Car driving licenses for 17-year-olds - road safety effects in Finland

IRTAD Conference, 27-28.9.2022
Riikka Rajamäki
New Driving Licence Act on 1 July 2018

- Easier to get an age exemption permit to acquire a category B driving license at the age 17: long distances and missing or very slow public transport connections to school, work or hobbies

- Other changes:
  - Driving test time increased from 45 minutes to 60 minutes
  - From three-phase education model to one-phase model
  - Less compulsory education
  - Easier to combine driving school and driving instruction permit education

- Target: Cheaper to get a driving licence. Lighter regulation.
Monitoring the effects

- Driving licence statistics
- Driving test statistics
- Driving bans
- Survey after first year with category B driving licence
- Road accident statistics
- Statistical analysis of accident data using modeling, by VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland
Age exemption permits

**Annually**

**By gender**
Proportion of 16-17 year olds with driving licence in different categories

1.1.2014 to 1.1.2022

- 16 y Moped
- 16 y Light quadricycle
- 16 y Motorbike
- 16 y Driving license in any category

Legend:
- 17 y B
- 16 y Moped
- 16 y Light quadricycle
- 16 y Motorbike
- 16 y Driving license in any category
Success in category B driving test
Acceptance rate at first attempt by age, 2019-2021
Driving bans during the first year with a driving license

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of obtaining class B driving license</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020 Jan-Aug</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 y</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 y</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 y</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*shorter follow-up time
Survey after first year with B-class driving license

- Annual survey since 2001
- In 2020 additional sample of drivers who had got their licence with age exemption permit at age 17
- 1908 answers from age exemption permit drivers. Response rate 24%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age exemption permit</th>
<th>Normal group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kilometres driven, average</td>
<td>16 600 km</td>
<td>10 500 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No penalties and no accidents</td>
<td>54 %</td>
<td>63 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17 years old injured in traffic, by mode of transport, police reported injuries

Source: Statistics Finland
Statistical analysis of accident data, by VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland

- No statistically significant change in the number of 17 year olds injured in traffic, when all transport modes are taken into account
- Shift from moped, motorcycle and light quadricycle accidents to car accidents
- More passengers and people in other vehicles involved and injured in accidents
- 17 year olds have higher probability to be involved in a personal injury accident as a car driver during the first year with a driving license compared to 18-19 year olds
  - May be explained by higher mileage, bigger share of male drivers and regional differences
Probability to be involved in a personal injury accident during the first year with a B-class driving license (from VTT study)

Only 760 persons and 10 accidents

Age of obtaining class B driving license
- 17 y
- 18-19 y
- 20+ y
Probability to survive without personal injury accidents, by age and gender (from VTT study)

Age of obtaining class B driving license:
- 17 y
- 18-19 y
- 20+ y
Summary

• 17 year olds with an age exemption permit do better in the driving test

• 17 year olds, who get an age exemption permit because of travel needs, drive more than average 18 year olds

• 17 year olds have more driving bans and car accidents during first year as car driver compared to 18-19 year olds

• If the survey data on mileage is correct, 17 year olds have lower accident risk as car driver than 18-19 year olds

• Car driving license for 17 year olds reduces their moped, motorcycle and light quadricycle travel and accidents

• The study found no effect on the total number of accidents
Publications

**Driving Licence Act reform: impact on traffic safety** (Traficom Research Reports 3/2022, with summary in English)

**Driver's education and qualification reform in 2018 - An overview of the effects** (Traficom Publications 6/2021, in Finnish)

**Monitoring study of new drivers – Satisfaction with driver instruction and experiences in traffic of drivers who were issued a driving licence based on an age exception permit** (Traficom Research Reports 4/2021, with summary in English)

**Economic impact of the reform of the act on driving licenses** (Traficom Research Reports 18/2021, with summary in English)