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The Patriot Ledger

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Every state has its own transportation agency that handles driver’s licensing, so standardizing laws for new drivers isn’t as easy as it sounds – even if some safety advocates find the inconsistency alarming. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Many states enact tougher requirements for new drivers

Terry Collins
USA TODAY

A new wave of state laws is enforcing stricter requirements for new drivers, but states still can’t agree on how much practice is needed. • While most states have some form of graduated driver’s licensing laws, ranging from as low as 20 and as high as 70 supervised hours, more states are looking into adopting tougher mandates for young people, said Jonathan Adkins, CEO of the Governors Highway Safety Association, a Washington, DC-based nonprofit.

Florida, Washington and New Jersey tightened up requirements for new drivers in 2025, but even these new laws have inconsistent requirements. The new laws come as some traffic safety advocates say the United States would benefit from more uniform laws on the topic. “There should be a national law for teen drivers,” said Cheryl Giles, the longtime owner of Lakeland Atlantic Driving School in Winter Haven, Florida, which conducts about 1,000 student driving tests annually. “We desperately need some consistency.” Meanwhile, motor vehicle crashes continue to be among the leading causes of death for teens in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Teen drivers also face a disproportionately higher risk of crashes in comparison with older drivers, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports. “I would call it an epidemic right now, and we all

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“Whether you are in Virginia, Florida, Utah or even in the most rural parts of the country, the roads can be very dangerous places, especially when you don’t fully understand the dangers of driving.”

Tammy Gweedo McGee
Safe driving advocate

DC cracks down on homeless camps

Move follows federal takeover of police force

Christopher Cann
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Under the blazing sun, people living in homeless encampments in Washington packed up their belongings before authorities moved in with garbage trucks on Aug. 14 as President Donald Trump’s crack-down on the nation’s capital ramped up. At a camp a few miles from the Lincoln Memorial and the Kennedy Center, about eight people broke down their tents with the help of city workers and homeless advocacy groups. “(The president) is targeting us and persecuting us,” said David Beatty, a man living in the encampment that Trump posted a photo of on social media Aug. 10. “He wants to take our freedom away.”

The moves came days after Trump assumed federal control of the city’s police department and mobilized the National Guard, declaring a “crime emergency” and vowing to clear homeless people off the streets. Cities across the United States, including longtime Democratic strongholds such as Los Angeles and San Francisco, have increased homeless sweeps and encampment closures. A landmark 2024 Supreme Court decision that permitted laws banning people from sleeping outside, even if they

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A homeless encampment near the Lincoln Memorial is cleared by employees of the city government on Aug. 14 in Washington. WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES

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