



ACT
Government

LEARNING THROUGH PRACTICE

MARCH 2018



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First published 2000

This edition 2018 18/0251

ISBN No: 1-876677-96-1

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The development and implementation of the *Road Ready* program was funded by a \$2 million grant and on-going support from the NRMA–ACT Road Safety Trust to the ACT Government.



As a learner driver young people are among the safest road users.

Within a very short time, after gaining their Provisional Licence, they become the group of drivers most at risk of being involved in fatal, injury or property damage crashes.

So what can be done to make new solo drivers safer and more competent drivers?



Practice! Practice! Practice! Recent international research has shown that continuous practice during the Learner phase will substantially reduce the risks of new drivers when they begin to drive by themselves. Practising areas of driving where errors are commonly made is especially important.

This book is about learning to drive safely through practice. It identifies some of the common difficulties young drivers find themselves in and outlines some activities to do during the Learner period.

Towards the back of this the book there is space provided for recording practice drives. By keeping a record the learner, the supervisor and the professional driving instructor will be able to quickly see if practice has been undertaken in all conditions and road types and how much.

Information about driving

You and your Learner have already done some early work with learning about driving. The booklet, *Road Ready. Preparing Your Pre Learner For Driving*, contains five simple strategies that can help you to raise awareness about the complexity of driving. This is a good starting point for you and your learner driver to begin to understand some of the complex skills required for driving.

If you want to check any road rules or find out about other areas of driving, you can log onto the *Road Ready* website on hyperlink <http://www.roadready.act.gov.au>

Other useful books available are:

- *Road Ready. ACT Road Rules Handbook*. This book contains the road rules and information about what is required to be eligible for both a Learner and Provisional Licence.
- *Road Ready. Supervising a Learner Driver*. This booklet provides advice for those people taking on the supervisor's role for a Learner driver.
- *ACT Learner Driver Logbook*. This is the official ACT Government logbook for use by Accredited Driving Instructors (ADIs) as part of the Competency Based Training and Assessment (CBT & A) system. It sets out the driving competencies required to gain a provisional licence.
- *Road Ready. Towards your Ps in the ACT*. This booklet will provide information on how to develop the skills necessary for obtaining a Provisional Drivers Licence.

Before commencing any supervised on-road driving practice it is a good idea to scan through the *ACT Learner Driver Logbook*, and *Road Ready Towards your Ps* in the ACT booklets. This will not only indicate the order in which driving skills are usually taught by the professional driving instructor, but also provide some useful information to make all journeys safer.

Stages of Practice

There are a number of effective ways that a Learner driver can become a safe and competent driver:

- As a passenger commence scanning and observing the driving environment, co-navigating and co-piloting, and commentating on the drive.
- Commence with a few – perhaps up to 5 – driving lessons with an Accredited Driving Instructor (ADI) to become familiar with the first 10 Learner Driver Competencies in the Logbook.
- Get as much practice as you can between lessons with an ADI. Spend a lot of time practising driving in the local and familiar environment, and in manageable conditions. Focus particularly on driving competencies 1 to 10.
- Spend a lot of time practising driving in both local and less familiar environments. Focus on all driving competencies.
- Have several more professional driving lessons. Try to build up the amount of driving practice to at least 50 hours. Hold practice sessions at different times, in a range of weather and road conditions.
- If you are gaining your Provisional Licence through the CBT&A system, it will be necessary to have a number of lessons before attempting your final Competency assessment.
- If you wish to gain your Provisional Licence by means of a test with a Government licence examiner, you should have several more lessons with an ADI.
- Where necessary, continue to seek help with the driving task – even after being able to drive solo.

Common Errors of New Drivers

It is important for all new drivers to get extensive experience through continuing practice. Their driving will become automated, and their ability to perceive hazards and make the right decisions in difficult circumstances will improve. It is also important that they become particularly aware of situations in which they could be at a high risk of having a crash.

New drivers are commonly involved in particular types of crashes. Reducing the number of driving errors made by new drivers can lower the likelihood of being involved in these crashes.

Errors made by new drivers are often as a result of:

- not scanning the driving environment well;
- not being able to judge the speed of other vehicles, particularly on-coming traffic;
- travelling too closely to other vehicles; and
- travelling too fast, both for the road conditions and for their level of driving competence and experience.

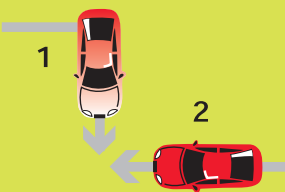


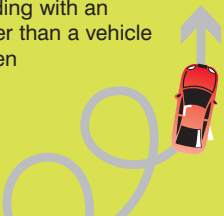
Two important things that can help reduce the involvement of young people in road crashes once they go solo are:

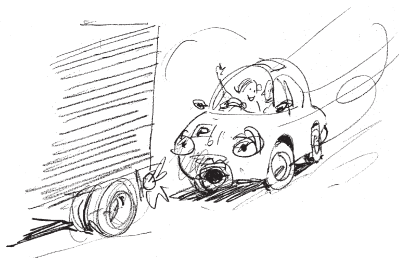
- gaining plenty of supervised practice during the Learner Licence period; and
- slowing down so as to provide plenty of space and time to be able to recover if and when errors are made.

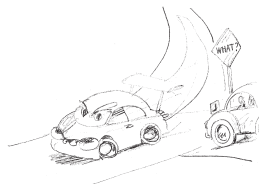
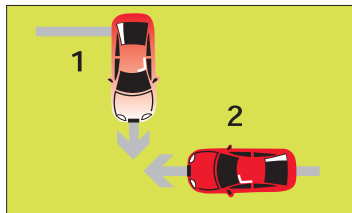


What types of crashes are young drivers usually involved in?

First-year drivers are very commonly involved in the following crash situations:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both the turning and straight-ahead driver at intersection crashes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both the front and rear driver in rear-end crashes 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both the driver on the right and driver on the left in cross-traffic crashes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drivers who lose control of the vehicle and run off the intended path, colliding with an object other than a vehicle being driven 





Crash type

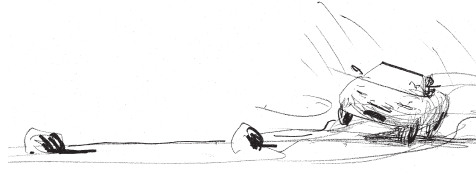
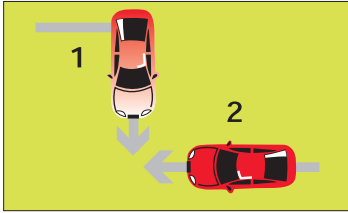
Right through, where driver '1' is at fault.

Possible explanations

- Speeding
- Inability to scan the driving environment and see the other vehicle
- Poor judgement of gaps in traffic
- Over-confidence in their own driving ability

Improving Your Driving Skills

- As a passenger, have the Learner comment on any driving and advise on ways to prepare for turning. See *Road Ready. Preparing Your Learner for Driving* – Commentary driving.
- After the first couple of lessons with the Accredited Driving Instructor, ask the Learner to commentate on how and where they are scanning.
- Park the car near a busy intersection and observe traffic. Have the Learner predict when it would or would not be safe to turn before an oncoming vehicle. See *Road Ready. Towards your Ps in the ACT* - Competency 7 – Turns left and right.
- Observe and discuss changing traffic lights. Talk about when it would be safe to enter the intersection – even when there are no traffic signals. See *Road Ready. Towards your Ps in the ACT* Competency 12 – Give Way rules.
- Practice estimating the speed of oncoming and passing vehicles, including motorcyclists and cyclists. See *Road Ready. Preparing Your Learner for Driving* – Speed sensitivity See *Road Ready. Towards your Ps in the ACT* Competency 8 – Speed control.
- Encourage the Learner to be responsible, share the road and to anticipate vulnerable road users and recognise the potential harm they could cause to a person who is walking or riding a bicycle or motorcycle.



Crash type

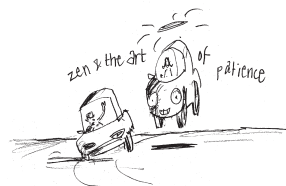
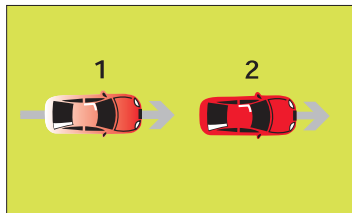
Right through, where driver '2' is at fault.

Possible explanations

- Speeding
- Inability to scan the driving environment and see the other vehicle
- Reliance upon other drivers to do the right thing

Improving Your Driving Skills

- Discuss together the idea that despite being technically 'right', all drivers have a shared responsibility to ensure crashes do not occur and that all road users are safe. If another vehicle is incorrectly heading into your space – take evasive action. See *Road Ready. Towards your Ps in the ACT Competency 12 – Give Way* rules.
- Talk about the importance of looking around or scanning when driving. Never assume that if someone has to give way that they will. Be prepared to 'back off' and slow down if a car looks like it might turn in front of you.
- As a driver who is going straight ahead, predict what the right-turning vehicle might do.



Crash type

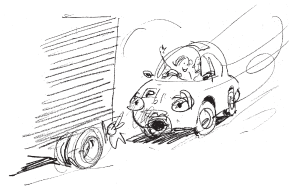
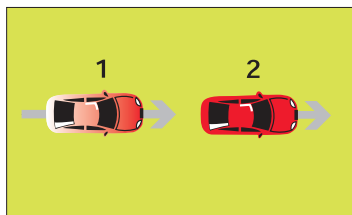
Rear-end crash, where driver '1' was the cause.

Possible explanations

- Driver travelling too fast
- Driver leaving insufficient space between vehicles
- Driver distracted

Improving Your Driving Skills

- As a passenger, have the Learner estimate a safe distance to travel behind another vehicle. See *Road Ready. Towards you Ps in the ACT Competency 9 – Slowing procedures.*
- Have the Learner driver predict what a vehicle immediately in front might do, or try to identify the intentions of the road user immediately in front of the vehicle. See *Road Ready. Preparing Your Pre Learner for Driving – Error spotting.*
- Have the learner commentate on (and predict) what might cause the vehicle in front to stop unexpectedly (eg. children playing on the edge of the road ahead; a pedestrian approaching or about to cross the pedestrian crossing). See *Road Ready. Preparing Your Pre-Learner for Driving – Commentary Driving.*
- Talk about the responsibility of the driver following a vehicle - how he or she must ensure that there is sufficient distance between vehicles. Talk through why this does not always happen and what can be done about it.
- Know and practice the three second rule. See *Road Ready. Towards your Ps in the ACT Competency 8 – Speed control.*



Crash type

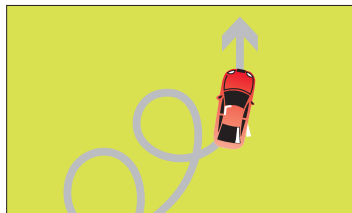
Rear-end crash, where driver '2' was the cause.

Possible explanations

- Poor route planning
- No, or infrequent, mirror or head check
- Late or no indication of intentions
- Misjudgment of stopping distance required

Improving Your Driving Skills

- Practice building 'cognitive driving maps' so that the Learner can confidently find their way to and from places. Emphasise the need for planning each journey before setting out. See *Road Ready. Preparing Your Pre-Learner for Driving* – Co-navigation.
- Build an awareness about blind spots. Have the Learner seated in the driver's seat with the mirrors positioned appropriately. Walk around the vehicle and as the Learner follows you in the mirrors, have he or she tell you when you disappear from the driver's line of vision. See *Road Ready. Towards your Ps in the ACT Competency 12 – Give Way rules* (observation).
- Continuously remind the Learner to do mirror and head checks. Eventually, it will become automatic! See *Road Ready. Towards your Ps in the ACT Competency 4 – Moving off procedure, Competency 10 – Stopping procedures*.
- Scan further into the distance than just immediately in front of your vehicle. This will help you to slow down gradually rather than suddenly.
- Indicate intentions early so that all other drivers can take necessary actions.



Crash type

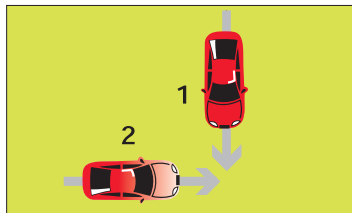
Left the road and hit an object or parked vehicle.

Possible explanations:

- Speeding
- Lack of steering control
- Distracted from the driving task

Improving Your Driving Skills

- Make sure practice driving sessions are not all undertaken in silence or without passengers or distractions. As the Learner driver becomes increasingly competent, introduce at random some distractions or extra tasks to manage.
- Practice changing gears while the car is stationary. As the Learner becomes more familiar, call out the gears while looking straight ahead. See *Road Ready. Towards your Ps in the ACT Competency 5 – Correct and smooth operation of the gears.*
- Talk about how, when near a corner, the driver should look through the corner as far as possible. See *Road Ready. Towards your Ps in the ACT Competency 6 – Steering control (cornering).*
- Ensure that the Learner keeps their hands at 'ten to two' or 'quarter to three' positions on the steering wheel at all times except when changing gears, and uses the 'pull push' steering technique. The steering wheel must not be allowed to spin back to the straight-ahead position after turning. See *Road Ready. Towards your Ps in the ACT Competency 6 – Steering control (handy hints).*
- Find an empty carpark or other quiet space and, using plastic bottles or cardboard boxes, set up a small obstacle course to practice steering.
- Constantly monitor speed. Guess the speed being travelled without looking at the speedometer. Check the accuracy of the guess. Call out speed zones or recommended speeds along your travel route as they arise or change. See *Road Ready. Preparing Your Pre Learner for Driving – Speed sensitivity.*

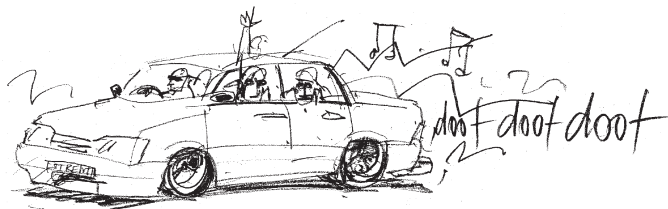


Crash type

Cross-traffic crash, when either driver '1' or '2' collides with the other.

Possible explanations:

- Not anticipating what other drivers may do
 - Unable to safely judge gaps in traffic
 - Failing to scan driving environment
- 'Test' each other on give way rules. See *Road Ready. Towards your Ps in the ACT Competency 12 – Give Way rules.*
 - Talk through ways to judge suitable and safe gaps in traffic so as to be able to cross into another lane. Judgement involves estimating how fast other vehicles are moving, how big the gap is between other vehicles and pedestrians, and how much time is needed to get into or across traffic. See *Road Ready. Preparing Your Pre- Learner for Driving – Speed sensitivity* See: *Road Ready. Towards your Ps in the ACT Competency 18 – Lane changing, merging and entering highways*
 - Practice moving off when there is only one vehicle coming. Concentrate on the timing so that moving off occurs just after the vehicle has passed.
 - When confident, practice doing the same exercise when there is a stream of traffic.
 - Practice doing the above exercises in different speed zones, such as 50kph, 60 kph and 80 kph
 - Emphasise the need to continually scan the environment and the need to re-check for vehicles that may have been, for example, hidden by shadows or other vehicles. See *Road Ready. Towards your Ps in the ACT Competency 20 – Observation skills (handy hints)*
 - Remind the Learner driver that although their vehicle may have the right of way, they should remain alert so as to manage or avert other drivers' errors.



Driving Practice Record

Keeping a record of supervised driving practice

It is a good idea to keep a record of all driving practice sessions. The record will be useful in two ways:

1. For planning driving practice sessions. Look through the practice log and identify the types of roads and conditions that have not been practiced on recently or often. Schedule sessions to ensure the Learner Driver has as many different experiences as possible.
2. To tally up the amount of driving practice. After each driving practice session record the length of the drive and the conditions it was completed in. It is recommended that every Learner driver has more than 50 hours of supervised driving practice, and by keeping a record you will be able to accurately calculate the amount that is really done.

By keeping a record the Learner, Supervisor and the Accredited Driving Instructor will be able to see how much practice has been undertaken and in what road and weather conditions.

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Weather Conditions - wet

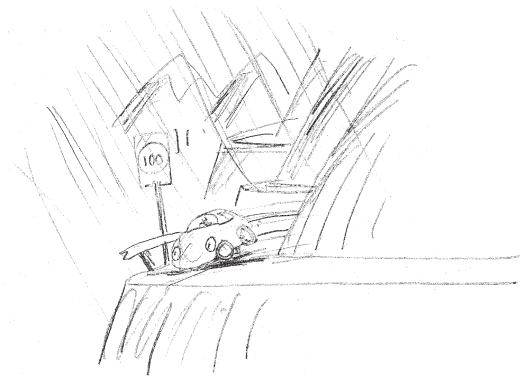
Do not attempt wet weather driving until you are reasonably confident about vehicle control under normal conditions. Trying wet weather driving too early may make you lose confidence. Use your judgement to determine when you are ready and perhaps hold off the first practice in wet if it is a blinding rainstorm! Driving in the wet is very different to driving in dry weather. The most important thing to remember is that you need to travel at a much slower pace. In wet weather it can be more difficult to see other road users and for them to see you. Reflections in the water on the road and wet windows can make vision unclear.

It takes a lot longer to stop on a wet road than on a dry one, so –

- Increase the gap between you and the vehicle in front to at least six or more seconds.
- Travel at a speed suitable for the conditions, which is not always the posted speed. When it first begins to rain, the roads are even more slippery due to oil and other deposits on the surface. So be especially wary on those first showers. Plan your trip thoroughly. Knowing where you need to go, before you set out, will be one less task for you to manage in the wet.

Remember – always test your brakes after driving through water.

Date	Duration	Supervisor's Comment & Initials	Learner Driver's Comment



Driving Conditions - Night Driving

Night driving is quite different to daytime driving. Many clues that you can see in the daytime are not easily seen at night (such as wildlife or pedestrians in dark clothing).

Travel much slower so that you have time to react. You should be able to stop within the distance you can see. In the country, this will be your headlight range.

Whilst driving at night your vehicle must have its head and tail lights on.

Use your high beam for extra seeing distance. Remember to dip your headlights to low beam when another vehicle is within 200 metres, or the other vehicle’s headlights dip – whichever is sooner.

If travelling behind another vehicle, dip your headlights when you are at least 200 metres or less behind it. If another vehicle’s lights dazzle you, slow down or stop until your eyes recover.

Date	Duration	Supervisor’s Comment & Initials	Learner Driver’s Comment

Driving Conditions - Sunlight (at Dawn or Dusk)

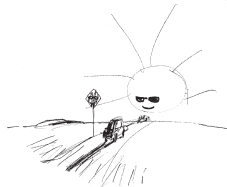
Other vehicles and road-users are difficult to see in glare.

Try to plan trips so that you avoid driving into the sun.

If the trip is unavoidable, use your sun-visor to shield your eyes.

Try and wear good quality sunglasses when the glare makes it hard to see. If the sunlight is too bright, slow down or stop for a short time.

Date	Duration	Supervisor's Comment & Initials	Learner Driver's Comment



Weather Conditions - Icy (or Snow)

Before travelling in places where there is likely to be snow, make sure the vehicle is in good condition for cold weather motoring.

Carefully test your brakes to see how they react on wet or icy roads. Brake gently, as harsh braking may cause the vehicle to slide. When the road is icy it will take twice the distance to stop – so keep plenty of space between you and the vehicle in front.

Watch out for icy patches on the road, particularly in areas shaded by trees or exposed to the wind.

Remember to carry snow chains and fit them before you get stuck.

Date	Duration	Supervisor's Comment & Initials	Learner Driver's Comment

[illegible]

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Type of Road - Undivided Main Road

There will probably be more traffic on an undivided main road than on a local residential street.

Keep a lookout for road markings and signs to know which lanes are available for your use.

When changing lanes use your mirrors and do a headcheck, and don't make any changes unless there is an appropriate gap.

Be aware of areas that may cause problems for the traffic, such as unmarked intersections, intersections with signals, lanes with parked cars, parking entrances and exits. Look ahead of the car in front of you for clues about what is happening in the driving environment.

Date	Duration	Supervisor's Comment & Initials	Learner Driver's Comment

[illegible]

Keep a lookout for road markings that indicate hazards – double lines, signs indicating wildlife, sharp bends, etc. Look across corners or surrounding landscape for potential hazards that you will encounter.

Remember to keep checking your rear-view mirror for vehicles that may be about to overtake.

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Type of Road - Freeway

Although there are no freeways in the ACT, it is likely that you will at some time need to drive on one.

Remember – Don't stop unless there is an emergency or a vehicle breakdown. If you do need to make a stop, use the emergency lane provided.

Do not travel in emergency lanes unless stopping.

When changing lanes, signal early and follow the usual procedures before attempting to overtake.

Keep in the left lane at all times unless overtaking.

Do not make a U turn on a freeway.

Date	Duration	Supervisor's Comment & Initials	Learner Driver's Comment

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When driving on gravel or loose surface, reduce your speed. If you are approaching another vehicle, slow down even more. Stones can be thrown up by the tyres of either your vehicle or the passing vehicle and shatter the windscreen.

Remember not to brake or accelerate quickly.

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Day of Week	Time of Day	Road Conditions	Type of Road	Traffic Conditions	Comments -unusual events	Supervisor	Time Spent Driving	Cumulative Hours