

Helping Teenagers become Safer Drivers

Facts:

1. Road crashes are one of the leading causes of injury, disability and death among young people.
2. Young drivers are over-represented in road crashes compared to other age groups.
3. Speeding is the major cause of road crashes in NSW.
4. Other high-risk behaviours that significantly contribute to road crashes in NSW include:
 - Drink driving
 - Driver fatigue
 - Not using seat belts

Other factors associated with young driver road crashes:

Driver inexperience: Often young drivers don't realise that it takes time and lots of practice to develop safe driving skills.

Developing brain: Parts of the brain responsible for self control and for recognising and managing hazards do not fully mature until after the teenage years, so young drivers are more likely to experiment and take dangerous risks.

Overconfidence and risk taking: Young drivers can be over confident about their driving ability and underestimate dangers on the road.

Having friends as passengers: Young drivers may be distracted by passengers or may feel pressured to take risks, such as speeding. Every extra peer passenger carried by a young driver increases the chance of crashing.

Alcohol and other drugs: Young people often do not understand that alcohol and other drugs affect a driver's skills, mood and most importantly behaviour, putting a driver at greater risk of crashing. Safe driving requires clear judgement, concentration and ability to react to what's happening on the road.

Busy lifestyles: Work, sport and study often mean busy lifestyles for young people, which may cause them to drive when tired – especially late at night. Driving tired significantly impairs driving, even if the driver does not feel sleepy.

For additional copies of this fact sheet or further information about youth injury prevention contact Youthsafe on 02 9817 7847 or check the website www.youthsafe.org

when you are driving be
a positive influence:
drive as safely as your
young driver should

Rules for Learner (L) and Provisional (P1 & P2) Drivers*

The NSW Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) aims to help young drivers gain more supervised experience.

Learner drivers under 25:

- Must have at least **120 hours** of supervised on-road driving experience, including 20 hours at night time. **One hour** of structured driving tuition by a professional driving instructor will count as **3 hours** in the *Learner Driver Log Book* to a maximum of 10 hours counting as 30 log book hours.
- Must hold an L licence for at least 12 months.

For new drivers there are speed restrictions with a maximum speed of 80km/h for a Learner licence, 90km/h for a P1 licence and 100km/h for a P2 licence.

For L, P1 and P2 drivers who speed, penalties apply including fines, demerit points, licence suspension or cancellation.

A zero blood alcohol limit applies to all L, P1 and P2 licence holders. This means **NO ALCOHOL** before driving.

Police conduct roadside drug testing (by saliva test) for illicit drugs. This applies to all drivers, riders and supervising licence holders.

For L and P1 drivers mobile phone use is prohibited, even hands-free or loudspeaker.

P1 drivers under the age of 25 can only carry one passenger under 21 between the hours of 11pm and 5am (some exemptions apply).

ALL L drivers must pass an on-road test to progress to the P1 licence. More information on this test is in "A Guide to the Driving Test", available at your nearest motor registry or from www.rms.nsw.gov.au.

A P1 licence must be held for at least 12 months. After passing a hazard perception test, drivers progress to the P2 licence for a minimum of 24 months.

Tips for supervising your Learner Driver (L)

- Safe driving takes time and practice – it is more than just operating a vehicle.
- Use the 120 supervised hours to help young drivers learn to recognise and respond safely to hazards.
- Plan a variety of driving experiences eg. different road conditions, weather and time of day.
- Shorter drives can be useful early on.
- Reduce the risk of distraction eg. turn off mobile phones.
- Keep instructions short and clear.
- Be positive and acknowledge when your teenager does well rather than criticise.
- At the end of a drive reinforce achievements and discuss areas to work on.
- Real on-road driving experience is more beneficial than 'advanced' or 'defensive' off-road driver training.
- Find out more about supporting your young driver by attending a GLS workshop in your area[^].

Tips for supporting Provisional Drivers (P1 & P2)

Remember your teenager is still very new to driving. Continue to encourage safe driving including:

- Ensuring they organise their time so they can stick to posted speed limits and adapt to driving conditions, such as rain.
- Slowly increasing the amount of independent night driving – this is a time when young drivers are more likely to crash.
- Gradually allowing them to increase the number of passengers in the car once they have progressed to the P2 stage.

Before your teenager goes out, particularly when partying, spend some time discussing options for getting home safely. Some ideas for teenagers to consider:

- Leave the car at home.
- Catch a train or bus – check timetables to avoid waiting at stations or bus stops.
- Stay overnight with a friend.
- Arrange to be dropped off and picked up by a parent or other responsible adult.

Also discuss:

- Driving alcohol free.
- Dealing with pressure from friends to drive unsafely.
- Being a responsible passenger.

*Young drivers must be familiar with the *Road Users' Handbook* and understand NSW road rules and licence conditions.
[^]For more information about the GLS scheme, GLS workshops and road rules contact The Centre for Road Safety, Transport for NSW on 13 22 13 or www.rms.nsw.gov.au.