

Summary of the Maryland MVA Driver Education Curriculum training session – conducted on September 16, 2026.

The presentation was led by Melody Miller, Assistant Division Manager for Business Licensing and Compliance, with additional MVA staff participating in the rollout discussion. The new curriculum was described as the result of more than three years of collaboration between MVA staff and members of the driver education industry.

► New 2026 Maryland Driver Education Curriculum

The revised curriculum is intended to modernize Maryland driver education and make it more suitable for both traditional classroom and virtual instruction. Major changes include substantially more interactive material, new videos and activities, updated learning objectives, more scenario-based instruction, expanded technology and safety information, and updated legal/regulatory material.

A major emphasis is the formal recognition of **virtual learning**. The curriculum includes rules and expectations specifically for virtual instruction, although schools that do not teach virtually do not have to present those particular slides.

Other major themes include expanded coverage of **Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)**, distracted driving, impairment and BAC, vulnerable road users, vehicle technology, urban/suburban/rural driving, expressway driving, vehicle ownership, registration, insurance, inspections, emissions, and MVA services. There is also increased use of the **SEE strategy — Search, Evaluate, Execute** — throughout the curriculum.

► Unit-by-Unit Changes

Unit 1 – Welcome to Driver Education

Formerly called “Orientation.” Objectives were reduced from five to four. Virtual learning is formally recognized, including rules and expectations for virtual classes. New material includes a scavenger-hunt activity, increased vehicle technology, licensing requirement changes, changes in how driver education is delivered, and additional discussion of seat-belt and child-safety-seat laws.

Unit 2 – The Language of the Road

Formerly “Traffic Systems and Roadway Information.” Objectives were reduced from five to four. New material includes a traffic-sign video, signalized-intersection video, reversible-lane indicators, shared left-turn lanes, and expanded signs, signals and roadway-marking instruction.

Unit 3 – Getting Started

Formerly “Vehicle Control and Technology.” This unit significantly expands vehicle technology instruction, particularly **ADAS and driver-assistance systems**. It also covers

vehicle controls, instrument panels, pre-entry checks, mirror adjustment, shift-lever information, technological advancements and the role of technology in reducing crash risk.

Unit 4 – Driving the Vehicle

Formerly “Safe Driving and Driver Behavior.” A new objective specifically requires students to identify examples of distracted driving. The curriculum distinguishes visual, auditory, manual and cognitive distractions. New videos include distracted-driving, “Left Behind,” and space-and-speed material. Additional driving activities address executing forward movement, backward movement and stopping.

Unit 5 – Driving in Neighborhoods

Formerly “Parking and Vehicle Maneuvers.” Parking instruction has been reorganized. Angle and perpendicular parking content has been merged, the order of angle-parking instructions has changed, two steps were added to perpendicular parking, and hill-parking strategies were added. MVA specifically said these curriculum changes **do not indicate corresponding changes to the MVA driving test.**

Unit 6 – Driving on Urban, Suburban, and Rural Roads

Formerly “Community and Urban Driving.” This unit has substantially expanded material covering differences among urban, suburban and rural environments; vulnerable road users; animals; pedestrian fatalities; intersections; yielding; protected and unprotected left turns; mixed-use roads; distracted driving; and the SEE strategy. It includes comparison activities and additional scenario-based instruction.

Unit 7 – Driving on Expressways

Formerly “Driving Highways and Interstates.” Objectives increased from two to three. Added material includes defensive driving, electronic message signs, lane changes, bridges and tunnels, work zones, roadside emergencies, emergency vehicles, Maryland’s Move Over Law, work-zone crashes and the consequences of higher speeds.

Unit 8 – Difficult Situations

Formerly “Emergency, Legal Issues, and Vehicle Malfunctions.” Objectives were reduced from five to four. The revised unit adds activities and reviews involving vehicle malfunctions, roadside emergencies, adverse conditions, tire failure, legal issues and administrative sanctions. It also emphasizes crash avoidance, speed compliance, attention and vehicle maintenance.

Unit 9 – Making Good Decisions

Formerly “Making Good Choices.” This unit significantly expands impairment and decision-making material. Topics include alcohol, cannabis and other drugs; emotions; fatigue/drowsy driving; distractions; DUI; implied consent; consequences; alcohol elimination; and factors affecting BAC. The presentation identified four BAC factors as amount of alcohol consumed, time spent drinking, weight and gender. Anger is covered as part of the broader discussion of emotions rather than being the sole focus of the unit.

Unit 10 – The Responsibilities of Vehicle Ownership

Formerly “Vehicle Ownership.” Expanded topics include purchasing/owning a vehicle, Maryland registration and registration renewal, creating a **myMVA account**, vehicle safety inspections, dealer inventory inspections, insurance requirements and penalties, emissions requirements and use of MVA kiosks. QR codes embedded in the curriculum link students directly to relevant resources.

► Curriculum Size and Teaching Approach

The new curriculum is extensive — MVA staff described it as **more than 750 slides**. Schools are not necessarily expected to mechanically present every available item. Instructors have choices within the curriculum and can select material appropriate to their instruction.

The curriculum was intentionally designed to be considerably more interactive and **virtual-friendly** than the 2017 version.

MVA has already piloted it with **five schools/instructor trainers who helped develop the curriculum**. According to MVA, those pilots did not produce concerns about having insufficient content to fill the required three-hour instructional sessions. Staff therefore encouraged instructors to fully review the curriculum before assuming they will need supplemental material.

► No Student Workbook

A significant change is that **there is no separate workbook for the new curriculum**.

Activities, reviews, knowledge checks and other interactive student material are embedded directly into the curriculum. MVA said the amount of interactive content eliminates the need for the external workbook used with the previous curriculum.

The Rookie Driver materials and Driver's Handbook remain accessible through QR codes incorporated into the curriculum.

► Instructor Guides and Presenter Notes

Every PowerPoint slide already contains **instructor/presenter notes**. MVA explained that the instructor guide is largely based on these notes, meaning instructors can begin reviewing instructional guidance immediately even before the separate guide is released.

The separate instructor guides will nevertheless be provided through the FTP server.

► Quizzes and Final Examination

The unit quizzes and final examination are also being updated for the 2026 curriculum.

When asked whether the test questions would change, MVA indicated that they would be **slightly different**, including revisions associated with the plain-language review.

Schools will distribute/administer the testing material in essentially the **same manner they used with the 2017 curriculum**. The testing materials had not yet been uploaded at the time of this training.

► English and Spanish Versions

MVA stated that the **English and Spanish curriculum presentations were already uploaded to the FTP server** and available for schools to begin reviewing/downloading. The instructor guides, unit quizzes and final examination were still being finalized.

The stated schedule was:

- English supporting materials/instructor guide: expected **by the end of the following week**.
- Spanish supporting materials/instructor guide: expected **no later than September 28, 2026**, following completion of translation and plain-language review.

► October 5, 2026 Rollout Date

The expected implementation date is **October 5, 2026**.

MVA provided an important transition rule: a class that **begins during the week before October 5** may continue using the old curriculum until that particular class concludes. Schools do **not** have to switch curricula in the middle of an existing class.

Once that class ends, however, the school's **next class must use the new curriculum**.

In practical terms, the transition is based on the **start of a class/course cycle**, rather than requiring students already underway to change curricula midway through instruction.

► FTP Access

The new curriculum is located on the **same MVA FTP server used for the 2017 curriculum**.

School owners should use their existing username/password. If an owner no longer has the credentials, they can contact the MVA office and request that the access information be resent.

MVA repeatedly emphasized that the FTP credentials are for **school owners only**. Owners may download/zip the curriculum and provide the actual files to instructors, including instructors working remotely, but they **should not distribute the FTP username and password to instructors**.

MVA also advised owners to **copy and paste the FTP username/password rather than manually typing them**, because incorrect attempts can lock the system and require IT intervention.

The old 2017 curriculum will remain on the FTP server during the transition period.

► **Student Access to the Curriculum**

MVA does **not currently plan to publish the complete new curriculum on <https://mva.maryland.gov/>** for students to independently review.

An instructor specifically asked whether PDFs could be posted publicly as with prior materials because students use them for review. MVA's answer was no.

Schools therefore should not assume that students will have a public MVA webpage containing the entire curriculum.

► **Previously Approved Videos**

An instructor asked whether previously approved MVA/curriculum videos could continue to be used as supplemental instructional material.

MVA said that **videos previously approved as part of an earlier curriculum may continue to be used without obtaining new approval**.

However, MVA encouraged instructors to first thoroughly examine the new curriculum. Because it contains considerably more material and has been successfully piloted for the required instructional time, supplemental videos may not be necessary.

► **Professional Development Credit**

Attendance at this curriculum training counts for **two hours of professional development**.

To receive credit, attendees must provide their **name and affiliated school in the meeting chat** so MVA can maintain its attendance/tracking list.

If multiple instructors attend together from one physical location, that is acceptable, but MVA must be able to **see everyone on camera** to verify attendance.

When professional-development paperwork is subsequently submitted, attendees should indicate that they participated in the training; MVA will verify attendance against its tracking records.

Attending the same presentation more than once **does not result in duplicate professional-development credit.**

► Additional Training Opportunities

MVA stated that **two additional sessions** remained after this presentation: one on **September 17, 2026** and another on **September 28, 2026**.

The sessions cover the same material. Owners may have additional instructors attend so those instructors can receive their own two hours of professional-development credit.

► Most Important Operational Information

For a Maryland driving school, the immediate action items are to **download and begin reviewing the 2026 curriculum now**, familiarize instructors with the substantially expanded interactive content and presenter notes, and prepare to transition new classes to it beginning October 5.

Owners should verify that they still have their MVA FTP credentials and retrieve them from MVA if necessary. They can distribute downloaded curriculum files to instructors but should keep the FTP credentials restricted to ownership.

Schools should also watch the FTP server for the **instructor guides, revised unit quizzes and final exam**, particularly the Spanish materials expected by September 28.

The biggest structural changes are the elimination of the separate student workbook, integration of activities directly into the curriculum, significantly expanded technology/ADAS and distracted-driving instruction, greater use of scenario-based and SEE-strategy teaching, explicit accommodation of virtual instruction, and much more comprehensive coverage of real-world driving environments and vehicle ownership.