

**Driver's Ed. Education**  
**A Series of Specifics for Success**  
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**Article #1 - A Driver's Ed. Mission Statement**

You may be wondering what application or purpose this Driver's Ed. thing has for you?

If you've been around the [your] club for long, and you haven't yet become a "trackie", you have likely been approached by some very enthusiastic folks who have a tendency to be rather persistent in trying to persuade you that this Driver's Ed. thing is just what you are looking for. If they seem a tad over-zealous, don't fault them; they simply have a hard time believing that anyone would not want to discover the great fun and reward of performance driving. They will offer all kinds of reasons to illustrate why you should take the plunge, and truthfully, they are probably right! Let's explore why.

First; the purpose of Driver's Ed... what I termed the "Mission Statement" when I wrote the handbook for the Zone 1 48 Hours of Watkins Glen; the granddaddy of [PCA] Driver's Ed events. The following passage has been adopted by Zone 1 as the credo of Dr.Ed. to describe to all what the intent of our Driver's Education programs is: "It is not the intention of this (...) event to turn you into a 'racer.' The purpose of Driver's Ed. is to teach you the rudiments of performance driving in the safe, controlled, and non-competitive environment of a racing circuit so that you may use this knowledge to further enhance your driving pleasure and safety, both on the track, and in everyday street driving."

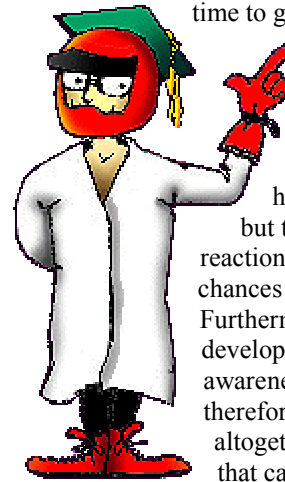
What we can take from this is, no; we don't expect you to go faster than you feel comfortable. We don't expect you to drive like a maniac, either on the track or when you get home. What we know will happen is that you will attain a level of driving confidence and skill that you have never known before - even if you are already a "good driver" - and will not only be able to enjoy your leisure-time driving more, but do it with more skill and consequently more safety. A most worthy goal... no?

The document goes on to say: "The ideas offered here are meant to be a conservative and consistent starting point to your "performance driving career." Make no mistake, this is serious business, and there is no room for anything less than a serious attitude on the track. At the same time, this is also serious fun, and should certainly lead to a lifetime of heightened driving enjoyment." As you can see, we mean business. No fooling around, no wild behavior; nothing less than your best effort to learn and improve

will be tolerated. This is not to say that it is like boot camp. It is a lot of fun and you will likely find it addictive as heck, just don't think we're a bunch of speed-crazed maniacs hurling our cars around the track with reckless abandon!

"But what is there to learn that is so important and that will help me every day" you might ask? Think of anything that you do well. What sets you apart from someone less proficient? Practice and repetition. If you pay attention and learn to do something correctly, you develop a feel for that task, and can almost do it "with your eyes closed." From using a computer mouse to playing video games to playing tennis; you develop the anticipation and reflexive skills necessary to excel. Driving is no different.

When you find yourself in a sticky situation behind the wheel, you likely will not have time to stop and think, and so must rely on instinct and reaction



time to get out of a jam. If you have practiced the art of performance driving, your skill level will be far higher than someone who has not, and you will have not only the knowledge, but the ingrained reflexive reactions necessary to improve your chances of escaping unscathed. Furthermore, you will almost surely develop a heightened sense of awareness and anticipation, and therefor may be able to avoid altogether the common situations that catch many others unaware.

Obviously, everyone should have this training!

Many people are afraid to track their cars because of perceived cosmetic or mechanical danger. I addressed these issues in the "Common Misconceptions" portion of the handbook:

"I WILL HARM MY CAR MECHANICALLY" - Obviously, increased stress means increased wear. If your car is in shabby condition, you likely won't pass pre-tech anyway. Unless you are really driving fast and hard (which is unlikely if you are a novice), the added stress on Porsche's traditionally over-engineered components will be negligible. In certain respects, Driver's Ed. can be a good thing, as it demands that you maintain your car to a higher level and it will be treated to things that it normally may not receive, like fresh brake fluid every year, brake pads and water hoses, wheel bearings re-packed or replaced, etc. You'll find you will get to know more about your car, and the fun is definitely worth the maintenance!

"I WILL HARM MY CAR COSMETICALLY" - This is the only category of tangible concern.

However, with some preparation - such as a fresh coat of wax, nose mask, racer's tape, mud flaps, etc. - cosmetic injury can be virtually eliminated. There are many cars that are track driven that also provide stiff competition on the concours field. And anyway, Porsches were built to fly free. What would you rather have; a garage queen that deteriorates just sitting there, or a seductress that excites you?"

If you are afraid of a stone chip or two, Driver's Ed. may not be for you. Honestly, in that event, you might want to reassess why you own the car in the first place. If it is original and pristine, you may have a point. If it is average or refurbished, it can be again, so don't worry. The saying, "Every Porsche Built is a Race Car" is fairly accurate. They were built to be driven. Otherwise, they're just another car.

So, there you have it. Driver's Education will teach you invaluable lessons in car control and safety that you will not get on your own. This is something that all drivers should aspire to. It will also provide you with a heightened sense of awareness, both of everyday driving conditions, and of your cars personality and capabilities; of why Porsches are such amazing automobiles. You will never know that until you drive your Porsche the way it was engineered to be driven. And...it's all great fun!

If you have been active in the club, you have likely realized this for yourself, but here is perhaps the best part of Driver's Ed.:

"Surely, you will be discovering something else; a whole new group of incredibly friendly and enthusiastic Porschephiles who share your interest in the marque. You may soon find that the people are what it's really all about. Serious Fun with Good Friends and Great Cars!

**So... what are you waiting for?! Life is Short...  
... Drive well!**

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PCA Zone 1 48 Hours of Watkins Glen handbook  
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**I have striven to make this an extremely well  
written and accurate series on a subject that is  
not to be taken lightly and can obviously be  
dangerous. To maintain the accuracy and  
proper presentation of that message, I would  
ask that absolutely no use whatsoever of any  
text herein be made without my  
express written consent.**

**I ask you to please abide by this request.  
Thank you.**