

# MG Trophy Championship Driving Standards

**The MG Trophy Championship Driving Standards Committee (DSC)** exists to help ensure that drivers are able to enjoy the very best in club motor sport, 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 DSC have developed a method to both accept complaints and to deal with those complaints once received.

## **The Complaints Procedure**

If you feel 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:

**a)** You can have a chat with the driver yourself. If you are upset or angry with the other driver then please go and have a coffee or something and then, after you have calmed down, speak to them in a calm manner. We do not condone any kind of confrontation, either in Park Ferme or in the paddock (and neither will the race officials). Often, sorting things out between you 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, or all, of the Driving Standards Committee about the incident so we can offer advice, particularly if you are not sure whether to make a formal complaint or not. As our committee consists of current drivers please make sure that they are in a position to listen to your complaint and not in the middle of something that needs their immediate attention. Most complaints are best dealt with a while after an incident in any case, rather than immediately after, while the adrenaline is still flowing and tempers may be raised. Also, should you ask a DSC member who races within your particular class then he or she may direct you to one of the other team members as we prefer not to deal with disputes between drivers we actually race against wherever possible.

**c)** You may speak to the Clerk of the Course about the incident who may investigate and take appropriate action if deemed necessary. You always have this option available irrespective of whether you complain to the DSC member and vice-versa. Note that if you think that another driver has unfairly gained an advantage over you and that they should receive a time penalty which would change the results of a race, this can only happen if you take your complaint to the clerk, which must be within 30 minutes of the (provisional) results first being published.

**d)** You (the driver or a nominated proxy only) may elect to submit a formal DS complaint by completing the DRIVING STANDARDS COMPLAINT FORM shown below which will be available from the Trophy co-ordinator. You should complete the form and return it to your co-ordinator who will e-mail it to all members of the Driving Standards Committee. You have until 1 week after the incident to lodge your complaint, complaints received after this time will not be considered.

On receipt of a complaint, the DSC will discuss it amongst themselves. After checking the database of DS complaints, if no other complaints have been received against the driver, and the incident is relatively minor, it may be that no action is taken except for logging the complaint. If it is more serious then some form of action may be taken.

If two or more complaints are received regarding the same driver, then that driver will be spoken to. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, or if the driver continues to drive in a similar manner, further action may be taken. This can range from a written warning through to suspension of racing membership. See the actions available later in this document.

**Confidentiality:** You should be aware that any complaints are dealt with completely confidentially and are only discussed within the DSC. The driver about whom a complaint has been received is not told from whom that complaint came.

Should a DS member feel the need to submit a complaint against another driver they will immediately rule themselves out of any further part in the DS procedure regarding that complaint, which will then be handled by the other members of the committee.

Should you feel the need to submit a complaint about one of the DSC members themselves please speak with your co-ordinator who will then discuss your complaint with the other DSC members.

Our DS complaints system works best if there is weight of evidence against a driver. We tend to take the view that anyone can make an occasional mistake, but when we receive similar complaints about the same driver, over and over again, 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 gradually build up a complete picture of so-and-sos competence, and take steps before things get out of hand.

**By agreeing to the same rules we can all continue to enjoy the very best of 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 of the right rules to get to the front.**

### **Driving Standards Regulations**

The Driving Standards Committee (DSC) will be working with meeting organizers and will investigate all 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 DSC are empowered to call a competitor to investigate any incident and may supplement their own investigations by the use of MSA Observers reports, where available and deemed appropriate by the Clerk of the Course at the event in question, and by the use of video evidence where available.

They are empowered to apply penalties in three categories.

- i) Driving in a manner that is considered careless by the DSC - to be penalized by a written warning. Two written warnings in six races will cause a yellow card to be issued.
- ii) Driving in a manner that is considered reckless by the DSC - to be penalized by the issuing of a yellow card. Two yellow cards in six races will cause a red card to be issued.
- iii) Driving in a manner that is considered dangerous by the DSC - to be penalized by the issuing of a red card.

Refusal to co-operate with the DSC will result in the issuing of a red card.

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. These two races will be the next two entered.

The issuing of 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.

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.

Suspension of racing membership of the Club will mean that the competitor is ineligible to compete in the championship during the period of suspension.

There is no right of appeal.

### **Frequent Driving Standards Issues**

We have highlighted below some of the key issues that continually lead to safety concerns and damage together with an expansion of some of the MSA Blue Book Regulations.

#### **Yellow Flag**

MSA Blue Book Q 15.1 e/f

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 the lives of marshals and fellow competitors at risk. Use the green flag lap to ensure that you are aware where all the marshals posts are (that's what its intended for). If you *do* pass under yellows, try to give the place back as soon as you can but be aware that there is still a good chance you will be called to the Clerk of the Course to explain your lack of observation. But 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 seems to be lots of confusion regarding when you can/cant overtake. It is quite simple though. 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.

Occasionally a green flag is not shown, so if you pass the next flag marshals 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.

### **Red Flag**

Should any race 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 you are about to dramatically encounter the incident, as the driver behind may not have seen the flag or, as with the traditional M25 traffic jam, all the cars behind you will back up quickly to the point where the flag may not yet be displayed. Some drivers raise or wave an arm to warn the drivers behind that the race has been stopped. You then proceed to the start line, or as directed.

### **Blue Flag**

MSA Blue Book Q 15.1

(b) Blue flag -Stationary: Another competitor is following close behind.

(c) Blue flag -Waved: Another competitor is trying to overtake.

Blue flags in national racing do *not* mean the same as F1s blue flags -they are just "for information" and carry no instruction to do anything other than to "be aware"! They usually mean that a faster car is trying to overtake you - most usually shown when someone is being lapped. If you are being lapped then there is nothing in the rules which says you must let them through it is their responsibility to pass you safely. However, if you are running on your own and being lapped, why spoil the race for the leaders?

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 their way as the overtaking car may have already committed themselves 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!

### **Re-joining the Circuit**

MSA Blue Book Q 14.5.1

If all four wheels have left the track you must rejoin at the nearest point compatible with safety. It is unfair and unacceptable to simply rejoin the circuit as quickly as possible without any regard for the drivers around you who have been able to retain control of their car. If this means stopping at the side of the circuit until safe to rejoin then that is what you must do, even if that means you rejoin last.

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. More often than not this results in them shooting across the circuit at right angles and off again 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. Remember, it is not the responsibility of the car you pull back on in front of to try and avoid you.

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

MSA Blue Book C 1.1.5 Drivers must at all time drive in a manner compatible with general safety.

MSA Blue Book Q 14.4.2 Manoeuvres liable to hinder other drivers such as premature direction changes on the straights, crowding of cars towards the inside or outside of the curve or any other abnormal change of direction, are strictly prohibited and will be subject to penalties ranging from a fine to exclusion from the race. The repetition of such driving, even involuntary, may result in exclusion.

The MGT Driving Standards Committee interpretation is that this precludes competitors from blocking, weaving, squeezing, **making unnecessary contact and generally driving in a manner that causes avoidable damage.**

So no blocking of following cars on the straight, by weaving, moving in front of them deliberately to block them, or pushing them to the side of the track if they get a wheel 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, and 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 simply 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.

**Do not drive on your mirrors just reacting to whatever the car behind is doing!**

## To Avoid "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 about 20% 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 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. Coincide your faster exit with catching Car-1 as the next straight begins.

Deciding the amount of blame apportioned is not an exact science. Much depends on Car-2's sudden lunge factor. Contact arising from a side-by-side-battle for a corner is not the same as an over-optimistic and sudden lunge from way-back that does not pay off.

Contact incidents happen when two drivers both attempt to put their car in the same place at the same time. And 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. And 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: doggedly 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!

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# Driving Standards Complaints Form

Your Name (or proxy).....

Your e mail address.....

Incident date.....

Circuit.....

When was the incident (Practice, Qualifying, Race).....

Complaint against.....Car Number.....

Damage to your car (if applicable).....  
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Brief description of incident/complaint.....  
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## DSC action

Complaint form handed to (name).....

Complaint received date.....

Outcome.....  
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Complainant advised of decision.....