

## Improving New Zealand's Graduated Driver Licensing System

The Government is making changes to the driver licensing system to reduce barriers to getting a full driver licence, while supporting road safety outcomes.

### What's changing

#### **1. Removing the full licence test**

Once a driver has completed their restricted licence period, they will be able to apply for their full licence without needing to sit another test. The hazard perception part of the full test will move to the restricted test to make sure drivers are tested on this important skill.

#### **2. Increasing the learner licence period for under 25s**

The learner licence period for under 25s will increase from six to 12 months, giving learners more time for supervised driving practice. Drivers can reduce their learner period back to six months by completing a specified number of practice hours or an approved driving course.

#### **3. Setting standard restricted licence periods**

The restricted licence period will be 12 months for under 25s and six months for over 25s, with no option to reduce it with a defensive driving course.

#### **4. Encouraging safe driving**

Drivers who receive demerit points while on their restricted licence will have their restricted period extended by six months. Demerit offences are infringements issued by a police officer. Currently, infringements issued by safety cameras do not have demerits attached.

#### **5. Introducing a zero-alcohol limit for all learner and restricted drivers**

The current zero-alcohol limit for drivers aged under 20 years will be extended to include all drivers on a learner or restricted licence, regardless of their age.

#### **6. Reducing the number of eyesight tests**

Currently drivers have their eyesight checked at every licence application (learner, restricted and full) and every licence renewal. Drivers will now only need their eyesight checked when they apply for their learner licence and then each time they renew their licence (typically every 10 years). Requirements for drivers over 75 years old remain the same.

#### **7. Improving NZTA's oversight of approved driving course providers**

NZTA approves driver training courses that help people get licence endorsements or let them move through the system quicker. The changes will give NZTA more ability to consider whether the providers of these courses are suitable.

### When the changes will happen

Most changes will come into effect on 25 January 2027.

The zero-alcohol limit for all learner and restricted licence drivers will require a legislative amendment and will come into effect at a later date.