



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Training needed to tackle aggressive young drivers

Young drivers are 15 per cent more likely to crash than older drivers because of mistakes at the wheel or reacting badly to risks on the road, according to road safety charity the IAM.

The IAM's report, *Licensed to skill, contributory factors in accidents* shows that for the under 20s, 'driver and rider error or reaction factors' account for 50 per cent of crashes. As experience grows this falls to 42 per cent of driver and riders in their 20s and 33 per cent of those aged between 40 and 60.

Factors associated with a more aggressive driving style are also more prevalent in the crashes of younger drivers. These include 'loss of control' (a factor in 14.5 per cent of crashes), 'travelling too fast for the conditions' (10.5 per cent), 'exceeding the speed limit' (six per cent) and 'sudden braking' (five per cent).

Alcohol was a factor for 4.6 per cent of crashes for the 17-24 age group compared to three per cent for the 25 – 69 age groups.

Young car drivers made up 27 per cent of all car driver fatalities, and more than 2000 were killed or seriously injured in 2009¹. With driver and rider error being the top cause of fatal and serious crashes for this group, the message is clear – young drivers need more experience and training.

The IAM is calling for post-test training for young drivers in the first 12 to 18 months after passing their driving test, based on a scheme in Austria that has cut the death rate for young male drivers by 30 per cent.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: “Seventeen to 25-year-olds are only 15 per cent of the driving population and yet they have 30 per cent of all accidents and account for 40 per cent of insurance claims. It’s clear that handing a driving licence over without offering further help is putting far too many young people at unacceptable risk.

“The government, the motoring industry and insurance companies need to work together to ensure that young people continue to improve their driving, particularly after passing their test.

“Post-test training that gives extra hours behind the wheel, including coaching on the critical risks such as rural roads, night time driving, weather and the effect of passengers, will save lives.”

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Notes to editors:

1. [*Licensed to skill, contributory factors in accidents*](#)
2. Reported road accidents involving young car drivers: Great Britain 2009 Road Accident Statistics Factsheet No. 6 – 2009 Department for Transport.
3. In Austria new drivers have at least three further contacts with qualified instructors within 12 to 18 months of passing their driving test. This has successfully reduced the number of deaths of young male drivers by nearly 30 per cent. After taking the test, drivers have an initial assessment to gain knowledge of their experience and to highlight any deficiencies. This is followed by visits to a road safety centre to demonstrate handling in the wet, speed into corners and the impact of speed on stopping distances.

4. The IAM is the UK's largest independent road safety charity, dedicated to improving standards and safety in driving, motorcycling and cycling. The commercial division of the IAM operates through its occupational driver training company IAM Drive & Survive. The IAM has more than 200 local volunteer groups and over 100,000 members in the UK and Ireland. It is best known for the advanced driving test and the advanced driving, motorcycling and cycling courses. Its policy and research division offers advice and expertise on road safety.

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Media contacts:

IAM Press Office – 020 8996 9777

press.office@iam.org.uk

ISDN broadcast lines available

iam.org.uk