

When teenagers take to the wheel

DRIVING TIP

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WHEN TEENAGERS TAKE TO THE WHEEL

How we train our new drivers is under scrutiny this month because the Government is still rightly concerned about the number of young driver deaths on our roads.

What can a parent do when the time comes for their teenager to take to the road and learn to drive? The short answer is pay for it as there is no substitute for proper professional tuition.

But the hands-on parent who wants to help their youngster with practice at the wheel can help make the process less daunting, and perhaps reduce the need for quite so many lessons, before the dreaded L-test.

IAM experts argue that drivers who practice with supervision in addition to their lessons with an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) are more rounded at the end of the process and increase the chances of first time test success.

But driving lessons are not getting any cheaper (if only because of the rising cost of petrol the instructor needs).

If you want to help your youngster learn to drive, you need to go back to driving school yourself. Be prepared to sit in the back when your youngster has their first driving lessons but say nothing. Just take it all in.

That way you can see and hear for yourself what the professional instructor is advising, and make sure that you reinforce those messages when you are helping on practice drives with your youngster.

You have to also realise that your driving style may be an effective one for you as an experienced driver, but not necessarily a direct fit with the syllabus that the ADI will be working to preparing your youngster for the test. The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) also publishes the curriculum on their website another very useful resource for parents.

Please remember too that not every family car is suitable for practicing in, of course: a larger vehicle that has an automatic transmission is of limited use if you know that your youngster will eventually do their test in a manual Micra, for example.

ENDS

338 words

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Issued by the IAM Press Office, telephone 020 8996 9625 .We have an ISDN line for interviews.
 2. The IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) directly influences the driving and riding of more than 160,000 road users a year (full members, associates and commercial clients) in the UK and Ireland. Established in 1956, the IAM is today best known for the advanced driving test and the advanced driving course. The IAM has grown to become the UK's leading road safety charity, dedicated to raising driving standards, engaging with the road-using public and influencing road safety policy. IAM Fleet, the corporate arm of the IAM, has two subsidiary companies, Drive & Survive and Fleet Ireland. It also operates IAM Pro-Drive.
 3. A 2006 report by Brunel University, following an 18 month study, concluded that advanced driver training produces safer drivers and lower accident involvement, with measurable improvements in knowledge, skills and attitude. The Driving Tips provided by the IAM are part of our broader road safety mission and not intended as a substitute for the advanced driving course.
 4. In January 2007, the IAM Motoring Trust was established as the research and advocacy arm of the IAM. The IAM Motoring Trust will undertake research, promote practical policies, act as an advocate for safer roads, safer drivers and safer vehicles and encourage responsible motoring through education and training.
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Institute of Advanced Motorists

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