

# Young drivers and the law

[Sociology](#), [Social Issues](#)



On the roads of New South Wales, young inexperienced drivers are the most likely to be involved in road traffic crashes and other incidents than drivers who are older and more experienced. A young driver is any driver who is under the age of twenty-five. Over the years, there have been a number of reforms in the law, to cater to changes. With the lack of experience in young drivers, they face many challenges when learning the multifaceted task of driving a vehicle and face a higher risk of danger. Evidence is shown by looking at recent statistics and viewing the causes one might experience which may have a link to the sometimes-fatal mistake. Statistics of deaths and injuries among young drivers have increased over the years. Forty-five percent of all young Australian deaths are due to road traffic incidents. Many lives of youth are cut short, and families all around Australia are devastated. Although young drivers make up only fifteen percent of all license holders, they represent almost a quarter of annual road fatalities. The Government is trying to protect the youth from themselves, since younger drivers are proven to engage in more 'risk taking' behaviour.

More statistics include:

- A seventeen-year-old driver on a P1 license is four times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash, rather than a driver over the age of twenty-six.
- One third of all speeding drivers and riders in fatal crashed are males between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five, with only six percent being female between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five, according to the young driver Fact Database.

Factors That Lead to Law Reform

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Learning to drive a car and gaining a driver license in order to drive without and adult is considered a 'rite of passage' for most Australian youth aged seventeen to twenty-five. The ability to drive without the supervision of parents means freedom for the child and also freedom from public transport and a general sense of not having to rely on others. Nevertheless, the capability to drive a vehicle without supervision from adults carries a tremendous burden of responsibility, and is subject to frequent changes in legislation. Older generations can recall not having to provide photo identification, written texts or logbooks to be granted a license. More recently, you are able to earn a learner permit at the age of sixteen years, and practice your driving capabilities with relatives or qualified instructors. During the nineteen eighties, there was a possibility that you could have received your P plates on your seventeenth birthday if you have passed a practical and written test. Yet, in recent years there has been a number of tragedies revolved around traffic incidents. New restrictions have also been placed on provisional license holders.

There are a number of factors which have lead to law reform such as:

- A major factor is the increase of the death toll on Australia's roads, where statistics show that just in New South Wales, one driver is killed approximately every six days.
- Another factor is a push by Non-Government Organisations such as the NRMA

(National Roads and Motorists' Association), where they undergo research to determine the main causes of accidents where young drivers are involved.

- An additional factor is the pressure placed on the government by families whose family members are involved in accidents, the media by highlighting a shortcoming of the law, and by the general public.
- Seventeen of them will crash this very day.
- Provisional license holders are four times more likely than other licensed drivers to be involved in fatal accidents.
- Crashes cause sixty-six percent of deaths among seventeen to twenty-year old's.
- Speed is a contributing factor in eighty percent of crashes.
- Twenty-five percent of provisional license drivers admit to speeding “most of or all the time”.
- Car crashes kill one-million and two hundred thousand people globally.
- One third of drivers crash in their first year of driving.

### Changes in Technology

The ongoing development of computing, communication, and sensor technology undoubtedly to have an effect on young drivers more than others. Technology acts as a distraction as it has become more and more a part of our daily lives. The potential of such a distraction has a wide range as it can be from a device like a cell phone, receiving text messages, MP3 players and Bluetooth connection and other devices. These and many more present a threat to the drivers as they lack the attention span and experience compared to an older driver in their late 20's and 30's.

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Furthermore, studies conclude that young drivers are the most likely to 'abuse' their ability to use newer technology. Moreover, an Australian study shows that nine percent of interviewed drivers who had previously crashed had used a mobile phone up to fifteen minutes prior to the crash. Therefore, the study concluded that someone who used their mobile phone in a fifteen-minute space is associated with an increased chance of crashing by four times.