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Reducing casualties involving young drivers and riders in Europe

January 25, 2017 Publications



Young drivers and riders aged 15-25 are more likely to be killed on Europe's roads than their older counterparts, despite continued improvements in road safety. Road collisions remain one of the highest external causes of death for young people. The risks are especially high for young males and for young riders.

This high collision risk is caused by a combination of factors. Biological and social changes between the ages of 15-25 affect the risk perception of young people and lead to an increase in social activity and associated pressure from peers.

A lack of experience on the road means that young people are worse at anticipating and reacting to hazards. They are also less aware of how best to drive and ride in particular road conditions and situations.

A range of impairments and distractions affect young people. This is linked to the increased social activity they experience during the ages of 15-25, which includes a greater exposure to alcohol and drugs, the influence of peer-age passengers and the effects of fatigue. In-car distraction from mobile devices is also a problem.

Young people tend to drive smaller and older vehicles as they are cheaper and more practical. These cars often have a lower crashworthiness and lack the safety technologies featured in newer, larger cars. The use of seat belts and protective clothing is also poor amongst young people.

A variety of countermeasures have been adopted across Europe and further afield, with the aim of reducing the collision risk of young people.

Recommendations have been made here based on those countermeasures shown to be most effective. The report groups these into the following four areas:

- **General safety measures:** Countries with higher general road safety standards also have safer young road users. Better enforcement of speed and drink-drive limits and of seat belt wearing particularly helps protect young

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people.

- **Training and education:** Introduce hazard perception training, expand formal training to cover driving and riding style as well as skills and encourage more accompanied driving to help gain experience.
- **Licensing systems and testing:** Adopt graduated licensing systems that encourage young people to gain more experience while limiting certain high-risk activities such as driving at night and with passengers. Ensure testing allows examiners to ascertain a safe driving style by including aspects such as independent driving. Lower the BAC limit for all young drivers including novice drivers.
- **Safer vehicles and telematics:** Encourage young people to use safer vehicles and utilise assistive technologies. Further explore the link between telematics-based insurance and safe driving.

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The **YEARS** project receives financial support from the European Commission, the German Road Safety Council (DVR) and the Belgian Road Safety Institute.



YEARS Young People

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