



Driver Education Foundation

# Going Solo<sup>TM</sup>

A resource for parents and restricted licence drivers



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*



**MONASH** University  
Accident Research Centre

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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.

The Going Solo booklet is proudly supported and funded by Mobil Oil New Zealand Limited.



# Introduction

**Welcome to Going Solo, a guide to excellent parent-teen driver partnerships.**

In the 6 months after getting a restricted licence, young drivers - both males and females - are involved in more crashes than any other driving group (including learner drivers).

Going Solo explains how parents and teen drivers can set up key driving practice and coaching partnerships to promote safe driving habits for life. As teen drivers experience a variety of risk situations, parental guidance will help teens drive safely when they gain their restricted licence and drive independently.

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 about who can be a supervisor, plus requirements for and conditions of a restricted licence, see NZTA's Learning to drive: Getting your car licence (Factsheet 45).

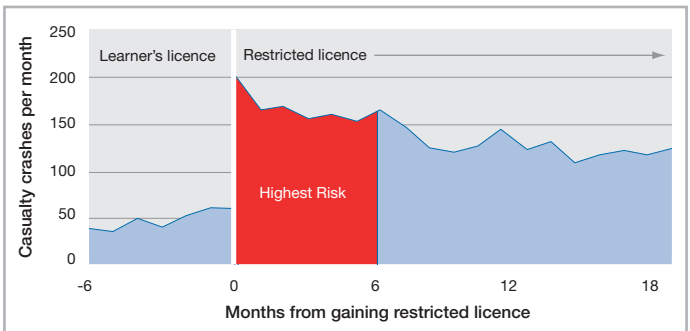
[www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/factsheets/45/learning-to-drive.html](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/factsheets/45/learning-to-drive.html)

# 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 when they were on their learner licence
- Young drivers with restricted licences are 7 times more likely to have a crash than men aged 45-49 - who are the safest group of drivers per vehicle km driven



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, you may like to 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 teen driver
- **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, particularly those with no median barriers
- On open roads with intersections, driveways, stretches of gravel or roadworks
- On any road with pedestrians or cyclists
- When tired

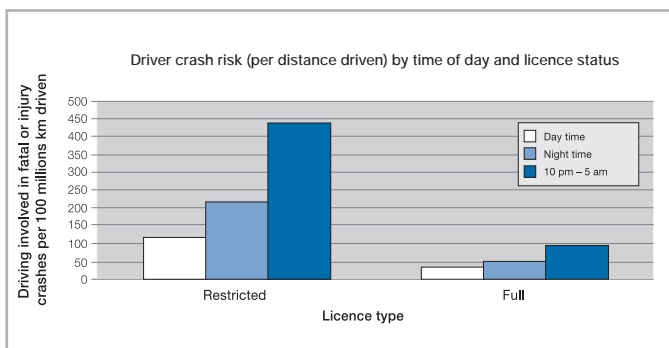
### **Illegal behaviours that increase the crash risk of drivers on a restricted licence include:**

- 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 behaviours.

# Driving at night

- Restricted licence holders are more likely to be involved in a fatal crash at night due to inexperience. The ability to see clearly after dark is also reduced.
- 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: July 2005-June 2010 data analysed by Ministry of Transport 2011\*

## Talking point

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).

\* Night time is based on times of sunrise and sunset

# 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 longer than drivers who are not distracted
- In New Zealand, like many countries, texting or talking on a handheld phone while driving is banned. This behaviour carries a fine of \$80 and 20 demerit points
- If you accumulate 100 or more demerit points in any 2-year period, your licence can be suspended for 3 months

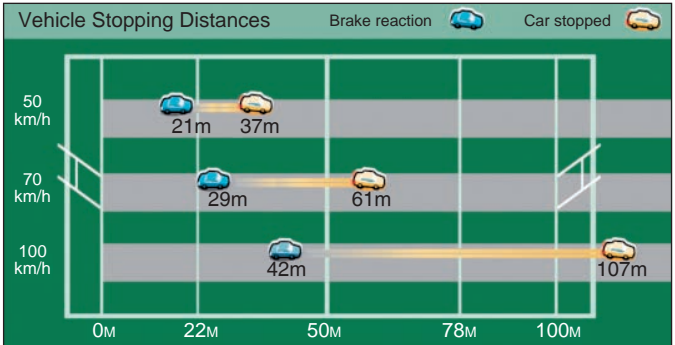


## Talking point

Discuss the risks and distractions teen drivers might get into while driving. For example, consider agreeing that neither of you will use a mobile phone while driving. Both will tell friends your phones will be turned off while driving.

# High-speed roads

- Vehicles are harder to control 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:

- A driver doing 50 kph travels 21 metres from seeing a hazard to starting to brake (typical reaction time = 1.5 seconds). It will take a further 16 metres to stop if the road is dry – a total of 37 metres – (see diagram)
- 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 poor weather conditions (including 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
- A 4-second following distance in poor weather conditions helps provide enough time to stop safely

### Talking points

- Discuss the above diagram so that your restricted licence driver understands how **stopping distance will increase with travel speed, and so following distance margins also need to increase**
- 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
- Some teen drivers 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 \$100 plus 35 demerit points\*\*, or a maximum fine of \$1000 and 35 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 will be suspended for three months.

## Talking point

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

- Teenagers need more sleep than adults – about 8-10 hours every night
- If a driver has not slept in 17 hours their driving ability is as poor as that of a drink driver
- 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 who have been drinking any amount of alcohol are more likely to crash than experienced drivers who have been drinking a moderate amount of alcohol
- It may take many hours to become fully sober after drinking alcohol
- ZERO blood alcohol level (BAC) is the legal limit for drivers under 20
- The penalty for drivers under 20 having a BAC up to and including 0.03 is a \$200 fine and 50 demerits. Young drivers with a BAC of higher than 0.03 attract much heavier penalties
- If you are found driving with illegal drugs in your blood you will face severe penalties and may lose the right to travel freely overseas
- Some medicines cause drowsiness – follow your prescription directions

## Talking points

Talk about ways your teen can avoid driving when tired and/or under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. E.g. Discuss how your teen can:

- Recognise if they are impaired - explain that if they have been drinking or taking drugs they may not be sober for many hours
- Plan to party safely – agree you will collect them at any time, or arrange for them to use public transport or a taxi
- Stop and have a powernap (of about 20 – 40 minutes) – if they become aware they feel drowsy while driving

# Driving too fast

- Speed is the key deciding factor as to how seriously someone is injured in a crash
- Drivers who vary their travel speeds to match road and environmental conditions have more time to react safely to unexpected risk situations
- Teen drivers often follow the car in front too closely – a safe following distance gives a much better chance of stopping without crashing in an emergency stop

## Talking points

- Slower speeds increase the margin for error in any driving situation, and will help inexperienced drivers avoid crashes
- Discuss ways to manage any pressure to speed, e.g. route and time planning, not attempting to make up time on the road, and not carrying passengers while on a restricted licence
- Experience teaches drivers to recognise and slow down for risky road and environment conditions and gives more time to react to any hazard. Parents and teens can seek out extra driving practice opportunities to give teens this experience

*If your son/daughter is caught showing off in your vehicle (such as street racing, unnecessary acceleration or wheel spins) 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, but safety should be top of the "wish list". Similar age and cost vehicles can differ widely in crashworthiness
- Generally larger cars, newer cars, and cars without extensive modifications are safer
- Visit the safe vehicles websites on the back cover to get extra information on buying a safe new or used "first vehicle" for a young driver

## 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

# Getting a full licence

## Preparation

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

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 designed to help parents and teen drivers frame up their own partnership.

A Driving Agreement will give teen drivers an excellent experience base through supervised driving in high risk situations before driving solo on a restricted licence.

## Why have one?

It is a great idea to set up a Driving Agreement because this clearly sets out the shared plan for supervised driving practice and expectations of parents and teen drivers when the teen driver is either:

- a) borrowing the family car, or
- b) driving his/her own car

## Tips:

A sample Driving Agreement is shown on the next page.

We recommend that you and your teen driver 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 teen driver in the car. This way you can check on your teen driver's progress through the restricted licence phase and check with the trainer whether they are ready for the full licence test, or which aspects of their driving behaviour need further practice.

Parents and teens on a restricted licence can find information on the risks teen drivers face and some practical advice, tools and tips to help mitigate these risks at [www.safeteedriver.co.nz](http://www.safeteedriver.co.nz). There are also suggestions for ideas to include in a parent-teen driving agreement.

# Setting up the agreement

- Step 1** Sit down and discuss what conditions are important for your family's situation and your role as a parent
- Step 2** Agree on, and fill in the conditions for Night Driving and High-risk situations (supervised)
- Step 3** Consider and complete the Additional training targets, 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		
High-risk situations (supervised)	Heavy/fast moving traffic	Dangerous road/weather conditions	Long distance driving	Late night driving Driving with passengers
Additional training targets	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 limits	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				
High-risk situations (supervised)				
Additional training targets				Full licence test
Mobile phone				
Alcohol limits				

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 [aa.co.nz/goingsolo](http://aa.co.nz/goingsolo)

The New Zealand Automobile Association has a useful interactive road code quiz for young drivers studying for a licence test:

[aa.co.nz/driver-training/road-code-quiz](http://aa.co.nz/driver-training/road-code-quiz)

The New Zealand Transport Agency has up to date information on driver licence tests, guide documents and helpful information links at:

[www.nzta.govt.nz/licence/photo/new-tests.html](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/licence/photo/new-tests.html)

Ministry of Transport offers a range of crash statistics reports:

[www.transport.govt.nz/research/roadcrashstatistics](http://www.transport.govt.nz/research/roadcrashstatistics) and lots of information on young driver safety in its Young Driver Crash Fact Sheet: [www.transport.govt.nz/research/Pages/YoungDriversCrashFacts.aspx](http://www.transport.govt.nz/research/Pages/YoungDriversCrashFacts.aspx)

For information on buying safe vehicles for young drivers see [www.rightcar.govt.nz](http://www.rightcar.govt.nz) and [www.aa.co.nz/motoring/buy-sell/used-cars/safety-ratings-of-used-cars/](http://www.aa.co.nz/motoring/buy-sell/used-cars/safety-ratings-of-used-cars/) and also [www.aa.co.nz/motoring/aa-torque/motoring-blog/buying-or-selling/helping-your-teen-buy-their-first-car/](http://www.aa.co.nz/motoring/aa-torque/motoring-blog/buying-or-selling/helping-your-teen-buy-their-first-car/)

For helpful information on preparing for your restricted licence test see the Practice Programme website [www.practice.co.nz](http://www.practice.co.nz) and ongoing safety ideas for parent-teen partnerships are at [www.safeteedriver.co.nz](http://www.safeteedriver.co.nz)

SADD is a peer-led education programme in schools that aims to reduce the harm caused by drink drivers [www.sadd.co.nz/](http://www.sadd.co.nz/)

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/](http://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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