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# The Progress-Index

MONDAY, AUGUST 18, 2025 | PROGRESS-INDEX.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



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

## European leaders, Zelenskyy to meet Trump

Andrew MacAskill, Tom Balmforth  
and Andreas Rinke  
REUTERS

LONDON – European leaders including from Germany, France and Britain will join Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to meet President Donald Trump in Washington, they said Aug. 17, seeking to shore up his position as Trump presses Ukraine to accept a quick peace deal.

Trump is leaning on Zelenskyy to strike an agreement after he met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska, and on Aug. 17 promised “big progress on Russia” in a social media post without specifying what that might be.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Trump had seen enough to justify meeting Zelenskyy and the Europeans on Aug. 18 but added that both Russia and Ukraine would need to make concessions.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer were hosting a meeting of allies on Aug. 17 to bolster Zelenskyy’s position, hoping in particular to lock down robust security guarantees for Ukraine that would include a U.S. role.

According to sources, the U.S. and Russian leaders discussed at their summit on Aug. 15 proposals for Russia to relinquish tiny pockets of occupied Ukraine in exchange for Ukraine ceding a swath of fortified land in the east and freezing the front lines elsewhere.

At face value, some of Putin’s demands would be hugely difficult for Ukraine to accept, setting the stage for potentially fraught talks about ending Europe’s deadliest war in 80 years, which has dragged on for 3½ years and killed or wounded more than 1 million people.

European allies are keen to help Zelenskyy avoid a repeat of his last Oval Office meeting in February. That went

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## Trump cracks down on homeless camps in DC

Christopher Cann  
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Under the blazing sun, people living in homeless encampments in Washington, DC, 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 have nowhere else to go, led to a broad crack-down in dozens of cities, towns and rural communities nationwide.

This year, the U.S. Park Police has disbanded about 70 encampments from federal parks in the U.S. capital, said White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt.

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Volunteers help people take down their tents and collect their belongings as city workers conduct a sweep of a homeless encampment on Aug. 14 in Washington. AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

