

P DRIVERS AND PEER PASSENGERS

More young people die from road crashes than any other unintentional causes in Victoria. Helping your child make safe choices about travelling is important.

What are the facts?

- Young drivers aged 18 to 25 years represent about 27 per cent of all drivers killed, but only around 13 per cent of Victorian licensed drivers.
- Young driver fatal crash risk increases by four times when carrying multiple passengers compared to driving alone or with only one passenger. Around 26 percent of first-year P plate drivers involved in fatal crashes are carrying two or more passengers yet only nine percent of probationary driving involves carrying multiple passengers.

What are the rules?

Probationary drivers in their first year of driving are only permitted to carry one peer aged (16-21 years) passenger. What can parents do?

Research shows that parents continue to have a high level of influence on their children into their early 20's. And, contrary to what most parents believe, young people generally have a high level of respect and consideration for their parents.

If your child is travelling independently to social functions you can assist them to make safe travel plans for getting to the function and especially getting home. This is particularly important if there is likely to be alcohol consumed at the gathering. Some ways to assist your child to get home safely are:

- drive your child to and from any events - this might involve staying up late, but it does ensure that they will get home safely
- arrange car-pooling with other parents
- provide taxi vouchers or money to be used to get home.

Develop a back-up safety plan with your child. This might mean that they are able to call you at any time if they feel unsafe or get stranded without a safe way of getting home.

Ensure your child has strategies for avoiding getting into risky situations. This involves being able to refuse a ride from a driver who might have been drinking or using other drugs, has too many passengers or is likely to drive in a dangerous manner. They also need to be encouraged to ask to get out of a car if they feel unsafe. It is important to have this discussion with your child and reassure them that they can contact you if they become stranded.

It is also important that your child understands how to be a safe passenger. This involves not only wearing seatbelts, but not distracting the driver and certainly not encouraging them to speed or break the law.

Parents should also have a discussion with their children about being a good friend in certain situations. This might mean looking after a mate who has had too much to drink, and ensuring they get home safely. It might also mean encouraging others not to drive while intoxicated. This can be difficult for a young person, but highlighting the risks and stressing the value of friendship might help encourage them to act to protect their friends.

Other resources

- [GLS Fact Sheet](#)
- [Probationary Kit](#)
- [Lessons From the Road](#)

“Although my daughter does not drive, many of her friends have just got their licences. We have talked about different scenarios for making sure she is safe when out with them and we have an arrangement whereby she can call me at any time and I will come and get her wherever she is with no questions asked.”

“My son is only 16, but he and his friends have started going to parties on weekends. A few of his friends’ parents and I usually work out a car pooling system, so one of us will take them and someone else will pick them up. While the boys don’t think it is all that cool to be picked up, that is the condition of them going out.”

17 Aug 2019

<http://www.saferpplaters.com.au/peer-pressure/facts>

