



What is a driving event? How can I get involved? What if I have never been on a track before? Is it racing and am I going to ruin my Mustang? What is this all about? AND what is

going on in 2007 so I can be part of this driving experience?

All great questions... I will now try to answer them by explaining our goals about the driving events.

The MCA's main goal for Driving Events is to conduct fun events in a well-organized, safe environment. It is about the most fun you can legally have in your Mustang. A learning experience which, in turn, can make you a better everyday driver, more alert to what is around you when you drive. But I must warn you—and I can say this with complete confidence—once you try it you will be hooked. How many people in this world can say they drove on the track at Lowe's, Nashville, Mid-Ohio, or even a historic track like Lime Rock? It is something that stays with you for the rest of your life. After attending a driving event, where you are instructed in such a way that you would feel safer on a track than on the freeway (now that is a scary place!), you will drive on a track with the confidence of a pro because you and your car have been checked out by well-trained individuals.

So what happens at the track when you get there, and what do they look for on your car? Everyone who drives on the track is put in different groups based on their level of experience and the level to which their car can be safely driven. This means if you are a first-time attendee, you will be placed in the novice class and your speed limits are kept relatively low, maybe 80 MPH, and there is no passing. The idea is for you to get a good, first-time feeling of driving on a track. You are not competing with the other cars. You're going out there for the excitement and exhilaration, putting your Mustang through the paces it was designed to do. Prior to going on the track, some important things take place: Your car is put through a technical inspection, which includes safety equipment. Tech inspec-

tors check under the hood to make sure there are no obvious leaks of fluids and that your battery is tied down well. They also inspect the general condition of all the under-hood components. They check that your wheel lugs are tightened to the specified amount of torque, and in some cases will check for wheel bearing tightness. As for the interior, they are looking for a fire extinguisher, and checking seat belt condition. Additionally, they will inspect your helmet to be sure it meets the requirements of the track.

Once your car passes inspection, it is ready to enter the track. But you are not, because you **MUST** attend the drivers'

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meeting. The drivers' meeting is always held before anyone goes out onto the track. Every sanctioning body has a required Drivers' Meeting. Attendance is a strict requirement for Professional racers as well as a Novice. This meeting is most important to make you feel comfortable going out there and that the officials feel confident that you understand all the rules. And, there are lots of rules.

Racing rules are designed for one purpose only—**safety**, your safety and the safety of everyone else out there. You learn the layout of the track and important points like the responsibilities of the corner workers. They are out there to watch everyone and communicate to the officials when there is a problem. Remember, they see much more than you can and are trained to make sure everyone follows the rules, is driving safely, and individual cars seen from their vantage point are safe to be on the track. These workers have different color flags designed to communicate to you and everyone on track when there is a problem

or when it's time to get off the track. You learn what each experience-level group can and cannot do out there, what the speed limits are, and even how to take a turn. You might think, "I know how to turn my car." Well there are techniques to help you go through the turns faster and at the same time safer. You will learn terms like turn-in, apex, and exiting of a turn. You will start to understand when to brake and when to hit the accelerator. You'll even gain more understanding the importance of smooth transition and control of your car.

This may all sound like a bit much, but when properly taught and learned, these techniques can help you with your day-to-day driving and even help in avoiding an accident in the future. It is fun—your heart races and your excitement level with your Mustang goes to heights you never could have dreamed.

There are a few events already planned for 2007. I urge you to participate in them. If you have questions, please call me. My number is printed at the end of this column. If I can't answer them, I can hook you up with the right people. We want you to be safe, have fun, and discover that the MCA is much more multidimensional than just car shows. MCA is striving for total excitement with your Mustang.

The following are a few events scheduled for 2007:

1) May 25, 26, and 27—High Speed Fun in Music City (Music City Mustang Club) Open Track event and track instruction. Event Chairperson, Jim Chism

2) June 1, 2, 3—7th Annual Performance Driving School (Carolina Regional Mustang Club). Driver road course education. Event Chairperson, Tom Hennig

More information on additional driving events will follow in future issues of *Mustang Times*.

So take that step and find out how much fun it can be. We will be there to help you make it the most enjoyable time you could have ever imagined in your Mustang.

Future "Driving Force" columns will feature learning the flags and what each signifies, the technical aspects on making that perfect turn, safety equipment, and much more.

—Jim Silverman
Chairperson for the Driving Events
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