



SCHATTENBAUM REGION

Porsche Club of America

Drivers Education



A Beginner's Guide to Drivers Education

We all remember our first Porsche Club of America Drivers Education (DE) event. I remember every detail of mine. They say that adrenaline helps burn things into your memory - I guess so! What a cacophony of sights, sounds, smells and feelings. I was completely unprepared when I went to my first DE. Of course I remembered my car, a helmet and the Tech Form but I wished someone had given me some advice on "all the other stuff" that I needed to know and do before the event.

Described below are a few suggestions on getting ready for your first DE event. Hopefully, reading this will reduce your stress and increase the fun factor. Remember- DE is supposed to be fun. This is not racing or race preparation. This is not an event to "show-off" how great you can drive or to find out how fast your car can go around turns. The purpose of DE is to learn how to properly and safely drive your Porsche and to enjoy driving it! Let that be your guide and your objective!

Before the Event: Preparation is Key

First and foremost- find a friend! Things will go much smoother if you get together with someone else who has gone to the event before. Chances are it was someone in PCA who convinced you to overcome your apprehension and got you to sign up for DE in the first place. Ask them to show you the ropes. They will be thrilled to do it- really. They will want to help you because chances are they've been in your shoes before and someone probably helped them on their first time. Ask them what they bring, how they prepare their car, where they have the tech inspection done, what time to leave, where to stay, etc., etc.

The Drivers Education Registration Form

You can find the DE Registration Form in the Club's newsletter as well as on our web site (www.schattenbaum.org/driversed). Complete the form and send it in with your payment. If you have questions about the form contact the Registrar for assistance. You will receive a confirmation notice, which will include your assigned car number. Bring a copy of the confirmation letter with you to the event.

Technical Safety Inspection

Every car used in DE events must pass a safety inspection by an approved Tech Inspector. The inspection must be performed no more than 30 days prior to EACH

event that you plan to attend. The Track Registrar will either provide you with a Tech Inspection Form when your registration is confirmed or tell you how to obtain the form from our website. Review the list of items that will be inspected and repair anything that requires attention. It's important that you start this process well in advance of the event. Don't wait until a few days before the event because if repairs are needed you may not have time to get them done.

Fill in the top section of the Tech Inspection form and present it to your mechanic or Schattenbaum-approved Tech Inspector when you have your car inspected. If everything passes inspection, you will be given the completed form - be sure it is signed and dated by the inspector. You must also sign and date the form. Bring the Inspection Form to the DE event. *You are required to provide proof of having had a safety inspection done before you can participate in each DE event!*

Things to Consider Before Getting the Tech Inspection

- ✓ Brake fluid should be changed annually and brake systems should be bled just prior to each DE event.
- ✓ Wheel lug nuts should be torqued to at least 90-ft. lbs. (or as specified for your Porsche model)
- ✓ Brake pads must have at least 50% remaining. The pad thickness must be sufficient to make it through the entire DE event (particularly important for 2-day events) and get you home safely. You may want to consider a performance brake pad. If necessary change the pads and bleed the brakes before the tech inspection.
- ✓ Check your tires to be sure they have enough tread. Don't buy new tires for they will have too much tread block.
- ✓ Make sure everything is in proper working order. Closely check items that commonly wear out like belts, hoses, light bulbs, relays, fuses, etc.

Mandatory Equipment and Other Accessories

Helmets are mandatory for all DE drivers. This is often overlooked until the last minute. Someone else in the Club may have a helmet that you can borrow but make arrangements to have one for your use before you leave for the event. Don't skimp on buying a helmet – consider what it's protecting! Buy a good full-face or open-face (personal preference) helmet such as Shoei, Bell, or Simpson. Helmets must fit properly to be effective (there are guides for measuring your head to assure a proper fit). If you expect to do DE regularly (or you just wanted to be better prepared) you may want to buy a pair of good quality racer's gloves and a helmet support / neck brace. These items and driving shoes are optional.

Snell Rated Helmets

Helmets must be Snell rated and meet specific criteria for use in DE. Snell updates its helmet requirements every 5 years and it normally takes several months before updated helmets are on the market. A Snell rating of "SA" means special application and is designed for use in automobiles whereas a Snell "M" rated helmet is designed for use on motorcycles. The basic differences between the M and SA rating is that the SA helmet has a fire resistant lining and is tested for multiple impacts while the M helmet is tested for a single impact and does not have a fire resistant lining. A Snell rating sticker is usually located on the inside the helmet.

Schattenbaum Region allows use of either SA or M rated helmets (SA is recommended). Drivers can use helmets with the last two Snell rating periods provided the helmet is in good condition. For example, in 2007, helmets designated as M00, SA00, M05 or SA05 are acceptable. Any helmet that shows signs of damage will not be allowed.

Other Sources of Information

You should familiarize yourself with the fundamentals and terminology associated with driving on a track prior to coming to your first DE event. The internet can be a great source of information. The national PCA web site, www.pca.org, is a good place to start your search. It includes hyperlinks to other PCA Regions' web sites that have information about DE (some materials are down-loadable). There are also numerous books and videos available on the topic of performance driving that can be helpful.

Before You Leave Home

So, your car has been tech inspected and is A-OK. You have your helmet and you've completed all the necessary forms. You even looked on a map for directions to the track. Don't forget to make your hotel reservations. You can get suggestions for hotels from your fellow Schattenbaum members.

Now, what should you bring to the event? On one hand you don't want to bring everything in the garage, but on the other hand it would be nice to have what you really need. Also consider removing things from your car that you will not need, since you will have to completely empty your car once you get to the track (see Grid Tech below).

Start to pack a day or two before the event so you have time to get everything you'll need. Also, check the weather forecasts. Events take place rain or shine and you will be outdoors most of the day, so plan accordingly.

Here are some suggestions for what to include:

Helmet	Hotel reservation confirmation
Completed Tech Inspection Form	Directions to the hotel and track
Tire pressure gauge	PCA membership card
Your car's tool kit and some other basic hand tools	Driver's license, car registration and insurance card
A roll of paper towels and window cleaner	Prescribed medications and other personal care items
Cotton towels	Wrist or pocket watch
White shoe polish in a "wipe-on" bottle or thin tape (to make your car numbers)	Sunglasses
A few quarts of oil and a funnel	T-shirt, sweatshirt, jacket, etc. as the weather conditions demand
Racer's tape to cover headlights and lenses (duct tape is not recommended as it can pull off paint!)	Long sleeve cotton shirt
A travel bag, milk crate or box to hold all this stuff	Tennis or driving shoes (not jogging shoes that have wide or bulky soles)
A tarp, at least 4'x6', to cover all this stuff in case of rain.	Cotton pants (e.g., blue jeans)

Additional / optional items:

Driving gloves and neck brace	An extra pair of prescription glasses or contact lenses
Wrench to tighten wheel lug nuts (preferably a torque wrench)	Cooler with ice and drinks (STAY HYDRATED!)
Floor jack and stands	Folding chair
Additional tools and car-care products	Snacks / lunch (some tracks have facilities where you can get food & drinks)
Hat	Umbrella (not red or yellow)
Sunscreen, Insect repellent	Rain coat or jacket (not red or yellow)

Leave your EGO at home!

When You Arrive at the Track

GET A FULL TANK OF GAS BEFORE YOU GET TO THE TRACK!

Gas is available at the track, but at limited times, and it is usually considerably more expensive.

Check your registration confirmation letter and plan to arrive at the track when it opens. Get there early, talk to people and find out what's happening. In some cases you will be assigned a specific paddock space (it may be indicated on the registration confirmation), in other cases it's first-come-first served for the best spots. Consider weather conditions when choosing your parking spot.

What to do when you get to the track:

- ✓ Find a place to park your car. Make sure your car is not blocking access roads or pit lane.
- ✓ Sign in: When entering the track gates you will be required to sign an insurance waiver for the track. You will sign another waiver for PCA at the registration table.
- ✓ Find the Registration table and sign-in. Get copies of all the forms that are provided including Student/Instructor lists and schedules for run groups and classroom activities.
- ✓ Listen for announcements.
- ✓ Prepare for Grid Tech.

Grid Tech Inspection

After parking your car and unloading your stuff, one of the first things you must do is prepare your car for "Grid Tech". This is an important final measure to ensure that your car and equipment are in safe working order. This is usually done near pit lane. Listen for the announcements, and get your car in line as early as possible. Bring your helmet and your completed Tech Inspection Form. Follow the instructions of the individuals running Grid Tech. They will inspect the outside and inside (cabin, trunk(s) and engine compartment) of your car.

Do all of the following before you get in the Grid Tech Line:

- ✓ Prepare your car: Take everything out of your car. This means everything! Empty the trunk(s) and door pockets. Remove anything in the cabin that is not permanently installed like radar detectors, MP-3 players, EZ-Pass tags and cell phones. Remove all floor mats and the empty coffee cups and food wrappers from under the seats. Remove air fresheners, etc that may be hanging in the cabin.
- ✓ You may want to remove the center caps from Fuchs wheels
- ✓ Targa and cabriolet owners must secure the top in place
- ✓ Put on your assigned car numbers

Grid tech is NOT the time to find and fix problems. If you are not prepared for grid tech, you will be sent to back of the line. If you fail grid tech, you will not be permitted on the track until the failure is corrected.

Driver's Meetings and Classes

There will be a driver's meeting at the beginning of the event. Don't be late. The Track Chairman will tell you about the track, any special rules for the day, how the flags will be used, potential hazards, etc. Green/Yellow run groups (beginners and novices) will have separate classroom sessions prior to getting out on the track as well as throughout the day. You will be told about this at the driver's meeting. Ask questions, pay attention and learn from the other drivers and instructors!

Other Things To Do

- ✓ Meet your instructor and introduce yourself (one will be assigned to you – if not see the Registrar). Get to know this person and find out where their car is parked. Discuss your driving experiences as well as your objectives of participating in DE. Agree on a location to meet before each of your runs.
- ✓ Make sure you know when your run group sessions start (see the Run Group Schedule you were given at registration). Get in the Grid Line when your run group is called. If necessary, use the bathroom first!

A Final Thought

Most DE participants are very willing to help other drivers, so don't worry if you forget something (and you probably will). There's always good number of members who trailer their cars to the event. These folks bring everything imaginable with them and they are usually happy to lend you what you need. Don't feel shy about asking to borrow something - Some day maybe you'll do the same for someone else...

Be safe and have fun learning to drive your Porsche the way it was meant to be driven!

If you have any questions regarding our DE events, please contact our Track Chairman or Track Registrar