

# Cockpit Drill

## DOOR

Check that it's firmly closed.

## HANDBRAKE OR PARKING BRAKE

Check that the handbrake is on by trying to pull it up further.

## SEAT

Make sure it's in the best position for you. You should be able to see clearly in all directions and reach all the controls easily. You can test this by pushing the clutch pedal to the floor – your knees should be slightly bent. Your elbows should also be slightly bent when your back is resting against the back of the seat.

## MIRRORS

You should be able to glance in your mirrors without moving your head too much.

Your interior mirror should be adjusted to give you the best view through the rear window.

The exterior mirrors should be set up so you can see a small part of your own car, but mostly the road behind.

## SEATBELT

Put on your own seatbelt, making sure it's comfortable and not twisted, and ensure that all other occupants are suitably restrained.

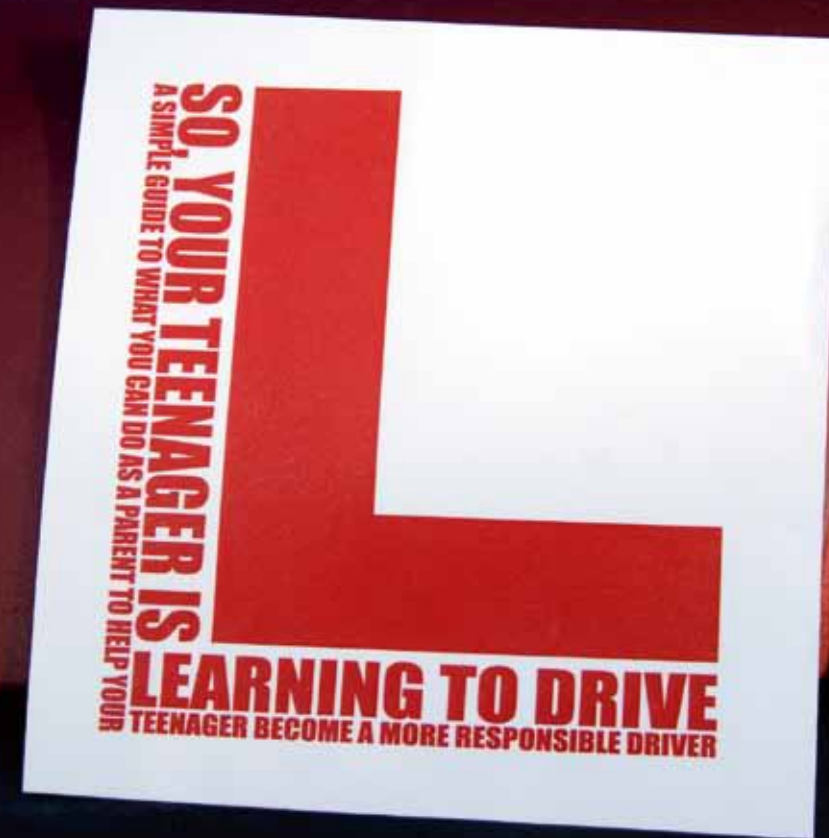
## GEARS

Make sure the gear lever is in neutral by shaking it left and right.

Finally, start the engine. Some vehicles may need a little pressure on the accelerator. Release the key as soon as the engine starts.

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Website: [www.roadsafetyscotland.org.uk](http://www.roadsafetyscotland.org.uk)



*Learning to drive is one of life's milestones.*

**If your son or daughter is thinking about the day they pass their driving test then this booklet is for you.**



Learning to drive is one of life's milestones. Driving brings freedom and independence, and your teenager no longer needs to rely on you for a lift.

In a very short space of time, your son/daughter is expected to learn skills which will last them for the rest of their lives so, while it may be a worrying time for you, you can be certain that most of them look forward to this stage of their lives with enthusiasm and longing.

Many parents want to help their children become safe and confident drivers, capable of handling any situation on modern roads.

Research informs us that the best way to develop safe and competent drivers is through both professional tuition and private practice. However, before looking at that in more detail, we need to look at the full process of learning to drive and when it actually starts.

# Baby driver

Psychologists who specialise in driver behaviour have shown that the process of learning to drive starts at a very young age. Children enjoy imitation, and it is one of the crucial ways in which they learn.

During their early experience as passengers, children begin to develop the attitudes which will influence later driving behaviour. In short, your child may very well become the type of driver you are! For many, that may be a positive influence, but everyone develops bad habits too. In some ways, these may even appear more exciting and appealing, and will be absorbed somewhere in the back of children's minds for a later date.

Be on your guard, and remember that you have the ability to influence their driving behaviour from infancy. In fact, your good example in front of your five year-old may save his/her life many years later.

Road safety education is available to children throughout their school life, and it is important that this theory is supported by good practice when they are with you and other people on the road.



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# Going for lessons

Driving instructors often say they can tell learners who have undertaken cycle training. They arrive with a degree of road sense which is evident very early on.

The training and testing process is managed by the Driving Standards Agency (DSA), and it recommends an average of 45 hours professional tuition combined with about 22 hours of private practice. This represents a substantial investment for most parents, both in terms of time and money.

## Professional Tuition

A fully-qualified driving instructor will have a green octagonal badge fixed to the car windscreen. Trainee instructors display a pink triangular badge, and may also charge for lessons.

Remember, a good driving instructor will not just teach your teenager to pass the test but also help him/her develop safe driver behaviour.

Here is a checklist of some key considerations:

- » Has the instructor been recommended by someone you know?
- » What grade is the instructor?
- » Would a female instructor make him/her feel more at ease?
- » Will it be the same instructor for every lesson?
- » Is the instructor's car similar to your own?
- » Does it have dual controls?
- » Do they give advice on theory tests, and further training?
- » How long, and how much, are the lessons? ('cheap' is not the same as 'good')
- » Are there discounts available for block bookings?
- » Does the instructor run a door-to-door service?



# Practice

Practice is also very important. It would be good to ask if you can sit in on one of the lessons, as current teaching methods may have changed. For further information on practice sessions, visit

[www.rospa.com/roadsafety/info/learners.pdf](http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety/info/learners.pdf)

Here are some suggestions for making the best use of private practice:

- » Talk to the instructor about progress and take advice about when to begin private practice
- » Consider hiring a dual-controlled car until your son/daughter is more confident
- » Ensure the car is properly insured and fully roadworthy (See [www.getinlane.com](http://www.getinlane.com))
- » Do not try to 'fool' the insurance company in any way as this will have serious repercussions for both you and your son/daughter in the event of a claim
- » Plan the sessions in advance, and discuss the route with your son/daughter
- » Consider beginning in a deserted car park, moving to quiet streets to help the learner gain confidence before graduating to busier roads
- » Make sure you have spent some time revising the latest edition of the Highway Code and always set a good example, remembering not to pass on any bad habits  
[www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/index.htm)
- » Always remain calm and communicate clearly, allowing plenty of time, as learners cannot process information in the same way as experienced drivers. Furthermore, remember to encourage rather than criticise

- » Use ordinary, everyday journeys to build up their experience and confidence in traffic by letting them drive
- » If you are supervising a learner driver, the laws relating to mobile phones, speeding, drink- and drug-driving, etc also apply to you
- » If you don't know where to start, the Cockpit Drill on the back cover is as good a place as any
- » Finally, take the instructor's advice about when your son/daughter is ready to sit the practical test.



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# The test

The test may have changed considerably since you took yours. Being familiar with the current test will help you give the best guidance to your son or daughter.

There are two distinct parts: theory and practical. To find out more, visit [www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/LearnerAndNewDrivers/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/LearnerAndNewDrivers/index.htm)

## Theory

The theory test has two separate parts, and candidates must bring both the photocard and paper counterpart of their driving licence. Candidates should also bring their appointment card.

The first part involves 50 multiple-choice questions the last five of which relate to a case study. These must be completed in 57 minutes and candidates must score at least 43 out of 50.

The hazard perception test consists of 14 video clips during which the learner has to identify hazards as they appear – each hazard is worth a maximum of five points and a score of at least 44 out of 75 is required.

Once candidates have completed this part of the test, they have two years in which to complete the practical test.

The DSA, with the Scottish Qualifications Authority, has recently developed a 'Safe Road User Award' and people who complete this may be entitled to sit a reduced-length theory test.

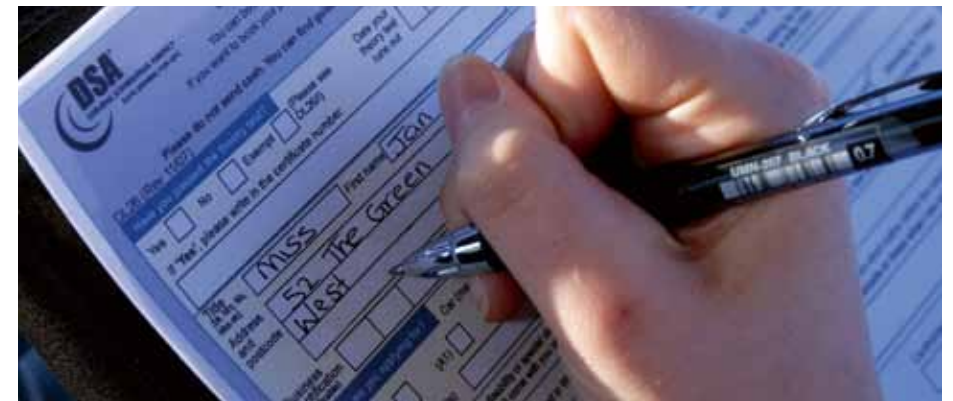
## Practical

Candidates must bring both parts of their driving licence, a theory test pass certificate and appointment card. It is also the candidate's responsibility to make sure there is an appropriately-insured and licensed car, with L plates, that is suitable for the test.

Before being allowed to sit the practical test, the candidate's eyesight will be checked and, if he/she fails, the test will be terminated. If they pass the eyesight test, they will then be asked several vehicle safety check questions.

The test will last approximately 40 minutes and your son/daughter will have to demonstrate that they can drive safely, and complete the manoeuvres which the examiner asks them to do. They will be expected to know the Highway Code and demonstrate this during the test. There will be at least two reversing manoeuvres to complete, and they may also be asked to carry out an emergency stop.

During the test, candidates may make a number of faults but still pass; however, 16 driving faults or one serious or dangerous fault will result in a fail. The candidate will be told immediately after the test whether he/she has passed or failed.



# A positive attitude

The types of behaviour which lead to crashes and injuries have not changed much over the years: the most notable ones are inappropriate and excessive speed, drink- and drug-driving, and failure to wear seatbelts. You should take every opportunity to advise your son/daughter of your concerns about this sort of behaviour.

Research into crashes involving young or new drivers shows that they are often very competent, with a high standard of skill and good reaction times. They believe these will get them out of even the tightest of spots. However, no matter how 'good' they are, the problem is one of inexperience, coupled with the fact that they are still young – they just haven't spent enough time behind the wheel, unsupervised, when they have to make every decision for themselves.



*Young drivers normally drive safely with you in the car, but perhaps not so safely when they are out with friends.*

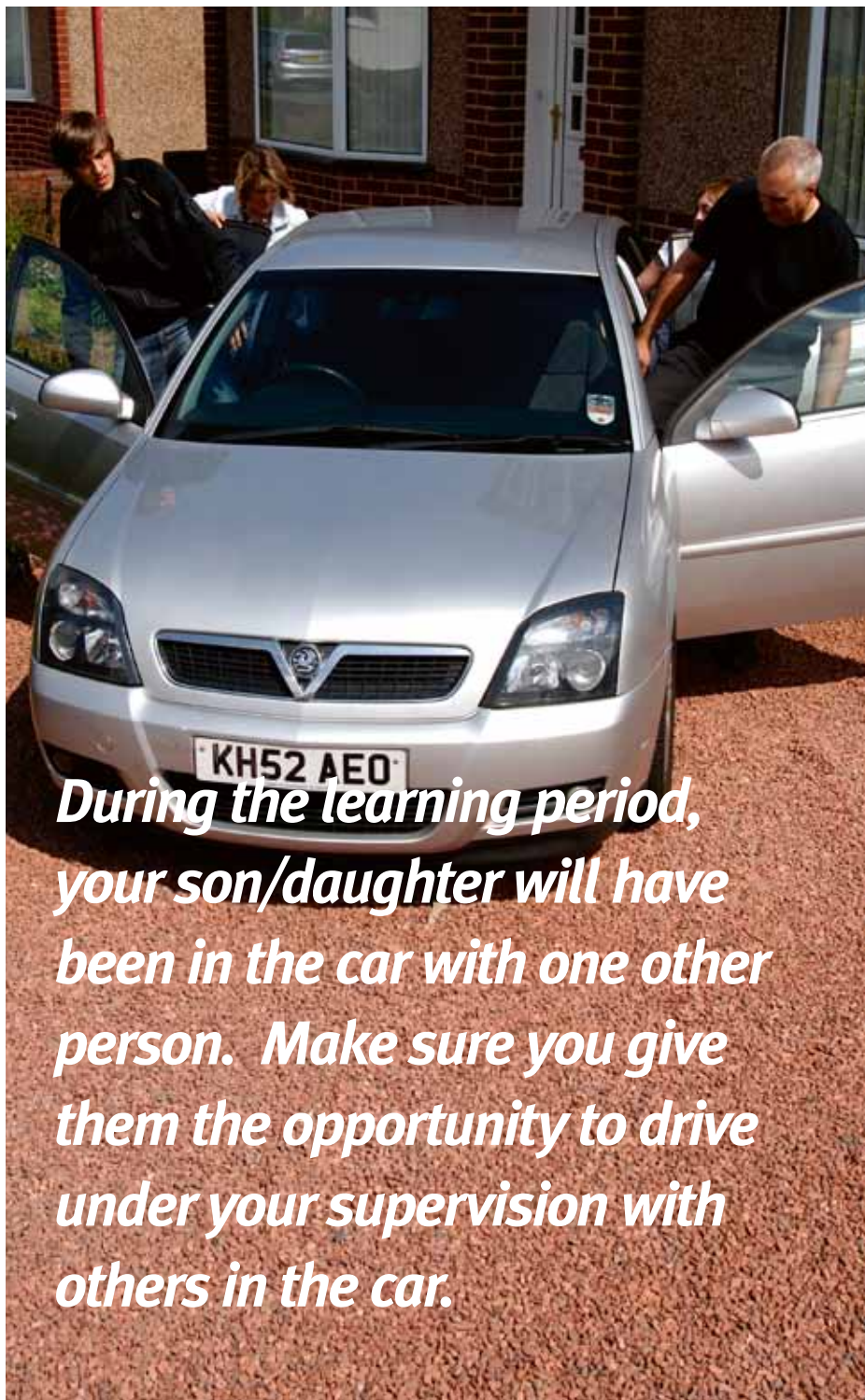
In fact, research suggests that this lack of experience can be overcome by around 1,000 miles of solo driving. By the end of this 1,000 miles, new drivers should have experienced most of the situations which they will face in their future driving career.

However, one-in-five new drivers will be involved in a crash in their first six months driving. So, it is important that you find the right way to tackle the issues to make sure your son/daughter is one of the 'other four'.

Young people often take risks, believing they won't get caught, or that nothing serious, such as a crash, injury or death will happen to them. Research tells us that young people are more likely to change their behaviour if they consider the following: loss of licence, increased insurance premiums, fines, decreased pulling power, loss of job, or struggling to get to work or college daily.

If they get six or more penalty points within two years of passing their test, they will lose their licence, go back to being a learner, and have to go through everything again.

Choosing a car for your son/daughter is also something you should become involved in. Style and price may be uppermost in your and their minds. However, make sure you also check the safety features and ratings for cars you are considering. For more information visit [www.euroncap.com](http://www.euroncap.com).



***During the learning period, your son/daughter will have been in the car with one other person. Make sure you give them the opportunity to drive under your supervision with others in the car.***

# Experience counts

Many people will have heard, or used, the phrase, “Well, you’ve passed your test, now you can learn to drive”, and the 1,000 solo miles mentioned earlier would suggest there’s a lot of truth in that.

After the test, don’t assume your responsibility is over or that you no longer have any influence over your son/daughter in relation to safe driving. This stage is as important as your pre-test role.

One essential thing which they need to be aware of is how differently a car behaves when carrying passengers. Lack of experience of this can often lead to disaster.

The instructor may have offered your son/daughter further training dealing with situations not normally covered in the learning process. Extra sessions on motorway driving, out-of-town driving, etc, could be very useful and should be positively encouraged. Ask the driving instructor about Pass Plus, and visit [www.passplus.org.uk](http://www.passplus.org.uk) for more information.

Advanced driver training is also available from organisations such as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM), and presents a great opportunity to learn techniques to keep them safe on the roads. This training is suitable for all so even you, as an experienced driver, should consider it. More information can be accessed at [www.roadada.org.uk](http://www.roadada.org.uk) and [www.iam.org.uk](http://www.iam.org.uk).

*New drivers find it difficult to ‘do the right thing’ when confronted by pressure from their peers.*

# Encouraging good practice

There are no guarantees, but here are some tips to help ensure your son/daughter stays as safe as possible after passing their test:

- \* Accompany them on the occasional journey or, if you are travelling somewhere together, let them drive
- \* Motorway driving, night driving and adverse weather conditions are all very different driving experiences. Accompany your new driver to offer practical advice and support. This should include different types of road, particularly single-carriageway rural roads which are subject to the national speed limit. Bends on these roads are over-represented in crashes involving new drivers
- \* Consider restricting night-time driving, limiting the number of passengers in the car and insist they only carry passengers who agree to wear seatbelts. These are also critical factors in fatal and serious crashes involving new drivers
- \* Set some ‘house rules’, on speed, alcohol and drugs for example – even small amounts of drink and drugs can affect someone’s ability to drive safely, make sure these are agreed before any use of the family car

- \* Encourage them to switch off mobile phones (even hands-free) and discourage them from taking MP3 players with them. Distraction is also a major factor in road crashes.

It is important to remember that young people often behave differently depending on who is in the car with them. New drivers may need to be very strong to ‘do the right thing’ when confronted by pressure from their peers. It is absolutely vital that you discuss how to handle peer pressure, helping them to develop coping strategies which will not cause them to ‘lose face’. Further information on this can be accessed at:

[www.crashmagnets.com](http://www.crashmagnets.com).

Remember that encouragement works better than criticism, and also that the most dangerous crashes involving young people happen at night, at the weekend, and when they are driving socially, rather than commuting. The severity of these crashes is often related to inappropriate speed choice and not wearing seatbelts.



# Back to Square One

The **New Driver's Act** is like being 'on probation'. For the first two years after passing their test, new drivers have to be very careful not to pick up penalty points. Six penalty points will result in their licence being 'revoked', which can be quite catastrophic for someone who has just spent a considerable amount of time and money getting a licence. It puts them right back to square one. They have to go through the whole process again, from the point where they apply for their provisional licence.

Make sure your son or daughter understands this and how much it will affect their new-found freedom, independence, and possibly even career.

Making the **wrong speed choice** is a major factor in accidents and the resulting casualties. Speed detection is carried out in a number of ways and speed offences carry a range of penalties. However, racing on the public highway will result in a mandatory disqualification.

**Drink-driving** accounts for around one in nine deaths in Scotland. Any drink-driving offence, whether 'very drunk' or 'just over the limit' is treated the same, and results in a minimum 12-month ban, a fine of up to £5,000 and up to six months in prison. It also gives them a criminal record for at least 20 years with serious implications for employment, foreign travel and car insurance.

The police now have tests which are very successful in detecting **drug-drivers**, with penalties exactly the same as those for drink-driving.

**Driving without insurance** is considered a very serious offence and will result in 6-8 penalty points. You should also note that it is now possible to be charged and have your vehicle seized under tough new anti-social behaviour legislation.

There are many useful websites which give excellent information about driving and the law, and you and your new driver will find the Direct Gov site particularly useful (<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/index.htm>).

Unfortunately, not everyone obeys the rules all the time, and things do go wrong. For more information about what happens if you are caught breaking the rules, see the penalties table at [www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/DG\\_069870](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/DG_069870).

Obtaining a driving licence can be very costly, and this table shows just how easy it is to lose it again. For most people, and particularly new drivers, that represents a major loss, so don't risk it.

## Further Information

Please go to these relevant websites for more information:

[www.roadsafetyscotland.org.uk](http://www.roadsafetyscotland.org.uk)  
[www.crashmagnets.com](http://www.crashmagnets.com)  
[www.getinlane.com](http://www.getinlane.com)  
[www.dontriskit.info](http://www.dontriskit.info)  
[www.iam.org.uk](http://www.iam.org.uk)  
[www.roadar.org.uk](http://www.roadar.org.uk)  
[www.rosipa.org.uk](http://www.rosipa.org.uk)

