

Tips for learners & supervising drivers

Helping make learner drivers safe

We know that everything improves with experience and learning to drive is no different. Parents and supervising drivers play an important role in providing vital on-road experience for learner drivers.

How to achieve 120 hours of learner driving experience

While this sounds like a lot, many learner drivers have their permit for 2 years, so 120 hours is just over an hour a week.

Think about the trips you already make together and schedule these as practice sessions. If you miss a practice session just schedule an additional drive at another time in the week.

Stages of learner driver development

A staged approach to driving practice will help learner drivers become safer drivers. Don't try to do too much too quickly.

Stage 1

Getting to know the vehicle and basic car control

The learner can locate and use the various controls brakes, steering, lights, wipers, adjusting the seat and mirrors. Practice in areas with little or no traffic with the learner practicing moving off, stopping, making turns, reversing, using indicators and changing gears.

Stage 2

Driving in less complex traffic situations and slow manoeuvres

Build experience in a variety of less demanding traffic situations such as local streets and quiet main roads. Practice parking including parallel parking and three point turns. The learner driver learns to scan and check for what is happening outside the car by checking blind spots, using mirrors and responding to traffic signs and signals.

Stage 3

Building experience and complexity

Practice at different times, in different weather conditions and in complex or busy traffic situations. This includes driving at night, at dusk and dawn, bright sunshine and on dull days. Drive in the wet and learn to cope with fog and icy conditions as well as busy streets, freeways and main roads.

Stage 4

Rehearsing for solo driving

Most of the decision making belongs to the learner with the supervising driver offering advice and helping the learner look for potential hazards.



Tips for while out driving

- Before each driving practice session do a quick review of what happened on the last drive.
- Plan together what skills and conditions you want to tackle on each drive.
- Don't force your learner to drive in conditions where they don't feel comfortable. Drive in less complex conditions until their confidence and competence improves.
- Have your learner describe what they are doing, what they can see ahead and what they are planning to do. This is commentary driving and it helps the learner work through what they are thinking and doing.
- Dealing with hazards on the road, aggressive or impatient drivers can be stressful. Pull over somewhere safe if either of you are upset; wait until everyone is calm before continuing.
- Supervising drivers when coaching your learner driver, use 'I' messages, e.g. 'In this situation I would...'
- Don't blame the learner for making mistakes, but encourage them to learn from their mistakes and discuss what they would do differently next time.

Practice driving in a range of conditions



Learner drivers need practice in as many different driving conditions and situations as possible. Dry weather, wet weather, daytime, night-time and at dusk. Light traffic and heavy traffic as well as suburban streets, highways, freeways, rural roads and in the centre of towns and cities.

Role of professional driving lessons



RACV recommends that new learner drivers should initially have a few lessons with a professional driver trainer to learn basic driving techniques that they can practice with you and to continue to work together through all stages of their driving development.

RACV is involved in keys2drive, an Australia wide, federally funded education program providing a free one hour driving lesson to all learner drivers and their supervisor.

For more information regarding professional driving lessons and keys2drive please contact RACV Drive School on 1300 788 223 or visit racv.com.au/driveschool

Useful websites & resources

RACV

www.racv.com.au

TAC

www.tac.gov.au

VicRoads

www.vicroads.vic.gov.au

DriveSmart

www.drivesmart.vic.gov.au

Road to Solo Driving handbook

(available at VicRoads customer service centres & RACV shops).

Learner Kit

Includes: Guide for Learners, Learner Log Book and the Guide for Supervising Drivers.

(Given to Learners when they pass their permit test).