

20% Of New Drivers Crash In The First Year, Bad Driving Kills More Young People Than Drugs Or Guns

20% of new drivers crash in the first year, bad driving kills more young people than drugs or guns - So you finally passed your driving test ... only to crash on the way home from the test centre. If it's any consolation you're not alone. A staggering one in five of new drivers are involved in an accident within 12 months of getting their licence.

Nor are these harmless 'teething problems' or minor prangs. According to the AA, unsafe driving now kills more young people than drugs or knife crime.

Young male drivers are especially vulnerable - in spite of the fact many of them drive as if they are invincible - with figures suggesting they are TEN times more likely to be killed or seriously injured on the road than their older, more experienced counterparts. AA President Edmund King says problems arise after the test for various reasons, some linked to attitude and some to experience.

Concerns over the effectiveness of the current driving test have repeatedly been raised in recent years by road safety campaigners, insurers and motoring organisations.

Later this year, the Department of Transport is expected to unveil changes to the test, but it is understood to be opposed to the introduction of a "graduated licensing scheme". This scheme is used in other countries including Australia, Canada, New Zealand and parts of the US.

Road safety charity Brake supports the idea of allowing drivers to 'build up' their experience over a longer period of time. But the DfT has said the idea of only allowing young drivers to drive on certain roads or with no passengers is unworkable. This is in spite of the fact that such schemes have been successful in reducing the number of fatalities among young drivers in other countries.

Just to give you an idea: in New South Wales, Australia a graduated scheme - involving three different stages over four years - was introduced in 2000. In 2004, the year when drivers completing the new scheme qualified for a full, unrestricted licence, the number of fatalities in the province fell to 510, the lowest recorded number since 1947. Cynics say the government is simply unwilling to cough up the money needed to make such a scheme work here.

Another idea that has been floated is that of compulsory post-test courses, for example in motorway driving and driving at night, neither of which are covered in the current test.

The Pass Plus course is a voluntary one and is already available to anyone who has

passed their driving test in the last 12 months. It provides training in areas including driving at night, motorway driving and all-weather driving. It also offers the chance to cut insurance premiums, which are often sky-high for young drivers. A long list of insurers, including Direct Line, Tesco, Swinton, Norwich Union and Privilege, offer successful Pass Plus graduates discounts, some of up to 40%.

Source : NoClaimsDiscount.co.uk