hours which shall include and comply with the following requirements:

(1) Four (4) hours concerning the nature and effects of alcohol and drugs, as specified in subparagraph (B) of subdivision (1) of subsection (d) of section 14-36 of the Connecticut General Statutes;

(2) Two (2) hours on subjects directed to safe driving practices, which shall include the following topics: the slow down for work zones under section 14-212a of the Connecticut General Statutes; the endangerment of a highway worker under section 14-212d of the Connecticut General Statutes; the move over law under section 14-283b of the Connecticut

General Statutes; and not less than fifteen minutes concerning the disregard of a signal from a law enforcement officer under subsection (b) of section 14-223 of the Connecticut General Statutes, and the penalties for violating said section;

(3) Two (2) hours of instruction concerning the statutory provisions, including penalties, applicable to drivers who are less than eighteen years of age, the dangers of teenage driving, the cognitive development of adolescents, and the responsibilities and liabilities of parents of teenage drivers; and

(4) The eight (8) hour safe driving practices program of this subsection may be included as part of the thirty (30) hour course of instruction specified in subsection (b) of this section.

(d) Each commercial driving school licensed to conduct classroom instruction in accordance with subsection (a) of this section shall provide to a parent or legal guardian of any student receiving classroom instruction pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, the opportunity to attend, without additional charge, the two hours of instruction described in subdivision (3) of subsection (c) of this section.

(e) An official of the commercial driving school providing instruction to the parent or legal guardian and the student, referred to in subsection (d) of this section, shall issue an affidavit on a form approved by the commissioner, signed under penalty of false statement, to such student attesting to the fact that the student's parent or legal guardian attended the two hours of instruction described in subsection (d) of this section. Such student shall provide such affidavit to the commissioner prior to being allowed to take the driver's test.

(f) A student enrolled in the thirty (30) hour course of instruction described in subsection (b) of this section who is a secondary school student shall receive a maximum of two (2) hours of classroom instruction per day, except that on a day when school is not scheduled, the student may receive a maximum of four (4) hours of classroom instruction. A student eighteen years of age or older enrolled in the eight (8) hour program described in subsection (c) of this section, who is a student in a secondary school, shall receive such instruction on at least two separate days, with a maximum of four (4) hours of instruction per day.

(g) Any fee charged by the commercial driving school for the eight (8) hour safe driving practices program described in subsection (c) of this section shall not exceed the amount prescribed in subsection (d) of section 14-36 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Any charges in excess of the approved fee shall subject the licensee to action by the commissioner under section 14-79 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

(h) Each commercial driving school shall provide the four (4) hours of instruction concerning the nature and effects of alcohol and drugs in relation to the ability to safely operate a motor vehicle in compliance with the following:

(1) Separate course materials shall be provided for the use of students and instructors, in printed or electronic media format;

(2) Such course materials shall have been prepared by a person or persons with knowledge and expertise in the field of alcohol and drug abuse;

(3) Such course materials, as presented, shall cover the blood alcohol level limits prescribed by law, the effects of operating a motor vehicle at or near such per se limits, effective methods to avoid peer pressure concerning excessive alcohol consumption and the penalties and costs associated with violations of the laws concerning driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs;

(4) Such course materials shall be subject to the approval of the commissioner, prior to the issuance of a license to the school, and may be required to be reviewed and approved prior to any renewal, in accordance with section 14-78-22 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies; and

(5) The department may conduct one or more training sessions, to be attended by at least one instructor from each school, concerning the presentation of the course materials, and effective teaching methods and strategies for alcohol and drug education.

(i) Each student enrolled in the classroom phase of the driver education program shall be provided:

(1) A full-length, current driver education textbook for the purpose of the program, and special materials, which may include the use of video tapes, as approved by the commissioner of motor vehicles; and

(2) The Connecticut Driver's Manual, published by the department of motor vehicles, which manual shall become the property of the student.

(j) Class size shall not exceed the capacity of instructional materials available and reasonable standards of safety and supervision. No classroom instruction shall be offered to a class exceeding forty (40) students.

(k) Each licensee, upon initial application and each renewal application, shall provide to the commissioner an annual schedule of classroom instruction sessions including the date, time, and location of such instruction. Any change in the classroom schedule shall be forwarded in writing to the commissioner, and shall be received by the commissioner during reasonable business hours and prior to the effective date of any such change. Classroom sessions may be monitored by the commissioner at any time.

(l) The commissioner shall maintain a listing of all commercial driving schools licensed in accordance with section 14-69 of the Connecticut General Statutes, and a listing of all instructors licensed in accordance with the provisions of section 14-73 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

(m) Classroom instruction shall not be given to a person who has not reached the age of sixteen (16) years.

(n) A licensed instructor shall be physically present for all classroom instruction.

(o) A licensed instructor shall only conduct one class session at a time.

(p) A licensed instructor shall maintain a professional demeanor while providing all driver education.

(q) A student who misses any portion of the approved curriculum shall complete the portion missed.

(Effective February 24, 1997; Amended March 10, 2004; Amended November 2, 2009; Amended October 1, 2012; Amended November 6, 2019)