



## SCOTTISH MOTOR RACING CLUB

### DRIVING STANDARDS CODE OF CONDUCT and GUIDANCE

#### OVERVIEW

The Driving Standards Code of Conduct is designed to ensure that drivers are able to enjoy their motor sport as safely and cost effectively as possible. By making sure that everyone understands the rules we hope to eliminate on-track incidents or at least to ensure that accident damage and risk of personal injury are minimised. With this aim, the SMRC has developed a method to accept and to deal with complaints.

The SMRC works with event officials and investigates on-track incidents, whether triggered by judicial action initiated by the Clerk of the Course, by competitor complaint, or by their own observations, notwithstanding that the Clerk of the Course may already have imposed a penalty under Motorsport UK Regulations.

The SMRC have a team of Motorsport UK licenced officials, Motorsport UK qualified Driver Coaches and Driving Standards Advisors to investigate and take action on driving standards incidents. They may supplement their own investigations by the use of Motorsport UK marshals reports, where available and deemed appropriate by the Clerk of the Course, and by the use of available video evidence.

Please note the Clerk of the Course may ask the opinion of the SMRC Driving Standards Advisors relating to on track incidents.

**By agreeing to play by the same rules we can all continue to enjoy the very best of low cost motor sport, in the company of friends off the track, and respected competitors on the track, with close, fast, wheel to wheel racing, using all the right skills.**

## THE DRIVING STANDARDS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

**Important:** If you think that another driver has unfairly gained an advantage over you and that they should receive a penalty that would change the result of a race, this can only happen if you take your complaint to the Clerk of the Course, which must be **within 30 minutes of the provisional results first being published**. This is irrespective of the Championship Yellow Card system described below. Please note any formal protest must be lodged with the Secretary of the Meeting along with the appropriate fee.

### Championship Yellow Card system

In the event of a Registered Competitor's driving standards falling below the standards considered to be appropriate to the Championship, the Championship Co-ordinator (or the Deputy), SMRC Driving Standards Advisor and/or Clerk of the Course will consider any incident or occurrence. As a result of their consideration if (a) a breach of driving standards and/or (b) behaviour either on or off the track such as to bring the Club or the Series into disrepute and/or (c) any other breach of these Regulations, the Clerk of the Course may take any action as prescribed in the Motorsport UK Regulations. In addition to any such action, the Championship Co-ordinator may issue a Championship 'Yellow Card' warning to any competitor for action or driving deemed to be detrimental to other participants and/or the interests of the Championship.

If a competitor is issued with a 'Yellow Card' they will be placed under observation by the Clerk of the Course at the following two events in which they take part. If any competitor receives more than two 'Yellow Cards' that competitor may be subject to any of the following:

(a) Suspension of Racing Membership of the SMRC thus making the competitor ineligible for the Championship. The period of the suspension will be notified to the competitor in writing and may cover one or more subsequent rounds of the Championship.

(b) Be required to satisfactorily complete a course specially devised by the SMRC in conjunction with the SMRC Motorsport UK qualified Driver Coaches. The course will be at the competitor's expense.

'Yellow Cards' are cumulative and are cancelled at the end of the season.

Our Driving Standards system works best if there is weight of evidence available. We tend to take the view that anyone can make an occasional mistake, however, if we receive similar complaints about the same driver, a clearer picture emerges. So our system can only work well if you use it.

Please do not come to us and say, *"So-and-so has just pushed me onto the grass for the third time this year, and I have seen him do the same to three other drivers, what are you going to do about it?"*, because we might well reply that it's the first complaint we have received. Rather, report each incident as and when you witness it, so that we can build up a complete picture of so-and-so's competence, and take steps before things get out of hand.

If you consider that another driver is driving outside the rules, then you have a number of options available to you.

## Complaint Procedure Options:

a) You can have a chat with the driver yourself. However, if you are upset or angry with the other driver then please wait a while and after you have calmed down, speak to them in a calm manner. The SMRC will not tolerate any aggressive confrontation, either in Parc Ferme or in the Paddock, and neither will the race officials. Often, sorting things out between yourselves is very effective; however, if this is not successful, or you do not feel you want to do this yourself, for whatever reason, then consider another option below.

b) Please feel free to have a chat with the Championship Co-ordinator, SMRC Driving Standards Advisor or SMRC Driver Coaches about the incident so we can offer advice, particularly if you are not sure whether to make a formal complaint or not. Again, most complaints are best dealt with a while after an incident, rather than immediately after, while the adrenaline is still flowing and tempers may be raised.

c) You may also speak to the Clerk of the Course about the incident and he / she may investigate and take appropriate action if deemed necessary. Notwithstanding the above you also have the right to lodge a formal protest in accordance with the Motorsport UK General Regulations, which should be done by completing an Motorsport UK Protest Form (and lodging the appropriate fee) which is available from the Secretary of the Meeting. Please note action via the Clerk of the Course needs to be taken **within 30 minutes of the provisional results first being published.**

## GUIDANCE ON DRIVING STANDARDS ISSUES

We highlight below some of the issues that continually lead to safety concerns and damage together with an expansion of some of the Motorsport UK General Regulations.

### Flags Generally

Use the green flag lap to ensure that you are aware where all the marshals' posts are - that's what it's intended for.

### Yellow Flag

You must slow down sufficiently to maintain full control over your vehicle and **NO OVERTAKING.**

Passing under yellow is not only gaining an unfair advantage but is putting marshals and fellow competitors at risk. Some drivers raise or wave an arm and point to the flag post to alert drivers behind – this is good practice.

If you overtake in error under a yellow you should give the place(s) back at the next safe available opportunity. Please **do not** attempt to give a place back until you pass the green flag, because the driver behind cannot overtake you, whether you are telling him to or not, while within the yellow flag zone.

There should be no confusion regarding when you can/can't overtake. It is quite simple. You can race until you PASS the first yellow flag i.e. you can overtake if you are in front by the time you pass the flag, after which you must slow down sufficiently to retain full control of your car (and stop if necessary as the circuit may be blocked) and you must not overtake until you pass the green flag signifying the end of the yellow flag zone. This is one reason it's important to know exactly where the active flag marshal's posts are. Pay attention on the Green Flag lap, rather than just worrying about warming your tyres.

### **Red Flag**

Should any race or qualifying session need to be stopped, you will see the red flag.

When you see the red flag you should cease racing and slow down, with due regard to the driver behind you.

You should not slam on the anchors, unless in emergency avoidance of an incident or another car. If you brake suddenly and unexpectedly, any driver(s) behind you may not have been able to see the flag and you may cause another avoidable accident.

Some drivers raise or wave an arm to warn the drivers behind that the session has been stopped before slowing. You then proceed to the start line (race) or the pits (qualifying), or as directed by marshals.

### **Chequered Flag**

Shown at the end of each session. You should not slam on the anchors, unless in emergency avoidance of an incident or another car. If you brake you may cause an avoidable accident.

### **Blue Flag**

Stationary - another competitor is following close behind.

Waved - another competitor is trying to overtake.

When shown to you, they usually mean that a faster car is trying to overtake you - most usually shown when someone is being lapped.

The Motorsport UK General Regulations states at Q 14.4 "A car alone may use the full width of the track. However as soon as it is caught by a car which is about to lap it the driver must allow the faster driver past at the first possible opportunity. If the driver who has been caught does not seem to make full use of the rear view mirrors, flag marshals will display waved blue flags". It also states "any driver who appears to ignore the blue flags will be reported to the Clerk of the Course".

If you can, give a clear hand signal pointing to the side you wish them to pass. Do not make any sudden unexpected move to get out of the way as the overtaking car may have already committed to passing you.

Do not try to make a pass easy by lifting off when a car is slipstreaming very closely behind you; it will probably run into you!

Faster cars who see the blue flag being shown for slower cars – it is your responsibility to make the pass safely. Remember that the slower car is still moving fast so do not cut them up or pull immediately in front of them but give them room, especially in the braking area.

## **Spinning**

Inevitably, while pushing a car to its limits on the race track, you will have the occasional spin. Whatever the reason for your spin, once control has been lost, you should push both the footbrake and the clutch pedal at the same time and maintain that pressure on both until the car comes to rest. This should mean that the car follows a predictable path. If you don't, the car may shoot backwards or forwards following the spin and collect any following car(s) who are trying to avoid you.

Remember **"in a spin - both feet in"**.

## **Re-joining the Circuit**

The Motorsport UK General Regulations states at Q 14.4.3 *"Should a car leave the track for any reason and without prejudice of 14.4.4 below the driver may re-join. However, this may only be done when it is safe to do so and without gaining any advantage."*

The Motorsport UK General Regulations states at Q 14.4.4 *"Repetition of serious mistakes or the appearance of a lack of control over the car (such as leaving the track) will be reported to the Clerk of the Course and may entail the imposition of penalties up to and including the disqualification of any driver concerned."*

One of the biggest errors made by drivers (and not just novices) when they go off the circuit is to keep their foot planted on the accelerator and attempt to return to the circuit without losing any time or places. Often this results in them shooting across the circuit at right angles and off again on the opposite side of the circuit, assuming they are fortunate enough not to wipe out a following car in the process.

Although it is understandable in the heat of battle that if you go off you should want to regain the circuit without losing places, there should only be one thought in your mind as soon as you go off. That should be, "how can I return to the circuit safely?" If you lose places as a result, or even if you end up last, that is your problem as you shouldn't have gone off in the first place. It is not the responsibility of any car you pull back on in front of to try and avoid you.

## **Blocking and Weaving**

The Motorsport UK General Regulations at Q 14.4.1 states that *"Overtaking, according to the circumstances, may be carried out either on the right or on the left. In response to each attempted overtaking manoeuvre no more than one change of direction to defend a position is permitted. Any driver moving back towards the racing line having earlier defended his position off-line should leave at least one cars width between his own car and the edge of the track on the approach to the corner. However, manoeuvres liable to hinder other drivers, such as deliberate crowding of a car beyond the edge of the track or any other abnormal change of direction, are strictly prohibited. Any driver who appears guilty of any of the above offences may be reported to the Clerk of the Course"*.

This regulation precludes competitors from blocking, weaving and squeezing. So that means no blocking of following cars on the straight, by weaving, moving in front of them to deliberately block them, or pushing them to the side of the track if they get alongside. Leaning on another car going around a corner and pushing them off the outside (or inside) of the track is not allowed.

Defensive driving is fine and is all part of racing. It generally involves protecting the inside line into a corner. Again, however, moving from an inside line to the outside because the following car attempts to go around the outside is blocking, and is not allowed.

### **The use of mirrors**

There is a minority of drivers who do not seem to look in their mirrors at all! This may be because they are driving above their natural level of performance, so that they have no spare time to look behind. Or it may be that they have very little experience and do not appreciate how vitally important the mirrors are, especially given the speed differentials which apply in some of our Championships.

You should develop a standard routine for using your mirrors which becomes second nature. Check your mirrors as you exit every single corner. This way you will not suffer any nasty surprises when, for example, the race leader is about to go past. All your fellow competitors will feel easier and you will enjoy a high reputation as a safe driver. By driving within yourself, at a level where you feel slightly uncomfortable but are not driving tensed up with your heart in your mouth, you will have time to not only check your mirrors but also the oil pressure and water temperature gauges at a convenient straight section of the track. This last exercise might well save you a fortune in repair bills!

### **Avoiding the "Racing Accident"**

We also want to eliminate the desperate "diving-up-the-inside" overtaking manoeuvres that are normally dismissed as "racing accidents". There is no more predictable or more common incident that happens on a race circuit, but there is a common feeling of blamelessness on the part of those involved.

Car 1 (leading):

1. Think about whether to take a conventional or defensive approach to the next corner as soon as you BEGIN the straight. Do not take this line at the last moment.
2. Check your mirrors and what is around you, before every turn-in manoeuvre.
3. Do not "slam the door" unless you are totally in front of Car 2. If it then hits the rear panel of your car, Car 2 is 100% to blame. If Car 2 hits your rear wing, you are partly at fault. In most cases, the impact will probably cause you to spin, and Car 2 to continue with light damage, so it is obviously worth considering making room if Car 2 is anything other than entirely behind you.

Car 2 (following):

1. Do not dive up the inside unless you can be fully alongside before the apex.
2. If you cannot quite get alongside, slow down enough to let the door be slammed in your face without contact. Better still; hang back slightly before the corner so that you can attack the corner with a greater exit speed than Car 1, catching Car 1 as the next straight begins.

“Contact incidents” happen when two drivers both attempt to put their car in the same place at the same time. Such incidents can be avoided by either one of the drivers anticipating what the other might do and choosing *not* to put their car in the same place. It is usually the following driver who has the best view of what is happening and who is thus best placed to take avoiding action.

If you are following another car and manage to get an “overlap”, but not fully alongside, what are you going to do? The leading car should be aware of you and should allow space for you. But if the driver hasn’t seen you, contact could result. It’s your choice, stick to your line and risk being punted off, or pull out of the manoeuvre and keep your car intact to try again.

The point is that it takes two to tangle. Sometimes you may feel that your car’s position means that you are “in the right”. But being “right” is not much consolation if you’re also in the tyre wall!

### **Mixed Class Races/Qualifying/Testing**

There are often events where multiple classes of car will be on track at the same time – this applies to testing, qualifying and racing.

Please bear in mind that during testing and qualifying, it is not a race for position. There is no point holding up a faster driver (even if they are in a slower car). They have caught you for a reason, they are quicker than you. If you let them past safely, you will not only gain a tow around the circuit for a corner or two, but also gives you a learning opportunity. Watch how they drive their car around the circuit, the attitude of the car, the lines and where they brake (or not!). This information can be invaluable and give you the ability to pedal faster.

In a racing situation here are a few examples of what tends to unfold, and how you should approach it.

Faster cars with faster drivers: You will very probably catch the rear of the slower class. It is your job to pass them safely. The slower car does not have to dive out of your way under blue flags (although they may choose to make it easy for you). Typically these can be single cars, but that they are driving to the extent of their abilities, and are fully entitled to continue their race. You may also catch the mid-pack or the leaders of the slower class. They also do not have to compromise their race for you, and they will be fully committed and focussed on their battle. Although they should be aware of you needing to pass, there may be occasions where you catch them by surprise. This can often happen with the second or third car that follows through. You must try to find a safe way past and you have no “entitlement” to move them out of the way. Remember – that the slower car is still moving fast so do not cut them up or pull immediately in front of them but give them room, especially in the braking area!

Faster cars with slower drivers: You may be caught by the faster drivers of the slower class. It is their job to pass you safely, however be aware that you will have a straight line speed advantage. It can be immensely frustrating to have a faster car with a slower driver baulk you in the corners, then shoot off down the straight, only for the same thing to happen at the next corner, and the next, and the next... If you are in the faster car, you are under no obligation to pull over and ease off, you have your own race to run, however consider what you have to gain by mixing it with frustrated drivers in a different class. They have caught you because they are faster round the circuit. You do not lose championship points by letting them through. If you let them go, they will go and attack the next car up the road, and may even help you get past.

Slower cars with faster drivers: You may catch the rear of the faster class. It is your job to pass them safely. The slower driver does not have to dive out of your way under blue flags (although they may choose to make it easy for you). You may also catch the mid-pack of the faster class. Be aware that they are driving to the extent of their abilities, and they do not have to compromise their race for you, you must find a safe way past. It can be frustrating having faster cars baulk you in the corners, but consider how best to use the tow and corners to separate you from the people you are battling.

Slower cars with slower drivers: You are likely to have a busy race! Be aware that you may be caught by the lead pack (or more) of both classes, and watch for blue flags. You do not have to dive out of the way - see Blue Flag section above.

### **Passing in corners**

If you are being challenged as you go into a corner, do NOT simply slam the door shut. Take your line and do not modify it in an effort to block the challenging driver or, at worst, force him off the track. In so many instances this results in both your car and the opposing car being tangled up, causing expensive damage to each and posing a potential menace to everyone else. GIVE THE OTHER DRIVER SOME ROOM. If you are on your normal and, hopefully, correct line, the other driver will find it difficult to match your pace through the corner anyway, and you should emerge ahead at the exit. If, however, the other driver gets alongside and is inside you, THE CORNER IS HIS. Don't, whatever you do, take immediate retaliatory action by tightening your line in order to try to squeeze him. Wait for a suitable opportunity to re-pass later on.

The first corner after the start is always a potential source of contact. Although the start is a great opportunity to make up places, be reasonable.

Do not start weaving as you approach that first corner, diving for the inside line. Keep your line as you approach the corner, so that everyone else will know where you are and anticipate what you are going to do. Remember, there are many more corners still to come in the race!

Remember - **by maintaining good driving standards we will enjoy our sport without detriment to others.**