

News Release Minister Michael O'Brien

Minister for Finance
Minister for Police
Minister for Correctional Services
Minister for Emergency Services
Minister for Road Safety

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Changes to protect young drivers pass through Parliament

Changes to the Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) that aim to protect South Australia's young drivers and their passengers have passed through Parliament.

Road Safety Minister Michael O'Brien said work will now begin on implementing the initiatives, including passenger and night-time driving restrictions which will apply during the first year of driving unsupervised when young drivers are at greatest risk.

"I am extremely pleased these changes have passed through Parliament as the evidence tells us they will save lives," Mr O'Brien said.

"This package provides the greatest protection for our young drivers and means we now have one of the best graduated licensing schemes in the country.

"These initiatives are not about removing the freedom that comes with having a licence, but rather ensuring young drivers have the best start.

"Young drivers are at greatest risk of a crash in their first year of driving unsupervised and SA has the second-worst fatality rate for the 16 to 19-year-old age group of all Australian states and territories.

"If these changes had been in place over the past five years they had the potential to prevent 22 deaths, 240 serious injuries and 1397 minor injuries."

Key changes, to be implemented later in 2014, include:

- A passenger restriction for P1 drivers under the age of 25, allowing no more than one passenger aged 16 to 20 years for the duration of their P1 licence, excluding immediate family members (with an exemption system).
- A restriction on driving between midnight and 5am for P1 drivers under the age of 25 for the duration of their P1 licence (with an exemption system).
- Extending the total minimum provisional licence period from two to three years. This will mean one year on a P1 licence and two years on a P2 licence.
- Removing regression to a previous licence stage following a disqualification period.
- The Hazard Perception Test (HPT) being a requirement of graduation from L to P1, rather than P1 to P2.

Mr O'Brien said an exemption system to these restrictions will be in place.

“This has been designed to address concerns from young drivers regarding employment, sporting and family commitments and volunteer activities,” he said.

Under the exemption system:

- P1 drivers will be exempt from the passenger restrictions if they are required to carry multiple peer passengers during the course of their employment.
- P1 drivers will be exempt from the night-time driving restriction if they need to drive for employment, formal volunteer work, education, training or sporting purposes.

Following amendments to the Bill, an exemption from the night-time driving restriction will also be available to P1 drivers taking part in charitable, artistic, religious or scientific activities organised by an organisation, association or club.

“The exemption system will mean young people with work, education, sporting, charitable or religious commitments are not restricted by the changes to the GLS,” Mr O’Brien said.

Drivers will need to carry a letter from their employer, volunteer/charitable/religious organisation, education institution or sports association, or some other supporting evidence, if stopped by police.

Passenger and night-time driving restrictions will also not apply if a P1 driver is aged over 25 or has a passenger acting as a Qualified Supervising Driver (QSD) in the front seat next to them. A QSD is a person who has held a full driver’s licence continuously for at least two years.

In addition, police members driving on duty and members of other emergency services, both paid and volunteer, driving on duty, will be exempt from both restrictions.

Further information about the changes to the GLS system can be found at www.mylicence.sa.gov.au/protecting_our_young_drivers