Driver Training Australia

Does Driver Training Work?

Why people crash?

There are two basic explanations as to why people crash. The first explanation is centred on an individual's willingness to take risks. The second deals with human errors sometimes categorised as; slips, laps or mistakes*.

Risk taking behaviour

All human beings take risks. We take risks because we have learnt that risk taking delivers rewards. Driving provides mobility and a number of social and psychological benefits. The principal mistake drivers make is to underestimate how risky a particular action (behaviour) might be. Although drivers understand a crash could happen academically, they are almost always surprised when a crash actually happens.

Errors

All humans make mistakes, but most failures don't result in a crash. This influences our tendency to underestimate how likely, or how bad a crash will be. Slips and lapses are either attention-failures, or memory-failures. Mistakes are either rule-based or knowledge-based. Research shows drivers make many errors on any journey.

Defensive Driving

Formal driver training has been around nearly as long as the car itself. The most common name for post-license driver training is defensive driving; although there are other names like advanced driver training or driver awareness training.

What these training courses have in common, is the idea that because drivers make mistakes and sometimes crash, building knowledge and skill will reduce crashes. This turns out not to be true. Improving knowledge and skill does not reliably produce safer drivers*. Sometimes drivers crash more after defensive driver training.

The Socratic Method

If the hypothesis that trained drivers will crash less is false, then science demands an alternative explanation. Initially however, it's both wise and ethical to observe the Latin idiom "*primum non nocere"* or "first, do no harm". That means avoiding training that can lead to more crashes; particularly courses that include emergency-braking, skid-control or swerving exercises.

The 4-Ways Driver Training Model© includes proven strategies that influence personal safety motivation and risk taking behaviour.

Fact Sheet