



House of Commons Transport Committee
Road safety: young and novice drivers' inquiry

Memorandum from:
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The Motor Schools Association of Great Britain (MSA GB) makes the following response to the House of Commons Transport Committee request for evidence regarding their Road safety: young and novice drivers' inquiry.

WHO WE REPRESENT

MSA GB is the national trade association for driving instructors and schools founded in 1935. Members of the association are in the main Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructors (DVSA ADIs). We also have a partnership with the Institute of Large Goods Vehicle Driving Instructors and represent their interests together with those of potential driving instructors and a number of bus/coach instructors and motorcycle instructors. MSA GB is the voice for around 7,500 driver/rider trainers. We are content for this memorandum to be published by the committee.

THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee invites written evidence on the reasons why young and novice drivers are at a higher risk of being involved in a road traffic collision, and what the Government can do to reduce these risks. This could include the use of telematic devices, proposals for a system of probation or Graduated Driver Licensing, or changes to training and testing for new drivers.

GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSING

MSA GB have supported the concept of GDL for many years. The challenge has always been that there is little agreement about the detail. While we do not have a system formerly called 'graduated licensing' we are moving in the right direction.

- New driver's licences are cancelled (revoked) if they get six or more points within two years of passing their test, which is a powerful incentive for most drivers to behave on the road.
- The requirement from new driver insurers that telematic devices (black boxes) are fitted into the cars of new drivers means that most new drivers cannot drive at certain times of the day, or particularly at night and can be penalised if they do not stick to speed limits.
- The revised driving test means that more candidates are covering more miles on test which makes the test more testing.

While a formal set of rules for pre- and post- test training might be considered desirable it is not clear what they might be, how they could be enforced or what the benefits to road safety might be beyond those already having an effect.

As an alternative or addition to GDL we would like the committee to consider making a recommendation for **a change to driving licence law to allow those who pass a test in a Category B automatic vehicle to be allowed to add the driving of manual vehicles to their licence by taking a short training course** rather than having to undertake a second driving test.

As more and more new drivers are attracted to this option it will be a major contribution eliminating one of the biggest distractions for new drivers – changing gear!

Government has announced that sales of new petrol and diesel cars as we know them today will cease in the UK by 2040 some reports have suggested the date will be moved to 2035. This means that in less than 20 years it will be impossible to buy the kind of new cars that driver trainers currently use to teach nearly all new drivers – cars with manual gear boxes. Only automatic vehicles will be available, in either full electric cars, cars with hydrogen fuel cells or hybrid vehicles.

Many driving instructors would use electric cars now if GB had a similar system to the French, regarding adding manual rights to automatic licences. However not as many people want to learn to drive in an automatic car, then take a second test. We believe, this has an environmental impact by slowing down the take up of electric cars and a change would also improve the collision rate amongst new drivers.

The number of new category B drivers passing their test in an automatic car has risen year on year for many years and over the last ten years the number of new drivers choosing automatics has more than doubled but still represents less than seven percent of the total new drivers.

The current regulations mean that to upgrade an automatic car driving licence (indicated by code 78 on a person's driving licence) to a manual one a driver must take a full practical driving test in a manual car and whilst practising in a manual must follow all the usual rules- must be properly supervised and must display 'L' plates.

They must then book a practical driving test. The cost of this in addition to the training costs is likely to be around one hundred and fifty pounds. We believe that the system operating in France since January 2017 is an excellent answer to this challenge. The French system allows holders of driving licences for category B vehicles with restrictive code 78 which restricts driving to vehicles with automatic gears only, for non-medical reasons, to have this restriction lifted following training with a qualified driver trainer. Full details of the system being use in France are attached as an **appendix to this memorandum**.

CHANGES TO TRAINING FOR NEW DRIVERS.

Nearly all training for driving licence acquisition is carried out in the private sector and paid for by the trainee or their immediate family. The number one priority for those taking lessons is to obtain a full driving licence. Human nature dictates that lots of people wish to do that as quickly and cheaply as possible. This means that road safety generally and safe driving in particular is not their priority.

The check on the quality of new drivers is entirely based on driver testing. The time constraints and functionality of testing means that theoretical concepts like experience (sometimes referred to as wisdom), mindset, approach and attitude are difficult if not impossible to test. Some of the practical skills required, for example how to drive at night or on particular kinds of roads like high speed dual carriageways, rural roads or in congested urban environments cannot all be tested

We would therefore request that the committee consider the models of some other countries and recommend **a short course of compulsory theory training** because learner drivers who have passed both the theory test and the hazard perception test display considerable knowledge but not much understanding.

Driver trainers believe that, a minimum number of sessions (perhaps 4 hours) in a peer group class, covering topics like hazard perception, drunk and drug driving, transport choices - walk, cycle, public transport or car, is this journey necessary and training in the dangers of being distracted by mobile phones, in car entertainment (ICE). Would be very beneficial.

CHANGES TO TESTING FOR NEW DRIVERS.

In addition, we would ask that the committee consider the models of some other countries and require **that a number of topics that are not always tested be subject to sign off by a DVSA ADI** because learners are knowledgeable but unaware of real dangers in some circumstances. These topics would include night-time driving, driving on the highest speed road within ten miles of the pupil's home and if available within a reasonable distance, level crossings, different types of pedestrian crossings and cover the additional skills needed in inclement weather. All items of Driver Assistance Systems should be taught.

APPENDIX

https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=680084D59311B33495E45F7EEAC1B259.tpdila12v_1?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000033316891&dateTexte=&oldAction=rechJO&categorieLien=id&idJO=JORFCONT000033316310



JORF No. 0253 of 29 October 2016 text n ° 43

Order of 14 October 2016 relating to the training of category B license holders limited to automatic gearshift vehicles for non-medical reasons in order to drive manual shifting vehicles in the same category

NOR: INTS1621834A

Concerned public: driving schools, drivers holding category B of the driving license limited to vehicles equipped with an automatic transmission.

Subject: License holders of category B vehicles with restrictive code 78 which restricts driving to vehicles with automatic gears only, for non-medical reasons, to have this restriction lifted following training at a driving and road safety education institution.

Entry into force: This Order comes into force on January 1, 2017.

At present, holders of category B of the driving license limited to automatic gearshift vehicles are not entitled to the driving of a vehicle of the same category equipped with a manual the requirement to have their drivers' licenses checked by a driver and road safety inspector, who is responsible for checking their ability to use the controls of a manual shift vehicle efficiently.

The purpose of this Order is to replace the regularization procedure by the follow-up of a driving school training for drivers whose vehicle is equipped with an automatic transmission for non-medical reasons.

Holders of category B of the driving license limited to vehicles equipped with an automatic transmission for medical reasons remain subject to the regularization procedure.

References: the texts amended by this decree may be consulted, as amended, on the Légifrance web site (<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr>).

The Minister of the Interior,

Having regard [to the Highway Code](#) , in particular Articles L. 213-1 and L. 213-7;

Having regard to the amended Order of 8 January 2001 on the operation of educational institutions for or consideration of the operation of motor vehicles and road safety, and in particular Article 6 thereof;

Having regard to the decree of 22 December 2009 relating to the apprenticeship of the driving of motor vehicles of category B in an approved educational establishment;

Considering the decree of 20 April 2012 laying down the conditions of establishment, issue and validity of driving license, in particular Article 3,

Stops:

Article 1

Holders of category B drivers' licenses limited to automatic gearshift vehicles, for non-medical reasons, are authorized to drive a manual shifting vehicle of the same category provided that they undergo training under conditions as provided for in this Order.

The program of this training is defined in Annex I.

Article 2

Training can not be completed less than six months after category B is obtained.

Compliance with this condition is verified at the student's enrollment by a representative of the institution providing the training.

Article 3

The training, lasting seven hours, is practical and individual. It may be carried out partly on a simulator or without the sequence exceeding the duration of one hour. Theoretical contributions, in connection with the practice, can be taught in the vehicle.

Article 4

The training shall be provided by a driving and road safety teacher who is authorized to teach the driving of a driving license for the driving of motor vehicles and road safety or a social integration or vocational integration or rehabilitation association approved for training in the driving of vehicles in category B of the driving license respectively under Articles [L. 213-1](#) and [L. 213-7](#) of the Highway Code.

Article 5

The training shall be provided on a manual gearbox, belonging to the category B driving license, which complies with the conditions laid down in Article 6 (b) of the aforementioned Order of 8 January 2001.

Article 6

At the end of the training, the holder of the prefectural authorization shall issue to the driver receiving the training a copy of the certificate conforming to the model set out in Annex II.

It shall transmit a copy of this certificate to the competent administrative authority.

It keeps the list of beneficiaries of the training certificate for a period of five years in the archives of the institution.

The training follows -
up authorizes the operation of vehicles in category B of the manual shift license only when the driver is in possession of the corresponding final driving license.

Article 7

The provisions of this Order come into force on January 1, 2017.

Article 8

The Highway Safety Officer is responsible for the implementation of this Order, which will be published in the Official Gazette of the French Republic.

Annex

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

TRAINING PROGRAM

The training is carried out under the effective and constant presence of the teacher holding a valid teaching authorization.

Conditions for the organization of the training

The training lasts seven hours.

It shall be provided on board a manual gearshift vehicle belonging to the approved driving and road safety training institution or to the approved social integration or vocational integration or rehabilitation association.

In the vehicle are placed the teacher of the driver installed at the front right and the student installed at the driver's seat.

The training starts in a zero or low traffic and continues on the tracks open to traffic,

Aim of the training

At the end of the training, the driver must be able to safely use a vehicle equipped with a manual shift simultaneously with the other driving tasks.

Structure and content of the training

This training is practical, but theoretical inputs are required by the teacher on board the vehicle.

It comprises two sequences:

Sequence 1: duration of 2 hours.

In low or no traffic, the student must have the following knowledge and skills:

- understand the principle of the slip point of the clutch and ensure its implementation;

- be able to safely carry out a hill start.

A part of this sequence, limited to one hour, can be carried out on a simulator, notably to learn how to use the manual transmission.

Sequence 2: duration of 5 hours.

This sequence takes place in a variety of simple and complex traffic conditions. It allows the acquisition of the following skills:

- knowing how to use the manual transmission rationally and safely under the aforementioned traffic conditions and adopting eco-driving techniques;

- be able to steer the vehicle by adapting the course and the trajectory to the environment and to the traffic conditions.

- Annex

ANNEX II

TRAINING FOLLOW-UP CERTIFICATE

This certificate shall be issued in accordance with Article 6 of the Decree of 14 October 2016 relating to the training required for driving a category B driver's vehicle equipped with a manual shift, holders of Class B driver's licenses limited to automatic gearshift vehicles for non-medical reasons.

Corporate name of the establishment:

Approval number:

SIREN or SIRET:

Address:

Date and place of issue of the approval prefectural:

Certifies that

Name:

use name:

First name (s):

Born (e) the:

A:

Address:

Date of obtaining Category B of the driver's license limited to the operation of automatic gears, for non-medical reasons:

Driver's license number:

Attended the seven hours of the compulsory training required for the driving a category B vehicle of the driver's license equipped with a manual shift.

Date of issue of the certificate:

Signature of the beneficiary of the training:

Stamp of the institution providing the training:

Warning

The holder of this certificate is only authorized to drive a vehicle of category B of the driver's license with a manual shift from the day on which he holds the corresponding definitive driving license.