

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

Total mobile device ban for L and P drivers

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A total mobile device ban for L and P drivers is in place from 1 July 2019.

It's already illegal to call, text or use social media when driving and now if you are a learner or provisional driver you also can't use Bluetooth, hands-free or speaker to interact with your phone.

The ACT is committed to the goal of Vision Zero, that is no deaths or serious injuries on our roads. New drivers are one of the ACT's most at-risk groups on our roads, and the ACT will be bringing the graduated licensing scheme (GLS) into line with the best practice national framework.

The increased restrictions to mobile device use while driving are the first in a series of changes for L and P drivers in our reforms to the GLS.

Evidence shows that it's not safe to use any device while driving. It is important that we help set good driving behaviours for young drivers and reduce distractions from the beginning by removing the interaction with mobile devices in cars.

We know that any activity that distracts a driver can result in more lane deviations, driver reaction delays and the risk of not anticipating potential hazards.

The penalties are:

- **Messaging, social media use, accessing applications and internet:**

\$589 and 4 demerit points

- **Talking, hands free and speaker mode:**

\$480 and 3 demerit points

The remainder of the GLS reforms will be implemented by 1 January 2020, and will include the following components:

- **Supervised driving hours**

- Learner drivers will have to hold their learner licence for at least a year and complete a minimum of 100 supervised driving hours, including 10 hours at night time.
- Logbook credits will be provided for certain education programs and experience with authorised driving instructors.
- Learner drivers aged over 25 will not require the same level of supervised driving before progressing to provisional driver tests.
- **Hazard Perception Test**
 - Learner drivers must successfully complete a hazard perception test to assess their ability to recognise dangerous situations and react safely before being eligible for their Ps.
- **P1 and P2 stages-**
 - Introducing a new P1 plate will target restrictions for the first 12 months, so new drivers safely gain more experience. No change to licence length, it will remain at 3 years.
 - Provisional drivers aged over 25 will go directly to the P2 stage.
- **Late night peer passenger restriction**
 - P1 drivers will be limited to one passenger aged between 16 and 22 years old in the car between 11pm and 5am.
 - A formal exemption application process will not be in place; exemptions will apply automatically for family and for employment purposes (paid or volunteer).
 - Exemptions will not apply for designated driving of more than one peer aged passenger at a time.
- **Demerit Points**
 - The demerit point threshold will be reduced to a maximum of 4 points in 3 years for all learner and provisional drivers.
 - Swift and severe penalties deter high risk driving, including licence suspensions.

FAQ

What about listening to music from my phone?

There is an exception for listening to music and podcast type audio, provided the device is not being held by the driver and does not require interaction by any means, including by voice, while driving. We encourage drivers to put the device into Do Not Disturb mode to remove the temptation to touch it to skip songs or change apps.

What about using a GPS?

There is an exception for using a GPS enabled device, provided the device is secured in an approved holder and does not require interaction by any means, including by voice, while driving.

How will a fine affect my demerit point balance?

A provisional driver starts with a threshold of 4 points - this means one offence could cost you your licence. These offences will also attract double demerit points during double demerit point periods.

What if I am getting a call?

Drivers will not be permitted to interact with their phone or device in any way - including via Bluetooth, hands-free or speaker mode. This means that you cannot answer a call while driving, either by touch or by using your voice. We encourage drivers to put the device into Do Not Disturb mode to remove the temptation to touch or in any way interact with it.

2020 Changes for L and P drivers

More changes to the Graduated Licensing Scheme will include reforms to the components as identified during consultation:

- Minimum supervised driving hours for learners
- Hazard Perception Testing
- Reduced demerit point threshold for learner and provisional drivers
- Introduction of P1 and P2 stages
- Late night passenger restrictions for P1 drivers

More details will be announced soon.