

RSA

Learn the Skills and Knowledge to Drive
Road Safety Authority

Irish Independent 



Learning to Drive

in association with the Road Safety Authority

Get up to speed with
the new learning to
drive requirements

How to become
a better, safer, more
competent driver

From passing the
theory test to getting your
licence; your complete guide
to getting behind the wheel!





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Credits

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A Message from Noel Brett, CEO, Road Safety Authority



This booklet is designed to guide those learning, or who are thinking of learning to drive, through the entire process.

In addition to candidates themselves, it will also be a useful reference for their Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) and Sponsors.

On some of the pages you will find QR code links to on-line videos. The videos have been produced to further help clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Learner, the ADI and the Sponsor.

By understanding these roles and responsibilities the RSA believe that your learning will progress as efficiently as possible and that it will have a deep and lasting effect on how you interact with other road users.

There are also some additional short videos that explain the learning to drive process, from Theory Test to compulsory lessons, right through to preparing for and sitting the practical driving test.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you well as you learn this very important life skill. It will open the door to new possibilities in terms of your personal freedom, mobility, and employment prospects. But please don't forget that with such new found personal freedom comes responsibility, a responsibility to yourself and to those in your community, with whom you share the road.

Good luck and safe and happy motoring!

Noel Brett
CEO – Road Safety Authority

Learning to Drive

'LEARNING to Drive' can be a stressful but equally rewarding experience for many people. It's also different to the way somebody would be used to learning in school or college.

It is carried out on a 'one to one' basis with a professional trainer, which in itself can be a challenging situation for some. What is being learned is a very important life skill and unlike theoretical knowledge learning a practical skill requires a different approach.

People have different learning styles and trainers need to be able to identify each individual's personal learning style. This is in order to make the training a success and as cost effective as possible. It is with that in mind that Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) develop individual training and lesson plans to suit each individual learner.

Some learners are known as 'Kinesthetic' type learners and learn best from training methods that include 'hands on' activity. Such learners may require more practical experience. Therefore, it is important for an ADI to recognise this and utilise a training plan that involves more practice.

Other learners may be 'Auditory' and respond best to training methods that focus on spoken words and sounds. Their ADIs may spend more time explaining things rather than demonstrating.

'Visual' learners respond well to methods of training that include strong visual components so plenty of demonstration may be required.

Other learners respond best when they read or write something and ADIs may set written work to help them progress through their learning to drive experience.

Whatever type of learner you are you will need time to practice outside the formal lessons, so it helps to be aware of your learning style and be guided by your ADI as to how best to practice. By practising what you have learned you will be able to develop and hone your driving skills. It will also help you to become a safer and more socially responsible driver.

What is Safe & Socially Responsible Driving?

Many drivers go through life without ever being involved in a crash and, as a result, regard themselves as 'safe' drivers. This may be the case, but are they socially responsible? Social responsibility includes being aware of the many issues that affect the way you drive, including whether or not you should be driving at all.

This booklet is designed to guide you through the learning to drive process in Ireland with the ultimate goal of helping you to become a safer and more socially responsible road user.

The three main elements of being a safe and socially responsible road user are having a:

■ Safe Vehicle ■ Safe Driver ■ Safe Journey ■

Safe Vehicle

Having a Safe Vehicle, which is well maintained, not only helps keep you and your family or friends safe, but helps other road users and communities in the areas where you

travel. A well maintained vehicle will produce less harmful emissions, burn less fuel saving you money and help to reduce your overall running costs. Properly serviced vehicles can use up to 20% less fuel than a poorly maintained vehicle.

A safe vehicle should have a warning triangle, a first aid kit and a hi-viz vest or jacket for everyone in the vehicle.

Clean windows make it easier to see, especially at times of the year when the sun is low in the sky or at night-time when headlights of oncoming vehicles dazzle.

Safe Driver

A Safe Driver is someone who does not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. A safe driver does not drive when tired (See page 13) or use a mobile phone when driving. A safe driver is someone who concentrates on the task of driving and doesn't get distracted.

A safe driver drives the way he or she did when under the guidance of their instructor or their Sponsor. Remember, drivers are responsible for the majority of collisions (84%) that happen on the road. Concentration, Consideration and Courtesy cost nothing at all, but could save your life or the life of a passenger or other road user.

Safe Journey

A Safe Journey is one of the hardest things to plan for, as it involves interaction with other road users who you have no control over. But you can anticipate what they might do and plan to keep yourself safe. A little time spent planning each journey can make all the difference.

It begins by asking – is the journey necessary? It may be that weather conditions are such that it is not safe to take your normal route or mode of transport. A simple decision to delay the start of your journey or to take the train instead might be the wisest course of action in such a situation.

If the journey is necessary, then plan for the safest route. Think about school times or peak times for traffic (to and from work) and ask yourself can you organise your journey to avoid the highest risks. Doing this can also save you considerable costs as you avoid getting stuck in traffic queues.

A driver can make a journey safer by making sure they have adequate fuel for the journey.

The main point is, the better the advance planning the safer the journey will be.

Value for your money

As a learner you owe it to yourself to get the most out of the learning to drive process. It is hard to believe but some learners turn up for their driving lesson without having given a single thought to their driving since their last lesson. These learners may eventually pass their driving test but all the good practice will be very quickly forgotten. This group of drivers are the most at risk on the road for the next two years or so. This is because they slowly experience what they should have been learning while being taught by their ADI and mentored by their Sponsor.

In Theory

INTRODUCED in 2001, the Driver Theory Test is now an essential part of obtaining a Learner Permit. The test comprises several elements relating to road safety and motoring legislation, including elements such as risk perception, eco-driving, hazard awareness, and good driving behaviour. Required for all categories of licence, the Driver Theory Test is completed in a user-friendly computerised format, suitable for people of all levels of computer literacy.

Preparing for your Driver Theory Test

The most effective way to prepare for your Driver Theory Test is by combining both study and practise. The Driver Theory Test study material comes in the form of a book and also an interactive CD-ROM, which can be used with your computer. Both of these materials provide information on each category within the exam and for each category of licence. Study the material in detail to ensure you are knowledgeable in every area. The most recent version of the study material (October 2011) includes a rationale as to why the correct answer is correct. This rationale will help you to not only learn the correct answer but more importantly, to understand it. It is common knowledge that where adults understand an issue they are far more likely to recall it and apply it in everyday driving situations.

The study that you do now to prepare for your driver theory test will also help you when it comes to your practical lessons in learning to drive a car or motorcycle.

The CD-ROM has the added benefit of allowing the user to complete practise tests, which gauge your progress as you study. By doing these, you can see where your weaknesses lie. It is a very valuable tool in your preparation for the real test. The multiple choice format of the test requires that you answer 35 out of 40 questions correctly in order to pass your Driver Theory Test. With this in mind, you can practise until you feel you are ready to book your test in one of the 41 test centres around the country.

There are four categories in which you can sit your theory

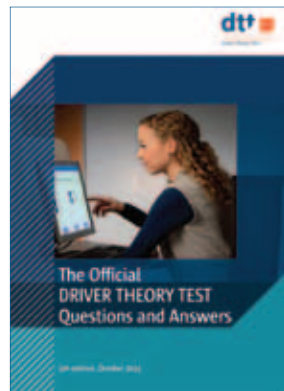
THE DRIVER THEORY TEST IS A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF YOUR DRIVER TRAINING, AND ESSENTIAL FOR OBTAINING YOUR LEARNER PERMIT. **MEGHAN O'DOWD** LOOKS AT HOW YOU CAN PREPARE FOR YOUR THEORY TEST

test. Category BW covers cars, tractors and work vehicles, Category A covers motorcycles and mopeds; Category C covers vans and trucks over 3,500 kg and Category D covers buses and minibuses.

Some Approved Driving Instructors help learners to prepare for their theory test so don't be afraid to ask for help if you are unsure about something, or have any concerns about a particular piece of information.

It is recommended that you arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled time, and ensure that you carry a valid form of ID. If you fail to arrive on time you may lose your place and your test fee. Having completed and passed the test, you will be provided with a pass certificate to confirm that you have successfully completed your Driver Theory Test. This certificate may then be used to apply for your Learner Permit.

To book your Driver Theory Test visit
www.theorytest.ie



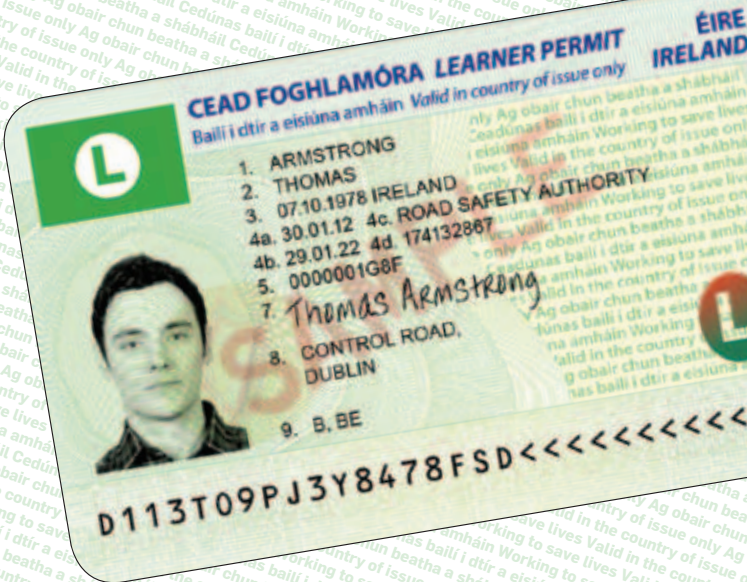
Getting ready for your driving test

Scan here to discover everything you need to know to prepare for your driving test



Getting ready for your motorcycle test

Scan here to watch our video on getting ready for the motorcycle test



ONCE YOU'VE PASSED
YOUR THEORY TEST, YOU
NEED TO APPLY FOR
YOUR LEARNER PERMIT
BEFORE GETTING ON THE
ROAD. **MEGHAN O'DOWD**
GIVES A BRIEF GUIDE ON
WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN
APPLYING FOR YOUR
LEARNER PERMIT

Permission Granted

ONCE you've passed your Driver Theory Test, there are a few simple steps to getting your Learner Permit so that you can undertake your lessons with an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) and set off on the road.

When applying for your Learner Permit, you must provide several items of documentation. Firstly, you must fill out an application form. Your local Motor Taxation Office will accept applications up to September 2013. After this period you will need to bring it along to one of the new National Driver Licence Service (NDLS) public offices located around the country (see ndls.ie for info). Learner Permits are normally issued for a period of two years at a cost of €35. Alongside this, applicants are required to include two passport photographs, both of which must be signed by you on the back. From September your photograph will be taken digitally at the new NDLS public office when applying for your licence, and included in the cost of the licence fee.

If you are applying for your first Learner Permit, you must also provide a birth certificate or passport as a form of identification. You will also be required to submit a satisfactory Eyesight Report, or D502 form, which can be downloaded from the RSA website or obtained from a Motor

Taxation office (or NDLS public office from September).

This examination must be carried out by a registered optician or medical practitioner. The Eyesight Report form should be submitted alongside your other documents when applying for your permit.

In some cases, applicants may need to also complete a Medical Report, or D501 form. While this is not needed in all applications it does apply to those who suffer from certain medical conditions, or are applying for certain categories of Permit such as the C, D or E Permits (buses, trucks and trailers). This form must be completed by a registered medical practitioner. For a detailed list of applicants who may require this, make sure to check rsa.ie.

The most important part of applying for your Learner Permit is to make sure you have all the documents you need before submitting your application. That way, you won't face delays in receiving your Permit. By following these guidelines you will be on your way to becoming a better, safer, socially responsible and more competent driver.

**For more information on your Learner Permit
application visit www.ndls.ie**



Michael Dolan



Formal training essential to becoming a better driver

SO YOU'VE PASSED YOUR THEORY TEST AND SECURED YOUR LEARNER PERMIT, **TARA LEIGH** WRITES ON WHAT IT TAKES TO GET BEHIND THE WHEEL



Essential Driver Training (EDT)

Scan here to watch our video on Essential Driver Training (EDT)

ON the 1st September 2010, the Road Safety Authority (RSA) announced a range of measures, as part of their Graduated Driving Licensing system, to enhance the way those learning to drive would be trained, tested and licenced in Ireland.

One of the most notable changes was that learners are now required to undertake at least 12 hours of compulsory Essential Driver Training (EDT) with an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI).

According to the Road Safety Authority the introduction of the Essential Driver Training scheme will not only help learner drivers learn vital driving skills but also enhance their understanding of road safety. The 12 one-hour sessions tackle specific 'high risk' issues to ensure drivers are fully equipped to drive safely from the very beginning of their motoring careers.

In addition to taking mandatory lessons with an ADI it is also strongly recommended that each learner driver chooses a Sponsor. A Sponsor is an experienced driver, often a family member, who supervises the learner's driving practise outside of formal driving and EDT lessons.

"Within the learning to drive process there are three participants - the learner, the Approved Driving Instructor and the Sponsor," says Michael Dolan. "All three roles are equally important to the process and if one element is missing, the learner will struggle."

The most important factor for the learner, says Dolan, is that the ADI and Sponsor understand their roles and interact with each other.

"For the learner this means choosing the best ADI and Sponsor for you, so that you get the most from your learning to drive experience."

However, it is just as important for the learner to take a hands-on approach to their learning.

"Once you have chosen an ADI it's necessary to prepare in advance for each lesson. You don't just turn up ad hoc, pay your money and off you go."

Choosing an Approved Driving Instructor

Over 1,900 instructors nationwide have been approved by the RSA. To find an ADI in your locality simply log on to rsa.ie where you will find a full list of ADI permit holders.

The ADI's role is to help the learner become a better, safer more competent driver. To do this, they need to not only deliver the EDT programme but structure the learner's training around his/her needs and progress.

"A common misconception is that you simply show up, tick off the 12 lessons and take your test," says Dolan. "It's not a matter of taking EDT lesson one, EDT lesson two and so on.

"The reality is that everyone progresses at different rates so it's not just a matter of undergoing 12 hours of training. How quickly you progress depend on a number of factors including how much work you and your Sponsor put in between lessons and your personal commitment to the process, as well as your own innate ability. Therefore it is the ADI's responsibility to tailor the training to each individual."

Once you've found an ADI it is vital to ask them for advice on how to prepare for the course of EDT lessons. Your ADI should let you know what practise and background reading is required.

At your first EDT lesson, and each lesson thereafter, your ADI will check your learner permit, and if you are using your own car, will check to make sure your insurance, motor tax, NCT and the roadworthiness of the vehicle are all in order.

At the end of each lesson – whether it's an EDT lesson or not – the ADI will inform the learner of their progress. This will include spoken feedback as well as written feedback on EDT lessons in the learner Logbook. Some ADIs provide written feedback on other formal non EDT lessons also.

The learner keeps the Logbook and it should be used as a learning tool to aid their formal lessons with their ADI and their practise sessions with their Sponsor. It also offers an opportunity for self- analysis and for the learner to review their own progress.

"Self-analysis is an important aspect of the Essential Driver Training programme as it encourages the pupil to observe and question their strengths and weaknesses, while at the same time guarding against over confidence," says Dolan. "It is important that the student is made aware that this is not about criticism, it's about advancing to becoming a better, safer, more competent driver. If you feel you did something well then say so but include why you did it well – that will help you to remember it later on.

"People can absorb the information and adjust to it better when it's also in black and white. When some drivers make an error and it hasn't caused a crash, they are inclined to ignore it and forget about it. The self-analysis part of the training makes learners ask questions such as what happened, how did it happen and how can I change it?"

While the Logbook is an important tool in self-analysis it can also be extremely useful to the Sponsor who can check your Logbook for feedback and structure your practise time accordingly.

"Traditionally when people learnt to drive they went out with their mother or father so the Sponsor is not a new role," asserts Dolan. "However, the Sponsor should not be teaching the learner new skills that have not been covered by the ADI."

According to the RSA, to become a competent driver a mix of both formal and informal training is required. That said the Sponsor's role is to reinforce the learning that is happening in the formal lessons.

"Basically, the practice sessions need to be undertaken in a structured manner so that all of the training is consistent," asserts Dolan. "It is therefore a good idea for the Sponsor to be guided by the ADI so that no discrepancies arise between what the learner is being taught by their ADI and what they are hearing from their Sponsor. This is why the Logbook is so important.

"There is a page at the back of the Logbook specifically for the Sponsor to make records and notes on the training sessions. That way, if there is something they are not sure about or they feel the learner is missing, the ADI will be able to see and address it at the next lesson."



Scan here to watch our video on the roles and responsibilities of the learner driver as you learn to drive

Your EDT Training

According to the RSA each EDT lesson lasts about one hour and it is recommend that you leave two weeks between each of the EDT lessons to allow for further instruction, practise and learning. Ideally, the EDT course should be spread over 6 months.

■ LESSON 1
CAR CONTROLS AND SAFETY CHECKS

■ LESSON 2
CORRECT POSITIONING 1

■ LESSON 3
CHANGING DIRECTION

■ LESSON 4
PROGRESSION MANAGEMENT

■ LESSON 5
CORRECT POSITIONING 2

■ LESSON 6
ANTICIPATION AND REACTION

■ LESSON 7
SHARING THE ROAD

■ LESSON 8
DRIVING SAFELY THROUGH TRAFFIC

■ LESSON 9
CHANGING DIRECTION (MORE COMPLEX SITUATIONS)

■ LESSON 10
SPEED MANAGEMENT

■ LESSON 11
DRIVING CALMLY

■ LESSON 12
NIGHT DRIVING

The role of the Sponsor



UNDOUBTEDLY, learning to drive is a major step on the road to independence; however, one should not forget that it is one that carries risks. It is for this reason that the Road Safety Authority is calling on parents, family members or friends to take a more active role in preparing the youth of today to become better, safer, competent and more responsible drivers.

Learner Permit holders have always been required to have a full licence holder present while driving. The major difference under the Essential Driver Training measure is that learner drivers (who hadn't already done so) are now advised to choose a Sponsor with which to undertake supervised driving time between each lesson.

According to the Road Safety Authority learner drivers

who practise between lessons will make better progress during their driving lessons and in turn achieve their goal of becoming a skilled driver.

Under the Essential Driver Training programme, learners are required to complete a minimum of 12 one-hour lessons focusing on 'high risk' road safety issues over a six-month period. The Road Safety Authority advises learners to leave at least two weeks between each lesson to allow for practice with their Sponsor, a person who has held a full driving licence for more than two years. In the interim the learner driver will be required to take additional lessons with their ADI (Approved Driving Instructor) depending upon their rate of progress and access to practise with their Sponsor.

The responsibilities of the Sponsor

While ADIs are responsible for delivering formal driver training the role of the Sponsor is to help learners practise in the skills learned during their EDT lessons.

Research shows that accompanying drivers can have a real impact on the learning to drive process so it is vital to choose someone that you feel comfortable with such as a family member. However, it is just as important to select an individual who is able to put in the time and effort to help you. Your Sponsor must have held their own full Category B driving licence for a minimum of two years and should ideally have at least 100,000km of driving experience.

AS PART OF THE ESSENTIAL DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAMME THE ROAD SAFETY AUTHORITY IS ENCOURAGING LEARNERS TO ENLIST THE HELP OF A SPONSOR TO SUPERVISE DRIVING PRACTICE BETWEEN LESSONS

"One of the most important decisions you make as you consider learning to drive is who to choose as your Sponsor," says Noel Brett, Chief Executive Officer with the Road Safety Authority. "This is a hugely important role and so it is vital that this is a person you feel comfortable with and who demonstrates safe driving behaviour you can learn from. This might be a parent, uncle or sibling, but it must be someone who can make the commitment to contribute their time to helping you to become a better, safer and competent driver."

That being said, the role of the Sponsor is to ensure learner drivers get time to practise what they have learned with the Approved Driving Instructor. Sponsors should not attempt to teach the learner driver anything that has not been covered by the Approved Driving Instructor. It is the Sponsor's job to offer support and display a real interest in the learner driver's progress.

In order to do this successfully, the Road Safety Authority advises Sponsors to take the time to meet with the Approved

Driving Instructor. These are not mutually exclusive roles and learner drivers get the best results when the Approved Driving Instructor and Sponsor work closely together. Once this is achieved, the training received from the Approved Driving Instructor and practise with their Sponsor will be consistent.

The Road Safety Authority has a number of tools available to Sponsors to enable them carry out their role as effectively as possible. Log on to www.rsa.ie to download the Rules of the Road and an Essential Driving Training booklet.



Sponsor

Scan here to watch our video on the role of the Sponsor

DRIVING FOR LIFE

TARA LEIGH TALKS TO CATHY AND HER SPONSOR VAL ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING THE CORRECT DRIVING SKILLS FROM THE BEGINNING AND WHY IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO GET BEHIND THE WHEEL

CATHY, who is in her 60s, began taking lessons three weeks ago and while she recognises she still has a long way to go before becoming an accomplished driver she already considers her Essential Driver Training extremely valuable.

"Tomás, my Approved Driving Instructor, is very patient with me and explains everything clearly, which has really helped my confidence," says Cathy.

While Cathy believes mandatory lessons are essential to her progress in learning to drive she is eager to purchase a car so that she can practise with her Sponsor in between lessons. When selecting a Sponsor she chose her daughter Val and both women feel it is important to choose someone you trust.

"I think you need to have a good relationship to be able to practise with someone," says Val. "I live directly across the road from my mother, so we are very close and she knows we are not going to fight or get in an argument when we are out driving. She's comfortable with me in the car and that is very important."

However, it is not just about feeling comfortable with the person, acknowledges Val, you have to be sure you are passing on the right information. To ensure this, Val has sat in on Cathy's lessons with her Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) to become familiar with his approach.

"If you are going to be conveying the information to the learner in between lessons, you need to know what the ADI is teaching. It is helpful to know what has been covered and that way our practise sessions can reinforce what was learnt," states Val.

"When you have been driving for a long time you don't think every step through one hundred per cent of the time but when you are learning to drive, you are in a situation

where you have to think everything through all of the time. By bringing someone else on board it not only makes everybody responsible for the learner's advancement but everyone will become better drivers."

Charting your progress

While practising with a Sponsor is a great way to build upon the tuition received with the ADI, documenting your progress in a Logbook will ensure you know exactly where your strengths and weaknesses lie, and give you something to think about in-between lessons.

"After each lesson myself and Tomas, the ADI, record our analysis of the lesson in the Logbook. This way, we can see in black and white what she needs to go back over. My mother completes her self-analysis page during the week when she has time to reflect on the lesson without any pressure."

The Road Safety Authority believes that by utilising all of these aspects of the Essential Driver Training programme, a learner will become a better safer driver and develop skills they will carry with them for the rest of their lives.

"Everybody becomes complacent over time but if you grasp these skills when you are starting out they will stay with you and you will not develop bad habits," continues Val.

"When I was learning to drive ten years ago, it was a completely different system. My husband gave me a few lessons and after that I took a few with a driving instructor but I drove myself to and from the lessons. When you think about it now, it was absolutely crazy. I could have driven to my test, failed it and driven home. With the Essential Driver Training scheme the onus is put on drivers to get involved in the learning properly and from the very beginning."

THE LOGBOOK IS A USEFUL TOOL FOR THE LEARNER, THE SPONSOR AND THE ADI IN HELPING THE LEARNER BECOME A BETTER, SAFER, MORE COMPETENT DRIVER. BELOW WE TAKE A LOOK AT A SAMPLE LOGBOOK TO ILLUSTRATE THIS

Your Logbook

ONE LEARNER'S SELF- ANALYSIS
AND THE SPONSOR'S RECORDINGS



RSA

Essential Driver Training (EDT)

LEARNER LOGBOOK

Udarás Lim Shábháilteacht Ar Bhoithre
Road Safety Authority

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Udarás Lim Shábháilteacht Ar Bhoithre
Road Safety Authority

SELF ANALYSIS – LESSON 1

In analysing your performance on EDT Lesson 1, please think about the following questions. What were the expected outcomes for this lesson? Did I meet those outcomes? Do I understand the theory behind the topics covered? What did I do well? Why did I do it well? What did I not do so well? What do I think caused me not to perform those pieces so well? Was I properly prepared for the lesson? How can I be better prepared in future?

To get the best out of your self analysis, you should complete it as soon as possible after the lesson while it is fresh in your mind. This is an exercise for your own use but your ADI may wish to discuss your self analysis with you before your next lesson and you should find that a short discussion with your ADI or Sponsor will often be helpful. The main thing to remember is to take the time to carefully consider your own performance.

Self Analysis

(See notes section inside back cover)

I was not very well prepared for today's EDT lesson as I did not do plenty of practise beforehand. I know the practise is a crucial part of my course and need to make sure I take the time to practise in future. That will help me to be ready for each lesson as they come along.

Generally I was using the system of car control well but on occasion forgot to check the mirror before I signalled. By doing that I do not always know it is safe to start slowing down or even if the signal might startle another driver who is overtaking me. I need to be more consistent and remember the MSMMA routine. (Mirror, Signal, Mirror, Manoeuvre)

My reversing was great. I managed to do three reverses correctly, one after another. This went well because this is the thing I was practising all week; I also remembered to use the markings Brian gave me. I think I have the handle on that now but must keep practising. Brian tells me to always reverse into my driveway at home. That way I will be able to see properly when reversing in and when I drive out again. I am good at things when someone shows me how to do it, the demonstration really helped.

Brian said I need to watch the speed, he said I tend to be 'heavy footed' so sometimes I don't realise how fast I am going – for that reason I need to pay more attention to the Speedo. I must ask Brian when I might be ready to do EDT lesson 5. I feel ready. In the meantime I will ask Dad to watch my speed in the practise sessions.

Sponsor'S PAGE

Sponsors should use this section to record the dates and times of when practise sessions are taken and which topics were practised. Be guided by your learner's ADI who will have noted details of the EDT lessons taken and may have included details of what needs to be practised further, what the learner needs to read up on or have covered before the next EDT lesson. Sponsors may also use this section to leave comments for the learner or ADI as appropriate. By keeping in touch with the learner and the ADI, a Sponsor will be able to help reinforce, for the learner, the learning that has taken place during both EDT and other driving lessons.

Notes:

14th February 2013

Karen drove to Tesco's and on the route we were able to practise many roundabouts (7 in total). She drives well but sometimes forgets to check her mirror before signalling. She does it well when I remind her but not so well when left to her own devices.

17th February 2013

Today Karen drove to Naas. Her mirror work was much better and she only forgot it once and even then she recognised that herself. Her confidence when approaching junctions is really growing now.

23rd February 2013

Not a good day today, Karen seems to have reverted to her old ways with the mirrors again. She was very upset by this so we changed to practise her reversing instead and that seemed to cheer her up. I must talk to Brian to see what I could do to help her remember to check her mirrors.

28th February 2013

Better again today. Brian had Karen talk her way through the system of control on the approach to each junction – seemed to do the trick. We did over 70Km today and Karen did extremely well. I think she is ready to do her 5th EDT lesson and will chat to Brian about arranging that.

'Golden Rules for Success'

01 Do seek a recommendation from family or friends when choosing your ADI. Before booking your first appointment ask the ADI for a full list of terms and conditions, including their cancellation policy. If using a large driving school ask which ADI will be assigned to you and if you are not happy let them know, they will be keen to hold onto you as a customer. Some learners complain about the driving school changing their ADI from one lesson to the next. Again, if this is happening to you and you are not happy with it say so, you might decide to say it at the start so you always get the same ADI. It's up to you.

02 Make sure your ADI gives you an appointment card which sets out the date, time and location of pick up for your next lesson as well as what type of lesson it is (EDT, non EDT etc).

03 Be careful when deciding to pay for lessons in advance, many are just paying on a per lesson basis these days.

04 Ask to see your training plan (this will not be available at your first lesson) and check your progress against it from time to time.

05 Be careful when choosing a Sponsor – make sure they will be committed to the task and can spare the time to help you.

06 Do ask questions of your ADI and your Sponsor. Do not let things slip by, if you don't know ask or you won't know!

07 Make sure you always get a lesson 'wrap up' from your ADI. This should include feedback on the lesson just completed, progress against your training plan, recommendations for practise with your Sponsor and some recommended reading (related to either what you have just been doing in your lesson or what you will be doing in your next lesson).

08 Take time to complete your 'self-analysis'. This is a very important part of skills learning for adults. See page 11 of this handbook for some examples.

09 Make sure your Logbook is properly completed by your ADI. The Feedback section and Recommended Actions must be completed. If anything is missing let your ADI know that you need them to complete it fully. See page 11 of this handbook for examples of ADI comments.

10 Check that your progress is being sent to the RSA by logging onto 'MY EDT' or 'MY IBT' available from the RSA website 'MY IBT' will be available from October 2013. Learners will not be able to get a test appointment without their ADI updating their EDT or IBT record. Most ADIs update the RSA records at least once a week. For further information on IBT see page 18.



Scan here to watch our video on the role of the Approved Driving Instructor (ADI)



DRUNK WITH TIREDNESSZZZZ?

If you're fighting sleep at the wheel it's as dangerous as driving over the legal limit.

**To keep
driving for
another hour:**

- 1 Find a safe place to park
- 2 Take 2 cups of strong coffee or a high caffeine soft drink (150mg)
- 3 Take a nap for no more than 15 mins



DRIVER FATIGUE
WAKE UP TO IT!

TARA LEIGH TALKS TO LEARNER JAMES KING AND HIS SPONSOR PAT HORGAN ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERTAKING A STRUCTURED MODE OF TRAINING AND WHY 12 LESSONS ALONE ARE SIMPLY NOT ENOUGH

What it takes to get behind the wheel today



“BEFORE EACH LESSON I SPEND AN HOUR OR TWO GOING OVER THE **EDT SYLLABUS**. I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO TAKE THE TIME TO PREPARE FOR YOUR LESSON SO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT LESSON WILL ENTAIL AND WHERE EVERYTHING IS ON THE CAR”

LIKE most men his age, James, 21, decided to take driving lessons so that he could get to and from work with ease. After beginning his Essential Driver Training (EDT) he believes preparation is of the utmost importance in becoming a proficient driver.

“Before each lesson I spend an hour or two going over the EDT syllabus. I think it is important to take the time to prepare for your lesson so you know what that lesson will entail and where everything is on the car.”

Each EDT lesson has a preparation requirement which not only involves studying the EDT syllabus but practising what has been demonstrated by the Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) with a Sponsor. When James’s Sponsor was no longer able to put in the time necessary to help him practise between lessons, James’s ADI Tomás O’ Callaghan asked Pat Horgan to step in.

“I think Tomás probably asked me to be James’s Sponsor because I was very hands on when my son was learning to drive,” says Pat.

“I used to sit in on his lessons with Tomás so that I could take in everything Tomás was saying while my son concentrated on the road. When a learner driver is being taught and has the ADI in the passenger seat he is only taking in so much, whereas a Sponsor sitting in the back of the car can take in a lot more information and relay that information to the learner at a later stage.”

“Having the Sponsor sit in on the lessons also helps people who are nervous driving with passengers,” adds James. “They can get used to someone else being in the car.”

However, Pat is quick to point out that the learner will

only become a skilful driver if both the Approved Driving Instructor and Sponsor are working together.

“If the Sponsor does not interact with the Approved Driving Instructor the Sponsor may be imparting their impressions on the learner rather than what is required under Essential Driver Training. The Sponsor may have ten or twelve years of collision free driving behind him/her but that does not mean he/she is driving correctly. Without a good degree of interaction, the Sponsor and Approved Driving Instructor cannot be on the same wavelength.”

Preparation is key

While it is vital for learners to undertake the 12 mandatory lessons set out by the Road Safety Authority with their ADI and practise with their Sponsor between each lesson to become a proficient driver, James argues that the learner must every day be striving to become a better driver.

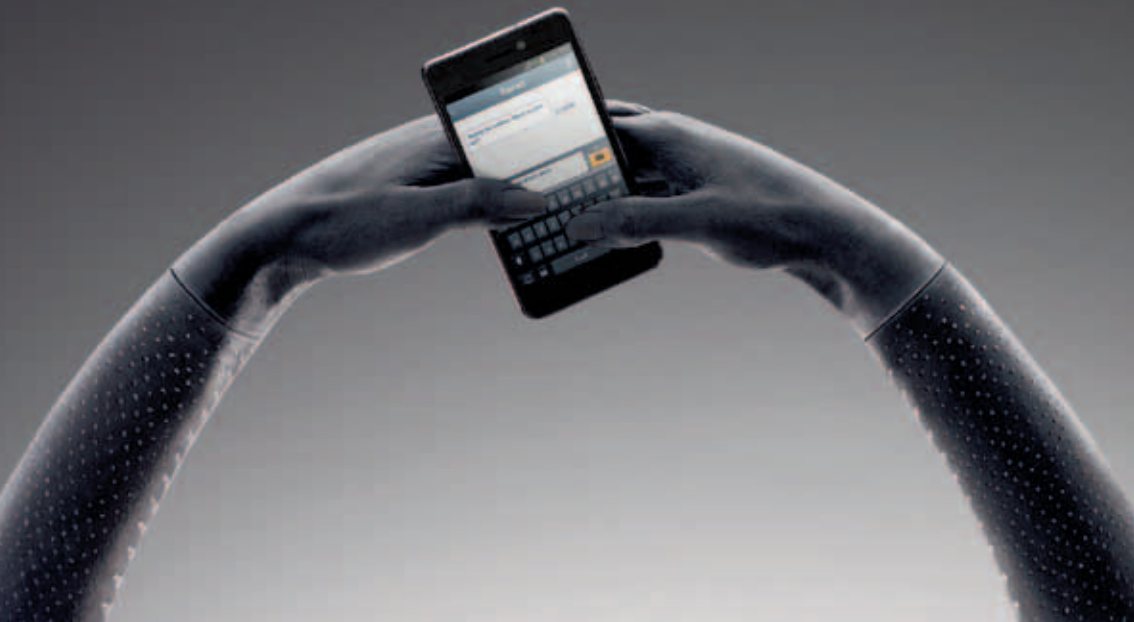
“I think it is important to practise in between lessons but an hour or two with your Sponsor is simply not enough. I take an hour every day to familiarise myself with the controls of the car so that I am ready for my next lesson.”

“The standard of driving on Irish roads is not great,” continues Pat. “I see a lot of people making mistakes and it is largely down to the fact that they have not been trained correctly from the start of their driving career.”

“If you are trained by someone who is not an Approved Driving Instructor, you are not getting the right information and chances are you will not become a safe and competent driver. It is necessary to learn from the start what is safe and what is not safe so that it becomes habit.” Get all of your driving lessons from an ADI.



You can't do two things at once.
Your mobile makes you four times more likely to crash.



ONCE YOUR APPROVED DRIVING INSTRUCTOR (ADI) HAS STAMPED EACH ESSENTIAL DRIVER TRAINING (EDT) LESSON AS COMPLETE IN YOUR LOGBOOK, YOUR LESSONS ARE NOT OVER SAYS THE RSA

Beyond your EDT Training

WHILE the EDT training is an important component of the Graduated Driving System you should not consider your training finished once you have completed all 12 lessons successfully.

The 12 lessons can be considered part of what is required for safe driving. After you finish your EDT course, you may still need to complete your individual driver training plan. This may well include additional lessons with an Approved Driving Instructor to improve your driving skills and confidence on the road. Everyone is different and most people will need different levels of training. EDT is just part of that.

The RSA also recommends continuing to practise with your Sponsor as much as possible to get comfortable behind the wheel.

According to Michael Dolan that principle applies whether you have passed your driving test or not.

"Some people look at the driving test as the end goal," says Dolan. "That's not the case. Sure, passing your driving test is a rite of passage that all learner drivers look forward to, but to stay safe you should be advancing your knowledge and understanding as well as your skills all of the time.

"This may involve taking extra formal lessons with an Approved Driving Instructor, regularly reading the Rules of the Road and re-familiarising yourself with Driver theory test books. Rule change and new road signs are introduced from time to time so it is good practise for every driver to read the Rules Of The Road at least once a year.

"Just because the theory test is out of the way, doesn't mean that study time is finished. Learners and qualified drivers should be constantly refreshing their knowledge.

"Research shows that learning in a structured manner will help you preserve those skills throughout your lifetime.

"So drivers need to learn the necessary skills now which will help them become better, safer and socially responsible drivers for the duration of their driving life."

For more information visit rsa.ie

**TARA LEIGH ON WHAT IT TAKES TO
BECOME A LICENCED MOTORCYCLE
RIDER TODAY**

Get on your bike

DUE to the fact that they have less protection and their narrow profile, motorcyclists are far more vulnerable on roads than drivers of cars or most other vehicles.

In fact, research shows that motorcyclists are three times more likely to be killed on Irish roads than in any other EU country.

In an attempt to bridge this gap, the Road Safety Authority has introduced new measures for training motorcyclists so that they have the information and skills needed to deal with the various hazards faced when riding a motorcycle.

According to the Road Safety Authority, Initial Basic Training (IBT) is the first step on the road to becoming a better, safer and more competent motorcyclist.

What is Initial Basic Training?

The RSA worked with motorcycle instructors to devise the course which is comprised of both on-road and compound based off-road tuition. In general and depending on the path chosen the learner motorcyclist will take four modules covering core areas of motorcycle safety including Personal Protection Equipment, Anticipation and Reaction and travelling in severe Weather Conditions. IBT training must be completed

with an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI). To find an IBT Approved Driving Instructor in your area simply log on to www.rsa.ie.

To get the most from your Initial Basic Training, the RSA advises all learners to consult with their IBT trainer on how best to prepare for the course and also to familiarise yourself with The Rules of the Road, the Learning to Ride a Motorcycle booklet and Essential Skills- the official motorcycling manual.

Self- analysis

At your first lesson, your trainer will give you a personal Logbook setting out the lesson plan for your Initial Basic Training course. As each module is successfully completed, your trainer will sign off and record this in your Logbook; this will allow you to move onto the next Module.

The Logbook also offers an opportunity for self-analysis. According to the RSA self-analysis is an important part of your training as it offers an opportunity to reflect on your training and focus on areas that you may feel are weak. At your next lesson, your IBT trainer can review those areas with you and help you to become a better, safer more competent motorcyclist.

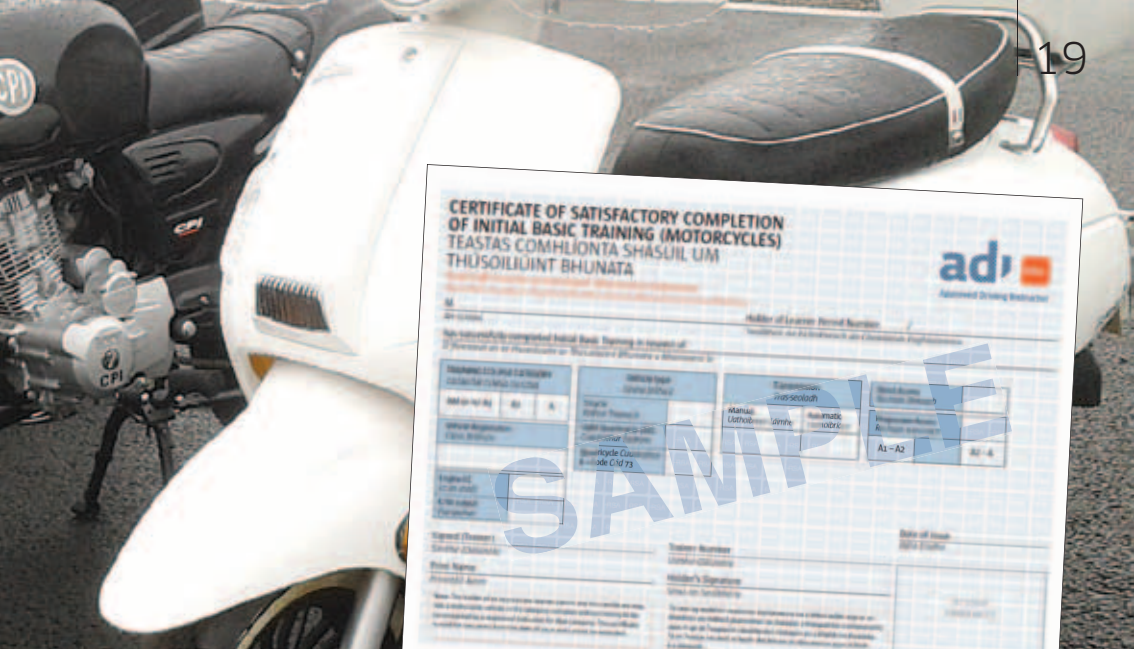
Motorcyclists cannot take to the roads unsupervised until the programme has been completed. Once you have completed all four modules, your trainer will give you a Certificate of Satisfactory Completion, which must be kept with your learner permit for the bike you are riding as both documents may need to be produced for Garda inspection.

However, it must be noted that all four modules have to be completed within two years of completing module one or you will have to repeat the entire course.



On the day of your motorcycle test

Scan here to find out what you should expect on the day of your motorcycle test



During your motorcycle test

Scan here to watch our video on what happens during the motorcycle test



Initial Basic Training (IBT)

Scan here to watch our video on Initial Basic Training (IBT)



Learner Motorcyclist

Scan here to watch our video on your roles and responsibilities as you learn to ride a motorcycle

What the new progression module means for you

On January 19th of this year a further progression module was introduced as part of the new licensing rules. This progression module allows riders in certain instances to change vehicle types and sizes and obtain a higher category of driving licence.

Progressing to an unrestricted Category A driving licence for learner permit holders

Prior to 2013 holders of a Learner Permit for Category A were initially restricted to driving motorcycles subject to a power limit of 25kW. This restriction continued for two years after you completed your motorcycle driving test and had obtained a full driving licence for this category.

The new rules mean that if you are 24 years old or over and the holder of the old Category A restricted to 25kW (paper type) Learner Permit or the holder of a Category A2 (plastic type) Learner Permit you can progress to the new unrestricted Category A licence by first obtaining a Category A unrestricted learner permit, then undergo the required IBT training. For example this can be done by undertaking modules 1,3 and 5 of the Initial Basic Training (if you have not previously completed IBT) and passing your practical driving test, after the 6 months learning period.

If on the other hand you have previously completed IBT and held a Category A restricted to 25kW Learner Permit (paper type), you only need to successfully complete the progression module 5 on a motorcycle with a minimum power output of 40kW as well as the practical driving test. (*From November 2013 the motorcycle used must have a minimum power output of 50kW.)

In addition, for those who have held a provisional licence prior to 1989 without a break in validity exceeding 5 years, you are only required to undergo a practical driving test.

Progressing to an unrestricted Category A driving licence for full driving licence holders

If you are aged 24 years or older and have been issued with a Category A full driving licence within the last two years and wish to remove the power restriction, you will need to complete modules 1, 3 and 5 of the IBT course on a motorcycle with a minimum power output of 40kW if you have not completed any Initial Basic Training.

For those who have previously completed IBT on any type of motorcycle, completion of the progression module 5 on a motorcycle with a minimum power output of 40kW is all that is required. (*The minimum power output of 40kW will be increased to 50kW in November 2013).

Taking the test

WHEN it comes to becoming a competent driver there is no doubt that driver education plays a central role. It was with this in mind the RSA introduced the new Essential Driver Training/Initial Basic Training programmes. That is, all of those applying for their first learner permit for a car on or after the 4th April 2011 must undertake at least 12 hours of compulsory training. According to the RSA this formal structure will ensure those learning to drive become safer drivers and sail through their driving test.

"When a person has come through their Essential Driver Training, taken the test and been successful, the feedback we get is positive," says Pat Travers, Chief Driver Tester with the RSA. "They will then be glad they have gone through the mandatory training, benefitted from their training and gotten value from their experience."

Pat Travers

No more waiting

DRIVING test waiting times have been steadily falling in recent years. It is for this reason you must ensure that you are ready for your test before applying. Your Approved Driving Instructor will be able to advise you as to when you are ready to take the test. The RSA aims to have a national waiting time on average of 10 weeks, in many areas it is less than this, so only apply when you are ready to do so.

New electronic marking system being introduced in driver testing

THE Driver Testing Service of the Road Safety Authority is currently implementing a system that records driving test results electronically. What this means for you is that your driver tester will be making notes on a tablet device during the test. Your ADI will have explained that you should not be put off by this as driver testers routinely make notes throughout the test. After your test has finished and you have been given your result, your tester will show you details on the screen.

Regardless of the result (Pass or Fail) he / she will also provide you with a Feedback Form which indicates the areas that would benefit from further attention. This information is important and whatever your result you should discuss the feedback with your ADI, to help you to become an even better safer driver.

Depending on the correspondence method you selected when you applied for your test, you will also receive a detailed marking sheet via email or post. This is available immediately to those with access to emails via a tablet or smart phone. If possible, discuss it with your ADI there and then. If it is not possible, you should arrange to meet your ADI to discuss it at a mutually convenient time.



Passing the test

WHEN it comes to sitting the test there are a number of key areas to be aware of. The most important factor, says Travers is to be prepared.

Travers is quick to point out that being unprepared does not mean that a person is not a good driver. "You could be an excellent driver but if you do not show up with a valid learner permit you will not be able to take your test. Not only is it a legal obligation to carry a learner permit it is also a key requirement in ensuring the identification of the person taking the test.

"You also need to ensure that your brake lights and indicators are in working order and that the car is taxed, insured and the NCT is displayed."

While this may seem like basic information the reality is that up to 20 per cent of people show up to their test without these requirements in place. "In this instance their test can't go ahead," continues Travers. "They will have to re-apply, re-pay their fees and come in again in another 10 weeks. It is absolutely vital to become familiar with RSA booklets such as the 'Preparing for your Driving Test' booklet before the day of your test."

The driving test itself should last approximately 40 minutes and will include questions on the Rules of the Road, as well as demonstration skills such as reversing around a corner, a turnabout in the road, and a hill start. You will also need to know how to perform a check on the tyres, lights, reflectors, engine oil, coolant, windscreen washer fluid, steering, brakes and horn.

Common mistakes made during the driving test

- Inadequate observation when moving off, at junctions, at roundabouts and when changing lanes
- Failure to anticipate the actions of other drivers
- Incorrect road position on straight, bends and when turning, at roundabouts or overtaking
- Incorrect, inadequate or inappropriate use of mirrors and signals
- Non-compliance with traffic controls such as road signs and markings
- Excessive speed for the road or traffic conditions
- Lack of confidence in the reverse and turnabout manoeuvres

Whether you pass your test or not, it is vitally important, says Travers to take heed of the tester's feedback. "Your tester will focus on the key learning points that you need to address, so if the issue with your drive today was that you were blind to stop signs, he would focus primarily on that and identify the other areas that you need to concentrate on.



You've passed! What next?

AFTER you pass your test, the tester will issue you with a Certificate of Competency, which you can then exchange for a full driving licence from the licensing authorities.



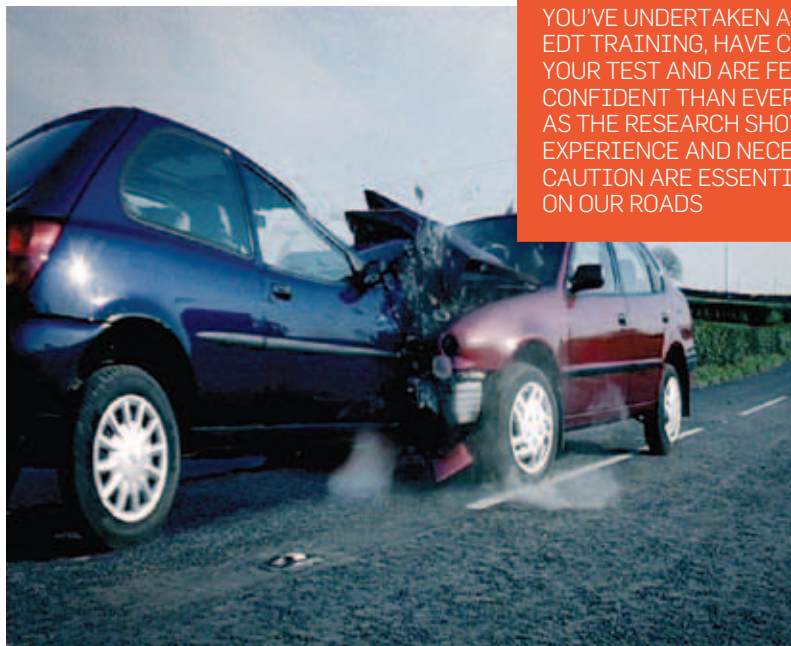
On the day of your test

Scan here to find out what to expect on the day of your driving test



During your driving test

Scan here to view a video of a candidate undergoing her driving test



YOU'VE UNDERTAKEN ALL YOUR EDT TRAINING, HAVE COMPLETED YOUR TEST AND ARE FEELING MORE CONFIDENT THAN EVER. HOWEVER, AS THE RESEARCH SHOWS, EXPERIENCE AND NECESSARY CAUTION ARE ESSENTIAL TO SAFETY ON OUR ROADS

Experience is the key

ROAD crashes are the biggest single killer of young people worldwide. It is vital that young and inexperienced drivers are aware of, and take seriously, the risks and hazards that every driver encounters on the roads. It is important to remember that, as the research shows, young drivers, charged with the excited energy of driving for the first time, are far more likely to be involved in a crash than their older counterparts.

And the studies back this up. Irish research, completed in 2011, showed that 17 – 20 year old drivers had a 12.9% of risk of being killed in a road collision. When you compare those figures to the 2.5% risk of 25 – 29 year olds and the 1.7% risk of 30 – 39 year olds you can see that there is a considerable discrepancy.

But it is not only in Ireland where younger inexperienced drivers are at the most risk.

Research conducted in the UK makes for interesting reading. Results from studies there show that an 18-year-old driver is more than three times as likely to be involved in

a crash as a 48 year-old and that one in five new drivers has a crash within six months of passing their test.

Why are young and inexperienced drivers more at risk?

It is common that inexperienced drivers become complacent or even arrogant about their skills. It is this kind of thinking which can put lives at risk. The first few years of driving are crucial in determining the crash liability of new drivers. Increasing age also results in a reduction in crashes, although the magnitude of this effect in the first few years of driving is considerably less than the effect of added experience. Taking the time to drive in a safe and socially responsible way will dramatically reduce the risk for newly qualified drivers, their friends and family.

But what is it about the lack of experience that leaves young drivers at such a high risk on the roads. It is clear that over-confidence plays a part. Young people quickly pick



up the physical skills of driving and, as a result, feel they have mastered it. Thus, they are left feeling very confident about their driving ability. This means young drivers may drive unsafely, but think that they are actually in control. Many young people also admit they think crashes only happen to other people. The research shows that younger and more inexperienced drivers are more likely to take risks. People do not generally take risks in a deliberate way - risk taking creeps in where new drivers do not take the time to keep themselves safe.

Inexperience can also affect a driver's ability to assess hazards and spot them quickly and effectively. Although some hazards on the road are easy to identify, there are some situations where hazards are not immediately obvious. Your driving instructor will have taught you to look forward and anticipate hazards; drivers who do so are among the safest drivers of all. Looking ahead and anticipating what might happen will not only help keep you safe but will save you money.

REMEMBER –Concentration – Courtesy and Consideration help keep everyone safe

Driving is a new experience for young people and they can tend to use most of their mental energy on the immediate tasks such as gear changing, rather than general observation of the potential hazards. If there is a sudden need to avoid a situation, young people may be less able to deal with it due to their mental energy being focused on other tasks. The good news is you can substantially reduce the danger during the period of highest risk by continuing to drive the way you were taught.

The three Cs will help. CONCENTRATION, CONSIDERATION, COURTESY were all things we learned from a very young age. Carrying those skills into using the road will help to keep you out of trouble and more importantly help to make you a safe and socially responsible driver.

KNOW THE LOWER DRINK DRIVE LIMITS AND THE NEW PENALTIES

Under the new limits if the level of alcohol present in the body (*Blood Alcohol Concentration or BAC*) is between:

**50mg
& 80mg**



The driver will be arrested, brought to a Garda Station and required to provide evidential breath or blood or urine specimens. In all cases where the BAC is between 50 and 80mg, the driver will be served with a fixed penalty notice and receive a fixed penalty of €200 and 3 penalty points. Points will remain on a licence record for a period of three years. Any driver accumulating 12 points in a three year period will be disqualified from driving for a period of 6 months.

Under the new limits if the level of alcohol present in the body (*Blood Alcohol Concentration or BAC*) is between:

**80mg
& 100mg**



The driver will be arrested, brought to a Garda Station and required to provide evidential breath or blood or urine specimens. In all cases where the BAC is between 80 and 100mg, the driver will be served with a fixed penalty notice and receive a fixed penalty of €400 and the person will be disqualified from holding a driving licence for a period of 6 months.

Under the new limits if the level of alcohol present in the body for learner, newly qualified or professional drivers (*Goods, Bus, Public Service Vehicle e.g. Taxi*) is between:

**20mg
& 80mg**



The driver will be arrested, brought to a Garda Station and required to provide evidential breath or blood or urine specimens. In all cases where the BAC is between 20 and 80mg, the driver will be served with a fixed penalty notice and receive a fixed penalty of €200 and the person will be disqualified from holding a driving licence for a period of 3 months.

For further details visit rsa.ie

RSA

Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre
Road Safety Authority



NEVER EVER DRINK & DRIVE

"WAITING TIMES OR ACCESS TO QUALITY TUITION ARE NO LONGER EXCUSES FOR DRIVING LONG TERM OR BREACHING THE TERMS OF THE LEARNER PERMIT."

Enforcement activity

THE Gardai have begun to mount regular enforcement campaigns targeting non-compliance by Learner Drivers of the terms of their permits.

Four operations were held in 2012 targeting learner permit holders and their legal obligations to have a fully qualified driver with them at all times, plus the display of L plates. Although the compliance rate has increased since the first operation in March, it remains at an unacceptably high level, and this will continue to be addressed in future Garda operations.

Additional and regular enforcement is planned in 2013.

The results of the four enforcement campaigns found that of the 4,423 learner drivers stopped at checkpoints, 1,610 (36%) were driving unaccompanied and 1,136 (26%) did not display 'L' plates.

These requirements are there for the Learner Driver's and every road user's protection and there will be a continued focus on ensuring our learner driver's do it right.

Historically learner drivers may have blamed waiting times for a driving test as an excuse for driving unaccompanied or without 'L' plates. Waiting times or access to quality tuition are no longer excuses for driving long term or breaching the terms of the Learner Permit. There are almost 2,000 Approved Driving Instructors (ADI) nationwide, registered with the RSA, who are able to provide a high standard of tuition to candidates. Waiting times for the driving test have been cut dramatically and are below a ten week national average and in some places this waiting time is lower.

If someone needs an urgent driving test, for example to secure a job, the RSA can prioritise that candidate for a test. There is also an issue of parental responsibility involved and the RSA would also appeal directly to the parents of young learner drivers to stop turning a blind eye to what's going on and do not allow their son or daughter access to a vehicle, unless they are accompanied and have 'L' plates displayed.



Are you ready for your driving test?

YOU'VE put in the time and effort with your Approved Driving Instructor, you are progressing through the Essential Driver Training/Initial Basic Training programme and your ADI and you both feel ready for your test. However, as the day of your test approaches there are certain considerations to be made.

With the average waiting times for driving tests getting shorter – the average waiting time is just ten weeks – the Road Safety Authority is urging people to wait until they and their Approved Driving Instructor feel that they are ready to sit the driving test. That said there is much more to preparing for the driving test than considering yourself a competent driver.

In 2011, 16.73 per cent of booked driving tests were not conducted for a number of reasons including a fault with the vehicle presented for the test, documentation not being in order and the candidate not turning up or being late. When a test is not conducted, it not only means that waiting times for learner drivers who are ready to take the test are longer but the candidate has to reapply and thus pay the fee again.

So how should you prepare for the driving test?

The first step is to ensure that your car is roadworthy well in advance of your driving test as your car may require maintenance. This means ensuring that the brake, indicator lights, handbrake and seatbelts are working efficiently. Tyres should meet the legal minimum tread depth (1.6mm for a car and 1.6mm for a motorbike).

In addition to the car being in working order a candidate must ensure that they have the correct documentation with them on the day of the test. In 2011, for example, 595 failed to take their test due to not having a valid NCT disc, 328 arrived with no L plates, 533 did not have valid tax, 724 had no valid insurance and 829 did not have a learner permit. The above are all required legally to drive your car and so are mandatory for completing the driving test.

While it may seem obvious the last step is to ensure you are in the waiting room of the correct Driving Test Centre before your driving test. Would you believe that 677 tests were not carried out in 2011 due to candidates being late? This is one of the simplest steps you can take in getting your driving licence so it's important to ensure you give yourself plenty of time to get to your test centre on time. Many test takers want time to relax, or go to the toilet before going out on test so give yourself plenty of time.



“It can happen to anyone”

The tragic effects of a fatal crash on one Irish family

MEGHANN Scully's brother Marcus was a local sporting hero, a keen academic who had dreams of becoming a vet and someone who could make friends easily. Being two and half years older than her, Meghann looked up to her brother who “seemed as though he could do everything.”

Tragically in 2005 while travelling home from rugby training with his friend, Marcus was involved in a car crash. The driver of the car died instantly and at 2.45am after being taken to a local hospital Marcus took his last breath.

Having just turned 18, eighteen days before the crash, Marcus had so much to live for.

“It was hard to believe that this could happen to someone so young,” says Meghann. “It broke our family apart.”

Meghann who was only 15 at the time has memories of waking in the middle of the night and finding her mother clutching Marcus' clothes. A year and a half later Meghann's father, who had been suffering from illness, died.

“My father never picked up after Marcus died. He just couldn't go on.

“It was a rollercoaster ride for us all. I had to grow up really fast. I felt like I had to step up to the mark.”

Feeling as though she had to hold everything together for her family, it was some time before Meghann grieved and came to terms with the reality that Marcus was dead.

“When Marcus died we were kind of in a bubble. We were in denial and it was difficult to move on with our own lives.”

As the years went on Meghann realised that she wanted to do something positive to honour Marcus memory.

“During my Masters I made a radio documentary about Marcus. It told the story from when Marcus was born to the night he died and how it has affected our family since.”

When the radio documentary was complete Meghann received an overwhelming response from her lecturers and family. She then came up with the idea to share her story with school children in an effort to educate them on the realities of road danger.

“When young people hear guards and teachers 'lecturing' them about road safety they tend to tune out. I think the reaction to me has been so positive because I'm just a normal girl being as honest as I can about how speed has affected me and my family.

“When you get your first car, you are so excited, you want



to take your friends everywhere and impress them with your driving. When you do that you can be inclined to take chances but you have to realise that that's someone else's son or daughter in your car.

“People don't think it will happen to them but it can happen to anyone. I never thought that I would be standing in front of a congregation giving a eulogy at the age of 15.”

If Meghann had one piece of advice to offer road users it would be to take caution on the road and to live every day to the full.

“The thing that always strikes people is how much Marcus had to live for. When he died his dreams died and in a way my family's did too. I used to imagine visiting him and my nieces and nephews when I was older. That's not going to happen; I'm never going to have nieces and nephews now.

“We all think we are invincible but we are not. I try to do something every day that makes me happy or makes a difference. Going through something like that you are reminded how short life is.”

Do all you can to learn to drive safely and stay safe. The Road Safety Authority have developed this booklet to help learners learn effectively. Their advice on a blended mix of formal driving lessons together with plenty of practise with a Sponsor is proven to work best. Follow their advice and be a safe and socially responsible driver – it won't guarantee your safety but will go a long way towards keeping you safe for you, your family and friends.

Understanding the impact

EVERY driver must be aware of the impact that each car journey has on the environment. From day one, it is important for learners to know about and understand the environmental impact of driving and how that might be mitigated by the use of vehicles and the vehicle controls.

It is a fact that vehicle size, engine size, vehicle design, fuel type and the way a vehicle is driven impact on the environment so drivers have a social responsibility to consider whether or not a journey is necessary before setting out.

Reducing the environmental impact of driving

Both your choice of car and your driving style impact on the amount of fuel you use and the amount of pollution you produce. However, there are a number of ways to reduce the environmental impact of driving. These tips will not only have a more positive effect on the environment, but they may also save you a great deal of money in the long run.

By accelerating and braking smoothly, by being more attentive, looking further ahead and by better planning you can considerably reduce fuel consumption and emissions. Remember to avoid using air conditioning when it is not necessary, to remove excess luggage from the car and empty roof racks which are not being used. A fully loaded boot not only means increased fuel

consumption but can also mean increased tyre wear.

Driving at 50km/h is more fuel efficient than driving at 70 km/h, so remember – don't rush. You can reduce the distance you drive by combining trips and planning your routes. Finally, switch off your engine whenever you stop for more than a minute and be sure to have your car serviced regularly.

Choosing your car

Did you know that one of the greatest factors influencing the environmental impact of your driving is your choice of car? A 4x4 car can produce as much as three times the emissions as the most efficient small car.

So, it's very important to choose a car to suit your everyday needs, rather than for rare occurrences. For that off-road trip you want to take for your holiday, why not hire a 4x4 for the duration of the holiday?

By driving a smaller, more efficient car the rest of the year, you could save more than enough money to pay for this. Road Tax is also considerably lower on more efficient cars. A revised rates structure for vehicles taxed on the basis of CO2 emissions was announced in Budget 2013.

Euro NCAP

If you are considering buying a new car you should examine

IT IS A FACT THAT VEHICLE SIZE, ENGINE SIZE, VEHICLE DESIGN, FUEL TYPE AND THE WAY A VEHICLE IS DRIVEN **IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT** SO DRIVERS HAVE A SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO CONSIDER WHETHER OR NOT A JOURNEY IS NECESSARY BEFORE SETTING OUT.



closely information regarding the safety performance of individual car models.

Euro NCAP provides a realistic and independent measurement of the safety performance of some of the most popular cars sold in Europe. They crash test vehicles in order to provide accurate information for anyone buying a car about the safety performance of their cars. Consumers then have the opportunity to compare the safety performance of similar sized vehicles with their chosen vehicle.

Established in 1997, Euro NCAP is backed by seven European Governments, the European Commission and motoring and consumer organisations in every EU country.

By law, all new car models must pass certain safety tests before they are sold. But legislation provides a minimum statutory standard of safety for new cars; it is the aim of Euro NCAP to encourage manufacturers to go beyond these minimum requirements.

If you want to know the safety performance of your current or future car - visit www.euroncap.com

Planning your journey

Every driver must know how to prepare for a journey. This includes understanding route planning, knowing how to load a vehicle appropriately and giving attention to weather

forecasts and radio announcements.

It is important to take into account road works, events, diversions and other factors that might make your journey take more time. Be sure to also plan for breaks and refuelling stops on a journey.

Before you set off, it is important to check that your car is in roadworthy condition. To do this, check your tyre pressure and that you have the required tread on your tyres. The RSA recommends replacing tyres when the tread depth falls below 3 mm. Next, make sure that your coolant fluids are at the required levels and that you have the proper level of oil in your engine (by using the dipstick).

Get someone to test all your vehicle's lights while walking around your vehicle.

Make sure your spare tyre is in good condition, inflated to the recommended pressure and that your wheel spanner and jack are operational. You may also want to carry a tyre inflator kit. Responsible drivers have hi-viz vests or jackets permanently stored in their vehicle. Best advice is to carry one for each seat in your vehicle.

Carrying a First Aid kit and two warning triangles may be of great assistance if you should encounter difficulties.

Finally, make sure also that you are displaying your up to date car insurance, motor tax and NCT discs.

New learner penalty point increases

THE RULES OF THE ROAD ARE THERE TO PROTECT AND NOT TO ACT AS AN INCONVENIENCE. BREAKING THESE RULES AND NOT DRIVING IN A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE MANNER CAN LEAD TO PENALTIES. SO, IT IS IN EVERYONE'S INTEREST THAT ALL MOTORISTS DRIVE IN A RESPONSIBLE FASHION.

A target was published in the RSA's Road Safety Strategy, 2007-2012. That target was to reduce road fatalities to no greater than 60 fatalities per million by the end of 2012 – equivalent to 252 deaths per annum. In 2012, there were 162 road deaths in Ireland, the lowest annual total since records began in 1959. It represents 36 road deaths per million.

The good news is that Ireland's road safety record has improved dramatically in recent years and we are now among the safest countries in the EU.

But while the trend is currently a positive one, the RSA recognises that road death and casualty reduction needs to be a permanent phenomenon, not just a one-off and they will be endeavouring to ensure that the numbers keep shrinking.

The current Road Safety Strategy for 2013 – 2020 targets not only road deaths, but in particular Serious Injury crashes. The way we learn to drive must play its part in achieving further reductions.

The Penalty Points System

A penalty point is essentially a formal reprimand by the Gardai endorsed on your driving licence record that shows you are guilty of a specific driving offence.

There are 48 road traffic offences that attract penalty points.

The penalty points system has been designed with drivers' best interests in mind.

Introduced in October 2002, the aim of penalty points is to improve driver behaviour and reduce levels of death and serious injury on Irish roads.

The system is underpinned by a government strategy to significantly reduce deaths and injuries on Irish roads and bring Irish road safety in line with international best practise.

As of the 31st March 2013, the number of learner drivers with penalty points endorsed on their licence is 31,186. The number of fully licenced drivers is 455,907.

Penalty points remain on the licence for a period of three years. Any driver who accumulates 12 penalty points within any given three-year period will be automatically disqualified from driving for six months. The driver is required to surrender his/her licence to the appropriate licensing authority within 14 days of receiving notification of the disqualification. It is an offence not to surrender a licence.

It is also an offence to drive while disqualified.

Written warning

If you have committed a driving offence that incurs penalty points you will receive a written notification informing you that points are being added to your driving licence.

This notice will include details of your name, address, date time and location of the driving offence concerned. It will also confirm that you either paid the fixed charge for the offence or were convicted in the court of such offence. The notice will also contain a date on which the notice was issued to you. This is the important date as the points will only be added to your licence 28 days after this date.

NEW PENALTY POINT OFFENCES ARE ON THE WAY TARGETING LEARNER DRIVERS BUT ARE DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE SAFER DRIVING AND REDUCE CASUALTIES ON OUR ROADS

OFFENCES INCURRING PENALTY POINTS These are summary descriptions of the offences and not a legal interpretation.	Penalty points on payment	Penalty points on conviction	Fixed Charge €	
			Amount paid in 28 days	Amount paid in next 28 days
Using vehicle (car) without (NCT) test certificate	m*	5	Court Fine	
Driving vehicle before remedying dangerous defect	m*	3	Court Fine	
Driving dangerously defective vehicle	m*	5	Court Fine	
Using vehicle without certificate of roadworthiness	m*	5	Court Fine	
Bridge strikes, etc.	m*	3	Court Fine	
Holding a mobile phone while driving	2	4	60	90
Dangerous overtaking	2	5	80	120
Failure to act in accordance with a Garda signal	1	3	80	120
Failure to stop a vehicle before stop sign/stop line	2	4	80	120
Failure to yield right of way at a yield sign/yield line	2	4	80	120
Crossing continuous white line	2	4	80	120
Entry by driver into hatched marked area of roadway, e.g. Carriageway reduction lane	1	3	80	120
Failure to obey traffic lights	2	5	80	120
Failure to obey traffic rules at railway level crossing	2	5	80	120
Driving a vehicle on a motorway against the flow of traffic	2	4	80	120
Driving on the hard shoulder on a motorway	1	3	80	120
Driving a vehicle (subject to an ordinary speed limit of 90 kms per hour or less) on the outside lane on a motorway	1	3	80	120
Failure to drive on the left hand side of the road	1	3	60	90
Failure to obey requirements at junctions, e.g. Not being in the correct lane when turning onto another road	1	3	60	90
Failure to obey requirements regarding reversing of vehicles, e.g. Reversing from minor road onto main road	1	3	60	90
Driving on a footpath	1	3	60	90
Driving on a cycle track	1	3	60	90
Failure to turn left when entering a roundabout	1	3	60	90
Driving on a median strip, e.g. Boundary between two carriageways	1	3	60	90
Failure to stop for school warden sign	1	4	80	120
Failure to stop when so required by a member of the Garda Síochána	2	5	80	120
Failure to leave appropriate distance between you and the vehicle in front	2	4	80	120
Failure to yield	2	4	80	120
Driving without reasonable consideration	2	4	80	120
Failure to comply with mandatory traffic signs at junctions	1	3	60	90
Failure to comply with prohibitory traffic signs	1	3	60	90
Failure to comply with keep left/keep right signs	1	3	60	90
Failure to comply with traffic lane markings	1	3	60	90
Illegal entry onto a one-way street	1	3	60	90
Driving a vehicle when unfit	m*	3	Court Fine	
Parking a vehicle in a dangerous position	m*	5	Court Fine	
Breach of duties at an accident	m*	5	Court Fine	
Speeding	2	4	80	120
Driving without insurance	m*	5	Court Fine	
Driver of car or goods vehicle not wearing safety belt	2	4	60	90
Driver permitting person under 17 years of age to occupy a seat when not wearing safety belt	2	4	60	90
Driver of car or goods vehicle permitting child under 3 years of age to travel in it without being restrained by appropriate child restraint	2	4	60	90
Driver of car or goods vehicle permitting child over 3 years of age to travel in it without being restrained by appropriate child restraint	2	4	60	90
Driver of car or goods vehicle permitting child to be restrained by rearward facing child restraint fitted to a seat protected by active frontal air-bag	2	4	60	90
Driver of bus not wearing safety belt	2	4	60	90
Using vehicle – (a) whose weight un-laden exceeds maximum permitted weight, (b) whose weight laden exceeds maximum permitted weight, or (c) any part of which transmits to ground greater weight than maximum permitted weight	1	3	200	300
Driver found to be driving carelessly	m*	5	Court Fine	
Drink Driving Offences(In all cases where the BAC is between 50 mg and 80 mg of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood)	3	n/a	200	
12 Penalty Points = Automatic Disqualification!				
* Mandatory Court Appearance				



Cannabis clouds your judgement.
Don't let it get in the way of your driving.
Don't drive stoned.

