

Drivers with more experience are less likely to have an accident

It's important for Learner drivers to have 120 hours of driving before getting a Restricted Licence. Taking your Learner on frequent practice drives will help them build up experience in many different road and traffic conditions. Co-ordinate practice drives with their professional lessons - talk to the instructor.

Prepare Your Car

Make sure the car is safe - involve the Learner in basic mechanical or vehicle checks (lights, tyres, oil, coolant, windscreen wash)

Ensure they know what the vehicle's internal controls are and how to operate them - especially Climate controls - they will be asked about them on their Restricted Licence test

Make sure L plates are displayed (remove them when you are driving)

Buy an interior rear-view mirror for the passenger side - to help you see what's happening behind while the Learner is driving

Prepare the Learner

Make sure they have a valid Learner Driver Licence

They should also have lessons with a professional Driving Instructor in a dual-controlled car

Discuss that the aim is to help them practice what they are taught in their professional lessons

Ensure they have mastered basic car control skills, including the Emergency Stop

Prepare the Drive

Remember it takes new drivers up to two seconds longer to react to hazards, than more experienced drivers

One of the most fundamental errors experienced drivers make is assuming a new driver can drive AND see potential hazards. Chances are they won't, because they're still concentrating on the fundamentals.

Young drivers, especially men, tend to be over confident. They can be very good at controlling the vehicle and have fast reactions, but not at identifying potential hazards and assessing risk.

You're responsible for any driving offences committed by the Learner while you're supervising

E.g. If they run a red light YOU earn demerit points too

Read the Road Code again before you start to supervise

Encourage the Learner driver to read the Road Code as well

The Drive

Plan routes in advance. Learners get tired and lose concentration easily - start with short and less demanding drives.

As they gain experience, gradually increase the difficulty of the driving. Include longer drives in a range of conditions and let them plan routes.

Remember you're helping to shape the Learner's attitude to driving

Set a good example in the way you drive – it's much harder to convince a young person to drive safely and responsibly if you don't practice what you preach. And think carefully before you criticise another road users' actions.

Follow the formula 'Praise – Constructive Criticism – Praise'

Remember they don't have your driving experience and will make mistakes - be calm and positive

Offer advice and tips. Give instructions and directions well in advance - be clear and specific.

Encourage the habit of Mirrors – Signal – Manoeuvre

Anticipate - be ready to take evasive action

Ask questions to assess what they're seeing and when they see a potential hazard (what seems obvious to you may not be obvious to them)

Potential hazards - advise the Learner to release the accelerator pedal and hover their right foot over the brake pedal, while their left foot hovers over the clutch pedal

Remind them to check the speedometer regularly

Regularly ask what the speed limit is

Encourage positive attitudes towards speed limits – they protect everyone especially pedestrians, cyclists and children

Remind them to check their rearview mirror every 8 – 10 seconds

Remind them to check down every intersection they pass

Ensure they look at least 12 seconds ahead to establish any potential hazards

Give advice on how to get back on the right route if they take a wrong turn, stay calm and don't suggest sudden changes in direction work, your way round at the next suitable junction(s)

If the learner does something dangerous during the drive, find somewhere safe to stop and discuss what happened

Don't

Shout (except in an emergency)

Be sarcastic - this will only increase their stress and reduce their confidence

Talk on your mobile or smoke while supervising

Contradict driving techniques taught by the Instructor

Expect the Learner to know how to deal with every problem

Blame the Learner for a mistake

After the Drive

Review each drive - be positive

If there are several faults to address, deal with the higher-risk issues first

Leave the others for later, to avoid discouraging the Learner

Record brief details of the drive in 'The Driver's Record'

Before the next drive, briefly review the main issues from the previous one – be positive

TEENCOACH