

Guide for **Learners**

**LEARNER
KIT**



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The logo for VicRoads, featuring the word "vic" in green and "roads" in black.The logo for "arrive alive!", with "arrive" in blue and "alive!" in red.The logo for Victoria, featuring a blue square with a white map outline and the text "Victoria The Place To Be" below it.

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Road laws and legal requirements

Road laws change from time to time. Requirements for learners and tests may change accordingly. It is your responsibility to ensure that you study the current edition of the *Road to Solo Driving* handbook and the current licence test brochures in preparation for your licence test. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the most recent edition of this handbook and any update sheets. If you are in doubt, check with any of the VicRoads Customer Service Centres.

This book is a guide only and is not legal advice.

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How to use this book

Congratulations! You've passed your learner test, found yourself a supervising driver, and now you're ready to learn the skills you need to become a safer, probationary driver.

Getting at least 120 hours of driving experience, before you get your Ps is the first big step to becoming a safe driver. It will also help you to prepare for your probationary licence test.

This book will help you make the most of your practice sessions, get the essential driving experience you need and keep track of your progress as you work towards your Ps.

Importantly, it will help you structure your learner driving experience into four key stages so you'll be a safer learner and probationary driver.

You and your supervising driver should work as partners, so you should both read through this book.

To get a licence you will need to complete the *Learner Log Book* in this book to show you've had at least 120 hours of driving experience, unless you're 21 or older when you apply for your Ps.

YOU MUST READ pages 1 to 3 of the *Learner Log Book*. If you do not complete the *Learner Log Book* correctly or fail to provide a Declaration of Completion, you will lose your booking and test fees, and must wait at least six weeks before you can take your probationary licence test.

There's also a great website that's worth a visit. The *L site* is for learner drivers and includes information, activities, suggestions for practice, and resources you and your supervising driver might find useful. It's at www.lsite.vicroads.vic.gov.au

Also, for more information on the Graduated Licensing System visit www.arrivealive.vic.gov.au

KEYS FOR SUCCESS

Learning to drive needs a partnership between you and your supervising driver(s).

You and your supervising driver(s) need to read this book and use it as a guide.

Also give your supervising driver(s) the book *Guide for Supervising Drivers*, and make sure they read it. Additional copies can be printed from the VicRoads website www.vicroads.vic.gov.au

Check out the *L site* at www.lsite.vicroads.vic.gov.au

Your 'learning to drive' partnership



Learning to drive works best when you have a partnership with your supervising driver.

YOUR SUPERVISING DRIVER IS NOT JUST A PASSENGER

They have an important job to do and you both need to work together.

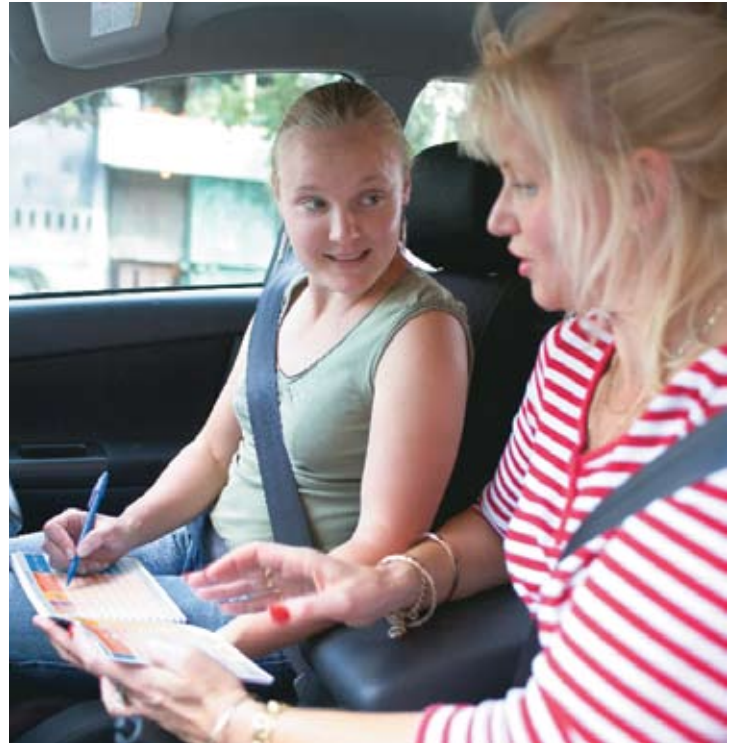
Choose your supervising driver carefully. It may be a parent, older relative or even a family friend. If you don't get along though, it's probably best to ask someone else.

The best supervising driver is someone you think is a safe driver.

- Their job is to make time for you to practise and give some practical advice when needed.
- They should work with you to plan practice sessions and trips that follow the stages in this book – starting with simple driving activities, then becoming more challenging as you get more experience.

Learning to drive can be stressful. You may make mistakes and your supervising driver may panic or get upset. Be prepared for this and try not to let the upset feelings take over.

If things look like getting out of hand during a session, you can stop the car (safely) and let things calm down. You can stop the session and start again in a few days. Being able to work well with your supervising driver is essential.





USING DRIVING INSTRUCTORS

Some people may find professional lessons helpful when learning to drive. They're never a replacement for practice and experience.

When you choose a professional driving instructor, make sure it's someone you can get along with. It is worthwhile shopping around to find the instructor that suits you.

Your instructor might suggest what you and your supervising driver can practise, and your supervising driver might get some useful advice from your instructor. Your instructor could give you some initial practice in new or challenging driving situations.

Some instructors are more comfortable working with supervising drivers than others. Some will even let your supervising driver go along on a lesson.

Ask your friends if they've found a good instructor.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Choose your supervising driver carefully – a safe driver and someone you get on with.

Be prepared to stop the practice session if things get stressful.

Think about getting some lessons with a professional driving instructor – but remember this doesn't replace lots of practice.

Victoria's Graduated Licensing System



Probationary drivers have a much higher risk of crashing than experienced drivers, especially immediately after getting their licence. For this reason, Victoria has a Graduated Licensing System to help you become a safer driver. It's based on research from Australia and overseas.

STEPS TO A DRIVER LICENCE

The Graduated Licensing System gives new drivers time to develop safer driving skills. It provides a structured transition to full driving privileges as the new driver's experience and maturity increase. It helps new drivers to be safer by:

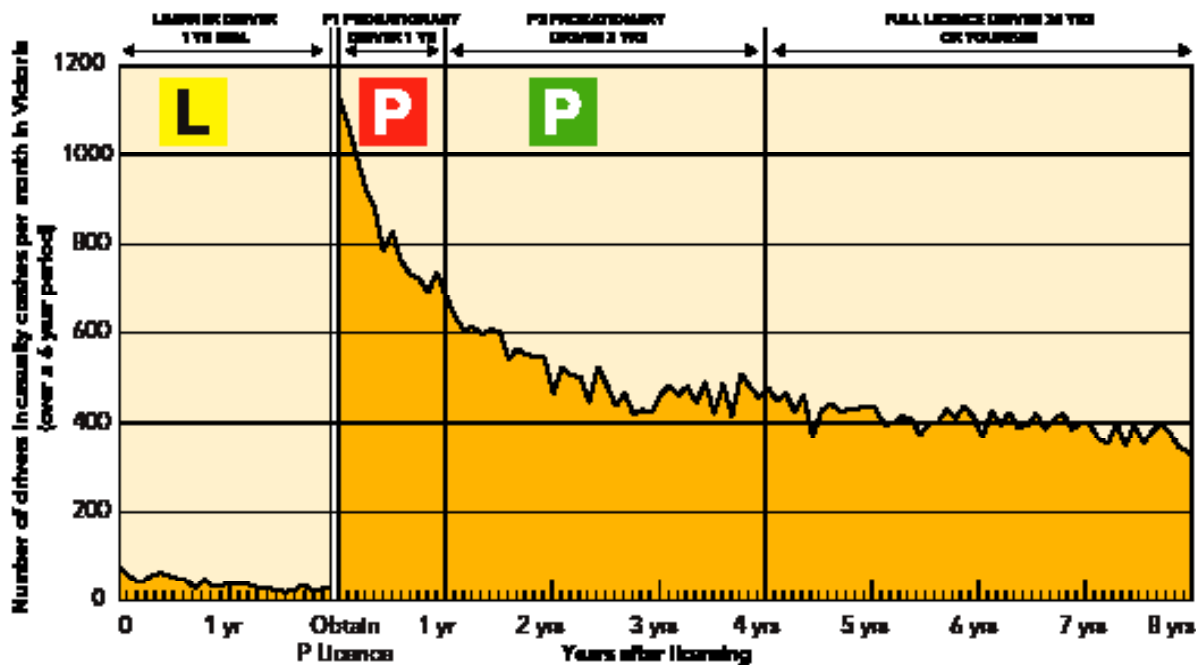
- Better preparing learners for solo driving through extended learning.
- Protecting probationary drivers by keeping them out of higher risk situations.
- Motivating probationary drivers to adopt safer behaviour and to drive within the law.

You will need to complete three licence stages before obtaining a full licence (or two stages for older drivers):

- The first stage is an extended learner period of at least 12 months during which you must complete at least 120 hours of supervised driving experience, documented in the *Learner Log Book* at the back of this handbook.
- After passing your probationary licence test you must then complete a one year P1 probationary licence period followed by a three year P2 probationary period, with special rules.
- This three stage Graduated Licensing System is designed to help address the crash profile of new drivers, as shown in the diagram on page 6.
- If you are 21 or older when you apply for a probationary licence you will only need to complete two licence stages before obtaining a full licence, the learner period followed by the three year P2 probationary licence period. Also you will have a shorter minimum learner permit period (six months if aged 21 to 24 years or three months if 25 years or older).



CRASH PROFILE OF NEW DRIVERS AND THE GRADUATED LICENSING SYSTEM



Victoria's Graduated Licensing System



THE LEARNER PERIOD

- If you are under 21 years of age when you apply for your Ps, you have to hold your learner permit for at least 12 months.
- You also need at least 120 hours of logged driving experience (with a supervising driver) before you can take the probationary licence test.
- Although 120 hours might seem like a lot, it really isn't. Many learners have their permit for two years – 120 hours is just over an hour of driving each week for them. This book has advice on how you can make the most of the learner period and your 120 hours.
- Your learner permit is valid for 10 years so there's no need to rush through the learning process.
- You will have to use the *Learner Log Book* to prove you have had enough practice. You must read pages 1 to 3 of the *Learner Log Book*. If you do not complete the *Learner Log Book* correctly, you will not be able to take your probationary licence test. You will lose your booking and test fees, and you must wait at least six weeks before you can take your probationary licence test.
- The special restrictions and requirements for learner permit holders are shown in the table on page 8.

THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD

The probationary period in Victoria lasts four years (or three years for older drivers).

- It starts with a one year P1 probationary licence, followed by a three year P2 probationary licence.
- On a P1 probationary licence you must comply with extra restrictions and your P1 licence period may be extended by at least six months if you do the wrong thing, such as demerit point suspension.
- On a P2 probationary licence some of the extra restrictions for P1 drivers are removed, but there are still special restrictions and your P2 probationary licence period may be extended by at least six months if you do the wrong thing, such as demerit point suspension.
- If you are 21 or older when you first get your licence, you go straight to the P2 probationary licence.
- The special restrictions and requirements which apply to P1 and P2 probationary licence holders are shown in the table on page 8.



THE GRADUATED LICENSING SYSTEM

	LEARNER	PROBATIONARY P1 (IF UNDER 21 WHEN OBTAIN PROBATIONARY LICENCE)	PROBATIONARY P2
MINIMUM AGE	16 years	18 years	19 years
MINIMUM HOLDING PERIOD	1 year (6 mths if 21-24 yrs, 3 mths if 25 yrs +)	1 year	3 years
CONDITIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Display L plates ■ Must be accompanied by a driver with a full (non-probationary) car licence ■ Must carry learner permit whilst driving ■ Zero BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration) ■ No mobile phone use ■ No towing ■ Only drive cars ■ Complete at least 120 hours of logged supervised driving experience, documented in the <i>Learner Log Book</i> (if under 21 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Display red P1 plates ■ Must carry licence when driving ■ Zero BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration) ■ No mobile phone use ■ No high powered vehicles ■ No towing (unless for work or under instruction) ■ Only drive cars suitable to your licence type (automatic or manual) ■ Good driving record to progress to P2 probationary licence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Display green P2 plates ■ Must carry licence when driving ■ Zero BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration) ■ No hand held mobile phone use ■ No high powered vehicles ■ Only drive cars suitable to your licence type (automatic or manual) ■ Good driving record to progress to full licence

See *The New Victorian Graduated Licensing System Fact Sheet* for further information at www.arrivealive.vic.gov.au

Learning to drive **in stages**



Safe driving is more difficult than it seems. There's much more to driving than knowing the road rules and controlling a car. It takes years of practice to become a really safe driver – 120 hours is the first step along the way.

The most important driving skills are dealing with traffic and driving safely in different conditions. The only way to develop them is to get lots of varied on-road practice as a learner.

You need to plan your practice sessions so they match your experience. You can't just go out into heavy traffic or on a wet night at the start of your learner period. As a beginner, you're not ready to drive in difficult conditions.

You need lots of practice. You should organise your driving sessions to help make sure you're really ready to drive solo when you go for your test.

This book divides the learner period into four stages. You need to go through each stage to become a safer driver.

You start with simple driving and move to more complex situations as you gain experience.

THE FOUR STAGES

- **STAGE 1** is all about controlling your car. It's the shortest stage and aims to get you to start, stop and steer safely in quiet areas without traffic.
- **STAGE 2** is about applying your new car control skills and looking out for other road users on quiet roads with little traffic.
- **STAGE 3** takes longer and uses your Stage 1 and 2 skills on busier roads and in more difficult driving situations. Now you start becoming a real driver. You learn to deal with traffic and other hazards to become safer in varied driving situations.
- **STAGE 4** also takes a long time and can be the longest stage. It involves driving as if you're a solo driver. You still have your Ls on the car and a supervising driver beside you, but you'll learn to make most of the driving decisions yourself. The aim is to build up lots of different experiences where you act like a solo driver. Then when you hit the road on your own you'll be ready.



MOVING THROUGH THE STAGES

You need to work through each stage with your supervising driver.

You need to reach the goals in each stage before moving onto the next. If you do it gradually and get enough practice, you will see yourself improve as you get closer to becoming a solo driver.

Remember, the four stages are not completely independent of each other:

- The later stages depend on the earlier ones – you need to complete each stage properly before moving onto the next.
- The earlier stages include skills that you should practise throughout the learner period. You may be tested on these, so it's worth keeping up the practice all the way through!
- The low speed skills in Stage 1 will continue developing over the whole learner period, so you still need to practise and check them.
- The parking and three point turn skills from Stage 2 will disappear if you don't keep practising them in Stages 3 and 4.

Don't forget you can use a professional driving instructor to help work out when you are ready to move onto the next stage.





KEYS FOR SUCCESS

Get yourself and your supervising driver(s) organised!

Plan your practice sessions.

Fill in your *Learner Log Book* as you go.

Aiming for 120 hours



PRACTICE IS THE KEY TO YOUR SUCCESS

Victoria chose a minimum of 120 hours because:

- Available research shows that new solo drivers with almost 120 hours of learner driving experience have a 30 percent lower risk of crashing than those with about 50 hours.
- Road safety experts agree that 120 hours is a good step towards becoming a safer driver.
- The more experience you get, even beyond 120 hours, the safer you become. It takes years of experience to become a really safe driver.

Getting 120 hours of practice isn't a big deal when many young people are learners for two years. A little more than an hour a week over two years will get you there easily.

Learners differ in how interested they are in getting a licence or practising driving. Don't be surprised if your interest levels go up and down over the learner period, but always remember – to become a safer P plate driver you need lots of regular practice.

People learn differently and at different rates. You might find some things are easier to pick up than others.

Don't get stressed out about it – practice is the best way to learn.

Many learners use professional driving instructors as part of their 120 hours of practice. Professional lessons are never a replacement for practice and experience. An instructor can help with specific skills and advice on when it's OK to move into busier traffic or onto freeways and rural roads.

Don't forget, your safety as a driver will continue improving long after you get your Ps.



KEYS FOR SUCCESS

Don't expect to be a good driver right from the start.

Getting at least 120 hours is important for your safety and can be easily achieved.

Before starting



There are some important things to check before you sit in the driver's seat.

CHECKLIST

Work through this checklist with your supervising driver and make sure you can put a tick in every box:

- You have a current learner permit.
- You've studied the *Road to Solo Driving* handbook (you're about to apply some of those road rules!).
- You have L plates fitted to the front and rear of your car.
- You and your supervising driver have considered the option of professional lessons.
- You have a manual car for practice if you want a licence that will let you drive a manual car immediately.
- Your supervising driver has a current, full (non-probationary) car licence.
- Your supervising driver knows the road rules (have they looked through the *Road to Solo Driving* handbook?).
- You or your supervising driver has checked that your car insurance will cover a learner driver.
- Your supervising driver's car is in good condition (check this together).

IS MY CAR SAFE TO USE FOR DRIVING PRACTICE?

You should check any car you're going to drive to make sure it's safe to use. Check these things together before every practice session:

- The tyres have enough tread and are properly inflated.
- All the lights and indicators are working.
- The wipers, washers and horn are working.
- Glance at the registration sticker to check the car is registered.

TIPS FOR YOUR SUPERVISING DRIVER

Supervising drivers must have a full (non-probationary) car licence.

It is important that the supervising driver is alert, not tired or stressed, to be able to provide good quality supervision during driving practice.

They must carry their licence with them, sit in the front passenger seat and cannot have a BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration) of .05 or above.



There are some specific rules for learners that you have to obey. When you're driving you must:

- Display your L plates in a prominent position on the front and rear of the car.
- Carry your learner permit.
- Have a zero BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration) at all times.
- Be accompanied by a driver with a full (non-probationary) car licence at all times.
- Always drive within the speed limits.

You cannot tow a trailer or caravan, and must not use a mobile phone (hands free or hand held) at any time when driving.

Your supervising driver needs to have a full (non-probationary) car licence (held for two years) and must have a BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration) less than .05.

Make sure the car you practise in is roadworthy and that the brakes have been checked.

THINKING ABOUT STRESS

Most learners and supervising drivers find there are occasional angry outbursts and stressful situations in the car. It's not surprising – learning to drive can be stressful.

Expect a little anxiety sometimes because learning to drive safely is far more complex than most people realise. It's relatively easy to start, stop and steer but developing and applying safe driving skills in complex situations is very difficult.

Don't turn driving into an unpleasant chore. Keep the following in mind:

- If stress and anger attacks happen, stop the car and have a bit of a break.
- If the driving conditions become worse and your supervising driver is uncomfortable, stop the practice session and let them drive. Driving sessions should never place you at risk of crashing and learners shouldn't drive beyond their ability.
- You should both be very proud of your decision to work together. Keep reminding yourselves that a few mistakes will happen sometimes, but there will be lots of progress.

Stage 1: Controlling the car

Your first job is learning how to make the car start, stop and steer. If you've never been in the driver's seat, this can be a challenge. Even if you've been driving, your supervising driver needs to see you can do everything listed here before you move into traffic.

GOALS

You'll be ready to move on from Stage 1 when you can show your supervising driver you can do the following in quiet locations, away from traffic:

- Know where the controls are.
- Start the car.
- Move off smoothly.
- Slow down and stop smoothly at a chosen location.
- Corner smoothly at low speed.
- Stop the car on a slight slope and move off again using the handbrake.
- Use the gears smoothly and efficiently in low speed driving (for manual cars).
- Reverse in a straight line and around a curved path.





STAGE 1

HOW TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

- Find a quiet location to practise. Try places such as:
 - New housing estates or industrial areas on weekends.
 - Car parks near beaches or big public parks when they're not busy.
 - Car parks and roads leading to sports grounds after the weekend games.
 - A quiet local street.
- Spend some time getting to know the car's controls. You should be able to find and operate most of the controls – floor pedals, indicators, lights, horn, gears, etc. – without looking for them.
- Learn how to set the car up for driving. A professional driving instructor can help here.
- Before you start driving, make sure the seat, steering wheel (in some cars) and mirrors are all adjusted to suit you.
- Consider getting some professional driving lessons. Your supervising driver could go along for one with you.
- Make sure you can start and stop the engine, and learn how to change gears if you're learning in a manual car.
- To start, make the car move off in a straight line, then make it stop. Practise accelerating and braking as smoothly as possible.
- Choose a simple path to follow – you can use some old boxes or similar to mark it out. Practise steering smoothly around corners at a slow speed. Don't forget to use your indicators!
- As you get more comfortable with cornering, focus on changing gears while you're driving around your course. You probably won't get over second or third gear but the practise is useful.
- While you're doing all this, make sure you practise using your mirrors and looking for other road users and potential hazards.
- Change the path from time to time or go in the opposite direction.
- Practise reversing. Start in a straight line, then practise reversing around corners or a marker. Be extra careful to watch out for others!
- Find a slight slope and practise starting and stopping – both uphill and down.

Stage 1: Controlling the car

TIPS FOR YOUR SUPERVISING DRIVER

Learning a new skill is difficult, and people learn at different rates and have different styles. For many learners this is the most frustrating part of learning to drive – it looks easy, but it's challenging.

You can do the following to make the learning process smoother:

- Get rid of any potential distraction – no radio, passengers, music, mobile phones or spectators. Your learner needs to concentrate.
- Start with simple tasks and only get more complicated when these are under control.
- Early in the learner period, short, more frequent sessions are better than long ones.
- The basic skills practised here are the building blocks for safer driving. Get some professional help if needed. Don't move onto Stage 2 until Stage 1 is under control.
- Make it a habit at the end of each session to discuss how your session went and what may need more work next time.





STAGE 1

HOW MUCH PROFESSIONAL DRIVING INSTRUCTION SHOULD YOU HAVE?

If you get professional lessons, you might wonder how many you should have and when to have them. The answer's different for every learner.

Many learners have lessons early in Stage 1 – before they move into traffic. Many learners have lessons at the end of the learner period to make sure they're ready for their driving test.

If you can afford it, it's good to work cooperatively with a driving instructor – perhaps to get advice as you move into each new stage or when you need some initial practice in a challenging driving situation.

Different learners learn different things from an instructor. You need to work out what's best for you and your supervising driver.

KEYS FOR SUCCESS

Consider starting with some lessons from a professional driving instructor.

Focus on starting, steering and stopping – all at low speeds in a quiet place.

Once you can manoeuvre the car, start and stop smoothly and have achieved all the Stage 1 goals, you're ready for Stage 2.

Stage 2: Driving on quiet roads



Once you can drive the car smoothly in a quiet area without traffic, it's time to apply your new car control skills on quiet, low speed roads. Quiet residential streets are ideal. This stage will give you a chance to practise driving on real roads, without having to deal with too much traffic or other road users.

GOALS

You'll be ready to move onto Stage 3 when you and your supervising driver agree you can do each of the following in fine weather, in the rain and at night:

DRY DAYTIME DRIVING	WET WEATHER DRIVING	NIGHT TIME DRIVING	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Move from the kerb safely and stop at the kerb safely.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use your mirrors correctly and do headchecks (look over your shoulder and through the rear side windows when necessary).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Observe potential hazards when moving off.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drive safely on straight, quiet, low speed roads.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drive around curves on quiet, low speed roads safely.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Turn left at intersections safely.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Negotiate roundabouts (in quiet, residential streets) safely.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Smoothly slow down when approaching intersections.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Travel through quiet intersections safely.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Turn right at quiet intersections safely.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drive within the speed limit and at a safe speed for the conditions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leave a safe space between your car and other cars, and the kerb.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Start and stop on hills.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete a three point turn and parallel park smoothly.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reverse out of a driveway or out of a parking spot safely.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Detect and respond to potential hazards in quiet streets (such as parked cars, other traffic, children or pets etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Obey give way, stop signs and traffic lights.



STAGE 2

HOW TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

The key to Stage 2 (and 3) is choosing driving routes that let you develop your skills, without driving beyond your ability.

You and your supervising driver will map out some driving routes through residential areas or other quiet driving locations so you can practise driving.

The routes should match where you're at as a learner. You wouldn't start dealing with heavy traffic or multi-lane roads yet. The idea of learning to drive is to develop skills progressively, not throw you in the deep end.

Here's what you and your supervising driver need to do during Stage 2:

- Get a map of your local area. Mark out a route that stays on quiet roads where there won't be much traffic. Do this together and discuss the route and potential hazards before you start driving.
- Your first route should look like a rectangle with left turns only.

- With each driving session, increase the complexity of the route so it includes roundabouts and going straight, or turning right at intersections. Always remember, this stage must focus on quiet streets.
- As you get more experience, you should add some wet weather and night time driving, but stick to quiet streets.
- Towards the end of this stage, it's OK to move onto slightly busier roads to get a sense of what the next stage will involve.
- With each drive, make sure your supervising driver navigates for you. You should concentrate on seeing and obeying signs, driving at a safe speed and noticing and avoiding potential hazards.
- Keep practising slow speed manoeuvres such as parking.
- After each session, talk with your supervising driver about how it went and what you could improve next time. Don't be upset by a bit of criticism – you won't improve if you can't identify areas you need to work on.

Stage 2: Driving on quiet roads



TIPS FOR YOUR SUPERVISING DRIVER

This stage brings new challenges – these include other cars, children, cyclists, pets and other hazards. From now on the main safety skill your learner will develop is detecting and responding to potential hazards before there's a risk of a crash.

As well as navigating and giving practical advice about car control, you should point out potential hazards to help direct your learner's attention to possible problems. It's hard work, which is why you should spend as much time in Stage 2 as you need before moving on. There's no need to rush!

Start simply and increase complexity over the stage. Plan the routes together, then talk about each session afterwards – and it's OK to stop (safely) during sessions to discuss how things are going.

Don't forget, you can ask a professional driving instructor for help at any time if you're unsure about anything or you want advice about readiness to move onto the next stage.



STAGE 2



WHAT DOES 'SAFELY' MEAN?

When you work through your list of goals, you and your supervising driver need to decide if you're doing things 'safely'. The easiest way to do this is to work out how you both feel when you drive in each of those situations.

Driving safely means choosing the right speed, using mirrors and headchecks, noticing and avoiding potential hazards, keeping safe distances from other cars etc. It also means driving in a way that makes the supervising driver (or any passengers) feel relaxed.

If they feel a bit tense at some point in your drive, you probably need to improve your driving in that situation.

KEYS FOR SUCCESS

Plan your practice routes with your supervising driver.

Start with simple routes and slowly make them more complex.

Drive mainly on quiet streets with little traffic.

Stage 3: Complex driving situations



Now that you can handle driving in quiet streets, it's time to apply those safe driving skills you're learning to complex situations such as main roads, busy traffic and difficult conditions.

This will be a challenging stage of the learner period. The aim is to help you become a safer driver in a variety of driving situations.

GOALS

DRY DAYTIME DRIVING	WET WEATHER DRIVING	NIGHT TIME DRIVING	You'll know you're ready to move onto Stage 4 when you and your supervising driver agree you can do each of the following in fine weather, in the rain and at night:							
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enter busy traffic safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drive on high speed roads safely.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drive on straight and curved main roads safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drive on lower quality roads safely.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep in your own lane and change lanes safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan your own driving routes for normal driving trips.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Negotiate and turn at traffic lights safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overtake others safely on divided multi-lane roads.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Smoothly slow down and choose a suitable speed when approaching intersections and curves.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Detect and avoid potential hazards.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Handle busy roundabouts safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drive within the speed limit and at a safe speed in busy traffic.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cope with busy intersections safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Select safe gaps when entering or crossing traffic.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Turn across oncoming traffic safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep safe following distances in busy traffic.



STAGE 3

HOW TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

Stage 3 involves driving in complex situations. The skills you developed on quiet roads can now be applied to busy traffic and more difficult driving conditions.

The best way to do this is to start with simple tasks or situations and gradually make them harder. Each new situation draws on your earlier experience and what you've already learnt, so don't feel overwhelmed.

Here are some suggestions to help you:

- Start by choosing practice routes that include some sections on busy roads.
- Don't move into peak hour traffic right away.
- Begin with routes on normally busy roads during the day or when there is less traffic.
- As you become more experienced in traffic, get some night time or wet-weather practice using the same routes.
- With increasing experience, you can start driving in heavy traffic (peak hour), then begin combining things such as busy roads and night time driving.

- Keep using planned routes when you begin Stage 3. As you progress, start replacing them with everyday driving tasks, such as going to the shops, or driving to and from school or work.
- Planned driving practice can still be useful if you find your everyday driving doesn't include enough driving at night or in poor weather.
- The supervising driver's role will change towards the end of this stage:
 - They gradually become less involved in your driving decisions as your skills improve.
 - They'll still offer advice, but hopefully you'll begin detecting hazards and making decisions without relying on them as much.
- As you get more experience and do more everyday driving, there may be times you need to carry an extra family member as a passenger. That's OK as long as you and your supervising driver are comfortable and the passenger doesn't interfere with your concentration.
- It's easy to include driving practice into your family's everyday driving. Allow some extra time each trip so you never feel rushed.
- Offer to drive whenever you think you can manage the trip.

Stage 3: Complex driving situations



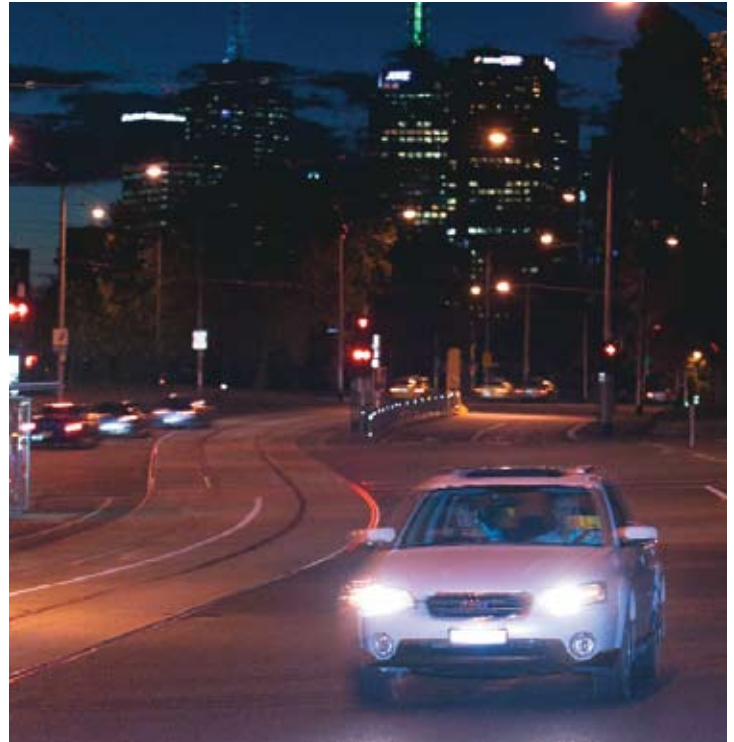
TIPS FOR YOUR SUPERVISING DRIVER

Practice means more than just one or two short trips. For example if, your learner is trying to get some practice at night, make sure you get out as often as possible.

At this stage learners can feel less motivated to practise. They feel they can control and manoeuvre the car pretty well so practising isn't important. Remember, practice is essential, so find ways to build practice sessions into your everyday transport needs. It's amazing how much time your learner builds up driving to and from school and other places.

Keep the radio or CD player off. Learners are still developing new skills in new situations and need all of their concentration on the road. The same applies to mobile phones, even yours, so there are no distractions at all.

Use professional driving instructors if you or your learner have any questions about driving, or if you want some advice about readiness to move onto the next stage.



STAGE 3



... AND SOME MORE TIPS FOR YOUR SUPERVISING DRIVER

As this stage progresses, you become more of a coach – keeping an eye on your learner, giving them practice opportunities that match their improving skills and offering occasional advice.

Keep having short review discussions at the end of each drive. Talk about the good and not-so-good aspects of the session, including any unsafe driving you noticed from other drivers.

Remember to include the full range of driving situations:

- If you're in a rural area, have some sessions in a regional centre.
- If you're in a regional centre, visit Melbourne at the end (not the beginning) of this stage for some practice on really busy roads.
- If you're in Melbourne, don't forget to practise on rural highways and smaller rural roads.
- Perhaps get some practice on dirt roads – although professional help might be worthwhile if you're not experienced in that sort of driving.

KEYS FOR SUCCESS

Get lots of practice in lots of different driving situations.

Gradually increase the complexity of your driving situations.

Replace planned routes with your family's everyday driving tasks as you get more experience.

Thinking about hazards



You probably already know you'll have to do a hazard perception test when you go for your licence.

That's because avoiding hazards and risky situations is an important skill for safe driving.

What happens in your head is more important than just controlling your car.

WHAT MAKES A DRIVER UNSAFE?

You can only concentrate on one or two tasks at a time. Many unsafe situations occur because drivers don't focus on driving as much as they should. For example:

- New drivers need to concentrate closely on their driving because they have trouble making quick decisions when the situation gets difficult.
- New drivers in challenging situations tend to focus on their basic driving skills instead of looking out for potential problems.
- Distractions (using a mobile phone, changing CDs, having a conversation) also get in the way of concentrating on your driving.
- When you drive too fast, it's difficult to think quickly and it's hard to focus on possible hazards.





- Alcohol and drugs slow your thinking. Driving with them in your system can mean you can't concentrate well enough to drive safely.
- Tiredness and stress have the same effect as alcohol and drugs.

KEEP YOUR MIND ON DRIVING

Anything that helps you concentrate more will reduce your crash risk.

Here are some good habits you should learn:

- Slow down. Even skilled drivers are safer when they drive slower because there's more time to process what's happening around them.
- Avoid driving when you're tired, stressed or distracted.
- Never drive after drinking alcohol or using drugs.
- Purposefully slow down and be extra vigilant in new or challenging driving situations, or when conditions change, such as when it starts raining.
- Minimise distractions in the car. Turn off mobile phones, minimise talk with passengers and don't change the CD or radio station while driving.
- Avoid concentrating on distractions outside the car.



Thinking about hazards



AVOIDING HAZARDS

Detecting and responding to hazards are essential skills for safe driving. There are some practical ways you and your supervising driver can improve these skills:

- Early in the learner period, your supervising driver should have been pointing out most hazards. As your experience grows, they shouldn't need to do this as often.
- When you're driving in challenging situations (heavy rain, fog or darkness), talking your way through the hazards can help focus your attention. Tell your supervising driver what you see and what you're doing about it (e.g. 'There's a bike rider there so I'll slow down').
- Drive a bit slower when you're in new situations or on unfamiliar roads. It gives you more time to spot hazards.
- Look further ahead of your car so you spot hazards before they become a problem.
- Practise spotting less obvious road users (cyclists, pedestrians, children and motorcyclists) and drive more cautiously than usual when you see them.

STAGE 3



- Don't forget hazards can be behind and beside you. Use your mirrors and do headchecks when needed.
- Drive as if something unexpected will happen. Make sure there are no distractions and all your attention is on driving.
- The two best defences against unexpected hazards are less speed and more space:
 - Drive slower than you might want to and practise creating space around your car.
 - Try to avoid driving alongside other cars – you could be in their blind spot.
 - Leave large gaps when you turn across oncoming cars or enter moving traffic.
 - Don't drive too close to the vehicle in front, keep a safe distance from other cars.
- Keep practising! Hazard perception skills improve with driving experience, so make sure you get as much experience in as many different driving situations as possible. You can even practise spotting hazards as a passenger.
- Become predictable. Other drivers are trying to avoid hazards. If you do unexpected things, you become their hazard and increase your risk of being in a crash.

KEYS FOR SUCCESS

Slow down and create space around your car.

Minimise distractions and avoid alcohol, tiredness and stress.

Keep practising your driving to improve your hazard perception skills.

Be predictable so you don't become someone else's hazard.

Stage 4: Rehearsing solo driving



In the final stage of the learner period it's important to use a car as if you're already a solo driver – the only difference is that you will have your supervising driver sitting beside you.

This is the stage where your new, safe driving skills become your lifetime driving habits.

GOALS

By the end of this stage you should be ready to drive safely as a solo driver in a broad range of driving conditions. You and your supervising driver should agree you can drive safely in light and heavy traffic in all sorts of driving conditions. You should be able to:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drive safely in light and heavy traffic. | <input type="checkbox"/> Make safe decisions about driving – such as when to drive and when not to, and taking safe routes. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Detect and respond to hazards. | <input type="checkbox"/> Handle unexpected situations safely. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keep a safe distance from other cars. | <input type="checkbox"/> Understand how to use a car safely as part of your normal everyday transport. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choose safe and legal speeds. | <input type="checkbox"/> Manage moderate levels of distraction in the car, such as passengers and music, and know when and how to reduce distractions to stay safe. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leave a safe gap when turning across other traffic. | <input type="checkbox"/> Handle complex tasks such as merging on a freeway, reversing from a driveway, parallel parking and changing lanes in busy areas, hook turns and busy intersections. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drive safely on a variety of road types and in different conditions. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choose your own driving routes to get from your starting point to your destination. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drive safely without help from your supervising driver. | |



STAGE 4



TIPS FOR YOUR SUPERVISING DRIVER

Make sure your learner fills in their *Learner Log Book* – you should use it to ensure they get practice in a variety of conditions.

Your learner can drive with passengers, but make sure they don't become a distraction.

A sign that your learner is ready to drive on their own is when you say little and no longer need to tell them how to drive.

Your learner needs to show they can drive in all conditions, safely and independently – without your help.

Stage 4: Rehearsing solo driving

HOW TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

Stage 4 is all about rehearsing for independent driving. You still need a supervising driver sitting beside you, but they're now more of a passenger. They'll still offer advice and suggestions and will help you look for potential hazards, but most of the responsibility and decision making belongs to you.

You can do the following to continue developing your safe driving skills:

- Move slowly into this stage. There's still more practice and learning to do.
- At the start, you'll still get lots of advice from your supervising driver. As you progress you'll feel more like a solo driver and your supervising driver will be more like a passenger. This will vary depending on the type of driving you do.
- If you need to go somewhere by car, ask to drive. It's up to your supervising driver to say 'yes', but it's worth asking for the practice.
- There are still times when specific practice is good:
 - If you haven't done much wet weather driving and it rains, ask for some extra practice sessions.
 - If you haven't driven on a freeway or rural road, ask for a session to practise on this road type.
- Start driving with passengers in the car or get used to the radio playing. Learn to manage and reduce these distractions so you can keep your mind on driving. At first, only add these potential distractions when you're driving in easier conditions. Once you can manage these in easier conditions, add them to more complicated trips – but stay in control. Make sure you can focus on driving and that passengers don't make you lose concentration.
- You're in charge of the car when you're driving now. It's OK to tell passengers to settle down.
- Try to become your family's driver whenever you're going somewhere with them.
- Start making some longer trips, but make sure you manage your fatigue:
 - Don't drive when you're feeling tired.
 - Have a rest stop every two hours or more often if needed.



STAGE 4



KEYS FOR SUCCESS

Move slowly through Stage 4.

Begin to take over the decision making from your supervising driver.

Be your family's driver whenever you can, but make sure you leave extra time so you're not rushed, and don't go beyond your driving ability.

Getting your **licence**



Don't rush! If you don't need your licence yet, it's alright to wait. The more practice you get as a learner, the safer you'll be – and your learner permit is valid for 10 years. If you've worked your way through this book and have done at least 120 hours of driving practice, you're well on the way to your probationary licence.

GOALS

Your goal now is to get your probationary licence – if you're really ready! You need to review your progress, prepare for the test, book it and take it.

HOW TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

Don't stress out about the test. Many young people get probationary licences every year in Victoria. The best way to improve your chance of success is to know what's coming and be prepared. Remember:

- Brush up on the road rules. You may think you know them because you've been driving for a while, but it's easy to forget the details.
- Go through the basic driving skills again and make sure actions, such as checking mirrors and blind spots, and travelling at safe speeds with safe following distances and gaps, are second nature.
- Consider some professional lessons. Ask the instructor and some of your licensed friends what to expect.
- Review your *Learner Log Book* to be sure you have the minimum experience and have driven in many different situations.

- You probably already know what type of car (manual or automatic) you'll use for the test. Don't forget, if you use an automatic for the test, you'll be restricted to one when you're on your Ps.
- Get some practice in the car you're using for the test. You don't want to be getting used to a new one during the test!
- Contact VicRoads and book your test. You can take a professional driving instructor along if that helps you feel less anxious but you can't take a friend or relative.
- You have to do a computerised Hazard Perception Test and a practical driving test. Test details are in the *Road to Solo Driving* handbook and on the VicRoads website at www.vicroads.vic.gov.au
- Try the practice Hazard Perception Test items on the VicRoads website.

THE HAZARD PERCEPTION TEST

The Hazard Perception Test is designed to see how safely you respond to traffic situations.

It will indicate how well you are able to observe the whole road environment and anticipate potential hazards. It will also assess your speed control, following distances and gap selection.

For each item in the Hazard Perception Test, you will see a video of a traffic situation and be given a driving task such as slowing down or making a turn. You will have to respond safely to each traffic situation.



THE PRACTICAL DRIVE TEST

It's easy to get nervous about the practical drive test. Read VicRoads' brochure *What You Need to Know About Your Licence Assessment* for more information.

Make sure you can do the following:

- Know where the car's controls are and how to use them.
- Drive safely in quiet traffic conditions demonstrating you can use the indicators correctly, steer smoothly and perform simple actions such as turning at an intersection.
- Drive in different conditions at a speed to suit the conditions and within the speed limit, but not too slowly.
- Leave a safe gap to vehicles in front and around you, at all times.
- Stay aware of (and avoid) potential hazards in quiet and busy traffic.
- Demonstrate good judgement at intersections and in other potential conflict situations in different traffic situations.
- Know how to perform slow speed actions such as a three-point turn, U-turn and parking.
- Drive safely in busy traffic and on higher speed roads.
- Discuss with your supervising driver potential hazards and what you're doing to reduce the risk of problems developing.

If you pass the test you'll have your photograph and signature taken and you'll leave VicRoads with your probationary driver licence.

During your test you will need to use a vehicle that:

- Is currently registered, roadworthy and in clean condition.
- Can maintain a comfortable temperature for passengers.
- Has a speed display on the dashboard that the licence testing officer is easily able to verify.
- Has a manual transmission (for manual licence tests only).
- Has a centrally mounted handbrake accessible to the person in the front passenger seat (in a dual control vehicle an accessible centrally mounted handbrake is not required if the instructor is in the front passenger seat).
- Is capable of having the headlights (low beam) turned on during the test.
- Has a seat belt for all occupants.

KEYS FOR SUCCESS

Brush up on the road rules and revisit your basic skills.

Have some lessons with a professional driving instructor to see if you're ready for the test.

Check that your *Learner Log Book* is complete and book your test.

Staying safe on your P plates



Congratulations! You've got your licence and you've just joined one of the highest risk groups on the road. It takes years of experience to become a really safe driver. You may think you're a better driver than everyone else, but thinking you're safer than you really are can increase your crash risk. As a new driver, there are things you can do and think about to reduce your crash risk.

THE FACTS

Driving seems pretty easy most of the time. As long as nothing unexpected happens and you drive carefully and legally, you should be safe.

However, unexpected things do happen. Sometimes drivers make mistakes or make poor judgements.

P platers are especially accident prone, particularly in their first year of driving. Here are some facts to keep in mind:

- P platers have three times the risk of being in an accident where at least one person is injured or killed.
- They have three times the risk of having a single vehicle crash, such as running off the road.

- Their crash risk in the first few months is very high compared to later in the probationary period.
- Even with 120 hours of experience as a learner, P platers are still developing safe driving skills and still have a high risk of crashing.
- Drivers aged 18-25 account for about a quarter of all drivers killed.

Common crashes involving new probationary licence drivers include:

- Running into the back of another vehicle.
- Turning right at intersections.
- Being hit by a right turning vehicle.
- Single vehicle crashes.



HOW TO BE A SAFER DRIVER

Driving solo is a new skill. Start carefully and gradually increase the complexity of driving. You can help yourself be safer in the following ways:

- Drive for a reason. The risk of crashing is much lower when you're driving to go somewhere – when you use your car for transport, not just for fun.
 - Never drive after drinking (or taking drugs). You have a zero BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration) requirement for the whole of your probationary period because alcohol influences you more than experienced drivers.
 - Start simply. When you first get your Ps, limit your driving in the first few months.
 - Minimise driving at night or in wet weather – they're high risk times for new drivers.
 - Avoid a car full of passengers until you've been driving for a few months.
 - Don't drive when you're feeling tired. Fatigue is a problem for everyone, especially young drivers. If you get less sleep than you need because of study, work or partying, you'll have a higher crash risk.
 - Don't follow other cars too closely and increase the space around your car.
- Scan intersections for hazards.
 - Wait for longer gaps when turning into or across traffic.
 - Minimise distractions, they're still a problem.
 - Don't use a mobile phone while you're driving.
 - Keep control of potential distractions in the car (such as the CD player and your passengers) and stay focused on your driving.
 - Control your speed. As you get more experience, you may tend to push the speed limit and exceed it when you think it's safe. All drivers are more likely to crash if they're speeding. If someone else causes a crash and you're speeding, your injuries will be more serious than if you'd been driving more slowly.
 - Remember you're still learning! Most drivers are too confident about their safety, especially younger drivers. Experts agree that overconfidence leads to many young driver crashes. You do improve your skills and become safer as you get more practice on the road.

Staying safe on your P plates



SOME THOUGHTS FOR SUPERVISING DRIVERS

It's OK to make suggestions about your new solo driver's safety when you're concerned.

If your new driver's borrowing your car it's OK to make some rules like the suggestions on the previous page.

You can get your new driver to give you a lift every now and then. They might put on a bit of a safety act when you're there, but it reinforces your interest in their safety.



KEYS FOR SUCCESS

Don't be overconfident. Remember your safe driving skills improve with experience.

Practise the risk management skills on page 40 to reduce your crash risk, they could save your life.

SAFE DRIVING

Use the *Learner Kit* throughout your entire learner period.

Remember getting at least 120 hours of supervised driving experience is the first step towards becoming a safer driver.

Safe driving!

Want to know more?

The following resources will also be useful.

HAZARD PERCEPTION

Before you can take your practical probationary licence test, you must undertake a Hazard Perception Test. The following resources are useful to help you understand what hazard perception is about:

- TAC's Drive Smart CD ROM (an interactive training product – order online at www.drivesmart.vic.gov.au)
- NRMA's Shirt 2nd Gear CD ROM (an interactive training product – order online via www.mynrma.com.au)
- VicRoads Hazard Perception Sample Test (online at <http://clt.vicroads.vic.gov.au/>)

LICENCE TEST

- Road To Solo Driving (handbook)
- What You Need to Know About Your Licence Assessment (brochure)

PROBATIONARY LICENCE

- Probationary Licence Information (brochure)

These publications are available from VicRoads Customer Service Centres, VicRoads bookshop (including online at www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/bookshop) and selected newsagents.

See the back of the Road To Solo Driving handbook for VicRoads location details, telephone 13 11 71, TTY (for hearing impaired) 1300 652 321 or visit the VicRoads homepage on www.vicroads.vic.gov.au

For more information about TAC products and publications call (03) 9664 6106.

