



License Plate Identifiers (Decals) for GDL Drivers

Questions & Answers

1. Do license plate identifiers for new teen drivers have safety benefits?

Yes. The implementation of license plate identifiers (i.e., decals) for GDL drivers in New Jersey was evaluated two years after implementation. The study revealed that crash rates among young drivers with provisional (intermediate) licenses were almost 10% lower 2 years after the implementation of decals as compared to their crash rates 4 years prior to implementation. Based on these results, it was estimated that this strategy prevented more than 3,000 (3,197) young driver crashes. There were no positive effects for learner drivers.

2. What is the purpose of license plate identifiers (decals) for GDL drivers?

The purpose of a plate identifier is to increase compliance with GDL requirements so safety benefits are achieved in the real world. Non-compliance with GDL laws reduces their effectiveness. Decals increase the enforcement of GDL laws by indicating that young drivers are subject to state GDL laws. The use of decals also increases the perceived and the real likelihood that GDL drivers who are non-compliant are detected.



3. How are license plate identifiers (decals) implemented?

In New Jersey, drivers under the age of 21 holding a learner's permit or provisional license are required to place a state-issued reflective red decal on the license plate of their vehicle. The decal is placed in the upper left corner of both the front and rear license plate.

In Australia, provisional 1 (P1) and provisional 2 (P2) license holders must display a P plate when driving a car or motorcycle. The P plate (decal) is an object that indicates the driver's license status to police and other road users. The P plate must be displayed at the front and rear of the vehicle.

4. How is it enforced?

In New Jersey, drivers under the age of 21 holding a learner's permit or provisional license who fail to display the decal during operation of the vehicle receive a driving violation and are subject to a \$100 fine.

In Australia, drivers with a P1 or P2 license who fail to display their P plate receive a fine and demerit points.

5. Do license plate identifiers place young drivers at risk for predators?

No. Despite concerns expressed by parents about young drivers being targeted by predators due to the presence of a decal, there was only one documented incident in New Jersey in which a young driver was inappropriately approached as a result of the decal. According to a U.S. national survey, a majority of parents of teenagers approved the use of license status identifiers (decals) on vehicles for restricted license holders. In Australia, research has not shown any level of concern among parents about this strategy. In fact, in one particular study parents were surprised by this suggestion.

6. Do other jurisdictions use plate identifiers for GDL drivers?

Yes. New Jersey is currently the only U.S. jurisdiction that has a decal requirement that was enacted in 2010. More recently, as of July 2017, Massachusetts and New York have also introduced bills for decals. Young drivers in Australia and in some other countries are also required to display a decal on their plate.



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