

RSA



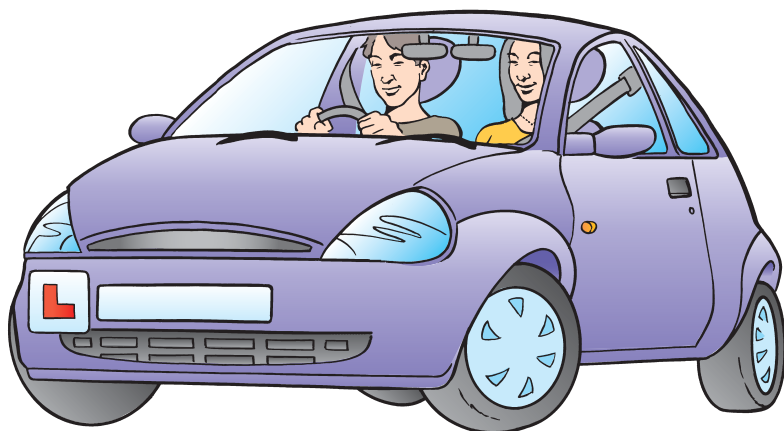
# Helping learner drivers to drive safely

Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre  
Road Safety Authority

# Helping learner drivers to drive safely

The best way to learn to drive is to take professional lessons with an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI), supported by private practice supervised by a parent or friend. This helps the learner to practise what they are being taught in the professional lessons in a wider range of driving situations. Research shows that the more driving experience learners obtain, the safer they are likely to be when they start to drive on their own. Supervised practice will also help them to pass the driving test.

This leaflet provides advice to the person(s) acting as accompanying driver about helping learner car drivers during supervised private driving practice.



# Before starting



## Prepare yourself

From 1 January 2009 it will be illegal to receive any payment for accompanying a learner driver unless you are a registered ADI (Approved Driving Instructor).

Take a driver assessment or advanced driving course to refresh your own skills and knowledge.

Check you are legally entitled to supervise a learner driver. You must:

- Have a full driving licence, which you have held for at least two years, for the type of vehicle (automatic or manual).

Check that the motor insurance policy allows the learner to drive the car, and the insurers know the learner's age.

Study the latest edition of the Rules of the Road ([www.rulesoftheroad.ie](http://www.rulesoftheroad.ie)) – you would not want to give the wrong information to your learner!

Talk to the learner's instructor and ask when the learner is ready to begin private practice. Keep in contact during the learning period (if possible, sit in on some lessons) to support the instructor. It is very useful to keep a record of the private practice.

**Set a good example.** It is much harder to convince a learner, if she or he sees that you don't practise what you preach.

## Prepare the learner

Make sure that the learner has a valid learner permit to drive the vehicle. Ensure the learner has mastered the basic car control skills. He or she should take some lessons with a professional ADI instructor in a dual-controlled car first.

Discuss and agree with the learner that the aim is to help them practise what they are being taught in their professional lessons and in particular do not attempt new or complex manoeuvres without checking with their driving instructor first.

## Prepare your car

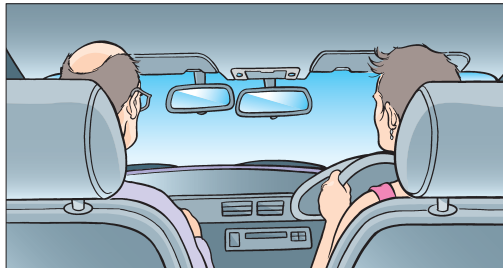
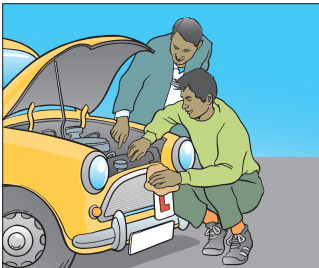
Make sure the car is in a safe condition. Involve the learner in the basic mechanical or vehicle checks (lights, tyres, reflectors, oil, coolant, windscreen washer, wipers, indicators, steering, brakes and horn); this will help to instil 'life long' good practice on the part of the learner. In addition he or she will be asked to demonstrate this knowledge in the driving test.



If possible, the car used for the lessons and the one used for practice should be of similar size and power. They should have the same type of gears – manual or automatic.

Make sure the car displays 'L' plates while the learner is driving, as well as a current tax disc, insurance disc and NCT disc if required.

Buy an interior rear-view mirror for the passenger side to help you see what's happening behind while the learner is driving, but check with the vehicle manufacturer that it will not affect the deployment of any passenger airbag.



## Prepare the drive

Plan the routes in advance. Start with short and less demanding drives –learners get tired and lose concentration easily. Gradually increase the difficulty of the driving and include longer drives in a range of conditions:

- **Daylight and darkness**
- **Dry and wet roads**  
(avoid severe weather conditions)
- **Single and dual carriageway**  
(not motorways)
- **Roads with different speed limits**
- **Roads in built-up and non built-up areas**

As the learner gains experience, let them plan routes.

# During practice



Be calm and positive. Offer advice and tips. Follow the formula 'Praise – Constructive Criticism – Praise', as this is one of the best training methods.



Do not shout or be sarcastic as this will only increase the learner's stress and reduce their confidence. Remember, the learner does not have your driving experience and will make mistakes. Don't smoke during the drive, even if you think it keeps you calm.

Do not contradict the driving techniques taught by the instructor, even if you disagree with them.

Give instructions and directions well in advance. Be clear and specific. Do not overload them with information.

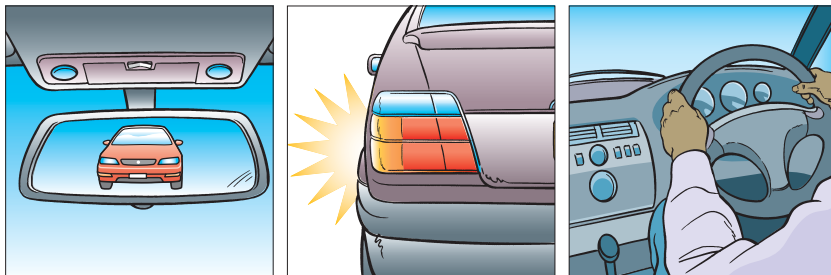
Ask questions to assess what the learner is 'seeing' and when they are spotting something that may develop into a hazard (what seems obvious to you may not be obvious to them).

Help the learner to develop a 'safe attitude'. One way of helping to develop a 'safe attitude' is by getting the learner to self-analyse the effects of their behaviour. For example, questions like, 'What caused that to happen?' and, 'What is the effect of that behaviour?' are both typical questions that will assist in developing a 'safe attitude'.

Young drivers, especially men, tend to be over-confident. They can be very good at controlling the vehicle and have fast reactions, but they can be poor at identifying potential hazards and assessing risk. It takes new drivers up to two seconds longer to react to hazards than more experienced drivers.

# During practice

## Encourage the habit of Mirrors – Signal – Manoeuvre



Remind the learner to check the speedometer regularly. Periodically, ask what the speed limit is. Encourage positive attitudes towards speed limits – they help to protect everyone, especially pedestrians, cyclists and children.

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. The discussion should include clear agreement on what happened, an analysis of the fault (why it happened, etc.) and advice on how to avoid a repetition including any further practice needed.

### Review

Review each drive after it is over – be positive, show how the practice fits in with their learning, and look forward to the next session by linking what has been learned in this session.

If there are several faults to address, deal with the higher risk issues first and leave the others for later – to avoid discouraging the learner.

Record brief details of the drive in a log book.

Before the next drive, briefly review the main issues from the previous one, agree a plan for this drive, and remember – be positive.

# After the driving test

This is where the real risk begins. Learner drivers have few collisions while they are under supervision, but, once they start to drive unsupervised, their chances of crashing increase dramatically – one in five new drivers crashes within a year of passing the test.

It is useful to continue some supervised driving even after the learner has passed the test. One way is to let them drive you when you are travelling together.

## Motorway driving

Many new drivers find driving on motorways for the first time difficult. It helps if you accompany your new driver on the motorway the first few times. It may help to visit [www.rotr.ie](http://www.rotr.ie) and view the RSA's 'How to Drive on a Motorway' TV advert.

Encourage the newly qualified driver to take an advanced course. This involves extra driving practice with a professional instructor in different conditions (including motorways). Drivers can obtain reduced insurance premiums from some insurance companies after taking the course.

If the new driver is going to drive the family car, consider agreeing some rules with them.

## Penalty points

Encourage new drivers to drive so as to avoid road traffic infringements and incurring penalty points, and build up the habit of good driving, rather than a habit of bad driving.

## Approved Driving Instructors (ADI)



The Road Safety Authority (RSA) is responsible for regulating driving instruction in Ireland. From 1 January 2009 all driving instructors who provide instruction for reward must be 'Full Permit' holders on the RSA's Approved Driving Instruction Register. Regulating the industry is essential to ensure that every instructor meets a minimum standard in terms of his/her ability to deliver instruction.

Regulation also provides consumer protection by creating a formal complaints procedure, with regard to the behaviour of the instructor, and the standard of instructors' vehicles.

A list of ADI registered 'Full Permit' instructors can be viewed at [www.rsa.ie](http://www.rsa.ie)

# Working to Save Lives

Useful reading	Useful contacts
<b>Rules of the Road</b> Available from bookshops or <a href="http://www.rulesoftheroad.ie">www.rulesoftheroad.ie</a>	<b>Driver Testing Section</b> The Road Safety Authority Moy Valley Business Park Primrose Hill, Dublin Road Ballina, Co. Mayo  Lo-Call: 1890 406040 Website: <a href="http://www.drivingtest.ie">www.drivingtest.ie</a>
<b>Preparing for your Driving Test</b> Available from the Road Safety Authority or <a href="http://www.rsa.ie">www.rsa.ie</a>	<b>DTTS (Driver Theory Test Service)</b>  <a href="http://www.theorytest.ie">www.theorytest.ie</a> Lo-Call: 1890 606 106
<b>Driver Theory Test</b> The Official Driver Theory Test – Third Edition question book or CD-ROM . Available from bookshops.	<b>The Road Safety Authority</b>  Lo-Call: 1890 506080 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@rsa.ie">info@rsa.ie</a> Website: <a href="http://www.rsa.ie">www.rsa.ie</a>

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