



# Crash Risk Alert

1

## *Young drivers*

Getting a drivers licence can give you a real sense of freedom but you need to be aware that there are risks, especially in the first 2 years of driving as you get more driving experience.

**Why are young drivers at risk?** Research shows there are a variety of reasons including:

- lack of driving experience
- over confidence about driving ability and underestimating dangers on the road
- carrying friends as passengers – they distract the driver and sometimes encourage the driver to take risks
- deliberate risk-taking behaviours – speeding, not wearing seatbelts, burn-outs, tailgating
- driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs
- busy lifestyle – which means they may drive tired

**When are they at risk?** Most road crashes involving young drivers happen over the weekend, in the late afternoon and night.

**What type of crashes are they involved in?** They are more often single-vehicle crashes. Young drivers are also over-represented in head-on, overtaking and rear-end crashes.

**Who is most at risk?** Young men are the most at risk of being involved in a serious crash, also at risk are Indigenous young people and young people living in rural and remote areas. The biggest killer of young drivers is speeding- 80 percent of those killed are young men.

- Of all hospitalisations of young Australians, almost half are drivers involved in a road traffic crash and another quarter are passengers
- Young drivers aged 17-25 years represent 25% of all Australian road deaths, but are only approx. 13% of the licensed driver population.
- A 17 year old driver with a P1 licence is four times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash than a driver over 26 years



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2

## *How can you reduce the risks?*

1. **Concentrate** – driving is a complex task –focus on it and don't let yourself be distracted.
2. **Always wear a seatbelt** – it's the primary safety feature - air bags are designed to work with the seatbelt not on their own.
3. **Don't drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs** – you need to be totally clear headed to drive. Driving the day after partying you may still be over the limit.
4. **Two-second gap** – always maintain a two-second gap from the vehicle ahead and when it's raining or foggy night the gap should be four seconds.
5. **Anticipate** - expect the unexpected and be aware that other drivers may forget to indicate, or to look to see if other cars are close by.
6. **Don't drive tired** - driving tired reduces your ability to focus and slows your reflexes.
7. **Scan ahead** – constantly scan the road ahead and to the side – look out for other vehicles, cyclist and pedestrians. Also check your mirrors every five seconds or so.
8. **Drive at or lower than the posted speed limit** - even a few kilometres per hour above the speed limit greatly increases the risk of a crash.
9. **Don't cut in front of vehicles** – especially trucks or buses as they need a lot more space to stop in comparison to cars.
10. **Adjust the car controls and plan the route while you're parked** – set your air conditioning and music before driving.