

# SAFER DRIVING AGREEMENT

## Parents and Young Drivers



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## Young Drivers

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 novice drivers are much more likely to crash than experienced drivers, especially in their first year of driving, despite driving far less.

Young drivers are more likely to be involved in:

- high speed crashes
- crashes caused by losing control of the vehicle
- crashes in the dark
- 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, especially after the first 1,000 miles of driving.

### Age

Crash rates for newly qualified young drivers are much higher than for newly qualified older drivers.

### Attitude

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

### Peer Pressure

When young drivers, especially men, carry their friends they are more likely to be distracted or to mess around and show off while driving.

### Motor Insurance

Young drivers are also more likely to make an insurance claim than other drivers, and on average, their claims are much more expensive. This is why motor insurance premiums for young drivers are much higher than for other drivers.

### 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 overestimate their ability to avoid the hazard and accident. New drivers take longer to react to hazardous situations than more experienced drivers.

### Impairment

Younger drivers are affected more than experienced drivers by alcohol, drugs, fatigue and distractions, such as mobile phones.

### Gender

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



## How Can You Help?

The good news is that there are some simple steps that parents and young drivers can take together to reduce these risks, and probably the cost of insurance.

### Telematics

Many motor insurers offer telematics policies that involve the driver having a small device (a 'black box') installed or using an app on a smartphone. Some policies begin with an app, as a way of trying it, before having a black box fitted.

Telematics can help a new driver to improve their driving and reduce their insurance premiums by monitoring how they drive. If they drive responsibly and avoid high risk situations (such as driving in the early hours) they may be rewarded with a discount on their premiums or another benefit (such as more miles). But, if they drive poorly (for example, speeding or harsh braking), they get a lower score and their premiums may increase.

Telematics can significantly reduce risky driving

### Pass Plus

Pass Plus helps new drivers improve their skills and widen their driving experience. It involves extra driving lessons in different conditions (at night and on urban and rural roads, dual carriageways and motorways). Once completed, drivers might be able to obtain reduced insurance premiums from some insurance companies.

Only Pass Plus registered approved driving instructors (ADIs) can run Pass Plus courses. See [www.gov.uk/pass-plus](http://www.gov.uk/pass-plus) for more details. Ask the road safety department of your council if subsidised courses are available.

### Let Them Drive You

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

Make a Safer Driving Agreement between you.

In some countries, young drivers get a restricted driving licence for the first year or so after passing their driving test. For example, they cannot drive at night (often between midnight and 6am) or carry passengers of their own age, unless there is an experienced driver in the car. This is known as Graduated Driver Licensing, and helps to keep the new driver away from higher risk situations for a short period of time, while they develop their driving experience. Research shows it can be very effective at reducing young driver crashes.

While this system is not used in the UK, a voluntary parent/young driver agreement can create some of the effects. They are popular in some countries. 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 while they gain experience.

### Useful Websites

[www.rospa.com/roadsafety](http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety)

[www.rospa.com/resources/hubs/young-drivers/](http://www.rospa.com/resources/hubs/young-drivers/)

[www.roadar.org](http://www.roadar.org)

[www.think.direct.gov.uk](http://www.think.direct.gov.uk)

[www.helpingLdrivers.com](http://www.helpingLdrivers.com)

[www.gov.uk/pass-plus](http://www.gov.uk/pass-plus)

[www.gov.uk/highway-code](http://www.gov.uk/highway-code)



## Safer Driving Agreements

Safer Driving Agreements are flexible and tailored to individual circumstances. They can be verbal or written (see the example on the next page), and can support telematics insurance if the driver has such a policy. They are not about being over-protective or unreasonable but help the parent and the young driver to agree parameters for safer driving during the initial high risk period while they build up their experience. They usually cover some or all of the following:

### Driving at Night

Young drivers are more likely to crash at night, so consider agreeing that they will not drive between midnight (or earlier) and 6:00 am. The exact times can be relaxed as driving experience increases.

### Friends

Consider agreeing a limit on the number of friends they carry if you are not in the car. Passenger numbers can be increased as experience is gained.

### Speed

Young drivers are prone to approaching bends too fast and to dangerous overtaking. Driving too fast for the conditions (even within the speed limit) can be unsafe, for example on wet or icy roads or on narrow, winding rural roads. Discuss these risks with your young driver.

### Seat Belts

Ask your young driver to always wear their seat belt and to ask their passengers to wear their seatbelts. Set an example by always wearing yours.

### Further Training

Encourage your young driver to take further training.

### Alcohol and Drugs

Ask the young driver to stick to a zero limit when driving, and not to accept a lift with any driver who has been drinking or might have taken drugs. Set a good example yourself.

### Mobile Phones

Most young drivers will have a mobile phone. While this is useful in case they need to contact you, it is dangerous to use it while driving. Ask your son or daughter to agree only to use their phone whilst parked. Remind them that the penalty for using a hand-held phone is a £200 fine and six penalty points, which means they could lose their licence for a single offence (see below).

Other distractions, such as loud music, eating, drinking and smoking, or messing around with friends, while driving also increase the risk of crashing or being stopped by the Police.

### 'P' Plates

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

### Penalty Points

Make sure your young driver knows that if they acquire six or more penalty points within two years of passing their driving test, their licence will be revoked. They must then obtain a provisional licence, drive as a learner (i.e., display an 'L' Plate and be supervised) and pass the theory and practical driving tests again. This could happen if they use a hand-held mobile phone while driving just once. The penalty points will remain on their new licence. For more details see <https://www.gov.uk/penalty-points-endorsements/new-drivers>.



## Safer Driving Agreement

### Young Driver

I promise to:

- Confirm my destination in advance
- Drive only during the following times \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_
- 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, and to find alternative transport or call you and ask you to collect me or pay for a taxi, with no questions asked at the time.
- Always wear my seatbelt and ensure that my passengers do the same.
- Obey traffic laws, including speed limits and parking restrictions.
- Never use a mobile phone while driving, only when parked with the engine switched off
- 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 traffic laws, including speed limits and parking restrictions
- Never use a mobile phone while driving, only when parked with the engine switched off
- Accept a call from you at any hour and either collect you or pay for a taxi for you to get home, with 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.

We will review this agreement on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: (parent) \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: (son/daughter) \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Delete as necessary*





accidents don't have to happen

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