

# About Our Drivers Schools

Congratulations! You've made the decision to attend a high performance driving event (HPDE) hosted by the MotorCity Chapter BMW CCA. This may be your first driving school ever, or simply your first school with MotorCity BMW CCA. This article will help you get the most out of your experience at our school.

Please note the emphasis on school. Most of you are already okay drivers on the street. The fact that you are interested in improving your skills shows you want to become a better driver. Most on-road driving uses only a fraction of your car's capability and your potential driving skill. Our school will raise your driving to the next level. (As to your car, well, it's already more capable than you, especially if it is a BMW!) And most of all, you will have fun.

## **SOME DRIVING SCHOOL QUESTIONS**

**How much track time do I get?** Plenty! Don't be surprised if you are on the track for nearly 1-1/2 to 2 hours each day (spread out over three or four sessions). Before each session, you will have some short classroom review and training with the head instructor.

**Is this racing?** No. It is a school. You will have an instructor in the right-hand seat, and the instructor will coach you everything from where to put your car on the track, track-driving technique (for example, track braking is totally different), to when and where you can pass, etc. No one keeps score or times you. The idea is to learn the track and gain skill and experience as you learn the limits of your car.

**Is it safe?** Again, this isn't a race. We're not fender-banging and rubbing paint. Most tracks are forgiving and feature safe run-off areas. Plus, you can't pass another car without the car in front of you signaling that it's okay—and, similarly, no one can pass you without your approval.

**How fast will I go?** Well, fast, but perhaps not as fast as you think. The course will have straights where the instructor will encourage full throttle. But the real fun in track driving is in the turns: left, right, uphill, downhill, and sometimes blind. So, our emphasis is on driving smoothly and well through the turns—not necessarily on just going fast (although that will happen).

**What safety equipment do I need?** An approved helmet is absolutely required. (See below as to our helmet requirements.) Your car also must pass a safety inspection before the school. (See our technical inspection form on the web site.) Beyond that, you must wear long pants and comfortable shoes, such as sneakers (no sandals or high heels!), while you are on the track. Short sleeve shirts are allowed.

**Do I need a race car or exotic sports car?** Nope. Whether you are driving that old, collectible BMW 2002, a vintage 328, or a new M4, you are going to have fun. Most people drive their daily drivers to these events. You will see all types of BMWs and other everyday cars, as well as some tricked-out toy cars. Most driving-school participants—especially in the novice class—are going to be driving the same sort of daily driver you are. We also permit a variety of capable sport utility vehicles to run in our schools. Check with the registrar before you register to make sure your SUV (such as a BMW X1 or other X-car) qualifies.

**Am I going to wear out my car?** You shouldn't—but you will put a little wear on your brakes and tires.

### **Helmets?**

You're required to have a helmet, and only 2010, 2015, or 2020 SA or M (motorcycle) Snell rated helmets are allowed. A limited number of helmets are available for rent. If you need a helmet, be sure to buy one before you come or reserve one with us when you register.

### **Convertibles**

Unfortunately, **no convertibles**, including "hardtop convertibles." We do permit some T-top cars. Check with the registrar before you register to make sure your T-top car qualifies.

### **Lap timing**

This is not a race or other timed event. We do permit instructors and students to use data loggers and video cameras, but we discourage the in-car display of lap times during driving sessions.

## **THINGS TO DO BEFORE THE SCHOOL**

**Read through this article.** Lots of useful information.

**Get a tech inspection.** Your car needs to be safe and mechanically sound! We have a technical inspection form you can take to your dealer or an independent shop. **You must bring the completed form to registration at the track, or you will not be permitted to drive.**

**Get a helmet.** See above for our helmet requirements.

**Pack the right clothes.** We recommend comfortable clothes, including loose fitting pants, shirts, sweaters, etc. Flat-soled sneakers or similarly treaded shoes are recommended. Full Nomex race gear is very seldom worn by students and not often worn by instructors. We run in the rain, so be prepared with rain gear.

Food and drinks. Lunch is not provided at our two-day schools. Food can be purchased at the track and also is available at locations 10-15 minutes from the track. You should bring a cooler for snacks and drinks—it's important to stay hydrated!

Bring your forms. Remember to pack your Tech Inspection form and waivers in a convenient place for registration at the track.

### **TRACK DAY PREPARATION AND PROCEDURES**

This list will help you to prepare when you show up on Saturday morning.

\*Get a good night's sleep. It will be a long, busy day, and alert students are safe students.

\*Upon arrival, empty your car, including your glove box and trunk, of all loose objects. Remove all car mats, too. And don't forget to close your car's hood and sunroof before going on track.

\*Proceed to registration. At registration you will sign the liability waiver, and you will receive your wristband and student registration packet that includes your car numbers, nametag, track map, and a schedule.

\*Place your numbers and letter designating your run group (A, B, C, D) in accordance with your registration packet instructions.

\*Check your tires' air pressure and torque your wheel lug nuts or bolts to the recommended levels. If you have questions, you can ask more experienced attendees or your instructor for their input on tire pressures. Air service is usually available at the track, but you might want to bring your own pump, and you will want to bring a good tire pressure gauge.

\*Stay alert for announcements and driver meetings. There's little slack time in the schedule, so you need to be on time.

\*There is a 5 mph speed limit in the paddock area. Please observe this limit for your safety and the safety of others.

\*To better control access to the track, wristbands (issued at registration) must be worn on the left wrist by all students, instructors, guests, and workers. No one will be allowed to drive on the track or wander around the paddock without a wristband visible.

## STUFF TO BRING TO THE TRACK

These items have proven useful over time to our students. Except for the event paperwork, they are not required, but they can help you enjoy the school.

**\*Event paperwork.** This is in red and boldface because you won't believe how many students, even experienced students, forget to pack the Tech Inspection form or leave it at the hotel on Saturday morning. You can't do the Tech Inspection form at the track, and you can't drive without it.

\*Plastic tarps and bins to protect your stuff while it's out of your car.

\*Cooler with snacks and water or other fluids (stay hydrated!)

\*Hat and sunscreen

\*Hand cleaner

\*Spare parts such as fuses and drive belts

\*Toolbox

\*Duct tape

\*Spare brake fluid and engine oil

\*Electrical tape

\*Extra car keys

\*Flashlight

\*Paper towels and window cleaner

\*Lounge chair

\*Air compressor

\*Tire pressure gauge

\*Torque wrench

\*Car manual or shop manual

\*Rain gear (and towels for your car in case it rains)

## **TRACK RULES**

Please help keep the facility clean. Trash receptacles will be provided. Waste fluids need to be removed by participants. Fuel spills on the asphalt must be brought to the attention of track personnel immediately. Cleanup of trash, oil or fuel spills can be charged at exorbitant rates. Be careful with automotive fluids to save yourself from major cleanup bills.

Fuel is sometimes available at the track, but do not rely on this. Filling stations can be found a short distance from the track, but plan ahead—you want to schedule a fuel trip so that it doesn't interfere with your time on the track. This also means you should **watch your fuel gauge on the track**. Few things are more embarrassing than forcing a track session to end early because you ran out of fuel on lap 3.

No vehicles are permitted on any portion of the property other than the paddock or racetrack.

## **DRIVING SCHOOL FLAG SIGNALS**

All drivers should study this description of our signal flags. Bring it with you to the track for review and reference (while in the paddock, not while driving). You may be quizzed by the instructors regarding this information, so be sharp! Learn the meanings of these flags—they are the corner workers' only means of communicating with you while you are on the track. Remember that flag signals must be obeyed without question. If you are flagged while on the track and disagree or do not understand why, obey the flag, complete the lap you are on, exit to the pit lane, continue to the head of pit lane, and ask the person there for more information. We'll review the flags at the drivers' meeting on Saturday morning, but that should be a review, not the first time you've thought about flags!

### **Yellow:**



*Standing yellow:* Slow down safely (watch your mirrors before slowing to make sure no one rear-ends you), proceed with caution, and be prepared to stop. There is no passing until the next corner worker station without a yellow. Sometimes this will be a full course yellow, meaning that every corner worker is showing a yellow and there is no passing anywhere. The first lap of the day or session is sometimes under a full course yellow to let everyone warm up safely.

*Waving yellow:* Slow down and proceed with EXTREME CAUTION; there is a car blocking the track or something is otherwise endangering oncoming traffic just ahead. No passing until the next corner worker station without a yellow.

**Yellow with vertical red stripes:**



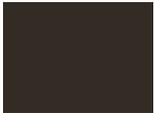
Oil/debris flag. Proceed with caution because there is oil, coolant, gravel, dirt, or other debris, or an animal, on the track. No passing until the next corner station without a flag.

**Green:**



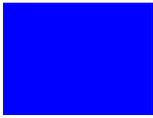
Start of track session, or to signify the track is green (hot). Usually shown at the start/finish line.

**Black:**



*Waved, furred, or pointed at your car*—there is something wrong with your car or your driving. Slow down, complete the lap you are on, come into pit lane, proceed to the head of pit lane, and talk to the person there who will discuss the problem with you.

*Displayed to all cars at all corner worker stations (possibly with a standing yellow)*—something has happened that requires us to clear the track. Slow down, proceed with caution, no passing, complete your current lap, exit the track to the pit lane, and stop in the pit lane or paddock.

**Blue:**

This flag may have a diagonal yellow stripe. It means a faster car is behind you. Give a passing signal at the next passing zone when it's safe to permit a pass.

**Red:**

Something has happened on track that requires us to get everyone stopped and to get safety vehicles onto the track. Stop as safely and quickly as you can after checking your mirrors for cars behind you. Pull to the side of the track (do not go off track) in sight of the next corner worker station (and on the corner worker's side of the track). Do not try to finish the lap unless the track exit is right ahead of you.

**Checkered:**

The track session is over. Usually shown at the start/finish line. Slow your car safely, complete the lap you are on, and exit into the pit lane and paddock. This is your cool-down lap, so try to use your brakes as little as possible to let them cool. NO PASSING! Do not use your parking brake upon returning to the pit lane or paddock.

**RUN GROUPS**

You are assigned to a run group (A, B, C, D) commensurate with your skill and experience, as we know it or as you report it to us. Sometimes, but not often, we'll adjust a student's run group classification during the school based on what we see at the track.

**INSURANCE**

An accident at one of our track events is rare, but it happens. We don't know whether damage to your car at the track is covered by your standard auto insurance policy, as that depends on your policy. (We do know that most policies will not cover track incidents.) If you're unsure, we recommend reading your policy and asking your insurance company. As an option, several vendors offer track insurance. We know of two our members have used:

- [Hagerty Insurance](#)
- [Lockton Affinity Motorsports](#)

## **GUESTS**

You are welcome to bring guests to the track. All guests must report to registration to sign our usual waiver and get a guest wristband. Students are NOT allowed to take any passengers (guests or other students) on the track at any time (except during designated touring or "parade lap" sessions). Only students and instructors may drive on the track (again, except during designated touring or "parade lap" sessions). Instructors may take a guest on the track, so long as the guest has signed the waiver and received a wristband, has an approved helmet, and is at least 18 years of age.

## **WEATHER**

The driving school will be run rain or shine (driving in the rain is a blast!). Be sure you come prepared to protect yourself from the sun and rain. Note that we require both driver's and passenger's side front windows to be open when on track, even in the rain. Believe it or not, not that much rain comes in while you're on the track!