

A Typical Day Out

Whilst there's no such thing as a typical day at the track, the following is a rough description of what commonly goes on:



The first thing to do when arriving at the venue is to find yourself a garage, carport or other parking area in the pits to store your things (garages are sometimes only available at a cost).

Then make your way to the **check-in office** (which might be in a garage or scrutineering bay). Have your Motorsport Australia Licence and Club membership card handy, and a couple of dollars if you need to buy competition numbers or a blue triangle to stick on your car. The event secretary will give you a scrutineering check-sheet.



Scrutineering is the next activity, the purpose being to inspect all the competing vehicles to ensure they are all in safe working order. You will need to remove all loose items from your car, including the contents of the glove box and centre console, floor mats, Melway, spare tyre, jack and other tools. Stick your competition number to the car in the specified location, and the blue triangle on the panel over the battery (in your NA or NB, it's in the boot). Then take your car to the scrutineering bay with the check-sheet tucked under a wiper.

The scrutineers will (amongst other things) check your engine bay for general appearance and any fluid leaks, tyre condition and legality, wheel nuts, brake lights, battery security, helmet condition and manufacture date, and extinguisher condition and date stamp. Finally they will attach a sticker to the windscreen and sign it off.

Keep your ears open for a summons to the **drivers' briefing**. This is mandatory for all drivers to attend, and here you will be given further information about what will happen for the rest of the day. The Clerk of the Course should explain the flags to be used on the day.

Look out also for the **day's schedule sheet**. Memorise your group number (or letter) so you are prepared for your next session. Keep track of which group is on the circuit and get yourself and your car to the "dummy grid" one or two groups before you are due to go out.

The **first session of the day** is often an untimed practice, during which you can usually take a passenger with you. If you've never seen the track before, it's a good idea to take an experienced driver with you to show you the circuit, and/or let them take you around so you can see the track layout, and get an idea of the braking and apex points.

Keep an eye on your mirrors regularly. Faster drivers don't like being held up, but are appreciative of courtesy. If a faster car is approaching, find a straight when you can let them through, then move aside. Use your right arm out the window to indicate on which side they should pass: arm out to pass on the right, and arm over the roof to pass on the left.

Remember, **you don't have to go flat out straight away**. Take plenty of time to learn the circuit safely. The best way to ruin your day is to have an accident, damaging your car, yourself, or the instructor who has placed his life in your hands. Whilst you may be able to correct small mistakes, if you are past the point of no return then get on the brakes as soon as possible: if an accident is inevitable, best that it happens at the lowest possible speed. If you can safely return to the track, wait until there is a break in the traffic, then stay off the racing line for a while to minimise the spreading of dirt and crud you have picked up.

If your car is damaged or becomes bogged in *kitty litter*, leave your helmet on, hop out when it is clear to do so, and make your way to the nearest safety barrier. Stay behind the barrier/tyre wall until the session is complete, when the safety marshals will come to tow your car out. **NEVER** walk across the track — a safety vehicle may be approaching from the opposite direction.

Later sessions (on competition days) are timed, and consist of a warm-up lap, three or four timed flying laps, and a cool-down lap. The first lap being untimed, don't go flat out. Get some heat into your engine and tyres, and space yourself out from the other cars so you will have plenty of space around you by the time you start the timed laps. Once shown the chequered (or red or black) flag, slow down gently, ideally staying off the brakes so they have time to cool down (they cool better when the car is moving than they will when parked). You don't have to slow to a crawl though, getting back to the pits quickly allows the next group to get out as soon as possible, so everyone gets more track time.

Once back in the pits, park your car and leave it in gear to stop it rolling away. Don't pull the handbrake on, as your brake rotors will still be hot, and clamping the pads to the rotors causes uneven cooling which will warp them easily.

Check the timing board for posting of results during the day. Have a rest, drink some water, munch a snack, and get ready to do it all over again.

We hope you had fun.