



# SIN CITY CHAPTER

## DRIVING SCHOOL

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### Cancellation Questions

##### What happens if I need to cancel?

You can cancel up to **April 23, 2005**, but there will be a \$35 service charge. There will be no refund if cancelled after April 23, 2005. The balance of your money **may** be refunded if there are students on the waiting list and their attendance at the school can be confirmed. Entries are also non-transferable.

##### Can I get a refund if my car breaks at the event?

Unfortunately, no. Funds are already committed to the event and are not lessened by one less car on the track, i.e. there will be no refund if cancelled after April 23, 2005.

#### Car Questions

##### Do I supply my own car?

Yes, you drive your own vehicle. Rental vehicles are allowed (you supply the rental), but additional rules and requirements do apply.

##### Can I trade cars with my buddy?

No. This is a driving school, not a test drive. To get the maximum benefit from the school, you need to stick with the same car all weekend. Please don't ask to do this.

##### What types of vehicle are not allowed in the school?

Trucks and SUVs (except for the BMW X3 and X5) are not allowed. Convertibles (soft top or hard top) must meet special rules regarding roll bars and passenger restraints.

##### What are the special rules for convertibles (soft top or hard top)?

Convertibles (soft top or hard top) must have a SCCA-approved (see Convertible Standard posted on the Sin City Chapter website) roll bar that clears the occupants' helmeted heads by 2 inches and 5- or 6-point harnesses for BOTH seats. Factory rollover protection is not acceptable as a roll bar. Factory hard tops do not provide a substitute for a roll bar. Arm restraints are **STRONGLY** recommended. Convertibles

must be identified on the application. The Sin City Chapter reserves the right to refuse any convertible application after conferring with the Chief Steward.

**My car is stock. I don't have an ///M car. I don't have a BMW.**

This is a driving “enhancement” school, where we teach the driver, not the car, and a stock car is the best vehicle to learn on. The more basic the car, the more you will learn about vehicle dynamics. Plus, afterwards you'll have a much better idea of what improvements, if any, you want to make to your car. A driving school gives you a “performance upgrade” that fits any vehicle.

Your car doesn't need to be the top of the line, most expensive, highest horse power car (see above statement). All BMWs are terrific cars. Even if you have an older car, you will get so much out of the type of training offered at a driving school. Furthermore, this school is not only for BMWs. In fact, most automobiles manufactured today are the most technologically advanced vehicles ever produced. <sup>(1)</sup>

**Why do I need an inspection on my car? It runs perfectly.**

I'm sure your car runs perfectly, and it gets you to and from work with no problems. The reason for the inspection is safety. Since you will be reaching interstate speeds and above, we must make sure all of the safety devices are in working order. We also make sure that the car will not break down, causing a potentially dangerous situation for you, your instructor, or the other students. This is a driving school and one of the pieces of equipment you will be using is your car. <sup>(1)</sup>

**Who is a qualified individual for the car technical inspection?**

You must use your own judgement as to what constitutes a qualified individual to conduct the technical inspection of your car. If you are not sure if you are qualified to do your own technical inspection, you should probably not do your own inspection. **You** are totally responsible for the mechanical condition of your vehicle. You are **STRONGLY** encouraged to have your Pre-Event Technical Inspection Form completed by a known and reputable BMW shop. Plan ahead as many shops get busy immediately before the school. If your car breaks at the track and you cannot fix it yourself, you are done. Many members at the event may try to help you, but the responsibility is yours alone.

**What type of things should I make sure get looked at closely during the car technical inspection?**

Here's a list of mechanical glitches that have occurred at recent driving schools that were easily prevented with a good, thorough pre-school technical inspection. If you have one of the models noted below, make sure to have these particular items checked thoroughly during your car technical inspection. If your car breaks at the track and you cannot fix it yourself, you are done. Many members at the event may try to help you, but the responsibility is yours alone.

E30 325

- brake fluid (flushed and sufficient quantity)

E30 M3

- front sway bar mounting bracket
- front control arm ball joint

E36 M3

- brake fluid (flushed and sufficient quantity)
- brake pad thickness (especially critical if two drivers are using the car in the school)
- idler pulley
- engine fan
- radiator
- coolant hose
- shocks
- selector seal on transmission
- header flange
- plastic impeller water pump
- plastic thermostat housing
- front control arm ball joint
- rear control arm mounting bracket
- front plastic air dam pieces

E39 M5

- brake pad thickness (especially critical if two drivers are using the car in the school)

E46 M3

- brake pad thickness (especially critical if two drivers are using the car in the school)

**Will there be an inspection of my car at the track?**

No. You do need to remove all loose materials from your car, including the trunk (this includes cell phones, radar detectors, beer bottles, change, floor mats, glove compartment contents, luggage, etc.).

**Can I bring a different car than was listed on my application?**

Yes, however, you need to notify Teri Lachman ASAP. Failure to do so may jeopardize your ability to participate in the school depending upon the type of car you want to use instead of the car specified on your application. If you are switching to a rental car, additional rules apply (see below).

**Can I use a rental car?**

Yes, however, additional rules do apply. You must supply proof of insurance before being allowed to participate in the school. You must also have a technical inspection performed on the car and a technical inspection form filled out when picking up your registration packet. Rental convertibles are NOT allowed.

### **Do you know of a place that rents BMWs in Las Vegas?**

Yes (although not sure about what types they might have). Some possibilities are:

- ? AA Exotic Car Rentals, 702-525-1603
- ? Dream Car Rentals, 702-856-0375 or 702-822-6392
- ? Preferred Rent-A-Car, 702-894-9936
- ? Rent-A-Vette, 702-736-2592
- ? Xpress Car Rental, 702-736-2663

Rental convertibles are NOT allowed.

### **Will air for tires be available at the track?**

Air service is not guaranteed at the track. There is air available at nearby gas stations. Best bet is to bring your own tire pressure gauge and an air pump if you own one.

### **Will gasoline be available at the track?**

Fill your tank before arriving at the school. A convenience store with Mobil gas is located at the I-15 entrance to the Las Vegas Motor Speedway. Plan your time to visit the gas station during a driving break to refuel if needed. Remember that your gas mileage on the track may not be quite as good as what you usually get.

## **Classroom Session Questions**

### **Why are there classroom sessions?**

Before you are let out onto the track, some basics must be covered first, like etiquette, passing requirements, track conditions, what the various flags mean and safety items.

Also, this is where the learning begins. At your first school, you will learn about contact patches, vehicle dynamics (I bet you never covered that in high school driver's ed), braking, steering inputs and throttle applications. All very important items if you plan on being able to have full control of your car. <sup>(1)</sup>

## **Clothing Questions**

### **What should I wear?**

Closed-toe shoes are a must for all drivers. T-shirts are fine, but please avoid wearing yellow shirts (the instructors wear yellow shirts). No sandals are allowed on the track. Wear comfortable clothes - loose fitting pants or shorts, shirts, sweaters, etc. You do not need to wear a racing suit. You will be outside all day - sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat are highly recommended.

## **Food Questions**

### **Will breakfast/snacks/drinks be available at the track?**

Only ice water. Please eat breakfast before arriving at the track. You will need to bring your own snacks and other drinks with you as well. The convenience store at the I-15 entrance to the Las Vegas Motor Speedway has snacks, drinks, as well as a restaurant.

### **Will lunch be available at the track?**

Lunch will NOT be provided for students. A lunch wagon will be available at the track for you to purchase a lunch if you choose to do so. There are also a couple of restaurants located close to the track. You can also “brown bag” it and bring your own lunch. The caterer mandated by the track has proven too unreliable in the past and the costs for the lunches had become ridiculous. Rather than raise the driving school fee by an unreasonable amount, the option to not provide student lunches was chosen.

### **Can I buy extra banquet tickets?**

First, please note that a banquet ticket is NOT included with your registration fee. Banquet tickets can be purchased in advance on the driving school application. A very limited number of tickets will be available for sale at the school.

### **Why is the banquet not closer to the hotel and/or track?**

Cost. Big Dogs provides the best compromise on location, size of banquet room, quality of food, and cost.

### **Why do you have a banquet?**

It's fun and provides a nice location to have dinner, relax with friends, and talk over the day's events (which always seem to get more impressive as the evening wears on!). The banquet is a casual affair at a local restaurant that has a nice big party room and a quite good catering department. Attendance at the banquet is usually around 100 and includes instructors, students, and staff. Dinner is a buffet, which generally includes a choice of a beef, chicken, or vegetarian entree. A drawing for a door prize is included, which has included in past years a set of tires. A no-host bar is available

### **Can I bring alcoholic beverages to the track?**

The Club's insurance coverage does not allow the consumption or usage of any alcoholic beverage or illegal drug by any participant or spectator during the time the driving school is in session. This means through the lunch break and not until after the track is closed at the end of each day. Violators will be subject to immediate expulsion from the event. Secondly, it is recommended that students and instructors who consume alcoholic beverages the day before the event do so in moderation so that the blood alcohol level is at 0.0% before reaching the track each day.

## Helmet Questions

### **Why must my helmet be Snell 95 or Snell 00 certified?**

To protect you. There are plenty of low quality helmets out there. The only way to know you have a helmet that will protect you in a crash is to make sure it has been tested to the high standards of the Snell foundation. For information, visit [www.smf.org](http://www.smf.org). Remember - if you value your head, you'll protect it. <sup>(1)</sup>

### **How do I figure out what size helmet I need?**

The circumference of your head should be measured at a point approximately one inch above the eyebrows in front and at a point in the back of your head that results in the largest possible measurement. Take several measurements to make sure you have the largest one.

Inches	Size	Equals
21-1/4	6-3/4	X-Small
21-5/8	6-7/8	Small
22	7	Small
22-3/8	7-1/8	Medium
22-3/4	7-1/4	Medium
23-1/8	7-3/8	Large
23-1/2	7-1/2	Large
23-7/8	7-5/8	X-Large
24-1/4	7-3/4	X-Large

### **Is there a limitless supply of rental helmets?**

No. There are a very limited number of rental helmets. The helmets are reserved on a first come, first served basis. If a helmet in the size you need is no longer available when your registration form is received, you will be contacted so you can make alternate arrangements for a helmet. A helmet is required for all drivers even if all of the rental helmets are already reserved.

### **Where can I buy a helmet?**

Possible sources are Racer Wholesale at [www.racerwholesale.com](http://www.racerwholesale.com), Sparco at [www.sparcoua.com](http://www.sparcoua.com), or Bell Motorsports at [www.bellmotorsports.com](http://www.bellmotorsports.com).

## Insurance Questions

### **Will insurance cover any damage to my car that might happen at the school?**

You must carry personal insurance on your car. The Club's insurance policy has no provision for payment for physical damage to vehicles. You are totally responsible for the safe operation of your vehicle. BMW CCA, the Sin City Chapter, its officers, instructors, staff and facility providers assume no responsibility in the event of an accident, of any kind, in the course of this event. If this is of concern to you, contact

your own personal insurance carrier for advice to determine what coverage would be in effect during this school.

**What does the liability waiver mean OR What liability am I assuming by participating in the school?**

In order to protect the sport and those who organize events, a waiver form must be signed. A copy of this waiver is included in the confirmation packet for your review. Please read it carefully. The waiver form acknowledges the dangers involved and it describes the rights that you relinquish. It is important that you understand the physical and financial risks involved.

When you sign the waiver, you are signing away your rights to sue BMW CCA, Inc., the Sin City Chapter, any other participant or any instructor or worker, for ANYTHING that happens to you, or to your car, at the driving school. Make sure your loved ones understand this. In the unlikely event that your car is damaged or you become seriously injured at this event, you cannot sue BMW CCA, the Sin City Chapter or its officers, no matter who is “at fault”. Litigation is no substitute for purchasing sufficient life insurance, disability insurance, and medical insurance to protect yourself and your loved ones. If you have doubts about whether you should sign the insurance waiver, then you should not participate in the school.

## **Membership Questions**

**How can I find out what my BMW CCA membership number is?**

Your CCA membership (6-digit number) can be found on your CCA membership card and it is also listed on the mailing label of the Roundel magazine.

## **Preparation Questions**

**What items are recommended to bring with me to the track?**

The recommended list of “good to have” items for the track include glass cleaner, paper towels, brake fluid, oil, tire pressure gauge, torque wrench, duct tape, electrical tape, extra engine oil, extra fuses, rags, flashlight, hand cleaner, snacks, plenty to drink (non-alcoholic), a container to stow your gear in, lawn chairs, waterproof gear to cover you and your stuff (trash bags or a tarp work really well), and a shade tent (you will attract friends).

## **Registration Questions**

**Should I ask how many students have signed up before I send my application in?**

No, for a couple of reasons. First, if the school is close to full, the delay while you wait for an answer on how many students are ahead of you may cost you your spot in the school. It has happened in the past. Second, the number of students is not given out in order to discourage those who like to wait until the last second to register (see next

FAQ question). If the school is full when your application arrives, you will be contacted and your payment won't be cashed/charged until a spot opens up in the school. If you do go ahead and ask, you will receive one of two answers. Either you should be fine if you send in your application within the next week or that the school is full with details about the waiting list procedure. Begging, bribes (unless we're talking big money), name-dropping, and/or whining have not proven successful in the past and don't count on them working this year either! : )

**When do I need to register by or Can I wait until the last possible second to register for the school?**

The earlier you register for the school, the better. By registering early, you will ensure that you get into the school (40 people didn't get in last year!), you get the run group you prefer (once a run group is full, it's full!), you get a loaner helmet in the size you need (we ran out of all sizes last year!), and you don't cause the registrar to pull her hair out (always a plus!).

The number of instructors are based on student demand for the school (1-2 months in advance of the school). By signing up at the last minute, we don't have time to recruit additional instructors and you get to sit on the sidelines watching instead of out there on the track having fun. PLEASE DON'T PROCRASTINATE!

**Why is the hotel not closer to the track or Why isn't the hotel on the Strip?**

Cost. Hotels that are close to the track are either too small to accommodate the instructors plus the students or are too costly and would drive up the driving school fee excessively. Hotels on the Strip are expensive and would drive up the driving school fee excessively. As a student, you can stay wherever you like. The block of rooms at the hotel where the instructors are staying is provided as a convenience, not a mandatory requirement.

**Why is the hotel block of rooms sold out?**

You waited too long to make your reservation. Once the block of hotel rooms is gone, they are gone

**Schedule Questions**

**What is the schedule for the weekend?**

Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup>

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Early registration at the La Quinta Inn & Suites Northwest Tech Center in their meeting room; pick up registration packets; snacks and drinks will be provided

Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>

7:00 - 7:30 a.m.

8:00 a.m.

9:00 a.m. - Noon

Pick up registration packets at the track  
Drivers' meeting at the track - MANDATORY!  
Track time

Noon - 12:40 p.m.	Paid corner worker lunch break; Track is cold
12:40 - 5:00 p.m.	Track time
6:30 p.m.	No host cocktails at Big Dogs in the Pedigree Room
7:30 p.m.	Banquet at Big Dogs in the Pedigree Room (ticket required)

Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup>

8:00 a.m.	Drivers' meeting at the track - MANDATORY!
9:00 a.m. - Noon	Track time
Noon - 12:40 p.m.	Paid corner worker lunch break; Track is cold
12:40 - 5:00 p.m.	Track time
5:00 p.m.	Last session ends; clean up and head for home

### **Do I have to attend the driver's meeting?**

YES! Attendance at the 8:00 am driver's meeting on Saturday and Sunday is mandatory for all students. Showing up late or missing the meeting may cost you track time!

## **Spectator Questions**

### **Are spectators allowed?**

Spectators are allowed provided they sign the liability waiver before entering the track area. Children under 18 are allowed, however, a special parental consent waiver is required that must be signed by **both** parents or one parent's signature and affirmation that they have sole custody (forms available on the chapter web site at [www.sincitybmwcarclub.com](http://www.sincitybmwcarclub.com)). Children must stay with an adult at all times. This is a rule for their safety and there are no exceptions. Please report to the registration area when arriving at the track to turn in the special consent waiver and sole custody affirmation (if required) and received a special wristband for the child to wear.

### **Can spectators get rides around the track?**

You bet! As time/schedules permit, ask an instructor to provide a ride for the passenger of your choice (18 or older). Riders must have signed all waivers and wear an approved helmet.

## **Track Session Questions**

### **Why on a racetrack?**

To have enough space and to accommodate a large group of people, we need a facility like a racetrack. Most motorsport facilities offer a control tower in which the safety people and event organizers can view the whole event. The track itself has plenty of safety features built right in that parking lots or public roads do not. Also, tracks are built with different types of corners and offer more challenges than you might normally find. This helps test your abilities to read the road and raises your awareness of your surroundings. Furthermore, a dedicated facility like a racetrack eliminates the

distractions that other, non-participating vehicles might impose nor do they have cross traffic that might interfere. <sup>(1)</sup>

### **What if this is my first school?**

This whole thing can be a bit confusing if you have never participated, so a Saturday morning classroom session will be held to give you a little help. Your first classroom session after the drivers' meeting will be a special orientation, followed by your initial track session. That will be followed by additional classes through out the weekend. The instructors, of course, are always available for one-on-one coaching.

### **How do I know which run group I am assigned to?**

Your registration packet contains numbers and letters. The numbers is to identify you, the letter is your run group, and the letter color is your instructor group.

### **Will I have an instructor? OR Do I have to have an instructor in the car?**

One instructor will be assigned for EVERY STUDENT in a group. For the first two or three sessions on Saturday and Sunday, each car will have an instructor. The instructor will drive the first few laps of the first session on Saturday then switch with the student. This way everyone becomes familiar with the track and starts off on the right foot with a little coaching and demonstration. In later sessions, when you have been signed off by your instructor, you are free to take an instructor of your choice or spend time going solo. Try to use several different instructors if you have been signed off, as you will learn something new from each one.

### **What if I don't get along with my instructor?**

These rarely happens but, if you and your instructor are not getting along or "clicking", simply ask the Chief Instructor for another instructor. Everyone has their own style of learning and teaching and your instructors respect that. <sup>(1)</sup>

### **How are the driving sessions run?**

Your group will have eight track sessions of 20-25 minutes each. At the start of each session you line up at pre-grid and you will be checked to be sure you are ready with helmet, seat belt attached, driver's and passenger's windows down, sunroof closed, etc. Park your car and meet your instructor at the flag that matches your color sticker. Instructors will explain the procedure for the first driving session. You are then waved onto the track one at a time with an interval between each car. The first lap is always under a standing yellow flag and you must maintain your interval, not pass any cars, and settle into the driving mode. After one lap or when ordered by Course Control, the standing yellow flags will be removed and you may accelerate to your safe speed. At the end of the session, a checkered flag is the signal to slow down, complete a cool-down lap, and come into the pits. When returning to the pit parking area, drive to your instructor's tent and pull out of the traffic lane to let your instructor out. Then go and park your car. DO NOT STOP IN THE PIT TRAFFIC LANE TO LET YOUR INSTRUCTOR EXIT YOUR CAR. This blocks the traffic lanes and holds up the next run group from

proceeding to pre-grid. REMEMBER that you are not racing! Our goal is to drive at our own pace, learn more about our cars, and practice our technique.

### **What if I'm stuck behind a slower car? OR What if I have a faster car behind me?**

Ideally, most cars in a run group go around at the same pace, but passing does occur so whenever it is safe to do so, check your mirrors and DO NOT BLOCK faster cars. Passing violations will be handled aggressively by event officials and violators will be talked to, deprived of track time, and ultimately ejected from the event. There are two primary rules for passing: 1) Passing is done ONLY in the designated passing zones and 2) Pass ONLY when signaled by the driver of EACH car you are passing.

If you are slower, wait for the passing zone, then signal. Do this action for each car that you think is attempting to pass you. In addition to the signal, BACK OFF THE GAS so the faster car(s) can get by within the designated area. Remember that you may be faster down the straightaway, there are many turns that the car(s) behind you may be able to negotiate at a faster pace. Drivers who are holding up traffic will have the blue passing flag displayed in the turn before the straightaway.

If someone is going slower than you are, you may pass only in the designated areas. DO NOT TAILGATE! Wait for the passing zone; wait for the signal, then PASS. If you are behind a line of slower traffic, you can pull into the hot pits and have the starter give you an open space. Accelerate quickly so you are not caught by traffic.

### **What if I'm not that fast?**

Some people are faster learners or have a natural ability to communicate with their car and they might end up going a little faster. This is why we space the cars out and give everyone room on the course. While speed is not the essence of this type of program, some people like to pick up the pace more than others do. There will be multiple opportunities for you to let a faster car past in each lap. Passing will only be done in designated areas and only with your permission. No passing will be done without the acknowledgement of both drivers. <sup>(1)</sup>

### **I won't be that fast or I don't want to go fast.**

Speed is not the goal here. Some people just like to go faster than others do. I always recommend to the students who like to go their own pace and don't like "traffic" behind them that when it comes time to go out on the track to grid farther back in the group. That way you have fewer people to worry about wanting to go faster.

If you are worried about speed, here is something further to think about. I've found the one wanting to go fast early on during the school end up being the "slower" ones as the school progresses because they are not learning the skills, but just trying to go fast. Starting slow IS the key. <sup>(1)</sup>

### **What do I do if I go off the track?**

In the unlikely event your car leaves the track surface due to an error in judgment, the car is out of control and you do not have ABS, the best general rule is to lock up all

four wheels and keep them locked until you are completely stopped. If ABS-equipped, stay hard on the brakes and steer the car. If you see you are going to run off the track and if you still have control, drive off straight. Only re-enter the track when your instructor tells you to, or if you do not have an instructor in the car, then wait until it is safe and there is ample time to do so. Corner workers will help signal you when it is safe to go back on the track. Drive back to the pits so that your car can be inspected for damage.

### **Can I drive solo?**

Only the highly skilled/advanced students will be allowed to drive solo, but only after working with their instructor. When both you and your instructor agree you have reached the level that driving solo will be of benefit will you be allowed to drive solo. <sup>(1)</sup>

### **Do we get trophies?**

No, no, no. This is a driving school. No racing or timing allowed. If anything resembles racing you will be kindly asked to stop or, worse, asked to leave with no refund. <sup>(1)</sup>

### **Is there a test?**

There is no test, but you will get plenty of feedback from your instructor as to what to work on. Your instructor will meet with you before your first session and you will have a chance to discuss what your goals for the weekend might be. Your instructor will also give you a few things to work on during the course of the school. <sup>(1)</sup>

## **Weather Questions**

### **What will the weather be like?**

The average high temperature for May is 88°F (but it's a dry heat!); average low is 60°F. It does occasionally rain, so that could happen as well. It could be windy too.

### **Why don't you provide shade?**

We do for instructors, who are volunteering their time for the weekend. Students are welcome to enjoy the shade provided by instructors, but you can't move the tent to your car! Las Vegas is a sunny area and there aren't too many trees around at the track (actually, there are none.) Your best bet is to bring your own shade or make friends with someone who has brought a tent or other shade-making device. The classroom is also open for students to use when class is not in session.

*Is your question not listed here? Check the Sin City BMW Club web page at [www.sincitybmwclub.com](http://www.sincitybmwclub.com) for that latest version of the FAQ. Still not listed, contact Teri Lachman at [TalonM3@earthlink.net](mailto:TalonM3@earthlink.net) or 702-656-7799*

<sup>(1)</sup> Thanks to Sheridan White, "Do A Drivers School '... but I don't want to hurt my car!'", Der Maisbauer, Newsletter of the Missouri Valley Chapter, July-August 2004.