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Drivers Ed Direct

(via driverseddirect.com) – Drivers Ed Direct, based outside of Los Angeles, is the only drivers education program in the country that teaches teenagers—and anyone else getting a license— how to drive on hybrid cars.

[Netscape Anchor Commentary](#) 2006-08-04

Dakota:

As noted in the post, Drivers Ed Direct is the only drivers education program in the country that uses hybrid cars---Toyota Prius and Ford Escape hybrids, to be exact.

“In terms of the hybrids, there’s no better way than to have a kid become environmentally aware than by having them to learn how to drive a hybrid,” says Blake Mycoskie, one of the co-founders of Drivers Ed Direct. “If the kids are educated, they might be more willing to buy one, or they’ll tell their parents.”

Plus, from a kid's point of view, taking lessons on a new car---all the cars used by Drivers Ed Direct are new--is just fun. “Think of what you learned to drive on—it was probably a 1984 Civic,” says Mycoskie.

Yes, it was something like that. So this morning I redeemed those painful high school memories of drivers ed by getting behind a Toyota Prius and taking a mini-lesson from a Drivers Ed Direct instructor. The Toyota Prius was amazingly zippy and fun to drive and I was even complimented on my driving skills. But yes, because it's a drivers ed car, even these hybrids still have that ominous-looking brake on the passenger side.

Instructors come to students’ homes with the cars; the rest of the drivers ed class takes place online, another innovative technique (and one that spares kids a summer stuck in a classroom). The hybrid-driving part of the program is currently only available in the Los Angeles area; the online component is in three states: California, Florida, and Nevada. Supplemental products, like DVDs, are also offered in select states.

Mycoskie helped found the company last year after listening to a friend’s son complain about having to take drivers ed class.

”The more I listened [to him], the more I realized that Drivers Ed was an industry that was still stuck in time,” says Mycoskie. “They were still using these musty old classrooms. I thought surely there is a better way to do this.”

And while kids in the program--who come from a mix of backgrounds (“They're not just tree huggers,” says Mycoskie)---are taught about the benefits of using hybrids, “we don’t force it down their throat by any means,” he says.

“But definitely we encourage it. As more hybrids get put on the used market, and there are more affordable used hybrids, we will see more people going out and buying them.”