

Official Guidance issued from the Driver Standards Agency

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# Supervise a learner driver

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Check if you can supervise friends or family learning to drive a car, what the rules are, how to prepare the car, and how to plan your practice sessions

Applies to England, Scotland and Wales

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DRIVER AND VEHICLE STANDARDS AGENCY

Guidance

# Supervise a learner driver

Check if you can supervise friends or family learning to drive a car, what the rules are, how to prepare the car, and how to plan your practice sessions.

From:

[Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency](#)

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## Eligibility

You can supervise a family member or friend who is learning to drive if:

- you're at least 21 years old
- you're qualified to drive the type of vehicle they're driving - for example, you must have a manual car licence if you're supervising someone in a manual car
- you've had a full driving licence for at least 3 years (from the UK, [the EU](#), Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein)
- you are not currently banned from driving

**It's illegal to accept any payment, including money for fuel, when you're supervising someone who's learning to drive.**

Only approved driving instructors (ADIs) and trainee driving instructors can accept payment for driving lessons.

## Skills and knowledge you need

You must know and be able to apply all the rules in [The Highway Code](#) to supervise a learner. It's regularly updated, so make sure you check for any recent changes.

Ask the learner's driving instructor if they can give you a lesson before you start supervising the learner. This will help you avoid passing on:

- any bad driving habits you've developed
- old techniques that may have been updated since you passed your driving test

## Who you can supervise

The learner must:

- have a valid [UK provisional driving licence](#)
- meet the [minimum eyesight rules](#)
- be at least 17 years old

You can only supervise a learner who is 16 years old if they get, or have applied for, the enhanced rate of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

## Check the car you want to use is suitable

The learner can practise driving with you in any make or model of car.

The car you use must:

- be fitted with [L plates \(or D plates in Wales\)](#) - these must be on the front and the back of the car
- be [taxed](#)
- have a valid MOT ([if it needs one](#))
- be [safe to drive](#) - help the learner check it's safe each time they practise driving
- be [registered with DVLA](#)

You should:

- remove or cover the L (or D) plates when the car is being driven by anyone with a full driving licence
- fit an extra rear-view mirror so you can see behind the car during the practice session

The learner can [take their driving test in the same car they've been practising in](#) if it meets the rules.

## Get car insurance

If the learner will be driving your car, they must either:

- be added to your insurance policy as a 'named driver' - your no claims discount could be affected if they need to make a claim
- take out learner driver insurance to cover them driving your car - check with the provider if any claims they make will affect your no claims discount

If they want to use their own car, they must:

- be the registered keeper
- have their own insurance policy covering them as a learner driver

Some insurance companies require the person supervising a learner driver to be over 25 years old. Check the insurance policy before the learner drives with you.

**A learner driver can get an unlimited fine, a driving ban and up to 8 penalty points if they drive without insurance.**

### Driving lessons with an instructor in the learner's car

Check with the insurance company if the learner intends to have driving lessons with a driving instructor in the learner's car. Some policies do not cover this.

## When to start private practice

Either you or the learner should tell their driving instructor that you intend to do private practice when they reach a suitable level.

The driving instructor can then:

- tell you when the learner is ready to drive under your supervision
- help you plan practice sessions at the right level
- invite you to sit in on one of the learner's lessons (if they agree) before you start supervising - this can help you see how the driving instructor handles situations that you might find difficult

## **Plan your practice sessions**

Before you plan any sessions, ask the learner about their driving skills and what they'd like to focus on. You can ask things like:

- what they've been practising with their driving instructor
- what types of roads they feel ready to drive on - for example, dual carriageways or busy junctions
- if there's anything they want to practise - for example, reversing manoeuvres, roundabouts or following a sat nav

This will help avoid putting them into a situation that they cannot cope with.

Based on what they've said and their driving experience and ability, think about these things when you're planning:

- where you'll ask the learner to drive
- time of day
- manoeuvres they'll practise
- weather conditions

### **Where you'll ask the learner to drive**

You need to think about:

- what types of roads your route will include - for example, country roads or dual carriageways
- what your route will include - for example, roundabouts, traffic lights, junctions, steep hills
- if you'll use a sat nav or not

You must not go on motorways - learner drivers can only drive on motorways with an approved driving instructor (ADI) in a car fitted with dual controls.

### **Time of day**

You need to think about:

- how busy the roads will be - try to avoid busy times of day until the learner is confident in heavier traffic
- how light or dark it is - they should practise driving during the day and at night

### **Manoeuvres they'll practise**

You need to think about:

- which manoeuvres the learner needs to work on
- which car park to use - try to use a quiet area of the car park where there are several bays to choose from
- which roads you can use - try not to disturb other road users or local residents

### **Weather conditions**

You need to think about:

- what the weather is like - they should practise in a range of weather conditions, for example, rain or windy conditions
- if it's safe to drive

Do not drive in severe weather conditions unless your journey is essential.

### **Skills you'll need to help the learner with**

You need to be able help the learner to:

- understand their legal responsibilities as a driver
- carry out safety checks before they drive

- understand how to find and use the controls in the car (for example, the windscreen wipers and indicators)
- move away and stop safely
- judge the car's position on the road
- check their mirrors and blind spots correctly
- signal correctly before turning
- recognise hazards
- drive at an appropriate speed
- navigate junctions, roundabouts and pedestrian crossings
- reverse and turn the car around safely
- understand how to drive safely on different types of road, including dual carriageways and country roads
- drive in different weather conditions
- drive independently by following a sat nav and road signs
- park in car parks and at the side of the road
- drive in the dark
- drive in a fuel-efficient way
- understand how to keep their vehicle and its contents secure

### **Help on supervising these skills**

'The Official DVSA Guide to Learning to Drive' has detailed advice about how you can help the learner with each of these skills and what to expect.

The book has over 60 pages of advice and tips to help you plan your practice sessions and supervise the learner.

Enter the code **TP20** at the checkout to get 20% off the cost of the book.

[Buy 'The Official DVSA Guide to Learning to Drive'.](#)

### **Check how you're both feeling**

Consider rearranging the practice session if either you or the learner are feeling angry, sad, stressed or tired.

Driving or supervising a learner when you're angry, sad or stressed can be as dangerous as driving when you're tired. Emotions can be even more distracting than using a mobile phone while driving.

## During your practice sessions

As a full licence holder, you're in charge of the car, even when the learner is driving.

### Rules you must follow

Sit in the front passenger seat of the car while you're supervising the learner.

You must not:

- [hold and use a mobile phone, sat nav or tablet](#) - it's illegal to use one in your hand for any reason, including texting, making calls, taking photos and looking at websites
- have a [breath alcohol or blood alcohol level higher than the legal limit](#) - do not drink and supervise a learner, as it will seriously affect your judgement and abilities
- supervise a learner when you're under the influence of drugs or medicine, or if you have illegal drugs or certain medicines in your blood above specified limits - check the rules about [drugs and driving](#)
- go on motorways - learner drivers can only drive on motorways with an approved driving instructor (ADI) in a car fitted with dual controls

### Driving with other passengers

Other passengers can sit in the car while you're supervising the learner driver, but they should not distract them while they're driving.

As the driver, the learner is responsible for making sure any passengers under 14 years old use a seat belt or child restraint.

### Look and think ahead

You need to look and think further ahead than normal to identify hazards when you're supervising a learner. Do not expect the learner to have the same level of awareness and judgement as you.

## **Give directions**

Give your directions:

- clearly
- calmly
- in plenty of time

You're responsible for making sure the learner does not create dangerous situations through inexperience or poor judgement.

## **If the learner makes a mistake**

Do not get angry if something goes wrong.

Stay calm and ask the learner to pull over safely. Give yourselves time to calm down before discussing what went wrong and why.

Check the list of [common mistakes learners make during driving tests](#) to understand the types of mistakes they might make during practice sessions.

## **What to do in a dangerous situation**

If a dangerous situation develops:

- speak firmly and clearly without shouting
- reach across and take control of the steering wheel
- use dual controls if your car has them fitted

As a last resort, use the handbrake (parking brake) to carry out an emergency stop. Tell the learner to "stop" and use care.

## **After each practice session**

Talk to the learner about what went well and what they'd like to work on next time.

Do not be critical if you think their driving is not improving quickly.

On average, it takes people 45 hours of driving lessons with a driving instructor and 22 hours of practice with family or friends to learn to drive.

[Record the private driving practice](#) you've done to keep track of their progress. Ask the learner to show the record to their driving instructor at their next lesson.

Continue to talk to the driving instructor for advice about what to include in your next practice sessions.

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