



accidents don't have to happen

Refresher Driver Training Toolkit



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Contents

INTRODUCTION

KEY REASONS TO TAKE REFRESHER DRIVER TRAINING

- Would you benefit from Refresher Driver Training?
- Self Assessment Questionnaire

PROMOTING REFRESHER DRIVER TRAINING

- Working with the Local Media
- Writing a Press Release
- Websites
- Social Media
- Presentations to Local Groups
- Linking with Other Initiatives

FURTHER INFORMATION

- 'Focus On' Factsheets
- Useful Links

INTRODUCTION

Driving a car is an essential part of personal, family and work life for millions of us. It can be enjoyable and pleasant, but also stressful and dangerous.

We all develop our own driving style and habits over time, and often do not realise that we could improve our driving. However, we would all benefit from an objective assessment of our driving and a little refresher training to help us make our driving safer, more environmentally-friendly, less stressful and more enjoyable.

There are many types of refresher driver training, ranging from quick and easy training to longer courses leading to full advanced driving tests. The options include:

- Short assessment drives
- Courses for anxious drivers or people who have not driven for a long time
- Courses on specific skills, such as towing or parking
- Courses for older drivers
- Driver development training (often provided by employers)
- Advanced driver training
- Training as an alternative to prosecution, such as Driver Improvement or Speed Awareness courses.

There are many training providers, including voluntary groups, professional instructors, organisations like RoSPA and local authorities. Many employers also arrange driver development training for their staff who drive for work.

However, one of the most difficult challenges is to raise awareness of the existence and benefits of refresher training. There are a number of factors that encourage people to take refresher training, and some deterrents that discourage them.

Motivations

- Not driven for a long time
- Nervous driver
- Want to re-check driving ability
- Had a recent incident
- Been charged with a driving offence
- To improve job prospects
- Changing to different type of car
- Allowing a learner driver to take private practice in the family car to support their driving lessons

Deterrents

- Cost
- Not enough time
- Lack of confidence
- Don't think it will help
- Fear of failing

This Guide will help anyone who provides or promotes driver training to:

- Raise awareness about refresher driver training
- explain what it involves and promote its benefits
- suggest ways to overcome deterrents to taking further driver training

Key Reasons to Take Refresher Driver Training

To Enjoy Your Driving

You'll enjoy driving more and feel much less stressed. Your passengers will prefer being driven by you, and children who suffer from motion sickness will be less likely to feel ill, because the drive will be so much smoother and safer.

To Improve Your Confidence

You'll feel much more confident, in your own driving and in your ability to deal with the behaviour of other drivers.

To Reduce Your Crash Risk

It will help you to avoid making mistakes and mis-judgements that lead to crashes, and help you cope with the mistakes of other road users.

To Improve Your Fuel Consumption

You'll spend less money on fuel, and cause less harm to the environment, because your driving will be smoother and more systematic, with less sharp acceleration and braking and better use of gears.

To Reduce Wear and Tear on Your Vehicle

Your car (possibly the second most expensive item you own) will last longer and may have a higher resale value.

To Lower Your Insurance Premiums

You may be able receive insurance discounts – make sure you tell your insurer what extra training you've taken. At the very least, it will help you keep your no claims bonus intact.

To Improve Career Prospects

Many jobs involve driving, and having extra driver training qualifications can improve your CV and help to distinguish you from other applicants.

To Meet People

By joining a driving group, you can meet other like-minded people.

To Help Get A job

A driver training qualification can be useful when job hunting.

To Show You Are A Good Driver

Some people take advanced driver training to prove that they are a driver of the highest standard.



Would You Benefit from Refresher Driver Training?

	Y	N
Have you had a collision or near miss in the last 3 years?		
Do you have any penalty points on your licence?		
Have you been stopped by the Police in the last 3 years?		
Have you read the Highway Code in the last 5 years?		
Have you had any driver training in the last 3 years?		
Have you changed your car (for example, to an automatic)?		
Is your driving changing (eg, because you have a new job)?		
Do your passengers make comments about your driving?		
Do you blame other drivers when there is a conflict?		
Do you often feel anxious or stressed when driving?		
Do you try to intimidate other drivers to get out of your way?		
Do you break the speed limit?		
Do you sometimes fail to notice pedestrians or cyclists until the last moment?		
Do you feel competitive when driving?		
Are you more anxious in heavy traffic, bad weather or at night?		
Do you find driving more stressful than you used to do?		
Do you remonstrate with other drivers?		
Do you fail to check mirrors before pulling out or changing lanes?		

If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, consider taking some refresher driver training.

PROMOTING REFRESHER DRIVER TRAINING

Local Media

Regional press, television and radio are constantly looking for new stories and interesting angles, especially on local issues. They like stories about local people and local activities.

Local newspapers, publications and websites often have a free local diary of events.

Send press releases about a local story, with a 'hook' to give your approach more relevance, such as:

- the publication of a survey or some road safety research
- local problems or complaints
- a local or national road safety publicity campaign.

Some examples:

A survey about bad driving habits has been published, or a local paper has run a story about speeding on a local road. You could issue a press release with your views on these issues and how refresher training can help to solve the problems.

Monitor stories about road accidents in the local paper for (say) a month to use as a basis for a press release about the need for better driving standards. If the local Road Safety Department is running a publicity campaign, contact them to see if you can get involved to support it.

The local Road Safety Partnership has published numbers of drivers caught speeding – contact them to see if you can get involved to highlight how refresher training can help drivers to drive better.

Remember to issue your press release quickly, rather than a couple of weeks after the story to which you are responding. If possible, find out when local campaigns or initiatives are scheduled, so you can co-ordinate with them.

If you are part of a local driving group that provides free, voluntary tuition, then emphasise the fact that it is free, fun and provides several benefits. Use a real case study to show how an individual has directly benefited from taking some refresher or advanced driver training - the personal angle.

If you are a commercial driver trainer, avoid trying to promote your saleable services or products. It's pointless simply trying to sell your services; you need to promote a message, or offer free services. However, if you pay for advertising, consider emphasising your refresher training services.

Local Radio

Local radio stations often look for 'spokespeople' to interview on road safety stories, so building up a relationship can be very fruitful.

Other Approaches

- Use the 'letters' page in local newspapers.
- Post comments on driving stories on news' organisations websites
- Respond to radio phone-ins; local radio often features road safety issues
- Offer free training or a demonstration drive to a journalist.
- Run a competition with free training as a prize.
- Think about photo opportunities, eg, the oldest person to take a course.

Writing a Press Release

A good press release should be no more than one side of A4. Start with a 'punchy' title, and explain the main points of the story in the first paragraph. Use simple sentences and short paragraphs, and avoid professional jargon. Don't assume the journalist knows what you're talking about - be clear and concise, and explain:

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?

Be positive when describing driver training. The "Key Reasons for Taking Refresher Training" on page 2 gives suggestions, and the Refresher Driver Training questionnaire might help. Remember, avoid being too commercial. Journalists will ignore a press release that is drumming up business.

Facts and statistics (but not too many) are always useful for news stories. For example, "x% of drivers drive too close to the vehicle in front", "Drivers who use a mobile phone are four times more likely to crash". Local facts and figures are even better. Make sure your facts and figures are accurate and that you can tell the journalist where they came from if asked. Use the "Focus On" factsheets and the web links in Useful Links to find information.

Consider sending a digital photograph with your press release to the paper. Unless it's a really newsworthy story, the paper is unlikely to send a photographer to a photocall. Always include (email or phone) contact details.

Examples of road safety press releases can be found at www.rospa.com/news/.

Target Your Press Release

Research the local media to get a better idea of the sort of stories that particular papers and programmes cover. Compile a list of journalists and editors who cover transport issues or who have written road safety stories. Follow up the release with a telephone call to the journalists or editors you targeted.

Prepare yourself first by making sure you have identified the key messages you want to communicate, and try to anticipate questions the journalist might ask.

A Word of Caution

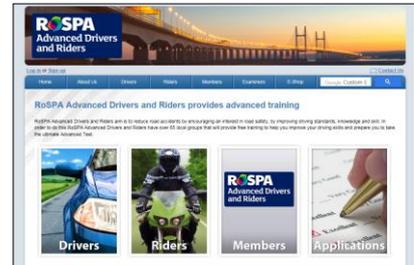
Be careful about commenting on a specific incident. The initial media reports may not be completely accurate, so consider the potential legal implications of saying something that might turn out to be incorrect.

Websites

Think about how to make your website visible so it attracts visitors and repeat visitors, and appears high in search engine results.

Name

- Choose a domain name that reflects who you are (e.g. www.rospa.com) and/or the purpose of the site (e.g. www.helpingldrivers.com).
- Find a domain name that is easy to remember and spell.
- Use a domain name ending with .com if possible, but also register the name as .co.uk and .org.uk.
- If a domain name is owned by someone else who is willing to sell it, be wary of paying too much; try to find an alternative name that is available to register at low cost.
- Remember to renew your domain name registration when it becomes due.



Design

- First impressions are very important for websites, so try to keep the Home page clear and simple.
- Think about how people will navigate from one section to another within your website, and make sure the names of the page links are logical and clear.
- Consider the readability of the text on your site (size, font, colour, layout) and keep it concise.
- Use good quality and relevant images throughout the site; get copyright permission if necessary.
- Seek views from a range of people and ask them what they think of the design and layout, and whether they could find the information they were seeking, or that you want them to find.
- If creating a new website, website-building applications (e.g. Adobe Dreamweaver) or hosting websites (e.g. Wordpress) provide templates. If you pay a professional website designer, make sure you brief them well on what you want, the purpose of the site and your intended audience.
- If you want to sell things on your website (e.g. promotional items, safe driving books, courses) consider having a store with a hosting service that lets you set your own prices (e.g. Society6, Amazon, and Cafepress).

Content

- A dynamic website that is regularly updated with new information gives people a reason to return. Updating your content regularly will also make it more search-engine friendly.
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) will help your website appear higher in search engine rankings, which will help to generate more visitors. An online search for “search optimization” will produce plenty of advice on how to improve your site’s performance in search engine results.
- If you use adverts on your site, keep them relevant to the topic, and explain why you use them (for example, to generate income to subsidise your work to promote refresher driver training).
- If you use content from other websites (e.g. images) get permission first and give them credit for it.
- If your site displays films consider whether you want to host your own files or use a hosting service, such as Youtube, in which case be sure that the way you design your website allows the media type you use to display correctly.
- Be careful about the contact information you provide on the website. Only provide your home address or home phone number if you’re sure you want people to be able contact you there. Consider setting up a PO box or a special email address, if you don’t have a business address.

Accessibility

- It's essential to ensure that everyone, including people with disabilities, has equal access to the information and functionality of your website, so ensure that it meets current accessibility standards. An online search will produce links to website accessibility guidelines and standards.
- Consider and test how your site will display and work on tablets and other mobile devices such as smart phones, and on different internet browsers as this will make it accessible to a much wider audience.

Security

- Keep the details (username, password, etc.) of your account in a safe place; if you forget them, you may not be able to work on your website again.
- If the website belongs to a group, make sure that more than one person has the account details so that you can still access and run the site if the person who set it up leaves the group.

Management

- Keep abreast of SEO updates as these can affect how well your site does in the page rankings.
- Respect your visitors' privacy, and if you collect personal information, make sure that you comply with data protection laws, and in particular, that you obtain consent to collect the information, store it securely and only use it for the purposes you specified.
- Write a privacy statement and provide a clear link to it. This must include an explanation of whether and how you use cookies (small text files that can track online activity to help the host website target advertising or to make the website run more smoothly) on your site.
- Include a clear process for people who decide to unsubscribe from the site.
- Avoid pop-ups and irrelevant adverts as they will annoy visitors to your site and discourage them from returning.

Promotion

- Submit your site to major search engines.
- Tell your friends and contacts about it.
- Use social media to talk about your site, or safe driving issues, and always include a link to your site.
- Use an e-mail address with your website's domain name.
- Include your site's domain name in your email signature.
- Offer to exchange links with other websites that complement yours, and/or to write guest blogs on other websites.

Evaluation

- Monitor how well your site is doing. Use a tool, such as Google Analytics, to measure how many visitors and repeat visitors your site receives, and which parts of the site are most popular.
- Include a Contact Us or Feedback link on the site and monitor what people say.
- Take constructive comments seriously.

Social Media

Social Media is a fantastic way of engaging with people. It's free and helps you to:

- Easily engage with like minded people
- Raise awareness of your activities
- Instantly communicate with your group members
- Share your messages with a much larger audience
- Communicate with industry peers
- Learn from others
- Identify possible problems or complaints enabling you to publicly rectify them

Many driving groups use Twitter, Facebook and so on to raise awareness of their activities, and to communicate with their members. The following tips may help you get the best out of social media.

Choose the right platform for your audience

- There is such a wide and ever growing range of platforms. it's impossible to use them all so it's vital that you make sure you choose the right ones.
- It's worth doing some research to see where your audience is to begin with:
 - Check which platforms other driver trainers and road safety groups use. For instance, Twitter is the main platform for RoSPA's social media activity.
 - Ask people (family, friends, colleagues, other driver trainers, members of your group) which platforms they use and what for.
 - Check out the LinkedIn groups. By getting involved in these you can get your messages in front of people who share the same interests as you.
- It's important to understand what the different platforms can offer as they do vary. This blog, "Pros and Cons of 5 of the Biggest Social Media Platforms" by [SocialMediaToday](#) provides useful advice.
- Plan how you will use social media (don't under-estimate the time it may take).
- Have clear objectives for using social media, don't use it just because you think it's the right thing to do. Develop rules (who will use it, what they can and cannot say, etc) to help you stick to your objectives.
- Keep the details (username, password, etc.) of your account in a safe place; if you forget them, you may not be able to work on your account again.
- If you are part of a group, make sure that more than one person has the account details for your platforms so that you can still access and run them if the person who set it up leaves the group.
- Share the workload, so that it's not only one person having to do all the posting, replying and monitoring.

Sharing content

- Start by following, liking or commenting on key people in driver training and road safety – they will often follow or like you back. Here's some RoSPA and RoADAR group accounts to get you started; [@RoSPA](#), [RoADAR Facebook](#), [@RoSPAWorkplace](#), [@RoadSafety](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [RoSPA Blogs](#).
- Also, connect with friends, family and colleagues.
- When posting content keep it fresh, relevant and up to date.
- People often search for their chosen topic within platforms so make sure you have used keywords in your posts.
- Link your social media accounts together and cross promote your content.
- Re-tweet interesting tweets - they may then follow and re-tweet your tweets.
- If you use someone else's content (text or images etc) make sure you have permission from the copyright owner.
- Register as a contributor on [SocialMediaToday](#) and submit blogs for publication – they get millions of visitors and tweet their articles to thousands of followers.
- Don't ignore people! If people take the time to comment or reply to your content it's important to acknowledge this.

Common pitfalls

- Plan exactly how much time you can afford to dedicate to social media and stick to it. It is easy to get sucked in and find it takes much more time than you had anticipated. Try to get someone else to help and share the workload.
- Nothing is private in the social media world! Anything you say is public so be sure everything you post is correct and above board before you post it.
- Be wary of making claims you cannot substantiate or getting into public verbal battles. Be very careful not to make untrue, insulting or harmful comments about other people or organisations – there could be serious legal consequences
- Followers are not just there to interact with your content; you must listen to them too and share any useful information that they provide.
- While social media helps you to spread your message to a much larger audience, it may also expose any weaknesses and complaints about your services to this large audience. So see if you can remedy any of these quickly.

Mailshots

- If you are considering a mailshot to existing or potential new members, consider using Mail Chimp or an equivalent package. This allows you to see how many times your email has been opened and allows the recipient to unsubscribe.
- Unsolicited emails can be very annoying, so only use email mailshots sparingly.

Presentations to Local Groups

Offer to give talks and presentations to local clubs, associations or groups. These could be about road safety generally, safe driving, specific topics, such as 'speed' or a local situation. Avoid a hard sell of your services, but give road safety information and promote road safety messages.

When giving talks:

Know Your Audience

Consider the audience when preparing your slides and when explaining and delivering the information. Take care to explain jargon and acronyms; don't assume that everyone will be familiar with those well known to you. For example, if you use the driving acronym COAST (Concentration, Observation, Anticipation, Space, Time) explain this clearly to the audience.

Decide Your Key Messages

Choose a small number of key messages that you'd like the audience to go away with. Once again, avoid being commercial. Delegates who see your presentation as a sales pitch will switch off very quickly, and miss your important points.

Stick to Your Time

The audience's attention will wander if you speak too long, or if you are delaying their coffee break. Generally, 20 – 30 minutes is a good length. If you are speaking for longer, try breaking up the talk by, for example, asking the audience questions, or showing a film, or just pausing for a few minutes for people to stretch their legs.

Use Visual Aids

Powerpoint is a good tool to use, but computers and projectors may not always be available.

Use your slides to display main points only, and try to use pictures rather than too much text.

Too much detail on a slide is difficult to read. Save the detail for your verbal explanation. This will help hold audience attention.

If using another person's computer, save the powerpoint presentation in a lower version just in case your later version is not compatible.

Be Positive

It is useful to explain the context, with some facts and figures about road accidents, but the focus should be on how to prevent them. Try to keep eye contact with your audience. Vary the tone of your voice and be enthusiastic about your topic.

Rehearse Your Speech

If you're not used to giving speeches, or it's a new topic, rehearse your talk in advance (in front of a small audience if possible). Try not to read directly from your notes; use prompt cards with key words or a print of your slides as an aide memoire.

Evaluation

Use a feedback form to collect information from the audience in relation to the venue, content of the presentation etc. This is helpful with Quality Assurance and continual improvement.

Prepare Handouts

The easiest way to prepare handouts is to use prints of the powerpoint slides you have created for the talk. Also, try to get materials from the free resources in the road safety section of www.rospa.com.

Finish with Questions & Answers

Invite questions or comments from the audience at the end, or throughout your presentation if you prefer. Audiences usually appreciate the chance to ask the speaker a few questions.

Linking with Other Groups and Initiatives

The Road Safety Department at your Local Authority and local Road Safety Partnerships are very important partners in promoting road and driver safety messages. They regularly run publicity campaigns and other education and training initiatives. Details should be published on their websites, and it's worth checking www.roadsafetygb.org.uk regularly.

The Department for Transport's "[Think! Road Safety](#)" publicity campaign runs campaigns on different road safety topics throughout the year. Free resources for the campaigns may be available from [Think! Road Safety Resources](#).

Other Local Partners

- Fire and Rescue Service
- Voluntary groups and charities (eg, Age UK)
- Commercial companies
- Associations
- Local driving groups
- Local pedestrian, cycling and motorcycling groups

Supporting local initiatives and events, perhaps by sending representatives and helping to promote them, will help to build strong relationships with other groups.

In return, they may be able to help promote your activities and messages, or provide facilities such as meeting rooms.

Focus On Factsheets

Focus On Road Safety Facts and Figures

On average, every day:

- Almost 5 people are killed on the road in reported road accidents.
- Around 60 people are seriously injured in reported road accidents.
- In total, over 400 people are killed or injured in reported road accidents.

These figures are for road crashes which were reported to the police. Although virtually all fatal road accidents are reported to the police, many involving injury are not reported, even when some of those involved require medical or hospital treatment. It is estimated that the total number of road casualties in Great Britain is over 700,000 a year.

The most common contributory factors are:

- Failing to look properly
- Losing control of the vehicle
- Failing to judge another person's path or speed
- Being careless, reckless or in a hurry
- Aggressive driving
- Exceeding the speed limit
- Driving too fast for the conditions
- Driving too close to another vehicle
- Drink driving
- Inexperience
- Driving or riding for work
- Driver Distraction
- Driver tiredness (fatigue)
- Around 45% of the people killed and 60% of those injured are car drivers or passengers.
- Over 20% of those killed, and 13% of the injured, on the road are pedestrians.
- Around 25% of the people killed, and 10% of those injured, on the road are motorcyclists.
- About 6% of those killed, and 10% of those injured are pedal cyclists.
- Most road accidents occur on urban roads.
- But, crashes on rural roads are more likely to be serious or fatal because of the higher speeds involved.
- Most road accidents occur in daylight and good driving conditions.
- The most dangerous hours on the roads on weekdays are the rush hours from 3.00 to 6.00pm, and then 7.00 to 9.00am.
- Hundreds of lives could be saved each year if everyone always wore their seat belt.



Focus on Inappropriate Speed

Each year over 230 people are killed in crashes involving exceeding the speed limit, and a further 100 are killed in crashes involving travelling within the speed limit but too fast for the conditions.

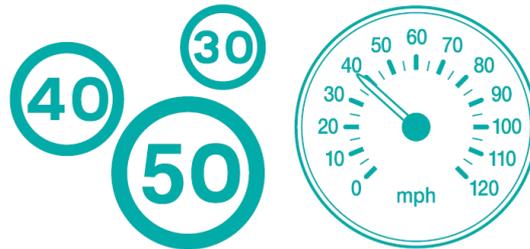
Drivers and riders who are travelling at inappropriate speeds are more likely to crash and their higher speed means that the crash will cause more severe injuries, to themselves or to other road users.

Inappropriate speed magnifies other driver errors, such as driving too close or driving when fatigued or distracted, multiplying the chances of these types of driving causing an accident.

Higher speeds mean that drivers have less time to identify and react to what is happening around them, and it takes longer for the vehicle to stop. It removes the driver's safety margin and turns near misses into crashes.

Drivers who speed are more likely to be involved in collisions. They are also more likely to commit other driving violations, such as red-light running and driving too close.

The risk of a pedestrian being fatally injured when hit by a car increases significantly at speeds between 30 and 40 mph. A pedestrian who is hit at 40 mph is between three and a half, to five and a half times more likely to be killed than a pedestrian who is hit at 30 mph.



Research suggests there are three types of drivers:

- Compliant drivers usually observe speed limits (52% of drivers)
- Moderate speeders occasionally exceed speed limits (33% of drivers)
- Excessive speeders routinely exceed speed limits (14% of drivers)

However, even the moderate speeders exceed 30 mph limits fairly regularly.

Excessive speeders normally ignore the 30 mph limit, and often by a wide margin.

Further Information

[RoSPA Road Safety: Speed](#)

[Road Safety Observatory: Speed](#)

[Top Ten Tips for Staying Within the Limit](#)

www.stoppingdistances.org.uk

[Think Road Safety Campaign: Speed](#)

Focus on Drinking and Driving

Over 200 people are killed and 1,200 seriously injured in drink drive crashes every year. It's not just the drivers who have been drinking who suffer, but also their passengers, people in other vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists or motorcyclists, and the families of everyone involved.

Alcohol:

- makes drivers over-confident and more likely to take risks
- slows their reactions
- increases stopping distances
- impairs judgement of speed, distance and time
- affects vision
- makes co-ordination more difficult
- reduces the ability to concentrate.

Drinkers cannot be sure how much alcohol they are consuming because the alcoholic strength of drinks varies enormously, as does the size of measures. The speed with which alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream varies depending on a person's size, age, weight and gender and whether they have eaten.

We absorb alcohol very quickly, but it takes about an hour for 1 unit to be removed by a healthy liver. The number of units of alcohol in a drink depends on its size and alcoholic strength by volume (abv). Even a small amount of alcohol, below the legal limit, seriously affects our ability to drive safely, and increases our risk of crashing.

Morning After

It takes several hours for alcohol to disappear from the body, so someone who was drinking late the previous evening could still be over the limit on their way to work the next morning.

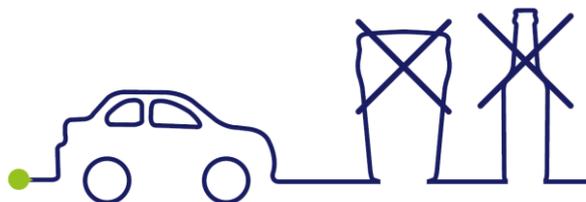
The only safe advice is to never mix drinking and driving.

Drink Drive Limits

The drink drive limit in England and Wales is 80mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood.

In Scotland, the drink drive limit is 50mg per 100 ml of blood.

In Northern Ireland, the drink drive limit is 80mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood, but it is due to be lowered to 50mg per 100 ml of blood for most drivers, and 20mg per 100ml of blood for novice and professional drivers.



Focus on Drinking and Driving Continued

Penalties

The penalties for drink driving include:

- A minimum 12-month driving ban
- A criminal record
- A fine of up to £5000 or up to 6 months in prison or both

Every year, over 60,000 people are convicted of drink driving, and face an automatic driving ban of at least 12 months, a large fine and possible imprisonment.



Further Information

[RoSPA Road Safety: Drink Driving](#)

[Road Safety Observatory: Drink Driving](#)

[Think Road Safety Campaign: Drink Driving](#)

Focus on Drugs and Driving

Illegal Drugs

Exact figures for the number of road deaths and injuries caused by drivers who are impaired by drugs are not available. However, drug driving is a serious problem, that has persisted for many years.

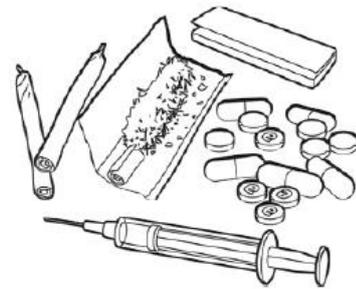
Almost 100 people were killed and around 1,5900 injured in road accidents in which 'Impaired by drugs' was a contributory factor. This is almost certainly an underestimate due to under-reporting.

Research in 2010 estimated that there were 200 drug driving-related deaths a year in Great Britain.

Earlier research suggested that illicit drugs (cannabis was the most common) could have been present in about 18% of road fatalities in 2000 in Great Britain.

Drugs can affect a driver's behaviour in a variety of ways (depending on the drug):

- slower reactions
- erratic behaviour
- poor concentration and confused thinking
- aggression, panic attacks or paranoia
- distorted perception
- blurred vision
- over confidence, resulting in taking unnecessary risks
- tremors, dizziness, cramps
- poor co-ordination
- severe fatigue after use.



The effects can last for hours or even days, and vary from person to person. They can be difficult for an individual to detect. There is a high risk of falling asleep through severe fatigue after the effect of drugs wear off.

Medicines

It is difficult to predict whether a particular medicine will affect a person's ability to drive safely, and if so, how and for how long.

A driver may not even notice that they have been impaired until it is too late. The effects depend on how much, how often and how a medicine is used, plus the psychological and physical attributes of the person taking it.

Some medicines may cause:

- drowsiness
- feeling nauseous or otherwise unwell
- dizziness or feeling light-headed
- reduced coordination, including shaking
- difficulty concentrating
- feeling unstable
- feeling edgy, angry or aggressive



A person's driving ability can also be affected by the medical condition for which they are taking the medicine.

Many over-the-counter medicines, including those for coughs, colds, flu and hay fever, cause unwanted drowsiness. Warnings about drowsiness are not always clear so, if the label says, "may cause drowsiness", assume that it will do so.

Alcohol and Drugs

Taking alcohol and drugs together is even worse as their effects combine and impairment can be multiplied.

The Law

Driving while unfit through drugs, whether illegal or prescribed or over-the-counter medicines, is an offence that carries the same penalties as drink driving. For someone to be convicted, it must be proved that they are under the influence of a drug or medicine and that this has made them unfit to drive.

It is an offence to drive or attempt to drive, or to be in charge of a motor vehicle with a specified controlled drug in the body above a specified limit. To be convicted of this offence, it must only be proved that the driver had a specified drug, above the specified limit, in their body. It is not necessary to prove that their driving was impaired.

The penalties for drug driving are the same as for drink driving, and include:

- A minimum 12-month driving ban
- A criminal record
- A fine of up to £5000 or up to 6 months in prison or both

Further Information

[Driving for Work: Drinks and Drugs](#)

[Road Safety Observatory: Drugs and Driving](#)

[Think Road Safety Campaign: Drug Driving](#)

Focus on Inexperience

Most inexperienced (novice) drivers are young, aged 17 to 24 years old. Young drivers account for over 20% of road deaths, even though they comprise only 7% of licence holders and drive less mileage than other drivers. They have a higher crash risk than other drivers, and their crashes are more likely to be severe.

Over 300 people are killed, and almost 4,000 seriously injured, in crashes involving young car drivers each year, including young drivers, their passengers and other road users. In fact, about two-thirds of deaths in young driver crashes are passengers and other road users.

Learner drivers have few accidents because they are always under supervision. But, once they can drive unsupervised, their chances of crashing increase dramatically. 1 in 5 new drivers crash within their first year of driving.

Young drivers are more likely to be involved in high speed crashes, crashes involving losing control, crashes in the dark and crashes when overtaking and negotiating bends. They make more insurance claims, and more expensive claims, than other drivers. There are several reasons for this:

Lack of Experience

As new drivers gain driving experience their crash rate falls. Once a new driver has driven about 1,000 miles, their risk is about the same as a driver with 3 or more years' experience.

Age

Younger novice drivers have a higher crash risk than older novice drivers – the crash risk of a newly qualified 17 year old is almost twice as high as for a newly qualified 60 year old.

Attitude

Young drivers, especially men, tend to be over confident and more likely to drive in risky ways: too fast, too close to the vehicle in front and dangerous overtaking.

Hazard Perception

They often have excellent vehicle control skills and fast reactions, but are poor at identifying hazards and assessing risk, and tend to overestimate their ability to avoid the accident.

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.

Further Information

[RoSPA Young Drivers Drivers Hub](#)

www.helpingldrivers.com

[Road Safety Observatory: Young Drivers](#)

Focus on Falling Asleep at the Wheel

Around one in five crashes on motorways or other monotonous roads resulting in death or injury are sleep-related.

Sleep-related crashes are most likely to happen:

- On long journeys on monotonous roads, such as motorways
- Between 2am and 6am
- Between 2pm and 4pm (especially after eating, or taking an alcoholic drink)
- After having less sleep than normal
- After drinking alcohol
- If taking medicines that cause drowsiness
- On journeys home after night shifts.



They are more likely to be serious because a sleeping driver is unable to brake or swerve before the impact.

The vast majority of sleep related crashes involve male drivers, with men under 30 having the highest risk of falling asleep at the wheel

Human beings need to sleep. The longer someone remains awake, the greater the need to sleep and the more difficult it is to resist falling asleep. Sleep will eventually overpower the strongest intentions and efforts to stay awake.

Most of the things that drivers do to fight off sleepiness when driving are ineffective for more than around 10 minutes. They are only useful in an emergency to provide time for the driver to find somewhere safe to stop and rest.

The only measures that have an effect in reducing sleepiness when driving are taking a nap of around 15 minutes and drinking at least 150mg of caffeine (at least two cups of strong coffee or equivalent). However, even these measures are no substitute for sleep. And there is some concern that drivers may use these tactics to enable themselves to continue driving when they should really stop.

While drivers are aware that they are becoming sleepy, and that this increases their risk of having an accident, many will persevere with their driving, and employ a number of measures to fight off sleepiness.

Drivers need to plan trips to include a rest stop every two hours.

Further Information

[RoSPA Road Safety: Fatigue](#)
[Think Road Safety Campaign: Fatigue](#)

[Road Safety Observatory: Fatigue](#)

Focus on Driver Distraction

Drivers can be distracted by many things, inside and outside the vehicle.

Mobile Phones

Using a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone while driving substantially increases the risk of crashing. Drivers who use a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone:

- are much less aware of what's happening on the road around them
- fail to see road signs
- fail to maintain proper lane position and speed
- are more likely to 'tailgate' other vehicles
- react more slowly and take longer to brake
- are more likely to enter unsafe gaps in traffic
- feel more stressed and frustrated.



They are four times more likely to crash, injuring or killing themselves or other people, and are likely to be at fault for the crash. In 2016, 35 people were killed, and almost 1,500 injured in crashes involving drivers using a mobile phone. A further 91 people were killed, and almost 5,000 injured in crashes involving other in-vehicle distractions.

Hand-held Phones

It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. It is also an offence to “cause or permit” a driver to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. Therefore, employers can be held liable as well as the individual driver if they require employees to use a hand-held phone while driving.

Hands-free Phones

Using a hands-free phone while driving does not reduce the risk because the problems are caused mainly by the mental distraction and divided attention of taking part in a phone conversation at the same time as driving. It can be illegal to use a hands-free phone while driving, depending on the circumstances. Drivers could be charged with ‘failing to have proper control of their vehicle’. In serious cases, using any type of mobile phone could result in prosecution for careless or dangerous driving - the Police check phone records when investigating fatal and serious crashes.

Now ‘smartphones’ are very common, more drivers are able to engage in a wide range of activities on their phone, including using social media while driving.

Other Distractions

Many other things, such as eating, drinking, smoking, reading a map and so on, while driving are also distracting. Sat Navs and entertainment systems also have the potential to distract the driver.

Further Information

[RoSPA Road Safety: Mobile Phones](#)

[Think Road Safety Campaign: Mobile Phones](#)

[Road Safety Observatory: Driver Distraction](#)

Focus on Close Following

Driving too close to another vehicle is a very common driving fault. Surveys often find that this is one of the main bad driving habits that concerns people.

As well as being intimidating and stressful for the driver being followed, it increases the risk of rear-end collisions. In 2016, 20 people were killed, and over 9,000 were injured, in crashes involving drivers following too close.



Driving too close to another vehicle is a careless driving offence for which the police can issue a fixed penalty (3 points and a £100 fine), or offer offending motorists the chance to take a driver improvement course. In the most serious cases, drivers could be charged with dangerous driving and prosecuted in court.

The overall stopping distance of a vehicle comprises the reaction (or thinking) time (during which the driver realises s/he has to stop and transfers his or her foot to the brake pedal) and the braking distance (the distance covered before the brakes bring the vehicle to a complete stop).

A driver travelling at 30 mph will travel about 9 metres (29' 6") before they even begin to brake. Their car will travel a further 14 metres (45' 11") before coming to a halt – a total of 23 metres (75' 5") from the moment the driver decides to stop. This assumes a reaction speed of about 0.7 seconds. A less alert driver will take longer to react and so cover more distance before even beginning to brake.

To keep a safe distance allow at least a two second gap from the vehicle in front.

The gap should be at least double this in the wet The stopping distances in the Highway Code are based on an alert driver on a dry road. In reality, the stopping distances could be much longer if the:

- driver is tired, distracted or affected by drink or drugs
- poor visibility means the driver does not see hazards early enough
- road is wet or icy
- car has poorly adjusted brakes or worn tyres
- driver does not brake hard enough.

Further Information

www.rospa.com/roadsafety

www.stoppingdistances.org.uk

www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk

Focus on Driving for Work

Driving is the most dangerous work activity that most people do.

Millions of people drive on the road in order to do their job, and in doing so, they both face, and create, risks. They drive an enormous variety of vehicles, including cars, vans, lorries, taxis, emergency service vehicles, buses, minibuses and coaches in order to carry out their duties. They all share the road with members of the public.

It is estimated that between one quarter and one third of reported road casualties occur in road accidents involving someone who was driving, riding or otherwise using the road for work purposes.

The HSE estimate that “more than a quarter of all road traffic incidents may involve somebody who is driving as part of their work at the time.”

In 2016, 529 people were killed, 5,269 seriously injured and more than 38,000 slightly injured in collisions involving a driver or rider driving for work.

Since 2006, over 62,000 people have been killed or seriously injured, and over half a million injured in work-related road crashes.

It is not just people who are at work who are killed and injured in work-related road crashes. In fact, other road users are more often killed or injured by at-work drivers. In 2016, two thirds of casualties, and around 80% of those killed, in work-related crashes were other road users or passengers of an at-work driver or rider.

Of the 44,048 work-related road casualties in 2016, 23,445 were other road users, 7,114 were passengers of an at-work driver and 13,489 were at-work drivers or riders.

Of the 529 people who were killed in work-related road crashes in 2016, 427 were other road users, 18 were passengers of an at-work driver and 84 were at-work drivers or riders.

Therefore, UK law requires employers to treat driving, riding or otherwise using the road for work, the same as any other health and safety risk. They must conduct suitable risk assessments and take all “reasonably practicable measures” to manage the risks.

Further Information

www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/
www.orsa.org.uk

[Road Safety Observatory: Driving for Work](#)
[Driving for Better Business](#)
[HSE Driving at Work: A Guide for Employers](#)

Further Information and Support

[RoSPA Road Safety](#)

[RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders](#)

[Think Road Safety](#)

[The Highway Code](#)

[Department for Transport](#)

[Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency \(DVLA\)](#)

[Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency](#)

[Road Safety GB](#)

[Road Safety Scotland](#)

[Road Safety Wales](#)

[AIRSO](#)

[RoadPeace](#)

[Brake](#)

[Reported Road Casualties Great Britain](#)

[Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency \(DVLA\)](#)

[Reported Road Casualties Scotland](#)

[Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency \(DVSA\)](#)

[Roadsafe](#)

[Department for Transport \(DfT\)](#)

[GEM Motoring Assist](#)

[Road Safety Knowledge Centre](#)

[www.gov.uk](#)

[Road Safety Observatory](#)

[Highways England](#)

[IAM RoadSmart](#)

[Living Streets](#)

[London Road Safety Council](#)

[Safe Driving for Life](#)

[PACTS, Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety](#)

[RAC Foundation](#)

[Transport for London Road Safety](#)

[Reporting of Equestrian Accidents](#)



accidents don't have to happen

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