

Probationary Period

New drivers, including teen drivers under Graduated Driver Licensing, (GDL) are placed on probation for a minimum of three years. The probationary period is a way for the Secretary of State to monitor the driving performance of new drivers. Although probation is a separate program from GDL, the objective of both programs is to help inexperienced drivers reduce their crash risk and drive safely.

Each traffic violation entered on your driver record during probation may result in a contact by the Secretary of State. Because probationary drivers who receive tickets are at a high risk of being involved in a crash, these contacts will become progressively more severe in response to continued unsafe driving. These contacts range from warning letters to a driver assessment reexamination. At a driver assessment reexamination, your driving privileges may be restricted and/or suspended. The purpose of these contacts is to encourage safer driving and reduce the risk of a traffic crash. Probationary licensing controls will also extend the time a young driver holds a GDL Level 1 or 2 license.

Probationary drivers must complete the last ten months of probation with no unsafe driving events, such as traffic convictions, at-fault crashes or suspensions. Most alcohol laws relating to "zero tolerance" or "minor in possession" carry a requirement that a driver's license be suspended upon conviction. If an unsafe driving event occurs in the last ten months of probation, the probationary period is extended until the driver completes 10 consecutive months without an incident.

The first two years after probation are called post probation. You are subject to a driver assessment reexamination during this time if you have nine or more points and an alcohol-related conviction on your driving record.

Points placed on your driver record during probation or post probation are not automatically erased when probation and post probation end. Points remain on your driving record for two years from the conviction date.