

STATES OF JERSEY



DRIVING LICENCES: THEORY TEST (P.155/2011) – AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 18th October 2011
by the Minister for Transport and Technical Services

STATES GREFFE

1 PAGE 2 –

After the words “to agree”, insert the words “, in accordance with (1) of Proposition 104/2010, the Sustainable Transport Policy approved by the States in December 2010, *to re-establish a reducing trend in road injury rates*, the Minister for Transport and Technical Services is requested to ensure that the task force set up to establish a Road Safety Strategy specifically considers the proposal from the Comité des Connétables,”.

2 PAGE 2 –

Replace the words “to request the Minister for Transport and Technical Services” with the words “if considered effective then”.

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In adopting (I) of Proposition 104/2010, approved in December 2010, the States agreed –

“to request the Minister (for Transport and Technical Services), in conjunction with the Minister for Home Affairs and the Honorary Police with regard to enforcement, to apply appropriate measures as set out in the Policy to re-establish a reducing trend in road injury rates and to agree an eventual ‘vision zero’ target of no deaths or serious injuries on Jersey’s roads and to request the Minister to ask the task force to be set up by the Department for Transport and Technical Services to adopt formally within the first year a specific trend target for accident reduction by the end of the policy period, and to inform the States of this target and the rationale behind it.”.

- 1.2 A task force has been set up to develop a Road Safety Strategy that will re-establish a reducing trend in road injury rates for all classes of road user.
- 1.3 The task force is investigating what incidents are happening, the causes, effects and influences of these incidents and how these can be effectively eliminated or reduced.

2. DISCUSSION

- 2.1 Any measure that will improve the safety and roadcraft of road users is to be welcomed. Unfortunately, no evidence has been provided in P.155/2011, even from those jurisdictions that already have it as a requirement, that introducing this requirement will be effective.
- 2.2 While it appears that young moped riders may have a higher probability of being involved in a road traffic collision (RTC) than other road users, it is also true that novice drivers who have obtained a full car driving licence and have passed a theory test, also have a higher probability of being involved in a collision.
- 2.3 Between January 2009 and December 2010, 31 sixteen year-old moped riders were injured in an RTC; and 64 seventeen to twenty-five year-old car drivers were involved in an RTC.
- 2.4 In that same period, parishes issued 713 new provisional licences to 16 year-olds for Category P. Also, 758 renewals were granted. Only 48 full Category P licences were granted to 16 year-olds (23 were granted to 17 year-olds with a further 38 granted A1). All would likely have taken CBT, but it seems that just under 70% sat the prescribed theory test while licence-holders. Just over 20% passed the theory test.
- 2.5 In the same period, parishes issued 1,111 new provisional licences to 17 year-olds for Category B, a car. Also, 1,217 renewals were granted. However, 1,103 seventeen year-olds were granted a full Category B car licence in the

period. Ninety-five per cent of 17 year-olds sat the theory test and around 80% passed (although not necessarily at the first attempt).

- 2.6 There will be no evidence readily available to suggest that it is predominantly the 30% or so of 16 year-old moped riders who have not taken a theory test who are injured or more likely to be injured in the moped crashes. However, it will be the case that the majority, if not all, of the 17 year-old motorists involved in an RTC will have passed the theory test.
- 2.7 It could be argued, of course, that the number of 17 year-old motorists involved in RTCs would be considerably higher had they not passed the theory test, but I would tend to the view that novice drivers and riders are more likely to be involved in collisions because of general inexperience and perhaps youthful exuberance, rather than solely a lack of knowledge of the Highway Code. Indeed, our youngsters could probably score higher than most mature drivers when it comes to knowledge of the Highway Code.
- 2.8 I am also concerned that there is no information on what options were considered. Indeed, if the proposal as submitted goes forward, it will soon become known that it would be possible to take the “car” theory test at 15, as it is the same test for an agricultural tractor, so all 15 year-olds will take the car test, as that is their ultimate goal, and it will also allow them to ride a moped at 16 without taking any further test.
- 2.9 Perhaps extending the nature of our already excellent Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) would reduce the number of riders involved in collisions.
- 2.10 In the same way, a provisional licence for a powered 2 wheeler isn’t valid for riding on the road until the holder successfully completes CBT, we could make it a requirement that a provisional licence isn’t valid for riding or driving on the road until the licence-holder has passed the theory test (or perhaps achieved a lower standard of pass, say 20 out of 35). The current waiting time for a theory test is around 4 weeks; it doesn’t seem a ridiculous time to wait rather than having to set up a further bureaucratic system to allow 15 year-olds to sit the theory test.
- 2.11 Perhaps there should be a requirement that anyone applying for a licence should prove a certain knowledge of the Highway Code before being granted a licence by a parish.
- 2.12 It may be that merely raising the age at which a person can be granted a licence would lead to safer roads. It has to be recognised, however, that we are all different and learn in different ways and over differing timespans.
- 2.13 On a wider scale, perhaps there should be greater emphasis on roadcraft as a life skill taught in school, with our young people being awarded a certificate when they have demonstrated sufficient awareness and knowledge of the roadcraft required to be a competent pedestrian, cyclist, horse-rider, motorcyclist and driver. Although limited, the evidence from “On Two Wheels” and “First Steps to Driving”, courses offered to some students at secondary schools and Highlands College, is that raising awareness of the required skills before applying to be a licence-holder is beneficial.

- 2.14 I believe it would be far better to assemble and consider the evidence from here and other jurisdictions on how we might improve the skills of our novice drivers and riders, encourage them to drive and ride responsibly and reduce the likelihood of them becoming one of the casualty statistics. The Road Safety Strategy task force can fully investigate and assess the options as part of its brief, producing a report on the options considered, the costs and expected benefits and recommendations for taking forward.

3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The resources required for the work of the Road Safety Strategy task force are already allocated through the Sustainable Transport Policy.