If you have any further questions about Learner and Provisional Driver Licensing Requirements, you can telephone Road User Services on (02) 6207 7000.

A special web site:

www.roadready.act.gov.au has been developed to assist

learner drivers and their parents.

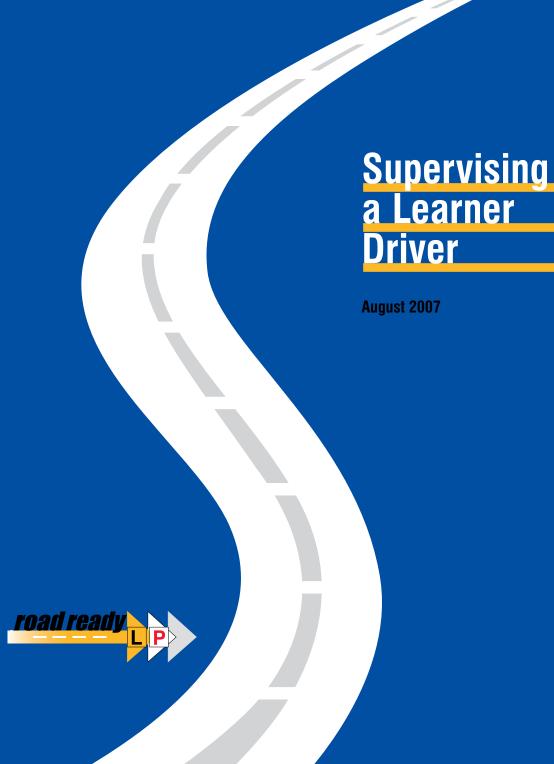
For further information please call Canberra Connect on

13 22 81

or visit

www.tams.act.gov.au





Supervising a Learner Driver





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First published 2000

Second edition 2003

This edition 2006, reprinted 2006, 2007

ISBN No: 1-876677-90-2

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Key writer Gayle Di Pietro Design by John van Loon

Illustrations by Kevin Burgemeestre

07/0963

http://www.act.gov.au

email: publications@act.gov.au Telephone: Canberra Connect 13 22 81



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 Department of Territory & Municipal Services

The Australian Capital Territory's *Road Ready* program is a graduated licensing system that encourages and supports young people to become safe and competent drivers. This support begins before young people are eligible to gain a Learner Licence and continues beyond the time when they obtain their Provisional Licence.

In the ACT, people as young as 15 years and 9 months are able to gain a Learner Licence through a school based (or private provider) program. Once the Learner has successfully obtained a Learner Licence, it is important that they gain plenty of driving practice during the Learner period. Lots of driving practice – at least fifty hours – will help make young people safe and effective as drivers once they go solo.

This booklet will help you as a parent or carer to:

- continue to make safe driving a high priority, through discussion and role modelling and by the use of commentary driving and co-navigation; and
- effectively supervise the practice drives of a young person during their Learner period.

Your role as a supervisor will be explained and some resources to make your task easier will be identified.





How Does my Learner Get a Provisional Licence?

In the ACT there are two ways to get a Provisional Licence.

- 1. Competency Based Training and Assessment (CBT&A). This is a continuous form of assessment with an Accredited Driving Instructor where various driving skills and attitudes are tested and certified throughout the Learner period.
- Government Test. This method occurs when the Learner chooses. to learn and practise without assessment at various points. When the Learner and their Instructor feel confident that the level of driving is at the required standard, a 'one-off' test is undertaken with a Government Licence Examiner.



Whichever method is chosen, the twenty-two competencies outlined in the ACT Learner Driver Logbook must be achieved to obtain a Provisional Licence. Learners can choose the system that suits them best, and they can change their mind during the Learner period if they wish.



Both methods of getting a Provisional Licence require the Learner to have plenty of driving practice.

This booklet will explore how you can best supervise the practice of the driver competencies.



The Facts About New Drivers

For most young people gaining a driving licence is a rite of passage and a symbol of adulthood. Getting it takes up a lot of their time and energy. Unfortunately, for too many families, this exciting event ends in tragedy.

Newly licensed drivers are over-represented in serious road crashes.

- One-third of drivers killed on Australian roads are between 17 and 25 years of age.
- First year drivers are three times more likely to be involved in road crashes than more experienced drivers.

What can be done about these figures?

Research shows that it takes around three to five years to become a fully competent driver. For many young people this key learning will be in the car on their own or with friends soon after they get their Provisional Licence.

The good news is that if Learner Drivers have over 50 hours of practice during their Learner period they can expect their risk of crashing once they have their Provisional Licence to be reduced by about one third.

The bottom line is – the more driving practice young people have as a Learner, the safer they will be when they go solo!





But Won't my Car Get Crashed?

Having a Learner Driver behind the wheel can be scary and cause you to worry about expensive repair bills, and even death or injury. Stop worrying!

It takes a long time for your unskilled beginner to become a fully competent solo driver. An average of an hour per week over a year (50 hours) is the minimum amount of time you should put aside. Aim for two to four hours a week - the more practice young people have, the more competent and safer they become.

Make the most of being in a vehicle with your Learner. It can be a very positive experience for you both, so get started with the onroad practice straight away.

Of all categories of drivers, Learner Drivers have the lowest crash rates. So you will probably be safer while supervising a Learner than at any other time on the road.



What Are Other Benefits of Driving Practice?

The relationship between having plenty of driving practice and being safer when a solo driver is clear.

As well as keeping young drivers safe, there are other good reasons for providing plenty of supervised driving practice.

- Controlled and smoother use of a vehicle saves wear and tear on the car and uses less fuel – so savings are made for both the pocket and the environment!
- If a Learner Driver has plenty of driving practice between professional lessons, they usually require fewer lessons with the driving instructor. The more driving practice a Learner has, the fewer lessons they need and the sooner they become competent!

These two factors alone will see more dollars in your pocket and a safer, more competent, provisional licensed driver.





Working Together

Helping your Learner to become a competent driver isn't something you need to do alone. Think of yourself as being in a partnership between you, your Learner, and an Accredited Driving Instructor, each with a different role.

Accredited Driving Instructors are experienced in the teaching role. They know the process for teaching and assessing the driver competencies. So leave the teaching to them.

Your role is to Supervise the driving practice of the Learner. Quite possibly you have already commenced the task of getting your son or daughter ready for the road by doing passenger activities such as commentary driving or co-navigating. Continue with this support and quidance role.

Jointly, you and your Learner can initiate lessons and practice sessions. Ensure the Learner has plenty of practice in lots of different road, traffic, trip and weather conditions, and understands the responsibility of driving safely.

In the beginning, all Learners could use a few lessons from an Accredited Driving Instructor – even Learners who are not using the CBT&A process. This ensures that they are taught basic car manoeuvring skills and that other critical driving skills are correctly introduced.



Choosing a Accredited Driving Instructor

The Accredited Driving Instructor shares responsibility to get your young person a driving licence. It is important that you work and support each other throughout the whole learning period to get the best possible outcome – a safe and competent driver.

Choose an Accredited Driving Instructor who suits the needs of you and the Learner. Ask, or better still get the Learner to ask, about any concerns you have.

- Is the driving instructor accredited?
- Do they offer preparation for a Government Test and/or a CBT&A approach?
- What size and type of vehicle is available?
- Where will they pick up and drop off the Learner?
- · What am I responsible for if there is a crash during the lesson?
- What price and length are the lessons?
- What happens if the Learner is sick or there is an emergency and the lesson needs to be re-scheduled?
- Do the vehicles have automatic or manual transmissions?

Read and check any documents or contracts carefully.

Don't worry if your car is not the same as the driving school's. It will add to the variety of driving experience the Learner has.





Manual or Automatic?

There are advantages and disadvantages with each. For example, it takes longer to learn in a manual, but manual licence holders end up with more options open to them when buying a car, or helping out by driving someone else's in an emergency.

On the other hand, learning to drive in an automatic means there are fewer tasks to juggle, and the Learner can focus on the mental and perceptual aspects of the driving task. Either way, just be patient and help your Learner practise the skills required to be a competent driver.



Before You Get Started

- Start your supervisor's role by obtaining the following booklets and browse through them with your Learner.
 - Road Ready ACT Road Rules Handbook
 - Road Ready Towards Your Ps in the ACT
 - ACT Learner Driver Log Book
 - Road Ready Learning through Practice

The Road Ready web site at www.roadready.act.gov.au is another excellent resource that provides up to date and relevant information on road rules and road safety.

- Check your insurance policy. Does it cover Learner drivers? What is and isn't covered?
- Check your vehicle. Is it roadworthy? Is all equipment in working order? Do the tyres have plenty of tread? Are you familiar with the controls?
- Re-read a copy of Preparing Your Pre Learner For Driving.

Copies are available from ACT High Schools or ACT Canberra Connect Shopfronts at Tuggeranong, Belconnen, Woden and Dickson.













Before Your Learner Gets Started

Ensure your Learner has a Learner Licence and carries it with them every time they go for a practice drive.

Spend lots of time with them, as a passenger, sitting beside you in the front seat. With them in this position you can take turns to commentate on what is happening in and out of the car. The Learner can also navigate or provide directions during a drive, spot other drivers' errors or styles, identify signs and road markings, and estimate travel speeds of both the vehicle they are in and others around them. Each of these activities helps prepare them for the task of driving.

Arrange for their first few driving experiences to be with an Accredited Driving Instructor. They will be taught well right from the start and won't adopt any unsafe practices.



Take a Moment

If safety is important to you, it will probably become important to vour Learner as well.

Before you get out on the road with your Learner, take a moment to think about your own driving skills. For example

- Do you always leave plenty of space between you and the vehicle in front?
- Do you always drive at a speed suitable for the conditions?
- Do you let yourself get distracted while driving, by using a mobile phone for example?
- Do you constantly scan for hazards when driving?

Think about your own attitudes when using the road. Have you heard yourself say any of these (or similar) negative lines?

- 'It's OK to drive a bit above the speed limit. Everyone does it.'
- 'Police should be out catching the real criminals rather than road traffic offenders.'
- 'I'm a safe driver, it's the other idiots on the road!'

Are you up to date with your knowledge about road law? (Take a few minutes to refresh your knowledge by reading the booklets mentioned earlier.)

Well....you need to consider what messages you are sending to your Learner Driver. Young people learn by example, so make sure you are a role model of a safe driver.





Time for Practice

You are probably wondering how you will find time to offer your Learner the opportunity to build experience behind the wheel. Aiming to schedule one or more practice sessions every week during the Learner period can seem challenging, but it is important. Don't look for excuses for not having the Learner drive.

In the future, the Learner may have to deal with the same situations you now consider to be difficult. (Too wet! Traffic too busy! Running late!) Let them practise in every situation with your support.

Encourage your Learner to do familiar and frequent drives – to their school, their social or sporting activities or their job.

You'll be surprised how quickly these short sessions add up to many hours of practice.

Better still, think about this.

Partnerships usually involve some sort of contract or agreement to ensure that the rules and conditions are clear, and that there is a positive outcome for all. This partnership between you and your Learner is no different. During practice, contracts can either be developed to cover the entire learning period or negotiated on a more short term basis. They can target particular competencies or just general practice, and can be oral or written.

Contracts have several advantages. They can clearly establish the date, time and duration of driving sessions, and they can cut down on your workload at home so you have more time to supervise driving sessions. Either you or the Learner can initiate a contract. Why not draw up a contract with the Learner Driver to:

- unpack the dishwasher (or do the dishes) every day in exchange for a half hour driving session;
- wash the car as a trade off for a practice session;
- make a simple meal for a one hour driving practice;
- do some gardening; or
- help clean the house in exchange for a drive.

Through the contract system, your Learner will also begin to realise that driving a car is not a right. It is a privilege that carries with it responsibility.

Examples of two types of contract are given on the next two pages, but the format is not as important as the agreement itself. Develop one together.



Practice Driving Session Contract						
1						
(Learner Driver) agree to perform the following task(s):						
in exchange for (Supervisor's name)						
supervising practice driving session(s) on						
(insert date[s]).						
The length of the session(s) will be minutes and will practise the following competencies:						
The practice session will take place on (insert trip plan)						
Signed(Learner Driver)						
Signed(Supervisor)						



Sample Contract B Practice Driving Session Contract						
agree to supervise				(Learner's	name)	
during the following practice sessions:						
DATE	TIME	DURATION	PURPOSE OF SESSION	SUPERVISOR INITIAL	LEARNER INITIAL	



Managing Conflict During Practice Drives

Being out on the road can be stressful enough without also being in conflict with your Learner Driver.

- If you are angry with each other before the practice session begins, postpone the session.
- If a mistake or error occurs that scares either of you, stop and wait until things have calmed down before recommencing the drive. Explain your concerns and give specific examples. Discuss what happened and why. Negotiate how the session will proceed.
- When something doesn't go well, such as lane changing, pull over and use diagrams to point out what was done and what should be done. Then repeat the driving manoeuvre.
- Sometimes the Learner may get confused or annoyed because they think what you are telling them is different from the Accredited Driving Instructor. How you learned may not be the way your Learner is being taught. Take the time to contact the Accredited Driving Instructor and clarify ways to work with your Learner.
- Don't expect your Learner to be as skilled as you are. You have a lot more experience than they do and they can't be expected to be as competent or confident as you.



Taking a Staged Approach to Practice Drives

Learning to drive is like any other complex task. If you break the task into small manageable bits and not try to learn too many things at once, it is much easier.

Early practice sessions should take place during daylight, in quiet streets or empty car parks. Only when the Learner can perform the basic manoeuvres with smoothness and control should you move into moderate traffic - ordinary street traffic at non peak hours.

Once the Learner is skilled and confident in moderate traffic, then it is time to move into higher risk settings such as night driving, peak hours or busy streets, highway and freeway driving, and bad weather driving.

Always plan the practice drives in advance, making sure they are not too difficult for the stage your Learner is at. Take a pad and pen and any relevant driving booklets. You may need to draw some diagrams to make explanations clearer.





Stage One - Getting Started

The length of each stage usually depends on the amount of practice the Learner has. Be sure your Learner is confident and competent before moving on to the next stage.

Stage One involves the Learner becoming familiar with the vehicle and the road. Start locally in an open area, such as a car park or in light traffic, where few problems would be expected.

- Driving sessions should be short (about 15 to 30 minutes), and in daylight.
- · Practice sessions should be undertaken at low speeds.
- In the beginning, your responsibilities may include giving street directions, looking out for obstacles and traffic hazards, giving guidance in relation to distances and position on the road, and instructing the Learner Driver when to indicate.

Use the *ACT Learner Driver Logbook* as a guide to the competencies being learned. The Learner will need to work on at least the first 10 competencies.

A good way to commence driving practice sessions is to demonstrate what is to be learned. Explain not just what you are doing, but why you are doing it. Then have the Learner do it.

Using hand signals to point out left and right directions can simplify things for the Learner. Think about the words you use to provide feedback. Avoid using words that could be heard as an instruction. For example, rather then saying 'right' use 'correct' instead.



Stage Two - Moving Into Traffic

As often as you can, take the opportunity to discuss your Learner's progress with their Accredited Driving Instructor and match the practice sessions with the competencies being taught at the time.

When the Learner is reasonably competent in basic vehicle handling skills in the local area, it is time to move out into light traffic. The Learner can practice not only the first seven driver competencies, but also negotiating intersections, judging speeds, braking, gear changing, turns, going up and down hills, reversing and parking.

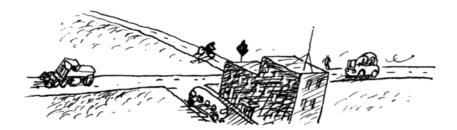
Driving sessions can become longer, around 30 to 45 minutes. Continue to pre-plan the practice routes. Allow the Learner Driver to take more responsibility for driving decisions, such as when and where to make turns.

As a supervisor you could:

- advise on the appropriate speed, given the current driving conditions:
- advise on the appropriate time interval between your car and the vehicle in front, given the current traffic and weather conditions; and
- identify potential hazards in the road environment.

Remember to talk about any new skills just learned or situations just encountered, and to discuss what went well and what could be improved in a future practice session.





Stage Three - Gaining Plenty of Experience

In Stage Three the focus is on gaining plenty of experience and encouraging the Learner Driver to make more independent driving decisions. Over time, undertake practice sessions on different types of roads and in different traffic, light and weather conditions. Vary and extend the length of the lessons.

- Help the Learner become a safe driver by using the 'see-think-do' process.
- Help the Learner watch for possible hazards. 'What do you see ahead?'
- Help the Learner think about what might happen and possible solutions: 'See the cyclist? What could happen here? What should you do?'
- Help the Learner decide what to do in these situations: 'Yes, it's a good idea to give him a bit more space.'
- Go on unplanned trips or unfamiliar routes at different times.
- Check that the Learner Driver has had plenty of practice on all types of roads and in different conditions. Concentrate on filling any gaps in the Learner's driving experience so that nothing is new or unfamiliar once they become solo drivers.
- Encourage the Learner to seek further assistance on particular aspects of driving when needed, even after they have their Provisional Licence. Remind them that learning doesn't stop after getting their P plate!



Conclusion

During the Learner period you as supervisor, together with the Accredited Driving Instructor, should have helped your Learner Driver to successfully become a safe and competent driver.

It does take time and patience.

But if it means that your student is less likely to be involved in road trauma and the associated emotional, financial and environmental costs, then surely it's worth it.

At least an hour a week can make all the difference.

