

# The Young Driver

November 2020

ISO ED 00053 V2 2019 (68)

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Image: gettyimages.com

Motor vehicle–related injuries to the young adult / young driver group continue to be of paramount importance to our society.

The young, novice driver, lacks the experience and ability to perform many of the complex tasks of ordinary driving. Compared with experienced drivers, the young / novice driver is less proficient in detecting and responding to hazards and controlling the vehicle, especially at higher speeds.

### Contributors to Young, Novice Driver Crashes and Injury

- Lack of driver experience
- Failure to use safety belts
- Inadequate hazard-perception skills
- Distraction (cell phone, food, drink, music)
- Transporting teenaged or young passengers
  - Night-time driving
- Speeding and reckless driving
  - Fatigue
- Unsafe vehicle choice
  - Alcohol use
- Drug or medication use
- Inadequate parental limit setting

**Young drivers are encouraged to follow these tips that demonstrate responsibility and maturity and could save a life:**

1. Wear a seat belt and remind passengers to buckle up during every ride.
2. When driving, “park” cell phones with a passenger or in the boot of the car.
3. Practice driving on a variety of roads and traffic patterns, at different times of day and in different weather conditions.
4. Scan for road hazards and follow traffic signs.
5. Watch the speed and keep a safe distance between moving vehicles.
6. Call a friend or parent for a ride when feeling tired, upset or following having had an alcoholic beverage.
7. Recognize and avoid distractions inside of the vehicle like carrying too many passengers; adjusting the radio, music player or GPS system; and eating.
8. Limit driving at night.
9. Limit the number of passengers. Only have 1 or 2 passengers in the car until the young, novice drivers have gained more experience.



#### Important Emergency Numbers

Netcare 911: 082 911 • SAPS: 10111  
Injury.Prevention@netcare.co.za