

41. Driving alone

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After an accident many people can be heard to say, 'It wasn't my fault', 'The other car came from nowhere' or 'I didn't see him coming?' This is especially the case in built-up areas, where the majority of accidents happen.

Now that you have passed your test there will often be no one sitting next to you to help out if another driver fails to see you or if another car comes from 'nowhere'. If you do have passengers they might distract you - or try to get you to do things you don't want to like driving fast or racing... From now on you are on your own - you make the decisions and you are responsible for everything that happens when you are driving.

But this is what you've been waiting for and working towards and if you continue to follow the advice given by your instructor and use some basic common sense, you should stay safe behind the wheel.

It's important not to be over-ambitious the first time you go out driving alone. For many drivers, their first solo drive will be in town. If this applies to you, start off on quiet back streets, ideally using roads that you drove on during your driving lessons - these will be familiar to you.

If your first drive is out of town, avoid single track roads where you might meet approaching traffic. Try to find a route with a few easy junctions, starting with left-turns and then moving to right-turns as soon as you feel comfortable.

Choose a route that keeps you within a twenty-minute walk from your home or destination; that way, if you feel uncomfortable you can park the car and walk. Feeling comfortable about driving unaccompanied is much more important than covering a long distance. Don't drive for more than about 20 minutes, especially if there is busy traffic about. A short trip to visit a friend or to the shops (where there is easy parking!) would be ideal.

It's also a good idea to choose a quiet time for your first drive alone - early on a Sunday morning is ideal. If you can't wait that long, at least try to avoid the rush hour.

Enjoy your driving, stay safe ... And remember to recommend your driving instructor, and the SmartDriving and DriverActive web sites to your friends!



Lesson Notes:

