



## **FIRST TIME ON TRACK OR FIRST TIME WITH METRO?**

While this document is written primarily to welcome those who have never driven on track, it will benefit even highly experienced drivers – including instructors – if they have not yet driven with Metro New York Region PCA. Our protocols, philosophies, and goals are explained below. One can only benefit from the preparation and advice it provides.

## **WHAT IS HPDE?**

Whether this is your first ever HPDE or just your first with Metro NY Region PCA, it's worth reviewing the philosophies and procedures.

High Performance Driver Education, more commonly HPDE or just DE, is an activity focused on driver training, designed to show you how to safely explore and get the most out of your car in a controlled environment: the race track.

The two goals of DE are education and enjoyment.

We teach the protocols of track driving and the techniques of good driving. Accuracy, car control, the line (the efficient route around each track), smooth application of controls and, above all, situational awareness comprise the knowledge you will absorb at a DE. As your skill and experience grow, the reward will be greater speed and an ability to safely drive your car ever closer to the limits of your and its capabilities, while sharing the track with other drivers.

To participate in a Metro NY PCA DE you must be at least 18 years of age and possess a valid driving license.

We have six run groups through which one may progress as skill and experience increase. The run groups are denoted by colors. These are:

Green: Beginner Student  
Yellow: Advanced Student  
Blue: Beginner Solo  
White: Intermediate Solo  
Black: Advanced Solo  
Red: Instructor

Green and Yellow are instructed run groups, meaning you will have an instructor riding with you in the passenger seat when you are on track. A yellow driver may be allowed to drive solo for a session or two within their run group if their instructor is considering a promotion to Blue.

The remaining groups are all solo, in which you can drive on track by yourself in the car, but may wish to have an instructor occasionally to provide coaching.

Instructors promote each driver through the run groups, in consultation with the Chief Instructor. Check Out rides are undertaken for the purpose of promotion and involve having an instructor in the car. There is no schedule for moving through the run groups; everyone learns at their own pace.



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Any solo drivers new to MNY or the track at which their first event with us is being held may be provided a Welcome Ride with an instructor at their own request or the discretion of a CI (Chief Instructor). These rides help ensure correct run group placement and comfort within the DE. If a CI mandates such a ride it will be as early as possible on the first day of the event and provided by an assigned instructor.

If this will be your first ever DE, you will be placed in the Green run group. Before going on track for the first time at each DE, Green students attend a classroom session in which the basics of track protocol and driving are explained. Green students generally have one or two classroom sessions each day. Yellow students are advised to attend and participate in the classroom discussions while getting to know the people with whom they share the track. There are also classroom sessions for the Solo drivers.

Track protocol includes: knowledge of the flags with which marshals communicate to drivers, their meanings, and the correct response to each; emergency procedures for the unlikely event that one needs to use them; passing procedures including when and how to give and take a point by, which is the signal used by a driver to allow another driver to pass them on track; how to leave and enter the track from the pit lane.

Basics of track driving include: learning a track; the correct line around the track; how and when to use the car controls (throttle, brakes, clutch, steering wheel); where to look when on track; how to learn and use landmarks; checking and setting your tire pressures; observing the state of your car during the event.

All of these skills will be put into practice when driving on the track, with the help of your instructor.

Firstly, we need to prepare for the DE.



## **REGISTRATION FOR DE**

Every year Metro NY PCA schedules DEs at a variety of tracks, most within five hours drive of Metropolitan New York. These usually include Lime Rock Park (LRP) in CT, New Jersey Motorsports Park (NJMP) in NJ, and Watkins Glen International (WGI) in NY. We also participate in events at Summit Point in WV, Palmer Motorsports Park in MA, VIR in VA, and Mid-Ohio in OH. Our track season runs from approximately late March until early November, and we generally space the DEs about four weeks apart. Most DEs are two days; some are three days. We have single-day events, some of which are for Solo drivers only. We release the season schedule and open the events for registration as early in the year as possible. We aim for early January.

You must register and pay for each DE online at [www.ClubRegistration.net](http://www.ClubRegistration.net), often referred to as ClubReg.

If you have never used the site before you will need to create a user account. In so doing you will fill in a profile that contains your contact information, information about the car(s) you intend to bring to the track, and your track experience. Please complete the profile in as much detail as possible and update it after each DE. It helps Registrars and Instructors know something about you and your experience. This is the same system we use to register for Autocross, Touring (Trek), Rally, and other events.

You can use “Metro” as a search term to find all of our events in the ClubReg system. After choosing the first event for which to register, you should choose the “Details” button and thoroughly read the information on the following page. In particular, read the Event Description.

Returning to the ClubReg Dashboard you can choose the “Register” button and complete the registration form. Among the options from which you will choose are your Entry Fees, the car you will bring, your preferred car number, your PCA membership number, your PCA home region, your last DE run group, any available options you wish to purchase, and you can sign the eWaivers. You will also be asked to agree with the terms and conditions of registration and the event.

If it is your first DE your responses on the registration form will likely be as follows:

You will choose the STUDENT entry fee for the day(s) you wish to attend. We generally advise people attend as many days of an event as they can. Students benefit greatly from the overnight break(s) between each track day and the ability to consciously and subconsciously absorb what they learned and put it in practice again each subsequent day.

You will choose your preferred vehicle for the event, from those you entered when creating your profile.

You will choose your preferred car number. There is no guarantee you will be assigned the number you choose. No 1- or 2-digit numbers are available. Once a number is assigned to our registrants, it is reserved for them on a rolling 18-month basis from their last registration. For this reason, about half of all 3-digit numbers are reserved. We try to provide numbers people want, or something very much like them. You must use your assigned car number.



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You will enter your PCA membership number if you are a member, or “Not a Member” if you are not. We welcome all drivers, but need to know if you are a PCA member and be able to confirm it.

If you are a PCA member you will enter your PCA Home Region, for instance MNY or Metro New York, or “not a member” if you are not.

Assuming this is your first DE you will enter n/a as your last run group. You will know your last run group for each subsequent registration.

You may enter questions or comments in the appropriate entry field.

If there are event options, such as garage spaces for rent, t-shirts, or a donation to our charity, you will be able to add them to your registration on this form,

You will be asked to confirm various pieces of information and agree to terms and conditions as well as signing an electronic waiver.

On the following page, you will have the opportunity to pay. We prefer you pay when you register. One is not considered to have registered until payment is made. Completing the form without paying will not reserve a place at the DE, nor secure any option. Wait List precedence is determined by date and time of payment, not registration form submission. As well, we may find it necessary to impose a late registration fee on those who insist on delaying payment. PCA members receive preference when a Wait List is tight. We prefer you pay by credit card through the ClubRegistration system. Only in exceptional circumstances will payment be accepted in any other way, by pre-arrangement with the DE Registrar.

If you have a coupon or gift certificate for Metro NY PCA HPDE you must still pay in full for the HPDE online. Please contact the Registrar by email when you register, or leave a note about your coupon/gift certificate in the “comments” field of the form and inform them you will receive a discount. You will be directed to hand the coupon/gift certificate to the Registrar at the track when collecting your wrist band. You will be provided a refund electronically through ClubRegistration.net after the Registrar has taken possession of the coupon/gift certificate..

The Details page for each event lays out the conditions for cancellation and refund. Metro NY PCA is very flexible and fair about refunds, and we take seriously that we are a club and a non-profit. Nonetheless, track events are extremely expensive to arrange and organize, and we cannot always provide a full refund for late cancellations. The conditions are clearly set forth in writing.

Once your Registration form has been submitted, the Registrar will process it. If you are a Green or Yellow student, your status will change from “Pending” to “Wait List” as soon as the Registrar has processed your paid registration. You will be moved from “Wait List” to “Confirmed” when Instructors have been designated for the DE. Once confirmed you will receive a confirmation email. We try to confirm students two weeks prior to each DE. This is sometimes not possible, and you may receive an email saying you have been Wait Listed and explaining why. You may be confirmed as late as a couple of days before the DE, but you will first receive communications from the Registrar. On rare occasions, a Wait Listed registrant may not be confirmed. In such cases you would receive communications from the Registrar and a full refund. You will also receive a degree of priority at the next Metro NY PCA DE for which you register.



## Metro NY PCA DE – Information for New DE Attendees and DE Novices

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You can check the status of your registration at any time by logging into ClubReg and looking at the Event Roster.

It took far longer to read the description above than it does to register for a Metro NY PCA DE.

If you need help, do not hesitate to contact the Metro NY PCA DE Registrar at [MetroNYPCADE@gmail.com](mailto:MetroNYPCADE@gmail.com).



## PREPARATION FOR THE TRACK

### YOUR CAR

Your car does not need to be modified for use on the track. Especially if it is a mid- or rear-engine Porsche it was designed in part to be used on track. It may nonetheless need some new parts and adjustments.

Your car **MUST** be inspected to help make sure it is safe to use on track.

Pre-event tech inspections are performed by PCA Region approved tech sites. The list of our local approved sites is here: <https://metronypca.org/approved-tech-sites> . Metro NY PCA will accept inspection completed using our form by any inspection site approved by any PCA Region.

A tech inspection is not an alternative to proper maintenance. It is a checkup prior to each track outing, performed no more than 30 days prior to each DE. The technicians at an inspection site will use the current Metro NY PCA DE Tech form (<https://metronypca.org/detechform>). You may need to take the form with you, printed in color.

If you review the form you will see that the inspection is fairly basic. It ensures that the car is in safe condition, that consumables such as brake pads and tires have enough life to withstand the rigors of a track event, that fluids are optimal, and that all of the safety equipment and running gear is in place and functioning. By completing the form, they will help the trackside tech/safety team to know the state of your car.

Again, your car does not need to be modified for use on track, especially if you are a Green or Yellow student. Good modifications can enhance a car, however by far the best modification is a skilled and experienced track driver.

Maintenance may be recommended by a tech inspector, and this is generally required.

Modifications might be suggested by a tech inspector. These may include “better” tires, brake pads, and a more aggressive alignment. In general, it is best to leave a car as it is until after at least one DE, with a couple of possible exceptions. Brake pads with a compound designed for track use are a good idea, especially if the car is of the heavier variety (over 3000 lbs). Some cars will use up new stock brake pads in a single day. Similarly, softer, performance-oriented tires can provide an extra margin of safety. In general, Porsche GT cars, 911s, Caymans, and Boxsters come equipped with adequate tires for a first DE, so long as they retain enough life. Tires over five years old should not be used on track.

Aftermarket safety equipment such as fire extinguishers, multi-point harnesses, roll cages, racing bucket seats, and data systems are not usually helpful for a novice. Carefully evaluate any modifications before committing to them, and bear in mind that a new student is generally best off in a factory stock car.

A front tow hook **MUST** be present with your vehicle, and should be attached to it at the track prior to final inspection. A rear tow hook is optional.



It is vital that you know how to disable automatic braking and lane drift systems if they are present on your car. As a student you will not disable traction control and stability control systems.

## **CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT**

On track one must wear closed-toed shoes; thin soles are advised. On track one must wear long trousers and, while short-sleeved shirts are usually allowed, some tracks require long-sleeved shirts. It is advisable that clothing be made of natural fibers unless it is specially designed and manufactured to be fire retardant. One example of fire-retardant clothing is a Nomex driving suit, which is absolutely not required to go on track. Your clothing should be very comfortable.

A helmet IS required to go on track. It must be a car helmet, not a motorcycle or other helmet. As of 2024 it must conform to the Snell 2015 or later specification. In 2025 the minimum standard will become Snell 2020. It must be a full-face helmet with a visor. Your helmet should fit properly. A proper fit is difficult to explain verbally. If you purchase your own helmet it is best to buy from a reputable brick-and-mortar store where the helmet will be properly fitted and adjusted for you. It is highly advisable to purchase at least one car racing balaclava to use with any helmet.

Metro NY PCA has a limited number of helmets to loan. First time DE attendees may wish to borrow a helmet rather than purchasing one. Be sure to alert the DE Registrar if this is your preference. You must ensure that a helmet is available to borrow. Under no circumstances will you be allowed on track without a proper helmet.

In the unlikely event that you, as a Green student new to DE, have correctly installed 5-, 6-, or 7- point harnesses in your car, you must also have an approved head and neck restraint (often called a HANS device) correctly adjusted and attached to your helmet. Any safety equipment, in particular restraints, installed for the use of the driver must be replicated for use of the passenger. Both a student and an instructor must be restrained by the same safety equipment in order to go on track together.

You may choose to purchase driving shoes (usually more like short boots with thin soles and ankle support). You may also decide to purchase driving gloves. If you do, the gloves should be in a bright color (usually white, red, blue, or yellow) so as to be visible when pointing another driver by on track. Proper driving shoes and gloves are fire retardant. Neither special shoes nor gloves are required to go on track. First time DE participants are advised to wait until their second DE before making extravagant purchases.

It is always sensible to bring a change of clothing and rain gear to the track. Please do not bring yellow or red rain gear as it could get mistaken for yellow or red flags.

Tire pressures are important and can significantly alter the handling of a car. Tires heat up quickly on track, which in turn increases tire pressure. It is advisable to have a good tire gauge that allows you to bleed air from your tires and get an accurate pressure reading. When it comes time to refill your tires, tracks generally have free air compressors available.

If you own a torque wrench and the correct socket for your wheel nuts, it is ideal to have them at the track to check wheel torques occasionally. If you have a car with center lock wheels it is a good idea to



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get a torque wrench and associated equipment with which to remove those wheels in event of emergency. Not all garages will have this specialized equipment.

It is strongly advisable to have the correct engine oil and brake fluid with you at the track in case a “top up” is required. Even if you do not know how to do this, someone else at the track will likely be able to advise and help.

You should bring painter’s tape and possibly colored tape with you to the track. Tape is useful for applying to headlights as protection. Tape is also useful for creating and applying numbers to your car.

You should bring window cleaner of some sort with you to the track. Windshields, especially, can become quite dirty at a DE, and clear vision is essential.

It is important to bring water and possibly other soft drinks to the track. Even on a cool day, track driving is a potentially tiring physical and mental activity and dehydration is always a danger.

Experienced DE attendees generally bring a folding chair or two to the track. Your car is not always the ideal place to relax between track sessions. While it is not necessary, you may also wish to have a small marquee to provide shade in an open paddock. You are strongly advised to bring sealable waterproof bags or containers to the in case of rain. You want to keep your belongings dry.

It is strongly advisable to bring a hat and sunscreen, as well as insect repellent.

Food may be available at or near each track, however one cannot count on it. Food is always welcome at the track, especially if one does not wish to go elsewhere for lunch. It is advisable to eat light foods, especially if you are prone to any motion sickness. Heavy foods can make one sleepy and also increase the chances of feeling queasy. You know yourself best: eat sensibly for the activity.

First time DE attendees are not advised to bring a fuel container to the track, however one must be aware that a car uses a great deal more fuel in track driving. A Porsche may well use fuel on track at about four times the rate it does on the street. Put differently, if your car gets 20mpg in spirited street driving it may get about 5mpg on the track. Be prepared to refill your gas tank. Tracks have fuel on site, usually a dollar or more per gallon more costly than outside the facility. Most tracks at which Metro NY PCA hosts DEs have gas stations nearby.





## AT THE TRACK

Insofar as possible, it is worthwhile to study and learn a track before arriving. Metro NY PCA makes track maps available through ClubReg, and they are also easily found through a Web search engine. YouTube videos are likewise readily available. Be sure you know the track configuration we will use for the DE. Try to get a sense of the paddock geography: determine where the fuel, bathrooms, air pump, classroom, food concession, and garbage cans are.

If you are trailering a car to the track, you will generally be able to drop off the trailer and car after 6PM the evening before the DE. Camping may be available at some tracks. Be sure to thoroughly read all relevant documents in ClubReg and communications from the DE Registrar for information and instructions.

If you are driving your track car to the track, you can use the information provided through ClubReg and the DE Registrar to know when the facility will open on the mornings of the DE. Your final confirmation e-mail will contain an event schedule.

Remember that traffic only moves one way in the paddock. In most US paddocks, the direction of travel is counter-clockwise. It is vital that you only drive in the correct direction around the paddock.

When you arrive at the track, find a place to park. At some tracks there are available garages. If you have rented one through Metro NY PCA, your final confirmation email will tell you which spot to use. At most tracks there is only paddock parking. Stake out a space and empty your car of all items not permanently attached. This includes floor mats, EZ Passes, radar detectors, cell phones without a proper holder, clothing, and anything else that can become dislodged. The cabin, door compartments, glove compartment, center console compartments, trunk, etc, must ALL be emptied.

You may leave permanent mount cameras in place. They should ideally have a secondary tether. You may use windshield RAM mounts if allowed by the trackside tech inspectors.

Once your car is empty, apply your track numbers. You must use the numbers assigned to you by the DE Registrar, as shown in your confirmation emails. Your numbers must be at least 4" high, distinct, and clearly visible to the track marshals. You must have numbers on each side of the car. You should also apply numbers to the rear of the car in such a way that they do not obstruct your vision.

You may empty your car after checking in at the Registration desk, if you prefer.

The Registration desk is set up in the classroom or the garage at most tracks. Please proceed to it with your valid driver's license. The Registrar will ask your name and check your license. You will be asked to sign an event waiver. Once you have been identified and you have signed, you will be provided a wrist band in the color of your run group. If you are a Green student, you will get a green wrist band. This must be worn on your left wrist, the wrist closer to your driver's window (unless you happen to have brought a right-hand drive car like those one finds in the UK or Japan).

No one is allowed on track without the appropriate wrist band. Do NOT remove your wristband until the HPDE is over. Wrist bands will not be replaced if lost.



At the registration table you can generally collect printed copies of the event schedule, the track map showing passing zones, and the event roster. If it is your first DE, you may also choose to collect a log book.

You need only check in with Registration on your first day at the DE.

After you register and have your wristband on, and after your car is emptied and has its numbers applied, you should take it to the trackside tech line. As well as your car, you must take your helmet and your completed tech inspection form to the tech line. If you have harnesses, you must also take your Head and Neck Restraint through the tech line.

The trackside tech inspectors will take your tech form. They will check your helmet, check that your car is emptied, that your numbers are correct, your brake pad thickness, your tires, and your wheel nut torques. Once you have passed trackside inspection, a sticker will be applied to the upper left corner of your windshield.

Your car will not be allowed on track without a valid tech sticker.

After you have completed trackside tech, it will probably be time for the driver's meeting. Attendance at the driver's meeting is mandatory on EVERY morning of the DE.

Following the daily driver's meeting, you will meet with your instructor if you are a student. Following that, you will attend a classroom session if you are a Green student.

Until after the driver's meeting, the track is "cold". That means no DE participants can be on the track. Sometime after the driver's meeting the track will go "hot". This means there is DE activity on track and in the pit lane.

From the time the track goes hot until the lunch break, the DE will proceed according to the published event schedule. The various run groups will stage and go on track at the scheduled times. At most tracks, the PA system will be used to alert run groups when to stage. Bear in mind, it is not always possible to hear a track PA system. The track will generally go cold for an hour during the lunch break. At the end of lunch until the scheduled end of the day, the track will again go hot. When the day ends the track goes cold until the next morning.

Ideally, instructors will contact their students by phone and/or email prior to the DE. This contact will allow the instructor and student to get to know one another, and establish a rapport. It will not always be possible for instructors to contact students in advance.

If you are in a student run group you will usually meet with your instructor immediately after the morning driver's meeting. You and your instructor will agree a protocol for them to join you and go on track at the scheduled times. Most often, your instructor will meet you at your car five to ten minutes before each of your track sessions. You will both get into the car. Your instructor will communicate with you on track using a small intercom system; in most cases your part of it will consist of a single boom mic and ear piece which you will slip under your helmet while plugging the other end into the portable intercom. Your instructor will guide you how to get on track. After each track session, your instructor will engage in a discussion about the session and determine on what to work in the next session.



Remember: you are driving the car, but your instructor is ultimately in control. It is important that you pay attention to and act upon what they say.

You should be comfortable with your instructor and feel able to speak with them freely, interacting in a relaxed manner inside the car and out. You should be confident in your instructor and happy to ask for and follow their advice. If this is not the case, you should feel comfortable asking the Chief Instructor to assign you someone else.

Event schedules for each DE are different. They may not even be the same on each day of an event. Run groups may be combined on track and the order in which groups run may change between morning and afternoon. Because a schedule cannot be created until registration for each event is closed, it is only possible to provide a ROUGH guide about each day:

06:00 or 07:00: track facilities usually open.

07:00 or 07:30: Registration and Trackside Tech usually begin, and run for about an hour.

08:30 or so: mandatory driver's meeting

09:00 or so: track goes hot for morning

09:00 or so: mandatory morning classroom for students

12:00 or so: track goes cold for lunch break

13:00 or so: track goes hot for afternoon

16:30 or so: track goes cold for the day

17:00 or so: evening trackside tech, except last day of DE

20:00 or so: track facility closes for the day.

Every run group will usually have four to six 25 minute sessions, depending on the number of run groups. This generally means each driver will get 100 to 150 minutes of time on track each day.

Metro NY PCA tries to provide a period of extended track time for solo drivers at the end of each day. This is not possible at all tracks and events. The aforementioned period usually consists of a 30-45-minute session for ALL solo drivers, run with Blue Group track rules. Students (Green and Yellow) drivers may not use the track in this session but may be taken out by an instructor who will provide demonstration laps, generally in the instructor's car. This is entirely at the discretion of and by invitation of the instructor. Following the all-solo session, the final session of each day may be a 30-60-minute session for Advanced Solo drivers (Black and Instructor groups) run with Red Group rules (extended passing). There are no student ride-alongs/demonstration rides in this session. There are never student ride alongs when extended passing is allowed.

Expect to relax in between track sessions. You may have classroom sessions to attend, but otherwise we "track rats" tend to socialize with each other, sit and rest, have a refreshment, etc. The goal of the day is to have fun. Make sure you enjoy yourself in between as well as during the education.

At the end of each DE day except the last, Metro NY PCA's trackside tech team will usually offer an inspection for the next day. Attending this makes the following morning less rushed.

At the end of the DE day, leave the track and have a great evening. Many of us eat together. If you have met someone interesting at the track or came with friends, be sure to go and enjoy.



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If you are a student, at the end of each DE your instructor will provide a written evaluation. Metro NY PCA uses online evaluations in ClubReg. You should also use this system to evaluate your instructor. Please also feel welcome to provide comments and suggestions to us about the DE as a whole. If you prefer not to do this through the online evaluation system, send an email to the DE Registrar at [MetroNYPCADE@gmail.com](mailto:MetroNYPCADE@gmail.com) .

We hope this guide for new DE attendees has helped make your first - or even your twenty first - DE easier and more enjoyable.