



Driver Education Foundation

Going Solo™

A resource for parents and restricted licence drivers



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato



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Going Solo – A resource for parents and restricted licence drivers, was produced by the New Zealand AA Driver Education Foundation, in partnership with the University of Waikato's Traffic & Road Safety Research Group (TARS), Monash University's Accident Research Centre (MUARC) and Mobil Oil New Zealand Limited.

The AA Driver Education Foundation (AA DEF) is a non-profit organisation that works to improve driving standards in New Zealand through the promotion of driver education initiatives.

Waikato's TARS group is New Zealand's leading road safety research centre. TARS has provided science-based information for drivers, educators, engineers, and road-controlling authorities since 1993, earning it an international reputation.

MUARC (Australia) is one of the world's leading injury prevention research centres and was responsible for developing the Going Solo initiative – one of the first publications worldwide to provide clear information for parents on young solo driver risk factors and strategies to promote safer driving.

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Introduction

Welcome to *Going Solo*, the resource for parents and restricted licence car drivers.

Restricted licence drivers are involved in more crashes than any other driving group (including learner drivers). Parents play a key role in guiding and promoting safe driving habits.

This booklet explains ways parents can help their restricted licence driver when they begin to drive alone. Throughout this booklet the term parents includes guardians and caregivers.

This booklet contains:

- Facts about the restricted licence
- Facts on driving risks faced by restricted licence holders
- Ways to reduce the risks
- A contract for parents and restricted licence holders (Driving Agreement)

Restricted licence facts

- The restricted licence comes after the learner's licence in New Zealand's 3-step graduated driver licensing system (GDLS)
- The restricted licence **is not** the end of driver training
- The restricted licence **is** the stage at which new drivers have an opportunity to 'go solo' and build their driving skills on their own

Drivers with a restricted licence **can**:

- Drive solo between 5 am and 10 pm

Drivers with a restricted licence **must** be supervised*:

- When carrying passengers
- When driving between 10 pm and 5 am

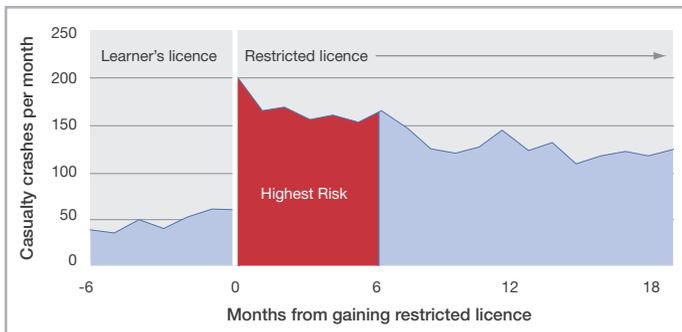
* (for information on who is eligible to be a supervising driver, and more details about the restricted licence please consult www.landtransport.govt.nz/factsheets/index.html)

Crash risk facts



Did you know?

- The highest crash risk period for all drivers is the first 6 months after gaining a restricted licence
- Restricted licence drivers are 4 times more likely to have a crash than learner drivers
- Young men with restricted licences are 7 times more likely to have a crash than men aged 45-49
- Young women with restricted licences are 6 times more likely to have a crash than women aged 45-49



Source: Crash profile of New Zealand novice drivers who held restricted licence for 18 months or more, as analysed by Ministry of Transport, 2008.

Why are restricted licence drivers more likely to crash than learners?

- Both are inexperienced but, unlike learners, restricted drivers face high-risk situations alone

As a parent, did you know that?

- **EVERY** restricted licence driver is at risk because of the combination of inexperience and high-risk situations (not just the 'hoons')
- **YOU** are a major influence on the driving behaviour of your son or daughter
- **SUPERVISING** your son or daughter as they experience new and riskier situations (particularly in the first 6 months of the restricted licence) is important so they can become safe and responsible drivers



So what are the high-risk situations?

We recommend you read through the information on the following risk factors and incorporate them into the **Driving Agreement** at the end of the Going Solo booklet.

Crash risk is highest for any new driver when driving:

- At night
- When distracted (e.g. mobile phones, personal music players)
- In poor weather conditions
- On high-speed roads
- When tired

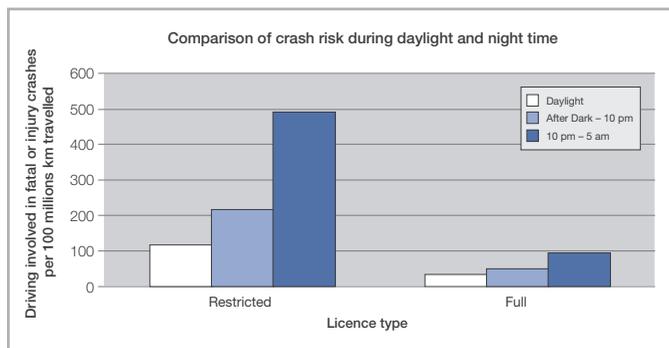
Illegal behaviours that increase crash risk to restricted licence drivers include:

- Driving unsupervised with passengers
- Driving unsupervised between 10 pm and 5 am
- Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Driving too fast for any reason

Restricted drivers should never engage in these illegal behaviours.

Driving at night

- Restricted licence holders are more likely to be involved in a fatal crash at night due to inexperience and reduced vision after dark
- This is also the most common time for people to engage in drink driving and to be fatigued. Restricted licence drivers' inexperience reduces their ability to avoid a crash if exposed to other drivers behaving unpredictably e.g. when impaired by alcohol
- Limiting unsupervised driving after dark to 10 pm is an effective way to reduce crash risk
- Remember – restricted licence drivers can only drive between 10 pm and 5 am if they are accompanied by a supervising driver!
- The graph indicates that when restricted licence drivers do drive between 10 pm and 5 am they have a high likelihood of being in a fatal or injury crash



Source: Crash risk by day, night, and licence 2003-2007, as analysed by Ministry of Transport, 2008.

Suggestion to reduce the risks

Agree on limits for driving at night while your new restricted licence holder gains more experience (see Driving Agreement at the end of the Going Solo booklet).

Distraction when driving

- Restricted licence holders are more likely to be distracted than other drivers, due to inexperience
- Distractions can include adjusting a personal music player, loud music, eating and drinking
- Talking on a mobile phone (hand-held or hands-free) is much more dangerous than having an in-car conversation, as the person on the other end of the mobile conversation can't see the traffic situation
- Drivers who text message (SMS) have their eyes off the road four times more than drivers who are not distracted
- In New Zealand, using a hand-held phone for talking or texting while driving can result in a fine of \$80 and 20 demerit points. (If you accumulate 100 or more active demerit points in any 2-year period, your licence can be suspended for 3 months.)
- Many countries, e.g. Australia and the UK, have placed restrictions on the use of mobile phones while driving

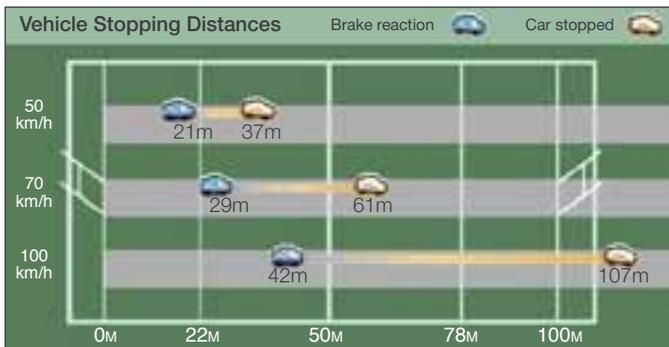


Suggestions to reduce the risks

Discuss with your restricted licence holder the risks, and sources of distraction they might experience when driving. Consider making an agreement that neither of you will use a mobile phone while driving. Tell your friends your phone will be turned off while driving.

High-speed roads

- Vehicles are harder to manoeuvre at high speeds
- Following distances need to be increased because the amount of time available to react to hazards is shortened, and the minimum distance needed to stop the car increases (see diagram below)
- The severity of a crash increases as impact speed increases



Note: These minimum stopping distances have been calculated for vehicles travelling in dry conditions. Stopping distances are much greater in wet or icy conditions.
Source: Ministry of Transport.

The diagram shows that in dry weather:

- If a driver is travelling at 50 km/h they will travel 21 metres before braking to avoid a hazard (reaction time = 1.5 seconds). It will take them 37 metres to stop when the road is dry
- At 100 km/h a driver will take 107 metres to stop in dry conditions. This means that if they brake hard to avoid a hazard 75 metres away they will not be able to stop in time

Poor weather conditions

- Driving in adverse weather conditions (including heavy rain, ice, sun glare, or fog) is extremely dangerous. This is due to reduced visibility and the increased distance needed to stop on wet or icy roads
- Doubling following distance in poor weather conditions provides extra reaction time needed to stop safely

Suggestions to reduce the risks

- Discuss the above diagram so that your restricted licence driver understands how **stopping distance increases with travel speed**
- Discuss with your restricted licence driver the need to **SLOW DOWN** when it is wet and always drive to the conditions

Driving with peer passengers

Remember: drivers with a restricted licence **must not** drive with passengers* **unless** there is a supervising driver (who has had their full licence for 2 years or more) seated in the front passenger seat. Restricted licence drivers cannot legally give lifts to their brothers/sisters.

- Driving with a car full of peer passengers increases the chances of having a fatal crash by **four times** compared to driving alone
- Peer passengers can be particularly distracting because they often engage in demanding conversations, give last minute directions, and comment on things outside the vehicle
- Male restricted licence drivers often engage in risk-taking, such as showing off to their mates in the car
- If you hold a restricted licence, driving with passengers can result in a fine of \$400 plus 25 demerit points**, or a fine of \$1000 and 25 demerit points if you are summonsed to court

* There are some exceptions e.g. for legal dependants

** If you accumulate 100 or more active demerit points in any 2-year period, your licence can be suspended for 3 months.

Suggestion to reduce the risks

Discuss with your son/daughter the importance of not giving or taking rides with other restricted licence drivers, especially if there are other friends in the car.

Once a driver has gained their full licence they can carry passengers in any situation



Driving when tired and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Driving when tired

- If a driver has not slept in 17 hours, their driving ability is as poor as a drink driver
- Teenagers need approximately 8-10 hours sleep every night. Because they need more sleep than adults, it is important to make sure they are not too tired to drive
- Driving when tired is particularly common among new drivers
- Driving when tired is a major cause of single vehicle crashes especially for new drivers

Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs

- Young drivers under the influence of alcohol have about 5 times greater risk of being involved in a crash than experienced drivers under the influence of alcohol
- There are serious penalties for drivers under the age of 20 who are found to have a blood alcohol level of more than 30mg/100ml, including a fine of up to \$2,250, imprisonment for up to 3 months, or both, and disqualification from driving for 3 months or more
- If you are aged 20 or older and have a blood alcohol level of more than 80mg/100ml, the penalties are even greater

Suggestions to reduce the risks

Work out strategies so that your son/daughter avoids driving when tired and/or under the influence of alcohol or drugs. For example:

- Discuss ways your son/daughter can plan to party safely
- Discuss how your son/daughter can recognise if they are impaired
- Organise to collect your son/daughter or for them to use public transport or a taxi
- If they have been drinking alcohol, encourage them to wait until they are fully sober before driving
- Encourage them to stop and have a power nap (of about 20 minutes) before they drive on, if they become aware they are driving while tired

Driving too fast

- Throughout the world speeding is the main risk factor for having a serious crash
- Inexperienced drivers tend to drive too fast for the conditions more often than experienced drivers
- Restricted licence drivers also tend to follow too closely to the car in front compared to experienced drivers. This puts them at risk of having a crash as they have less time to react
- Drivers who receive speeding tickets are much more likely to be involved in crashes

Suggestions to reduce the risks

- Discuss strategies for managing pressure to speed, e.g. route and time planning, and not attempting to make up time on the road
- Discuss the need to avoid unnecessary driving (cruising around) while holding a restricted licence. Cruising often coincides with being distracted and showing off

If your son/daughter is caught showing off (such as street racing, unnecessary acceleration or wheel spins) in your vehicle it can be impounded for 28 days and your son/daughter could lose their licence for 6 months!

Improving their chances of surviving a crash

- Because restricted licence drivers have a higher crash risk, it is important for them to drive the safest car possible
- Buying a safe car doesn't necessarily mean buying an expensive car
- Generally larger cars, newer cars, and cars without extensive modifications are safer
- For detailed new and used safety ratings by vehicle make and model visit www.rightcar.govt.nz and www.aa.co.nz

Did you know?

- You may have no insurance cover in a crash if your son or daughter was driving outside the conditions of their restricted licence
- If your restricted licence holder is at fault in a crash, third party insurance can help pay to repair the other car

Moving to the full licence

Help your restricted licence driver prepare

As a parent, it is important to help your son or daughter prepare for their full licence by encouraging them to practise their driving skills and hazard identification with you as a passenger

If your restricted licence driver is under 25 years old they can:

- Sit their full driver's licence test 18 months after receiving their restricted licence
- Sit their full driver's licence test after 12 months if they complete an approved driving course (they must have had their restricted licence for 6 months before taking the course)

If your restricted licence driver is over 25 years old the times are shorter.

The full licence test is made up of three parts:

- Test of basic driving – driving straight and turning at intersections in speed zones up to 60 km/h
- Detecting and responding to driving hazards in built-up areas – the testing officer will also ask your restricted licence driver to observe and recall the hazards they see during this part of the test
- Detecting and responding to driving hazards in higher speed zones – the testing officer will also ask your restricted licence driver to describe the hazards they see and what action they would take in reaction to those hazards



The Driving Agreement

What is it?

The Driving Agreement is an agreement designed for parents and restricted licence drivers.

Why have one?

It is a great idea to set up a Driving Agreement because this clearly sets out the roles of parents and restricted licence holders when it comes to either:

- a) Borrowing the family car, or
- b) The restricted licence holder driving his/her own car

Tips:

A sample Driving Agreement is shown on the next page.

We recommend that you and your restricted licence holder read the sample agreement and the high-risk situations covered earlier in this booklet and set up a Driving Agreement suited to your own situation.

For example, it is a good idea for your son/daughter to have a supervisor present when they first encounter a new or risky driving situation such as poor weather or unsealed roads (if these have not been practised during the learner licence phase).

One of the conditions you may consider is to arrange for a professional driving lesson with both you and your restricted licence holder in the car. This way you can check on your restricted licence holder's progress through the restricted licence phase, and whether they are ready for the full licence test.

Setting up the agreement

- Step 1** Sit down and discuss what conditions are important for your family's individual situation and your role as a parent
- Step 2** Agree and fill in the conditions for Night Driving and First Encounters (supervised)
- Step 3** Consider and complete the Additional Instruction, Mobile Phone and Alcohol limits
- Step 4** Complete any extra conditions or incentives relevant to your situation
- Step 5** Display the completed agreement in a prominent place, e.g. the fridge door

Recommended sample Driving Agreement

Months	First 3 months	3 – 6 months	6 – 12 months	12 – 18 months	
Night driving	Driving after dark – 10 pm	Remember restricted licence holders can only drive after 10 pm when supervised			
First encounters (supervised)	Drive on unsealed road	Drive in bad weather	Long distance drive	Late night drive	Drive with passengers
Additional instruction	Driving lesson (parent present)		Approved driving course	Full licence test	
Mobile phone	We agree not to converse or txt with a mobile phone while driving				
Alcohol	We agree that the restricted licence holder will not drive after consuming alcohol. The parent will pick up the restricted licence holder, or provide money for a taxi where necessary				

Role of the parent(s) in the driving agreement

Parents should praise or reward their new driver when they demonstrate that they are a responsible driver by keeping to the terms of the driving agreement. For example:

- Make an effort to be available as a supervisor at night
- Provide first aid kit in the car
- Pay for petrol and car maintenance
- Increase access to the car
- Contribute to 3rd party insurance

Your Driving Agreement

Months	First 3 months	3 – 6 months	6 – 12 months	12 – 18 months
Night driving				
First encounters (supervised)				
Additional instruction				Full licence test
Mobile phone				
Alcohol				

As a restricted licence holder, I agree to the conditions in the above Driving Agreement.
 I/We agree to supervise (or help) our son/daughter to achieve the conditions of our Driving Agreement.
 My/our role in the Driving Agreement is to



For more information

Free downloads of the Going Solo booklet and other resources are available at the AA Driver Education Foundation.

See www.aa.co.nz/aadef

The NZ Automobile Association has lots of important information for young drivers.

See www.aa.co.nz/motoring/licensingandtraining/Pages/default.aspx

The NZ Transport Agency has many useful factsheets on driver licensing, driving rules, and road safety.

See www.landtransport.govt.nz/factsheets/index.html

The Ministry of Transport has lots of important information on young driver safety and crash statistics.

See Safer Young Drivers – A Guide to Best Practice Education www.transport.govt.nz/improving-road-safety-education-for-young-people-1 see also Motor Vehicle Crashes in New Zealand – Yearly report www.transport.govt.nz/research-2

For helpful information in preparing for your restricted licence see the Practice Program website www.practice.co.nz

For information on safe vehicles see www.rightcar.govt.nz and www.aa.co.nz/motoring/owning/safety/Pages/default.aspx

The University of Waikato website has more information about the work carried out by the Traffic And Road Safety (TARS) research group in road safety and young driver education.

See www.waikato.ac.nz/go/tars/

The Monash University Accident Research Centre has reports and topic sheets on all aspects of road safety.

See <http://monash.edu.au/muarc/>

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