

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 perceiving hazards and self control do not fully mature until after the teenage years, meaning 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 9809 4615 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. Speed limits for young drivers are restricted with a maximum speed of 80km/h for a Learner, 90km/h for the Provisional P1 licence and 100km/h for the Provisional P2 licence.

A zero blood alcohol limit applies to all L, P1 and P2 licence holders. This means **NO ALCOHOL** before driving. Police now conduct roadside drug testing (by saliva test) for illicit drugs. This applies to all drivers, riders and supervising licence holders.

New Learner drivers must have at least **120 hours** of supervised on-road driving experience, 20 hours of which must be undertaken at night time*.

New Learner drivers under 25 must hold an L licence for at least 12 months*.

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

To progress to the P1 licence, L drivers must pass an on-road test.

Any P1 driver caught going over the posted speed limit will have their licence suspended for at least 3 months*.

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

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)

- Plan driving experiences with your L driver.
- Give your L driver your full attention and reduce the risk of distractions, eg. turn off your mobile phone.
- Be positive and quickly acknowledge when your teenager does well, rather than criticise.
- Make instructions short and clear and allow your young driver to concentrate on the task at hand.
- Shorter drives can be useful early on.
- Watch the road and point out potential hazards.
- At the end of the practice drive, recap in one or two sentences the young driver's achievements and indicate areas for further development.
- Real on-road driving experience is more beneficial than 'advanced' or 'defensive' off-road driver training.

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:

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

***These rules for Learner (L) and Provisional (P1 + P2) drivers are law in NSW, effective from 1 July 2007** and have been designed to help manage the risks for young and inexperienced drivers. Young drivers must be familiar with the RTA Road Users' Handbook and understand NSW road rules and licence conditions. For more information about the Graduated Licensing Scheme and road rules, contact the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) on 13 22 13 or www.rta.nsw.gov.au.