

Direct Line & Brake Reports on Safe Driving

Are you ready to drive?

LEARNING TO DRIVE



Produced by:



Working in partnership with:



direct line

About this report This is a survey report on safe driving, by Brake and Direct Line. Brake publishes regular survey reports throughout the year under the following topics:

- Are you ready to drive?
- Fit to drive
- A risky business
- Speed
- Driven to distraction

The reports are based on a survey of 1,000 drivers, conducted by an external research agency, Surveygoo. For further reports in the series, visit www.brake.org.uk/safedrivingreports

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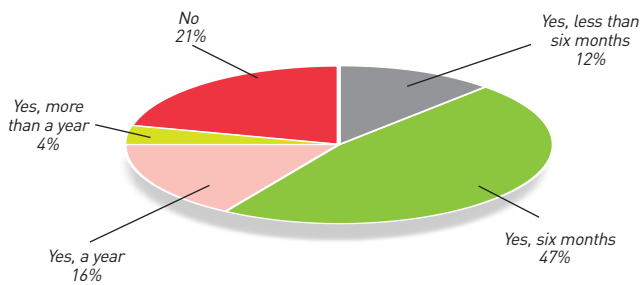
LEARNING TO DRIVE

Q1: Do you think learner drivers should have to undertake a minimum period of learning to drive before taking their practical test?

Eight in 10 people (79%) questioned believe there should be a minimum on-the-road learning period for new drivers before they take their practical test. Two thirds (67%) of people think that period should be at least six months and one in five thinks new drivers should practice for at least a year.

- Yes, less than six months 12%
- Yes, six months 47%
- Yes, a year 16%
- Yes, more than a year 4%
- No 21%

Figure 1: Do you think learner drivers should have to undertake a minimum period of learning to drive before taking their practical test?

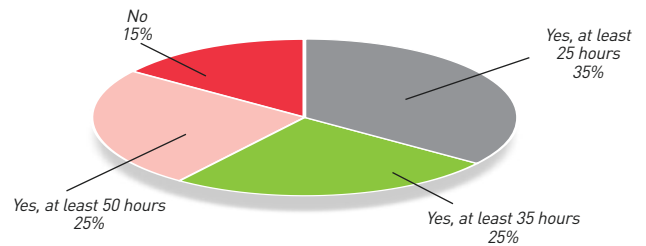


Q2: Do you think learner drivers should have to undertake a minimum number of hours of supervised driving before taking their practical test?

More than eight in 10 people (85%) questioned believe learner drivers should have to clock up a minimum number of supervised driving hours before they are allowed to take their driving test. Six in 10 people (60%) questioned think the minimum number of supervised hours should be at least 35. A quarter of people (25%) believe it should be 50 hours. Only one in seven people (15%) think there is no need for a minimum-hours requirement before taking the practical driving test.

- Yes, at least 25 hours 35%
- Yes, at least 35 hours 25%
- Yes, at least 50 hours 25%
- No 15%

Figure 2: Do you think learner drivers should have to undertake a minimum number of hours of supervised driving before taking their practical test?



THE FACTS: YOUNG DRIVERS

Research shows that the combination of youth and inexperience puts young drivers at a high risk of crashing. Their youth means they are more likely to take risks and their inexperience means they are less able to spot hazards. This crash risk reduces over time, but also if people start learning to drive when they are older¹.

Drivers aged 17-19 only make up 1.5% of UK licence holders² but are involved in 9% of fatal and serious crashes when they are the driver³. Drivers aged 16-19 are a third more likely to die in a crash than drivers aged 40-49⁴.

Almost a quarter of 18-24 year olds (23%) crash within two years of passing their driving test⁵.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG DRIVERS: RISKY BEHAVIOURS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM...

Mobile devices

Never be tempted to make a call, go online or stream from your mobile phone while driving: even hands-free calls are dangerous. Young drivers are more at risk from this kind of distraction as they admit using mobiles while driving more frequently⁶. You are up to three times more likely to crash if you undertake a second complex task while driving, for example using a mobile device⁷.

Seat belts

Always wear a seat belt, as it offers a huge amount of protection if you are involved in a crash, reducing your risk of dying by half⁸. Research shows young drivers often don't wear seat belts because of peer pressure, and an American study showed seat belt use among young people declines as the number of passengers they carry increases⁹. The latest figures show 21% of people killed on UK roads weren't wearing a seat belt¹⁰.

Speeding

As a young driver your risk perception may be lower than those with more experience, so it's vital you drive well within the speed limit and also at a suitable speed for the weather and conditions of the road. Speed or travelling too fast for the conditions is a contributory factor in a quarter of fatal crashes¹¹.

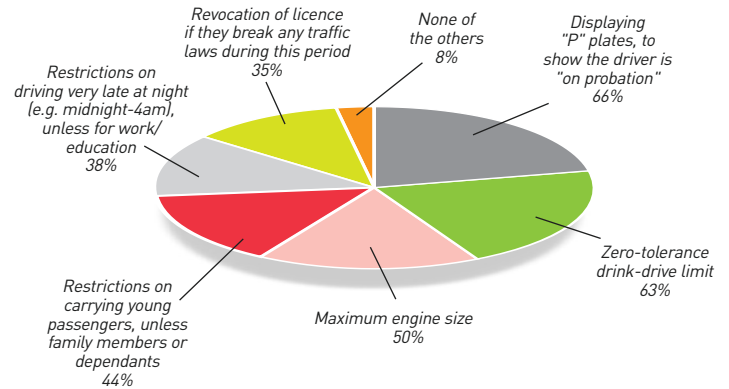


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Figure 3: Do you think new drivers should have to abide by any of the following restrictions for a year after passing their test?



ADVICE FOR YOUNG DRIVERS: RISKY BEHAVIOURS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM... (CONTINUED)

Drink- and drug-driving

Never be tempted to have even one for the road. Driving after any amount of alcohol is dangerous, and drivers in their 20s have the most drink- and drug-related crashes¹². If you are heading out for a night with friends, make sure you designate a driver or better still do not take a car at all. The effects of drugs are unpredictable and can be a lethal cocktail when mixed with driving. Some drugs may slow reaction times and others instil over-confidence and increase risk-taking.

Carrying passengers

Think carefully about the number of passengers you carry. Although there are no legal restrictions in Great Britain at present, the more passengers you carry, the higher the risk of crashing. Peer pressure can encourage bad driving and showing off, with 16 and 17 year-old drivers up to four times more likely to crash when carrying young passengers¹³. Teen drivers are six times more likely to be involved in a serious crash when there is a loud conversation in the car¹⁴. Such is the danger, restrictions are now in place in some countries to reduce the risk of distraction that carrying passengers causes. A law was passed in January 2016 to bring in restrictions in Northern Ireland.

Driving at night

If you have to drive at night, take extra care, stay sober and drug free. Young drivers have a higher proportion of crashes in the early evening and early mornings; and between 2am and 5am young male drivers aged between 17 and 20 are 17 times more likely to crash than drivers overall¹⁵. Drink, drugs and speeding due to peer pressure all increase the risk¹⁶, as does tiredness¹⁷.

Q3: Do you think new drivers should have to abide by any of the following restrictions for a year after passing their test?

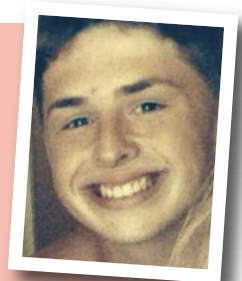
More than 90% of people questioned support some kind of restrictions for newly qualified drivers. Two thirds of people (66%) support the use of a "P" plate. Just under two thirds back a zero-tolerance drink-drive limit for novice drivers.

- Displaying "P" plates, to show the driver is "on probation" 66%
- Zero-tolerance drink-drive limit 63%
- Maximum engine size 50%
- Restrictions on carrying young passengers, unless family members or dependants 44%
- Restrictions on driving very late at night (e.g. midnight-4am), unless for work/education 38%
- Revocation of licence if they break any traffic laws during this period 35%
- None of the above 8%

LOST LIVES

17 year-old Rhodri Miller from Barry,

was talented, clever, kind and handsome: his smile would light up any room. He secured A*s in complex subjects like chemistry, physics and maths, and he has been described as simply the child every parent would dream of. All this changed on the dreadful evening of 6 March 2015, when just two days after passing his test he went out with friends on what police describe as the extremely challenging A470 road in Brecon and crashed. Rhodri, two other teenagers and a woman in a second car all died. Rhodri was not driving above the speed limit, but speed, inexperience, the weight of the passengers in his car, the dark, and peer pressure, all contributed to the fatal crash. His parents are now calling for changes to the driving test.



Joanne Miller says: "Roads and attitudes have changed but, apart from the theory test, the way our children are taught to drive hasn't. We need restrictions on the number of passengers young drivers can carry; driving lessons on motorways, at night time and in bad weather conditions; as well as warnings about speed and convoy driving. Other countries have adopted stricter policies, so why not here in the UK?"

"The amount of grief this tragedy has caused four families is, and always will be, devastating. Our Rhodri, Alesha and Corey were developing into such lovely young adults, and they and Margaret, who was a doting family member, have all been taken from us far too early. This type of thing only happens to other people - so we thought; it was our turn on that tragic day. Unfortunately it will be someone else's grief tomorrow. Rhodri was the bright light in our lives. Imagine having to look down at the body you have loved and cherished, now battered, bruised, and broken. Looking at a body without his soul, never being able to touch, kiss or talk to your baby, no longer looking at the bright future ahead, nothing in life ever being the same - now close your eyes and imagine this was you."



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End notes

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3. *Reported road casualties Great Britain 2014*, Department for Transport, 2015, table RAS30011
4. *Reported road casualties Great Britain 2014*, Department for Transport, 2015, table RAS30025
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6. *Driver distraction*, Brake and Direct Line, 2014
7. *The impact of driver inattention on near-crash/crash risk*, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2006
8. *Handbook of Road Safety Measures*, 2009
9. *Factors related to seat belt use among fatally injured teenage drivers*, Journal of Safety Research, 2004
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11. *Ibid.*
12. *Self-reported drink and drug driving: Findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales 2012/13*, Department for Transport, 2014
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15. *Night-time Accidents*, Centre for Transport Studies, University College London, 2005
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