

# ROAD SAFETY IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Road trauma is the cause of one of the world's greatest public health problems, and every year world wide, young drivers are over-represented in road traffic injuries<sup>15</sup>. It is the lack of hazard perception skills, risk awareness and self-assessment that makes young drivers crash<sup>16</sup>.

The WA Graduated Driver Training and Licensing System (licensing system) and the WA State Government's *Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy*<sup>17</sup> identify young novice drivers as having<sup>18</sup>:

- A greater chance of serious injury and death than any other age group.
- A greater risk of crashing within the first six months on P plates, particularly young men.
- An increased exposure to risk due to a combination of inexperience and overconfidence.

One of the most compelling pieces of evidence to address these risks, is that extensive and varied driving practice under supervision can significantly reduce the crash rate for Provisional drivers<sup>19</sup>. This important protective measure is reinforced throughout the *Keys for Life* program and is an integral part of *Towards Zero* and the licensing system.

## Towards Zero and the Safe System Approach

*Towards Zero* is Western Australia's road safety strategy for 2008 to 2020. It is anchored in evidence-based research and provides a framework for both

Government and community to work in partnership and to achieve a long-term reduction in road-related deaths and serious injuries. A fundamental principle of this strategy is the Safe System approach where all road users have a shared responsibility to comply with the rules. A Safe System recognises that humans are fallible, they make errors, and can only endure limited forces in a crash before being seriously injured or killed. A Safe System is about developing a safer road network with safer vehicles and a better understanding of the complex interactions between road users, roads and roadsides, vehicles and travel speeds.

A Safe System aims to prevent crashes from occurring, reduce the severity of crashes, and the role of human error. The cornerstones of *Towards Zero* – Safe Vehicles, Safe Road Users, Safe Roads and Roadsides, and Safe Speeds – have the potential to reduce serious injury and death in Western Australia by the year 2020.

## WA Graduated Driver Training and Licensing System

The licensing system is designed to ensure that novice drivers gain a wide range of supervised driving experience over time, under different road, traffic, time of day and weather conditions, and before driving solo<sup>20</sup>. The system is graduated to ensure that novice drivers learn to drive and successfully complete driving tasks in stages. It is described in more detail on page 28 and 43 and at <http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/licensing/my-drivers-licence.asp>

	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6	FULL LICENCE
15 years minimum	16 years minimum	16 years minimum	16½ years minimum	16½ years minimum	17 years minimum	17 years minimum	19 years minimum
							Can supervise a learner driver after 4 years.
	Learner's Permit (L plates)	Learn to drive (Log Book)	Hazard Perception Test (HPT)	Gain driving experience (Log Book)	Practical Driving Test (PDA)	Provisional Licence (P plates)	

<sup>15</sup> Borg, H.Y., 2006, Injury Prevention, 12 (Suppl 1): i15-i18, Reducing crashes and injuries among young drivers: what kind of prevention should we be focusing on?

<sup>16</sup> Curry, A. E., Halfeltz, J., Kallan, M. J., Winston, F. K., and Durbin, D. R. Accident Analysis & Prevention, Vol. 43, No. 4, 2011, pp1285-81290, Prevalence of teen driver errors leading to serious motor vehicle crashes

<sup>17</sup> Sensemick, T., 2004, Review of Literature regarding national and international young driver training, licensing and regulatory systems: Report to Western Australia Road Safety Council. Victoria, Monash University Accident Research Centre.

<sup>18</sup> Road Safety Council, 2008, WA Road Safety Strategy, Towards Zero Getting there Together 2008-2020

<sup>19</sup> Office of Road Safety website <http://www.ors.wa.gov.au/Statistics/Annual-Crash-Statistics>

<sup>20</sup> Langford, J., 2009, Curtin - Monash Accident Research Centre (C-MARC), Fact Sheet No. 3 Improving Novice Driver Safety Through Graduated Licensing.