

# **CATERHAM GRADUATES RACING CLUB**

## **DRIVING STANDARDS INFORMATION and GUIDANCE**

### **OVERVIEW**

The Driving Standards Team (DST) is here to help ensure that drivers are able to enjoy their motor sport as safely and cost effectively as possible. It is run by drivers, for drivers. 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 DST has developed a method to accept complaints and deal with complaints.

The DST works with meeting organizers and investigates on track incidents, whether triggered by judicial action initiated by the Clerk of the Course, by competitor complaint, or by their own observation, notwithstanding that the Clerk of the Course may already have imposed a penalty under MSA Regulations.

The DST are empowered by the Club investigate and taken action on driving standards incidents. They may supplement their own investigations by the use of MSA Observers reports, where available and deemed appropriate by the Clerk of the Course and by the use of available video evidence.

**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 TEAM**

The DST for the 2017 season is made up of 6 drivers, including representatives from each of the 5 racing classes.

The Team is as follows:-

Pete Cannard - Classic  
Declan Dolan - Mega  
Jonathan Miller - Sigma  
Chris Rome - Super  
Rick Potter – Sigmax  
Andrew Outterside – Non racing

The DST can be contacted as a group by emailing [standards@graduates.org.uk](mailto:standards@graduates.org.uk) or individually by their personal contact details found in the Members area on the website.

## DRIVING STANDARDS BRIEFINGS

Before any driver can race with the Club, they are required to attend a driving standards briefing with one or all of the DST. This is irrespective of whether the driver is a novice or an experienced racer. The initial briefing normally, but not always, takes place at the first race weekend of the year. However, we realise that this might not be suitable for every new driver but if it isn't, it is their responsibility to contact a member of the DST to arrange a briefing prior to their first race with the Club. The DST may hold all competitor briefings at other times.

## THE DRIVING STANDARDS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

It is not only an aggrieved driver who has the right to submit a DS complaint. Any member who witnesses what they consider to be unfair, careless, reckless or dangerous driving, whether they are taking part in a race, or while watching, may submit a complaint.

**Important:** If you think that another driver has unfairly gained an unfair 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 DST complaints procedure.

Our DST complaints 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 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, with particular reference to careless, reckless or dangerous driving, 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 go and have a coffee or something first and then, after you have calmed down, speak to them in a calm manner. We 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 any member of the Driving Standards Team about the incident so we can offer advice, particularly if you are not sure whether to make a formal complaint or not. BUT please be mindful that the DST member may be just about to go out and race themselves, so might be making some last minute preparations and not really be in a position to discuss at that moment. 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. Also, should you ask a DST member who races within your particular class they may direct you to one of the other team members, as we prefer not to deal with disputes between drivers we race against.

**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. You always have this option available irrespective of whether you complain to the DST and vice-versa.

**d)** You may choose to submit a formal complaint by completing an online form marked DRIVING STANDARDS COMPLAINT FORM which can be found in the Members Area of the website. This should be done within two weeks of the race meeting. The form will be automatically e-mailed to the DST and a member of the DST will acknowledge receipt. The complaint will then be allocated to a team member to investigate (a DST member will not normally investigate a complaint relating to the class they race in). They will carry out an investigation and report to the DST with their recommendation. The DST will then discuss and decide on an appropriate course of action. The DST's decision will be communicated to the driver involved and feedback will be given to the person who made the complaint. It may be that no action is taken, except for logging the complaint. Should the DST take action this ranges from a written warning through to suspension of racing membership. See the Driving Standards Penalties section below.

### **Confidentiality**

Complaints are dealt with completely confidentially and are only discussed within the DST. The driver about whom a complaint has been received is not told who made the complaint.

### **Driving Standards Penalties**

Where the DST has found that a complaint against a driver is upheld, they are empowered to apply penalties in three categories.

1. Driving in a manner that is considered **careless** by the DST will to be penalized by **a written warning**. Two written warnings in six races will cause a yellow card to be issued.
2. Driving in a manner that is considered **reckless** by the DST will be penalized by **a yellow card**. Two yellow cards in six races will cause a red card to be issued.
3. Driving in a manner that is considered **dangerous** by the DST will be penalized by **a red card**.

## Notes

- a) Each penalty will have a shelf life of six races from the date that the penalty is applied. After this period, the penalty will not be used for the purposes of totting up.
- b) A red card will cause the suspension of racing membership from the Club for a period of two races, which will both count as points scoring rounds with zero points score.
- c) Two red cards in one season will result in the suspension of racing membership of the Club for a period of six races, to be carried over to the next season if appropriate.
- d) Suspension of racing membership of the Club will mean that the competitor is ineligible to compete in the Championship during the period of suspension.
- e) Refusal to co-operate with the DST will result in a red card.

Although outside of the DST's remit it should be noted that penalties relating to Driving Standard may apply to actions taken by the Clerk of the Course. This is referred to our Championship Regulations:-

*4.3.4 – “If a competitor receives a penalty that includes licence points, a “3x points multiplier” championship penalty will also be incurred, whereby the number of licence points will be multiplied by three and that number of championship points will be deducted from their championship total after the application of drop scores”.*

## 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 MSA Blue Book 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.

If you are unsure, please look at the document in the Competitors area called "Flag Zones" (<http://www.graduates.org.uk/racing/FlagZones.pdf>) which shows this graphically. Occasionally a green flag is not shown, so if you pass the next flag marshal's post and it is not displaying a flag at all, it would not be unreasonable to suppose that the yellow flag zone has been passed. 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 (qualy), or as directed by marshals.

### **Chequered Flag**

Shown at the end of free practice, qualifying or the race. 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 Blue Book states (Q14.4) "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 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**

MSA Blue Book says *"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"*

MSA Blue Book Q 14.4.4 says *"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 Course and may entail the imposition of penalties up to and including the exclusion 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 be the responsibility of any car you pull back on in front of to try and avoid you.

### **Avoiding the “Racing Accident” and Blocking/Weaving**

*MSA Blue Book at C 1.1.5 refers to “Driving in a manner incompatible with general safety, and / or departing from the standard of a reasonably competent driver”.*

*MSA Blue Book at Q 14.4.1 states that “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 Course”.*

The DST interpretation is that this 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.

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.

### **Avoiding "The Racing Accident":**

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**

Within our calendar there are often events where multiple classes of car will be on track at the same time – this applies to racing, qualifying and testing. This scenario brings some situations where the DST would like to share our views on 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.

All drivers – learn how to identify the separate classes of cars in the mirrors and in front.

## **Chicanes**

There are essentially two types of chicanes, those that are fairly gentle with a wide area of track and those that are tight.

It is the tight chicanes that we tend to get the most incidents and consequently those are the ones we are considering here. Due to the fact that they are narrow, and generally have only slightly more than car's width, especially on the racing line, the old adage **two into one won't go** should be borne in mind. Of course, they can be a great place for making an overtaking manoeuvre but there is a fine line between daring and reckless! Trying a manoeuvre of going around the outside of a car that is on the racing line in a chicane that narrows is likely to be asking for trouble. Likewise trying a very late dive down the inside of a car as it is about clip one of the apex's, will result in the gap closing on you with nowhere to go except the kerbs, and that may launch you out of control.

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