

Driver Education – Safety

Safety is key. Safety is the most important aspect of driver education. It's only through safety that we have the opportunity to participate in driver ed (DE), to learn and have fun. Safety starts with you the driver. It includes your car, the track facilities and their operation during the event. It's essential that every participant be mindful of the safety requirements at a DE event.

Here's some important points about safety.

You the Driver

- You must be mentally and physically prepared. You know what you're able to do. Make sure you're as prepared as your car.
- Leave your ego, any bad attitudes, issues or problems outside the main gate.
- Your focus needs to be on listening and learning, being safe, while having fun.
- Get ample rest before each day of the DE event. You must be alert when participating.
- Eat enough food to maintain sufficient energy level throughout the DE event.
- Drink enough water or juice to maintain proper hydration during the DE event.
- Starting to feel tired / fatigued during a run session on track.....tell you instructor and come in.
- Feeling tired / fatigued late in the day...don't go out on track for "one more run". Give it (and yourself) a rest!

Your Safety Equipment (as a minimum)

- Full face helmet is required. Snell rated M2005 or SA2005 or newer year. If you're buying a helmet, purchase the newest SA rated one available.
- Cotton long sleeve shirt.
- Cotton pants.
- Cotton socks.
- Rubber soled shoes / sneakers.

Car Safety Equipment

- Fire Extinguisher BC or ABC rated 2.5 lb. minimum fully charged, securely mounted (metal-to-metal) within easy access of driver is required in upper run groups; white, black, red. Not mandatory beginner and less experienced run groups; green, yellow. Recommended to have even as a novice, if you're going to be a DE regular.
- Standard manufacturers seat belts acceptable. Should have 5 or 6 point harness system in the upper run groups.
- Harness system must be properly installed:
 - Harness system must be used with the appropriate seat having a slot through the seat bottom for the sub-belt and slots through the upper seat back for the shoulder belts.
 - System must include a properly secured sub-belt attached under the seat.
 - Shoulder belts must be used in conjunction with a properly padded roll bar or cage, or suitably designed truss for attaching the shoulder belts. A shoulder belt guide bar is also acceptable, so long as the shoulder belts go over it and are NOT attached to it. When using a guide bar, the shoulder belts are to be attached to the rear seat stock lap seat belt mounting points.
 - Shoulder belt angle should be no more than 40 degrees from horizontal when installed / attached.
 - Both driver and passenger MUST have the same level of protection in both seat and belts.
- Roll bars are required on all open cars (cabriolets) with the top up (closed). Such roll bars are to be adequate and dedicated. Cabriolets with pop-up roll bars are not acceptable, even if manually deployed. Boxsters, targas, and 914s are acceptable without add-on roll bars. Keep in mind that when seated in the car, the top of your helmet should be below a broom handle if the handle is laid from the top of the windshield frame to the top of the roll bar behind your seat.

Your Car Safe?

- Have your car tech inspected by a certified mechanic / shop in accordance with the DE event tech form.
- Do your own self tech of the car when you arrive at the track just before final inspection in the DE event's tech line.
- During the day, look over the car before going out on track for your next run session.
- Things you can check:
 - Battery secured, no leaks
 - Car empty (nothing that can roll around under the seats)
 - Tires in good condition (no cracks, no plugs, adequate tread)
 - Proper tire pressure
 - No fluid leaks
 - All fluid reservoir caps on tight
 - Sufficient fluid levels, especially brake fluid
 - Sufficient brake pad thickness (50% or more remaining)
 - Nothing loose or about to fall off the car
 - Doors operable from inside and outside
 - Brake lights working
 - Windows can be rolled completely down

Safety on Track

- Make sure that you take notice of the location of the corner worker stations around the track, especially which ones have flaggers.
- Be knowledgeable of the flags used by the corner workers. Know their meaning and be observant of them.
- Give passing signals early and clearly. One pass signal for each car that you allow to pass you. Give pass signal only in the designated passing zones. Give the car passing you the opportunity to clearly pass you and get back on line ahead of the next braking zone.
- Since learning is a major objective of DE events, make sure that you listen carefully to your instructor. Gradually learn about your cars capabilities, as well as its limits. The same applies to you the driver. Spend the time to learn, be smooth, be consistent....There's lots more DE opportunities. Remember precision and speed have to be learned and every track is different, so be patient.