This fact sheet focuses on unlicensed drivers and motorcycle riders involved in fatal crashes in South Australia 2005 to 2009.

Unlicensed drivers and riders can represent a high risk element within the driving community as they may have never undergone a practical driving assessment or they may be driving while disqualified due to a breach of licence condition or having committed a road traffic offence.

For the purposes of this fact sheet, “unlicensed” refers to situations where:

- The driver/rider has never held a licence
- The licence has expired and the driver/rider has failed to renew
- The driver/rider is unlicensed for the particular vehicle they were driving at the time of a crash (eg. Car licence while driving a heavy vehicle, or riding a motorcycle without the appropriate licence endorsement)
- Learner driver unaccompanied by a Qualified Supervising Driver*  
- The driver/rider has been disqualified from driving.

(*To act as a Qualified Supervising Driver for a learner’s permit holder, the accompanying driver must have held a full driver’s licence continuously for the previous two years)

Driving Unlicensed

It is difficult to estimate the number of drivers or riders who drive while unlicensed. Table 1 shows the numbers of drivers and riders who have received an expiation notice for driving with an expired or inappropriate licence as well as those apprehended for driving while unlicensed or disqualified.

Table 1: Drivers and riders expiated/apprehended for driving unlicensed, South Australia, 2004-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Expired/Inappropriate Licence</th>
<th>Unlicensed/Disqualified</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>7325</td>
<td>12726</td>
<td>20051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>7504</td>
<td>12130</td>
<td>19634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>7495</td>
<td>11339</td>
<td>18834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>7085</td>
<td>9851</td>
<td>16936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>7503</td>
<td>8431</td>
<td>15934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 year average</td>
<td>7382</td>
<td>10895</td>
<td>18278</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows that, between 2005 and 2009, 84 fatal crashes involved unlicensed drivers, an average of 17 per year. This equates to 16% of all fatal crashes over the same period. Of the 85 unlicensed drivers or riders, the unlicensed person was responsible for the crash in 82% of cases.

The number of crashes has remained steady over the five year period as can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2: Fatal crashes involving unlicensed drivers, South Australia, 2005-2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of crashes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 85 unlicensed drivers involved in fatal crashes in Table 2:
- 18% were disqualified from driving at the time of the crash
- 40% had never held a licence
- 16% were unlicensed for the vehicle which they were operating at the time of the crash
- 26% allowed their licence to expire – for periods that ranged from 25 years to a few days

The 84 fatal crashes involving unlicensed drivers resulted in 95 fatalities, 63 serious injuries and 29 minor injuries. The majority of fatal crashes involving unlicensed drivers were hit fixed object (46%), roll over (15%) and right angle crashes (12%), which is comparable to fatal crashes generally in South Australia.

**Age and Gender**

As can be seen in Figure 1, close to a quarter of all unlicensed drivers and riders involved in fatal crashes over 2005-2009 were in the 25-29 year age group. This compares to 10% of 25-29 year old drivers involved in fatal crashes generally. Notable figures are also seen in the 20-24 and 30-39 age groups. The older population, above age 50, do not feature highly as unlicensed drivers involved in fatal crashes.
As in fatal crashes generally, men are over represented - 86% of unlicensed drivers were male.

**Country or Metropolitan**

More fatal crashes typically occur in rural areas. Over 2005-2009, 59% of all fatal crashes occurred in rural areas. This compares to 52% of fatal crashes involving unlicensed drivers occurring in rural areas.

A higher proportion of fatal crashes involving unlicensed drivers occur on roads with a speed limit of 60km/h and under (42%), compared to all fatal crashes (32%). The largest majority of both still occur on roads with a speed limit of 100 km/h or more.
Figure 2: Percentage of fatal crashes by road speed limit, South Australia, 2005-2009

Other Risk Factors
Driving while unlicensed is already often a risk taking activity. When combined with other risk factors such as driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs and failure to wear a seatbelt or helmet, the chances of a crash occurring or a crash ending in a fatality increase.

Seatbelts & Helmets
Table 3 shows the frequency with which drivers and riders wear seatbelts or helmets. An increase in failure to wear these safety items is seen in unlicensed drivers and riders that were involved in fatal crashes.

Table 3: Drivers and riders involved in fatal crashes where seatbelt/helmet not worn, South Australia, 2005-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Seatbelt not worn</th>
<th>Helmet not worn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unlicensed Drivers/Riders</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Drivers/Riders</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alcohol & Drugs
Of the unlicensed drivers and riders who died as a result of the crash, that were tested, 57% were found to be over the legal limit of 0.05. Of those who tested positive, 56% were three or more times over the legal limit. In addition 48% were found to have MDMA, methamphetamine, THC (Cannabis) or a combination of these in their system. This compares to an average of 21% of drivers and rider fatalities generally.
Previous Disqualifications and Offences

A high proportion of drivers and riders responsible for fatal crashes have previously been disqualified on at least one occasion. The table below shows that on average over the past five years, a third of drivers responsible for fatal crashes, have had their licence disqualified at least once.

Figure 3: Unlicensed drivers and riders involved in fatal crashes that have previous licence disqualifications, South Australia, 2005-2009

The unlicensed drivers and riders involved in fatal crashes over 2005-2009 had an average of six offences, primarily consisting of speeding, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs and disobeying road rules. Of those that had been disqualified in the past, the average number of disqualifications was 5.4. The highest number of disqualifications one individual had was 26.
Definitions of police reported casualty types:

**Casualty Crash** - A crash where *at least one* fatality, serious injury *or* minor injury occurs.

**Casualty** – A fatality, serious injury *or* minor injury.

**Fatal Crash** - A crash for which there is *at least one* fatality.

**Fatality** - A person who dies within 30 days of a crash as a result of injuries sustained in that crash.

**Serious Injury Crash** - A non-fatal crash in which *at least one* person is seriously injured.

**Serious Injury** - A person who sustains injuries and is admitted to hospital as a result of a road crash and who does not die as a result of those injuries within 30 days of the crash.

**Minor Injury Crash** - A crash for *at least one* person sustains injury but no person is admitted to hospital or dies within 30 days of the crash.

**Minor Injury** – A person who sustains injuries requiring medical treatment, either by a doctor or in a hospital, as a result of a road crash and who does not die as a result of those injuries with 30 days of the crash.

**Property Damage Only Crash** – A crash resulting in property damage in excess of the prescribed amount in which no person is injured or dies within 30 days of the crash.

**Data sources**

The data presented in this reports was obtained from the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure Road Crash Database. The information was compiled from police reported road casualty crashes only.

Figures relating to the current year are preliminary and are subject to revision.

**Enquiries**

For further information about data in this report, contact:

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