

ROSPA
The Royal Society for the
Prevention of Accidents

SAFER DRIVING

Parents and Young Drivers



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Parents & Young Drivers

The Facts

Over 3000 car drivers aged under 25 are killed or seriously injured on Britain's roads each year. Don't let your son or daughter become one of these statistics

Learner drivers have few accidents because they are always under supervision. But, once they have passed their test, and can drive unsupervised, their chances of crashing increase dramatically. Young drivers are much more likely to crash than experienced drivers.

🔗 1 in 5 drivers crash within their first year of driving

🔗 1 in 3 male drivers aged between 17 and 20 years crash in the first two years after passing their test.

🔗 An 18 year old driver is more than three times as likely to be involved in a crash as a 48 year old driver.

🔗 Young drivers are more likely to be involved in high-speed crashes, single vehicle crashes involving losing control, crashes in the dark and crashes when overtaking and negotiating bends.

Why?

Lack of experience

This is one of the main reasons. As new drivers gain more driving experience their accident rate begins to fall.

Attitude

Young drivers, especially men, tend to be over confident and are more likely to drive in risky ways: too fast, too close to the vehicle in front and dangerous overtaking. Young drivers consistently rate their own performance as above average and are more likely to regard 'good' driving as the ability to master the controls of the car at higher speeds.

Hazard Perception

Young drivers often have excellent vehicle control skills and fast reactions. But, they are poor at identifying potential hazards and assessing risk, and tend to over-estimate their ability to avoid the hazard and accident. It takes new drivers up to two seconds longer to react to hazardous situations than more experienced drivers.

Peer pressure

Young drivers, especially men, who carry friends are more likely to have a crash.

Gender

Novice male drivers have higher accident rates than novice female drivers, and are more likely to commit driving offences.

Penalty Points

Not only are new drivers more likely to crash, but they are allowed fewer penalty points before losing their licence. If a driver acquires six or more penalty points within two years of passing their first test, their licence is revoked. They must then obtain a provisional licence, drive as a learner (display an 'L' Plate and be supervised) and pass the theory and practical driving tests again.



How Can You Help?

Pass Plus – www.passplus.org.uk

Passing the Driving Test is the first step to safe driving, not the end result. Encourage the young driver in your household to take further training. The Pass Plus scheme helps new drivers improve their skills and widen their driving experience. It involves extra driving practice in different conditions (at night and on urban and rural roads, dual carriageways and motorways). There is no test, once completed drivers can obtain reduced insurance premiums from some insurance companies, the saving made may be more than the cost of the course.

Safe Driving Agreement

In America, parent/young driver agreements are popular. The new driver is allowed to drive the family car (or their own car if you help to fund it) unsupervised, if they agree to certain conditions for the first year or so of driving. This keeps them away from situations that are most likely to lead to crashes.

The agreements are flexible and tailored to meet individual needs. They can be verbal or written (consider using the agreement on the back cover). They are not about being over-protective or unreasonable but are promises between the parent and the young driver for safer driving. Agree with your son or daughter some or all of the following:-

Driving at night: As young drivers have a high proportion of their crashes at night, agree the times when they can drive the car. For example, you might agree they will not use the car between midnight and 6:00 am. The exact times can be agreed between you, and can be relaxed as their driving experience increases.

Carrying Groups of Friends:

For the first few months after your son or daughter has passed their test consider agreeing a limit on the

number of their friends they carry to just one or two if you are not also in the car. Passenger numbers can be increased gradually as experience is gained.

Alcohol and drugs: Ask the young driver in your household to stick to a zero limit when driving for a year or so after passing their test. Ask them not to take a lift with drivers who have been drinking or might have taken drugs. Remember, even some over-the-counter medicines cause drowsiness. Set a good example yourself.

Speed: Young drivers are more likely to see speed as exciting. They are particularly prone to approaching bends too fast and to dangerous overtaking. Even keeping within the speed limit can be unsafe, for example on wet or icy roads or on narrow, winding rural roads. Discuss with your young driver why you would like them not to speed or take risks.

Mobile phones: Whilst it is reassuring for young drivers to carry a mobile phone, it is dangerous to use it whilst driving. Ask your son or daughter to agree only to use their mobile phone whilst parked. Discuss other distractions, like playing loud music, eating, drinking and smoking to ensure they are

aware of the implications of dividing attention between the driving and other things.

Seatbelts: Most drivers wear seat belts, but rear seat passengers are less likely to do so. They present a danger to themselves and to other people in the car. Drivers could agree to always ask their passengers to wear their seatbelts. Set an example and always wear yours.

'P' Plates: Green 'P' or 'L' plates can be displayed to indicate to other road users that there is an inexperienced driver at the wheel.

A Safer Driving Agreement requires both the parent and the young driver to make promises. In a RoSPA survey, most young drivers said they would not object to negotiating some conditions with their parents.

For advice on young and novice drivers, including a sample Safer Driving Agreement go to www.rospa.com

When travelling with your son or daughter, let them drive to increase their experience. Offer constructive advice, but don't be a back seat driver!



Safer Driving Agreement

This agreement is made between (son/daughter's name)
and(parent's name)

Young Driver

I promise to:

- Confirm my destination in advance
- Drive only during the following times of day
.....am topm
- Only give a lift to 1/2/3* passengers unless
you are also in the car
- Never drink alcohol or take drugs and drive
- Never accept a lift from a driver who has drunk
alcohol or taken drugs. I will always find
alternative transport or will call
you and ask you to collect me or pay
for a taxi, no questions asked at the time.
- Always wear my seatbelt and ensure that my
passengers do the same.
- Obey all traffic laws, including speed limits and
parking restrictions.
- Never use a mobile phone while driving, only
when parked
- Avoid distractions whilst driving – like fiddling
with the stereo, smoking, eating and drinking
- Telephone you if I'm going to be later
than expected

Parent

I promise to:

- Always wear my seatbelt and ensure my
passengers do the same
- Never drink alcohol or take drugs and drive
- Obey all traffic laws, including speed limits
and parking restrictions
- Never use a mobile phone while driving, only
when parked
- Accept a call from you at any hour and either
collect you or agree to fund a taxi to enable
you to get home, no questions asked at
the time
- Remain calm and constructive when
travelling in the car with you and accept that
mistakes are an important part of learning.

**Delete as necessary*

We will review this agreement on**Signed:** (by parent).....

Signed: (by son/daughter)**Dated:**.....



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