

It's against the law to drive a car or ride a motorbike on a road or in a public place without a learner's permit or a driver's licence.

DRIVING

The penalties are tough if you break the road rules on a learner's permit or probationary licence.

A probationary driver caught speeding will not only lose their licence but will also have their probation period extended by 6 months.

A probationary driver caught with a blood alcohol content of less than 0.05 can lose their licence for up to 4 months and will have their probation period extended by 6 months.

A probationary driver caught with a blood alcohol content between 0.05 and 0.15 can lose their licence for 6 to 14 months, depending on their BAC.

The penalties for subsequent drink driving offences for probationary drivers are even harsher.

New laws covering hoon driving were introduced in 2006.

Drivers who do burnouts or doughnuts, or who drag race or speed excessively can have their car impounded or immobilised for 30 days for a first offence. Repeat offenders can have their car permanently confiscated.

If you're charged by the police for a driving offence you should get some free advice from a lawyer, because you'll have to go to court.

LEARNER'S PERMIT

You must be 16 years of age to apply for a learner's permit

You must always display L-plates when you're driving and have a fully licenced driver with you

You can't drink any alcohol and drive, and you can't tow or use a mobile phone when driving

If you're under 21 you must do 120 hours of supervised driving before you can apply for a probationary licence and record your driving practice in a VicRoads logbook

PROBATIONARY LICENCE

You must be 18 years of age to apply for a probationary licence

If you're under 21 you can only apply for a probationary licence after you've had your learner's permit for 12 months

You'll be on a P1 licence for 12 months which means you must display red P-plates, you can't drink any alcohol and drive; you can't have more than one passenger aged 16 to 21; you can't tow or drive a high powered car; and you can't use a mobile phone including hands free while driving

After 12 months you'll be on a P2 licence for 3 years which means you must display green P-plates, you can't drink any alcohol and drive; you can't drive a high powered car; and you can't use a hand-held mobile phone while driving