

Top3

Young driver risks Campaign Toolkit

Wednesday 14 September – Friday 4 October 2026



Campaign Overview

The National Roads Partnership Operations Calendar 2026 Operation Spotlight (Sept 14 to Oct 4) focusses on young drivers and the risks posed to them on the roads.

This awareness fortnight is supported by NPCC, NFCC, National Highways and NRPOII.

This campaign pack has been designed by Devon and Somerset Fire Rescue Service for all fire services to use to support this campaign Top 3 – reducing risks for young drivers | Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service



NFCC's Position Statement

- Published in December 2024, the NFCC Road Safety Position Statement clearly outlines the priorities both for the NFCC and for Fire Services around road safety prevention work. You can read the position statement [Road Safety Policy Position Statement – NFCC](#)
- The Position Statement recommends that Government should consult on the introduction of formal post test protections for young new drivers. This is backed up by the [National Road Safety Strategy](#) which state that 'the government is consulting on introducing a three or six month minimum learning period for learner drivers.'
- The road safety sector can help to raise awareness amongst the public of the risks young drivers face through mechanisms such as this campaign.

What are the top 3 risks for young drivers?

- A new young driver who has recently passed their practical driving test and took less than 12 months to learn to drive
- A new young driver having more than one passenger of a similar age in the vehicle
- A new young driver driving in the dark – particularly between the hours of 11pm and 6am



Campaign aim

In the absence of formal post-test protections we can still educate the public around reducing the risk for young drivers and their passengers. This campaign can be used by Fire Services to:

- Raise awareness of the Top 3 risks amongst adult supervisors of young people and young people themselves
- Raise awareness of the stacked (cumulative) effect of these Top 3 risks amongst adult supervisors of young people and young people themselves
- Provide simple measures that can be used by adult supervisors of young people, and young people themselves, to mitigate these Top 3 risks



Target audiences for the campaign

- Young drivers and passengers (17–24 years old).
- The responsible adults of this age group.

Target users of the campaign

- Fire Services
- Road Safety professionals
- ADIs
- Emergency services and Local Authorities



What we know about the risks

17-24

Novice drivers are mostly young (17-24-year-olds) and as a group are overrepresented in road traffic collisions.

Doumen & Vlakveld 2023 - [ERSO-TR-NoviceDrivers-20231512.pdf](#)



Dark

Casualties from a collision involving at least one younger car driver peak on weekdays from 4pm to 7pm, but ... are highest during the late evening and early morning.

[Reported road casualties in Great Britain: younger driver factsheet, 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

Peers

Carrying peer passengers is a known risk for young drivers increasing their crash likelihood.

Chen et al, 2000 - Carrying Passengers as a Risk Factor for Crashes Fatal to 16- and 17-Year-Old Drivers
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/192524>



Key messages



Risk 1 Passing driving test quickly

Passing the practical test as quickly as possible sounds like a great idea to parents and young people – it's cheaper, means mum and dad are no longer taxis and it's another tick in the box for getting on the employment ladder.

HOWEVER

Skill and experience are two different things. Passing quickly means a young person doesn't experience lots of different weather conditions, doesn't have the chance to drive in different seasons, and doesn't get the experience to accompany their new skills. Skills can be learned quickly but the learning to judge how to use them takes experience.

Risk 1

Solutions:

- Take at least 6 months to learn to drive in varied conditions
- Take every opportunity for varied practice before and after the test
- Do hazard perception tests regularly long after passing the theory test

Risk 2 Driving with passengers of a similar age

Being the designated driver is a key privilege held by those with a driving licence and car. Having a sober driver to take their friends home from a night out is applauded. Taking a few friends to college, ferrying young siblings to school – these are all the best bits of a young person getting their licence

HOWEVER

The more passengers of a similar age to a young new driver, the greater the risk of crashing. Why? A new young driver is improving their skill and gaining experience rapidly in the first 6–12 months of driving. Add in anything that distracts from concentration and focus means an inexperienced, newly-skilled practitioner is using less brain power on the act of driving. And that's whether the passengers are sober or drunk.

Risk 2

Solutions

- Create a family contract that for at least 3–6 months after passing their test the new driver will only carry one passenger of similar age
- As a parent/guardian, offer lifts to groups of young friends instead of your child being the designated driver of multiple similar age passengers
- Provide money to use public transport/taxis over group travel

Risk 3

Driving in the Dark

Getting their licence means young people are able to independently get to and from their part time jobs, college and social life. That's the great thing

HOWEVER

Driving between 11pm and 6am is known to be the most risky time for new young drivers. Why? Because human brains like to be asleep at those times and young brains are no different – in fact they are often more tired from being busy and having a different circadian rhythm from older adults. Remember young drivers are still getting experience using a new skill. Often a new driver won't have taken any lessons in the dark. Often they are carrying passengers in the dark who are hindering their ability to focus completely on the task of driving.

Risk 3

Solutions

- Create a family contract to agree that for at least 3–6 months after passing their test the new driver will only drive in daylight hours
- Parents/guardians to offer lifts to your young person in the hours of darkness for at least 3–6 months after passing
- Parents/guardians to offer driving in the dark post–test sessions to your young driver and if possible pay for an instructor to do so too.

How to support the campaign

Be creative – incorporate the key messages into your road safety delivery during this two week period...and beyond.

Amplification –There are lots of ways you can support the campaign.

Sharing the key messages on your social media channels – see page 16–18 for suggested copy. Download our campaign materials directly and share them across your platforms. You're welcome to use our assets for paid communications or campaign activity in your region such as advertising on petrol pumps, local radio, community newsletters etc.

Evaluation • Please drop an email to annabellepriest@dsfire.gov.uk and let us know how the assets performed for you across your own channels to help with our post-campaign evaluation.

Suggested copy for social posts

Do you know a young person who is learning to drive? Help them to be safe on the roads with our #Top3RoadSafetyTips

Friends in the car = more fun, but also more risk. Agree to limit passengers in the first months after passing your test. It could save lives. #Top3Risks #RoadSafety

Young drivers face 3 big risks on the road:

- Lack of experience
- Driving late at night
- Passenger distractions

In 2022, almost 1 in 5 driver fatalities were aged 17–24. The Top 3 campaign is here to change that. #Top3Risks #SaferDriving

The Top 3 risks facing young drivers for young drivers are preventable by:

- Learning for over 6 months
- Avoiding driving 11pm–6am
- Limit young passengers

Talk about it. Make a plan. Drive safe. #Top3Risks #DriveSafe

Passing the test doesn't make you fully prepared. Weather, traffic, and night driving take practice. Take at least 6 months to learn and build safe habits for life.

#Top3Risks #DriveSafe

Tag us:

<https://m.facebook.com/NFCCFIRE>

<https://www.facebook.com/dsfireupdates/>

<https://twitter.com/dsfireupdates>

<https://www.instagram.com/dsfireupdates/>

Graphics for Top 3 campaign

Top 3 Campaign- Young Drivers 2026

Top 3 risks for young drivers



Top risk 1:



Learning to drive in
less than 6 months.



Top risk 2:



Driving with passengers
of a similar age.



Top risk 3:



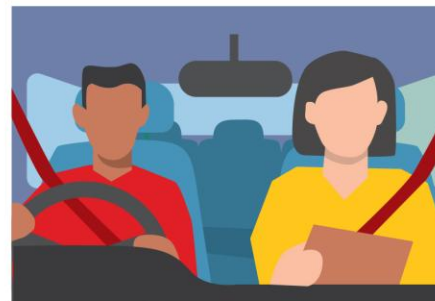
Driving in the dark.



Top 3 tips for young drivers



Top tip 1:



Learn to drive for at
least 6 months in
varied conditions.



Top tip 2:



Drive with just one
similar age passenger
for at least 3-6 months.



Top tip 3:



Avoid driving in the
dark unsupervised for
at least 3-6 months.



Graphics for Top 3 campaign

Top 3 Campaign- Young Drivers 2026

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Also running:

Tyre Safety Resources, Infographics, Posters | TyreSafe

Tyresafe are running their flagship Young Driver Campaign will return on 1 September, with a renewed focus on helping young and new drivers understand their responsibility for tyre safety and the potentially serious consequences of driving on unsafe or illegal tyres.

NPCC campaign



Useful links

Signpost your target audience to these useful links for more information about how to keep young drivers and passengers safe on the roads:

- <https://www.protectyoungdrivers.com/whatarethisrisks>
- <https://www.firstcar.co.uk/>
- <https://www.thehonesttruth.co.uk/>
- <https://www.brake.org.uk/>
- <https://www.racfoundation.org/>
- <https://readytopass.campaign.gov.uk/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/learn-to-drive-a-car>
- [Road Safety Strategy](#)
- [Safe-Mobility-for-Young-People-RAC-Foundation-Proposal-Autumn-2024.pdf](#)
- [Road-Safety-Education-report-Box-November-2023-1.pdf](#)

Thank you

