

“Under the Trooper’s Hat”

By: Trooper Michael Hayen
North Dakota Highway Patrol

The minimum driving age in North Dakota is 16 years old. However, North Dakota allows for a resident to obtain a restricted driver’s license at the age of 15 and when the driver turns 16, the restrictions are lifted. For the purposes of this article, a minor is fifteen years old with a restricted class D driver’s license.

North Dakota Century Code 39-06-17(4) outlines the restrictions that are placed on a minor. A minor with a restricted class D driver’s license may operate the type or class of motor vehicle specified on the restricted license under the following conditions:

1. The minor driver must be in possession of the license while operating the motor vehicle.
2. A minor holding a restricted class D license driving a motor vehicle may not carry more passengers than the vehicle manufacturer's suggested passenger capacity.
3. A minor holding a restricted class D license driving a motor vehicle may not operate an electronic communication device to talk, compose, read, or send an electronic message while operating a motor vehicle that is in motion unless the sole purpose of operating the device is to obtain emergency assistance, to prevent a crime about to be committed, or in the reasonable belief that an individual's life or safety is in danger.
4. A minor holding a restricted class D license may not operate a motor vehicle between the later of sunset or nine p.m. and five a.m. unless a parent, legal guardian, or an individual eighteen years of age or older is in the front seat of the motor vehicle or the motor vehicle is being driven directly to or from work, an official school activity, or a religious activity.

The restrictions also do not authorize a minor to drive a commercial truck, motorbus, or taxicab with the exception that the minor may drive a farm motor vehicle having a gross weight of fifty thousand pounds while used to transport agricultural products, farm machinery, or farm supplies to or from a farm when operated within 150 miles of the driver’s farm.

The above restrictions are indicated on the reverse side of the minor’s driver’s license.

The penalty for the fifteen-year-old driver who violates the provisions of their restricted license is \$20.00 and 4 points added to their driving record. If a parent or guardian knowingly allows or causes their minor child to operate a vehicle in violation of the

above restrictions, the parent or guardian can be cited and assessed a fine of \$20.00 with 2 points added to their driving record.

The mission of the North Dakota Highway Patrol is to make a difference every day by providing high-quality law enforcement services to keep North Dakota safe and secure. Visit the FAQ section of the NDHP: www.nd.gov/ndhp, like our Facebook page www.facebook.com/northdakotahighwaypatrol or join us on Twitter [@NDHighwayPatrol](https://twitter.com/NDHighwayPatrol) or Instagram, www.instagram.com/ndhighwaypatrol, to learn more about traffic safety, get tips, and read NDHP news.