

Healthy Roads

Road safety, alcohol and young people

- Young drivers aged 17–25 represent one-quarter of all Australian road deaths, despite comprising only 13% of the population.¹
- Road traffic crashes are responsible for 44% of all injury deaths in 12–24 year old Australians.²
- Transport crashes are the most common external cause of injury leading to hospitalisation amongst young people.²



Legal Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC levels):

- 0.05% is the BAC limit for full licence holders in WA.
- 0.00% is the BAC limit for novice drivers i.e. L and P plate drivers.⁶

Someone who is intoxicated and behind the wheel is a danger to all road users. Alcohol affects a person's:

- Decision-making
- Speed and distance judgements
- Reaction times
- Coordination
- Concentration and perception
- Balance and alertness.⁷

Young people are over-represented in road crash statistics:

- 10,089 people have been killed or seriously injured on WA roads in 2001–2010.³
- Deaths in the 17–25 age group were approximately twice as high as the total average over the 10 years.¹
- Young people aged 17–24 comprise just 12% of the WA population, yet accounted for 23% of road crash fatalities in 2010.⁴
- The 20–24 age group comprise just 8% of the WA population, yet accounted for 15% of road crash fatalities in 2010.⁴

Young people are particularly vulnerable road users due to their inexperience, age, risk-exposure (types of driving experiences exposed to e.g. night driving, driving old vehicles) and risk-taking on the roads.⁵ One common risk-taking behaviour that can have serious consequences when combined with driving is the consumption of alcohol.

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Drink driving

- Drink-driving contributes to over 30% of deaths on WA roads each year.⁸
- 21,855 drivers were caught by WA Police exceeding the legal BAC limit in 2008/09.
- It is estimated approximately 60% of these drivers were under the age of 30.⁸
- Young, less experienced drivers with a BAC level of 0.05% are 2.5 times more likely to crash than older, more experienced, sober drivers.⁹
- Teenage drivers are at greater risk of fatal crashes, with 5 times the risk of drivers aged 30 years or more at all levels of BAC.¹⁰
- 426 WA drivers aged 17–25 who crashed had a BAC of ≥ 0.05 in 2010.
- This is almost as many as the number (467) of drivers aged over 25.¹¹
- Intoxicated drivers who are involved in fatal crashes are 3 times more likely than sober drivers to engage in other risky behaviours such as speeding and not wearing seatbelts.⁸

\$18 billion dollars is the conservative estimate of the annual cost due to road crashes in Australia.¹² This figure does not include the intangible costs such as the possibility of premature death, debilitating lifelong injuries and the impact on the victim's friends, family and community.

References

Please refer to www.phaiwa.org.au for full reference listing.

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