

Summary:

Amount of driver training with a lay instructor among adolescents aged 16 and 17

To increase the amount of pre-licensing driver training is one of the Norwegian Public Road Administration's main areas of interest. This is because driver training is thought to reduce post-licensing crash-risk among novice drivers. The aim of the present study is to examine characteristics of private driver training and to identify factors affecting the amount of this kind of driver training. Private driver training refers to on-the-road training with a lay instructor (e.g. a family member or an acquaintance) who is at least 25 years old and has held a driver licence for no less than 5 years.

The report is based upon a national survey among 16- and 17 years old adolescents in Norway. The majority of the adolescents (82 %) had started driver training with a lay instructor. Most of those who had started training begun shortly after they were 16 years old. On average, the adolescents drive one and a half tour during a week with a lay instructor. The typical training tour lasts for 45 minutes and is 15 km of length. Most of the tours are not planned ahead and 61 % of the tours are conducted in combination with other driving purposes, such as shopping, visits etc.

There are small gender differences in both the starting age and the proportion of the adolescents who have started driver training with a lay instructor. However, there are large differences in the amount of training with a lay instructor; men are found to drive twice the amount of women. The main explanation is a greater interest in cars and driving among men. In addition, men experience that friends and parents influence them to conduct driver training to a larger extent than women do. Men are also more likely to train in combination with other driving purposes.

Both the adolescents and their lay instructors state "a future need for a car" and "learning to be a safe driver" as the most important reasons for driver training. Reducing the expenses related to training at driving schools is also of importance.

Having limited spare time, reduced surplus of energy, and the expectation of not being able to afford either a driver licence or a car reduce the amount of driving with a lay instructor. Lack of knowledge of what is permitted

during private driving training also reduces the amount of training.

The manner of the instructors behaviour during training also influences the amount of driver training. Training with an instructor who easily becomes irritated, impatient and continually corrects the adolescents during driving reduces the amount of training. However, few instructors are perceived to act like this. A rather unexpected result is that driving with a lay instructor who plans the tour ahead, explains what is done correctly and incorrectly during driving and who give their approval when something is done right also seems to lessen the amount of driver training. A possible explanation is that the instructor leaves the adolescent little control and codetermination, which easily can reduce the motivation to conduct driver training.

The following recommendations are given in order to increase the amount of driver training with a lay instructor:

- To achieve a satisfactory amount of driver training it is important to start as early as possible and to drive a lot from the start. This suggests that information about private driver training should be given before the adolescent become 16 years of age.
- Both the lay instructors and the adolescents emphasise safety as a one of the main motives for driver training. At the same time, several are not aware of the favourable effect a large amount of driver training has on post-licensing crash risk. Thus, information about the optimal level of driver training concerning post-licensing crash risk can be expected to increase the amount of driver training.
- Several of the lay instructors wish for a thorough instruction booklet/brochure providing advice and suggestions on how to be a lay instructor and what elements to focus on during driver training.
- It is a need to inform the adolescents and their lay instructors that there are no limitations pertaining to where one can drive during private

driver training and that it is allowed to carry passengers during driver training.

- It is of special importance to increase the amount of driver training among young women.
- It is recommended to encourage conducting driver training in combination with other driving purposes (shopping, visits etc.). The advantages are several; the risk during driver training with a lay instructor is found to be very low, and some of the greatest obstacles against driver training are reduced (lack of time and lack of surplus/-energy, economy).

Furthermore, combining driver training with other driving purposes will probably not increase the total number of traffic accidents because combined driver training will not cause any extra exposure in traffic.