



Eagles Canyon Performance Driving Day guide for new Drivers –

So you've signed up for your first track day and want to know what to expect. Let this guide prep you up to what is coming. A track day is one of the most fun, exciting and rewarding things you can do here on this earth! With all that fun comes some easy to learn common sense protocols to keep yourself, your car and others safe out on the race track. We have to understand that although this sport is outrageously fun, it can be extremely dangerous if rules and protocols aren't taken seriously.

- **My First Track Day: ECR PDD**
 - PDD stands for "Performance Driving Day". It is an event where you can drive your car on the Eagles Canyon world-class, purpose-built race track and begin to explore the physics of driving your car at a performance level it was built for. The event has driver instructors that will guide a student through the process of getting on a real track in their own car, and teach them how to maximize two things out on the race track:
 - 1. Safety
 - 2. Fun
 - **Notice Speed Wasn't Mentioned Yet?**
- Although speed is inherently a factor of track driving, it isn't an area of focus whatsoever for your first track day. In fact, the people that tend to be the best drivers are the ones who have one thing in common- respect. Respect of the instructor, the sport, themselves, other cars, even the staff at registration! With respect comes safety, and with safety comes the opportunity to begin learning the physics of high-performance driving. Trust this- *it's NOTHING like driving fast on the street!*

Know your schedule

- **Timing**
 - Plan to get to the track 30 minutes ahead of your scheduled check in time. This allows you to find a spot in the paddock, clear your car out, check your fluids, tires and brakes one more time. ECR will send out a schedule for the day. This schedule will include when you should register, go to your classroom or be on the track. Take a picture with your phone of the schedule. It is a great and handy place to find where you need to be and when.

What to bring

- **Personal supplies**
 - Make sure you have an adequate supply of Snacks and hydration, Sunscreen, Weather protection for Sun, wind, rain, heat or cold. Think of a hat, a coat or a portable shade canopy. The boy Scout motto "Always be Prepared" is a great way to prep for a track day.
- **Vehicle supplies**

- Make sure your car has what it needs to be happy. An air pressure gauge, extra fluids (Brake, Coolant, Power Steering, and oil) are always good to have on hand. Zip Ties, Tape and paper towels are always good to have on hand – “just in case”
- Make sure you have a way to take care of your car, do you have a small tool set to make adjustments or fix minor things?
- If it may rain, consider a water tight tub to hold all of your things, and trash bags to keep extra clothes dry

Preparing Your Car

• **Car inspection**

- In order to keep your first track day safe and fun for everyone it is imperative that you follow these guidelines well enough before the event to show up prepared. Have your car inspected by a real certified mechanic. Your buddy who took auto shop in high school 34 years ago, may not understand the need for safety in critical components needed to keep you in control of a 4000 lb. machine hurtling at a corner doing over 100 mph! Use this Eagles Canyon checklist, and have an expert mechanic make sure you will be safe. - <https://eaglescanyon.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ECR-CAR-SAFETY-INSPECTION-2020-1.pdf>

• **Helmet**

- The date codes on the inside of the helmet refer to the expiration of the certification. The expiration is based on a certification group known as Snell. A good helmet is what keeps you from possibly becoming a burden to your children after a mishap or living a great life to eventually become a burden to your children at an old age. Eagles Canyon has a requirement for helmets, and to keep you safe. Our approved helmets are listed here - <https://eaglescanyon.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020-helmet-cert-decals.pdf>
- It would be a good idea if you're shopping for a helmet to get an “SA 2015” or soon “SA 2020” in order to get the most usage out of your helmet.
- ECR strongly recommends against a motocross style helmet with an elongated chin bar. In a car, this becomes an issue with airbags your motocross bike doesn't have.
- The Snell Foundation also offers guidelines for purchasing the right helmet. Always think of the Racer's adage – “How valuable to you is your head and brain? Buy a helmet of that value.”

• **Tow Hook**

- It is courtesy to everyone at the event to have your tow hook installed on the car prior to your first on track session. Most production cars you see at ECR OTD events come with a factory tow hook that threads in through a hole in the plastic bumper. In the event that you have an on-track incident and need a tow, this makes the process go smoothly and won't waste precious time for other participants who want to get back on track after your situation is cleaned up.

• **Interior**

- Make sure your interior is clean and free of any clutter. You don't want things flying around hitting you in the head or rolling under the brake pedal while you're out on track. Make sure your Bluetooth is disabled as a call coming in can break your concentration at just the wrong time.

• **Tire Pressure**

- There should be recommended factory tire pressure settings on a sticker on the inside of your driver door jam. Add 5 pounds from this number. This is a good starting place for a novice driver, as you start getting quicker and building more heat in the tire you may need to bleed some air out to maintain operable pressures. Consider investing in a good air gauge. ECR has several on hand to loan out during an event. Tire car will be a saving grace for you and your car or wallet

• **Brake Lights**

- Working brake lights are a must as they're an essential communicator to drivers behind you when you are going to the brakes.

- **Fluids**
 - Make sure all your fluids are topped off particularly engine oil, coolant and brake fluid. Upgrading to a DOT4 brake fluid is highly recommended as it works better at higher temperatures but still just as fine for colder temperatures. Consider having a mechanic flush your brakes with a high performance fluid such as Motul RBF 600
- **Lug Nuts**
 - Make sure your lug nuts are tightened to factory spec. If you've changed your tires recently, drive your car for a few miles and then re torque them a second time just to be sure everything is set into place. Don't be the driver who people sing "Don't leave me loose Wheel"!
- **Seatbelts**
 - Seatbelts are usually a non-issue because they come standard in every car and are rarely damaged. Aftermarket seatbelts are where you can get into trouble. Depending on the style and combination of parts, some aftermarket belts can be significantly more dangerous than the standard OEM. If in doubt, talk to a professional at the track or use the standard belts.
- **Engine Compartment/Trunk**
 - Take a look under your hood before your track day to make sure nothing obvious is out of place. Oil leaks, loose brake fluid reservoir, etc. Make sure your battery is securely fastened and there is no way both terminals can be crossed.
- **Wheel Bearing**
 - Jack your car up and wiggle the wheel back and forth with your hands. There shouldn't be more than a tiny, tiny bit of play. This is just to check for a healthy wheel bearing, a vital thing to know before headed out on track.

Getting to know the terms you will hear at the track

- **Paddock –**
 - The area where you park your car in between sessions, Set up camp etc... Arrive to the track at least 30 minutes before the official check in. Find an area in the official parking area known as the Paddock. This is a great time to take the items you brought with you for the day out of your car and get to know your neighbors for the upcoming day. ECR OTD's are a social event as well as a learning event. You may be seeing these people for many years to come. Get friendly and make the day fun with your new friends.
- **Grid –**
 - This is the area where you will stage your car in the area adjacent to the track. Your instructors will walk you through the procedure to get your car positioned and ready to out on to the track and stay safe.
- **Grid Captain –**
 - This is person who makes sure you and all of the other drivers are safe on and off the track. They are there for your safety. As a track guest, their decisions and requests MUST be abided completely. Failure to dismiss their rules, however arbitrary you may think they are, are grounds for you to be asked to leave the property immediately.
- **Hot Pits –**
 - The area between the grid and the track which allows ingress/egress to the track for cars to slowly come in for a safety stop while other cars in your group are at speed on the racing surface.
- **Track out/Track in –**
 - The entry and exit for the actual racing surfaces
- **Corner Stations –**
 - The safety boxes which communicate safety notices to you as a driver using flags. At ECR, we put professional people in these boxes to look out for your safety. Be sure to learn what the flags they are waving at you mean. . Failure to not notice these flags or dismiss them, are grounds for you to be asked to leave track session immediately.

- **Flags!**

- One of the first things you can do before your first track day arrives is to learn the flags. The flags are vital communication from the track safety officials to you as the driver. On any given track there are “corner workers” manning stations at virtually every corner on the race track. These corner workers are the watchful eye for the drivers that just can’t quite see around the next turn yet. Wouldn’t it be nice to know if there was a car spun out in the middle of the track before you got there? These guys will waive different color flags for different reasons. In the case I just mentioned, you’d see a waving yellow flag, alerting you of this hazard. One really good way to get a good jump start on your first track day is to learn the flags the night before. Pour yourself a glass of your favorite adult beverage and research what the different color flags mean in racing. I’ll give you the most common flags you’ll see right here.



- GREEN FLAG (Solid Green)

A full speed session is under way the instant the green flag is displayed. This flag shall normally be displayed in one corner station only, and shall not ordinarily be displayed at the flag stations around the course. When displayed, the green flag indicates that the course is clear.



- YELLOW FLAG (Solid Yellow)

Standing (non-waving)

- There is an incident ahead and it is considered less severe. Typically, there will be a car off course in a safe spot. Slow down only enough to retain complete control of your car and continue around the incident cleanly. *DO NOT STOP.*

- Waving

- There is an incident ahead that is considered more severe and may be directly in your path. Slow down enough to leave yourself plenty of options while also being aware of what’s in your mirrors. *DO NOT STOP.*
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- BLACK FLAG (Solid Black)

Furled

- This is a warning from the track officials to you. It means you did something the track officials didn’t like. You likely know what you did if you see this flag and often occurs after a sketchy situation has passed. If you see this flag and you don’t know why you’re seeing it, pull in the pits and ask the pit coordinator.

Waving

- This is a command from the track officials to come into the pits and speak with the pit lane coordinator. It may be a result of driver conduct or some other factor that had nothing to do with you. Maybe it’s a mechanical issue with your car that you weren’t aware of that could save you thousands! Pull in the pits for more information.
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- CHECKERED FLAG (Black and White Checks)


- Signals the end of the session. Come back into pit lane the very next time you pass by the pit entrance.
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- RED (Solid Red)

- Displayed at each station and on the Starter’s stand – EXTREME DANGER – THE SESSION HAS BEEN STOPPED. Come to an immediate, controlled stop on the racing surface and off side of the race track (indicated by an official at that location or as specified in the event Supplementary Regulations). When
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released by an Official, proceed cautiously to the pits.

-  **BLUE FLAG (Blue with Diagonal Yellow Stripe)**
 - There is a quicker car catching up to you. When you get to the next approved passing section of the track initiate a point-by pass.

-  **WHITE FLAG (Solid White)**

- Caution – you are approaching a slow moving car (e.g., with mechanical trouble), ambulance, Tow Truck or other

Track Etiquette

It goes without saying that you need to treat this first track day experience with respect. A track day is one of the most fun things you can do in life but the consequence of extreme financial liability and, God forbid personal injury and/or death is a very real factor that needs to be acknowledged.

The best two things you can do is to drive in a manner where you *always* maintain 100% control of the car and *always* listen to your instructors. They will analyze where you can make the most improvement with the least risk and encourage you to explore this area. You will discover a new area of performance driving that you didn't even know existed and be challenged in ways you never even thought were a thing. Sorry, driving fast on the street won't compare in the slightest and there's a reason it's stupid. For this reason, tracks have a set of etiquette rules all drivers are asked to live by –

- **Point-By Passing**
 - Inevitably, even on our first track day we obviously will have one car catch another out on track. In order to make the experience safe and fun for everyone, the ECR OTD community generally uses point-by passing. Keep in mind *It is ALWAYS the responsibility of the overtaking car to get the pass done cleanly*. This is the standard because the car behind is at an advantage in every way. Unlike the car ahead, they are:
 1. Not under the stress of being passed...*"I better let this idiot around me before they wreck me!" We've all been there.*
 2. Can look out windshield instead of mirror
 3. Have a better sense of situational awareness and closing speeds.I will outline below the series of steps below for both the car being passed and the car passing.
- *If You Are About to Be Passed....*
 - Check Mirrors and Be Aware.
 - At first recognition of car behind you should do nothing different other than be aware a quicker car is approaching. Sometimes, the blue flag will aid in providing this information, but you shouldn't rely on this. Keep your line and keep your speed. Wait until the next straightaway or designated passing zone, **Stay on the racing line**, ensure your steering is straight and then begin to slowly creep out of the throttle. *For example, if you just came out of a left-hand corner you would track out to the right, hold the line to your exit of the corner, then initiate the point-by pointing to the right. This would be super clear communication to the driver behind.*
 - Reach your hand outside the window and point towards the direction you want the car to go around you.

- Either signals to the driver behind “I know you’re there and I want you to pass me on this side right now if you feel it is safe to do so.” It is helpful to be very definitive with your driving which side of the road you’re holding.
- Slow down just enough to have the pass be done cleanly and reasonably before the brake zone of the next corner.
- Slow too much and you could cause an unnecessary stack up behind, slow too little and the other driver might have to race you to get around you. Both circumstances here are not ideal, however it is obviously reasonable to air on the side of slowing too much rather than too little.
- If there is more than one car you would initiate a separate point-by motion with your arm for each car.
- *If You Are About to Pass....*
 - When you catch a slower car it only means one thing- that you’re lapping faster than the other guy. It does not mean you’re a better driver, have a better car or are less prone to anything bad that can happen out on the race track. Often times the driver who catches another car feels a sense of *entitlement*, and this can lead to trouble. With entitlement comes false confidence, pass enough cars in one session and you could very likely be driving over your head.
 - If you’re ever in doubt about a pass, tuck in line behind the other car and wait for a point-by pass. If you’re able to do this without developing a sense of frustration you will find yourself in a much better position mentally when you do get around that car. You will drive better, faster and more consistent this way. Just remember, any emotion behind the wheel typically yields bad results.
 - When you catch a slower car the first thing you need to do is maintain a respectable following distance.
 - This will be a bit closer than the standard on the road (unless you regularly drive in Downtown Dallas.) You want to be close enough to be clearly visible to the driver behind communicating “I want by!” but not so close as to make them panic and feel pressured. In reference to street driving I like to say, “Tailgate a little.”
- Look ahead.
 - Look in front of the car in front of you. If you’re staring at the bumper of the car in front of you, you likely will make the same mistakes they do even if you haven’t been making them the whole session.
 - Stay in their mirrors.
 - A lot of drivers will sidestep the car in front of them trying to encourage the point-by. Problem is, all this does to the driver in front is make them think “where’d they go!?” because they can’t see you in the mirrors. It’s okay to follow someone even if they’re a tick off line to ensure clear communication about which car is where on the track. Remember, it’s not about a couple tenths of a second or any egos here...
- Patience.
 - Anticipate the point-by to happen in the next straightaway or designated passing zone. When the point-by does occur, size up the situation. Is there enough of a speed differential to complete the pass before the brake zone of the next turn? Is the straight long enough? Are there any yellow flags? Any hazards?
- Making the decision.
 - Essentially, you either fully commit to the pass or you don’t. Where people get into trouble is when the kiiiiiiinda go for it where they kiiiiiiinda aren’t sure. If you’ve sized up the situation and it looks safe to pass, commit to that decision and make the pass happen cleanly. If you aren’t 100% sure (and follow your guts here) then stay in line, wave your hand in the windshield so the lead driver can see you, and don’t attempt the pass. Wait until the next point-by signal.
- Risk/Reward Assessment
 - At any given moment as drivers we have a risk/reward balance we are constantly weighing. The rewards can change dramatically and suddenly, especially in an adrenaline fueled driving environment.
 - In an ECR OTD event, the Reward **Never** Outweighs the Risk.
 - It is a non-competitive, non-timed event and everyone is out there to better themselves and have fun in their car. This is tricky mentally because when we are close to the same pace as another car

- things may escalate incrementally with every passing lap and before you know it both drivers are not only driving hard, but driving over their heads completely. Next thing you know a simple mistake puts both drivers in the wall, with thousands of dollars of damage AT BEST considering the risk of personal injury (and death). This has happened a number of times around the country, but ECR does our best to make this risk minimal. Sounds totally worth it to get in front of that other car, right?
- At the end of the day this is serious business and needs to be treated as such. We are the mouse in the tin can. If you throw that can against the wall as hard as you can the mouse doesn't stand a chance- even with a seatbelt.

Track Map

- **Reviewing Track Maps**
 - Before you go to your first track day there are a number of things you can do to prepare yourself before-hand. One of these things is to review a track map. The track at ECR is probably a place you have never driven. How fast do you feel comfortable driving around corners you have never seen? Preparation is the key to safely navigate the course. Listed below are some things you should become familiar with on the track map.
 - Here is a link from ECR on how to navigate the track, and the critical information on how to get through the entire course efficiently. <https://eaglescanyon.com/track/>
- **Pit Lane Entrance/Exit**
 - It seems simple enough, but after an intense on track session a lot of drivers either don't know or forget where their actually supposed to exit the track and come back onto pit lane. Knowing where to start slowing down and which side of the track to hold after which corner is essential.
- **Corner Worker Stations**
 - It is important to become familiar with where the corner worker stations are located around the race track. By now you hopefully know what the flags mean, but you also need to know where you're going to see them. By getting an idea of where they are beforehand you will more easily be able to find them when you take your first few real laps out on the track.
- **Turns**
 - ECR instructors and drivers refer to areas of the track by their turn number. It is helpful to know which turn you're approaching before you're actually approaching it at speed. Get to know where you are on track and help your instructor know where you are questioning how to drive an area better by using the correct turn number/name.
 - Is it a tight corner? Decreasing radius (tightens up as you go around), or increasing radius? (Becomes straighter as you go through.) Are there elevation changes? Pavement changes? What about bumps?

Listening to your Instructors

- Your instructor has years and years of track experience and is there to help make you a better driver. Our best advice is to be like a sponge and absorb as much information from your assigned expert as possible. This will only put you ahead of the learning curve in the long run. Driving at high speeds on the race track is a great metaphor for life. You don't know what you don't know and a little bit of humbleness will go a long way.