

Inland NorthWest Region Drivers Education (DE) - Run Groups

The purpose of this document is to update previous INWR DE Program policies on Run Group Advancement that have, over time been loosely followed, poorly understood by students and instructors alike and not widely distributed to DE Program participants.

The INWR DE Program committee believes this policy will a) help ensure consistency in all aspects of our student advancements as students' progress through our INWR Drivers Education program and b) elevate the educational value as well as the overall safety of our Driver's Education events for all participants.

A typical track day in the Inland North West Region (INWR) Drivers Education (DE) program is organized into "Run Groups" containing students of similar driving ability, driving vehicles of similar capabilities.

Students in the INWR Drivers Education program are expected to advance from Run Group to Run Group as they gain driving skills, confidence and track experience. Advancement through the run groups is self-paced based on each driver's abilities and comfort level. Moving to the next higher run group is achieved by a driver successfully completing checkout rides in which he/she is evaluated against a defined set of parameters that the INWR DE Program committee feels is appropriate for each Run Group. These parameters are summarized further on in this document. Only the INWR Chief Instructor or his designated instructors will be authorized to perform checkout rides.

Important Note

Your Run Group assignment within the INWR DE program is not automatically accepted by other regions nor does the Run Group in other region(s) DE programs automatically become your Run Group with INWR. Likewise, if you are advanced to a higher Run Group by INWR, do not assume that this advancement is recognized and implemented by other regions.

The evaluation checkout rides not only gain insight into the advancement student's ability to execute, at a minimum specific items, listed on the Run Group advancement checklist but they also serve to confirm a driver's ability and willingness to consistently display all of the less tangible qualities required for the Run Group for which they are being considered.

A checklist has been developed for advancing into each Run Group. The INWR instructor(s) performing the checkout rides must evaluate the driver on each item listed on the appropriate checklist. "Competence" in all aspects of the checklist criteria should be considered minimum requirements for all advancement candidates.

Driving "Solo"

An instructor has the latitude to allow his or her student to drive solo simply by informing the Chief Driving Instructor of the sign-off. A signed-off student may drive solo for the remaining runs for that day. Students signed-off for a day or a session do not advance, or cease to require an instructor. One-day sign-offs are typical when the instructor and student agree it will be beneficial for the student to run alone for a session(s), yet still require additional instruction at future events.

Advancement to the Next “Run Group”

“Advancing” refers to moving up to the next level run group. This is a much more significant step than sign-off for “Solo” and therefore requires an instructor check out ride plus approval of the Chief Driving Instructor. Changes in run groups are for the student’s first event following the check out ride and Chief Instructor approval.

Run Group Definitions

The INWR DE program uses three Run Groups: RED, YELLOW and BLUE/INSTRUCTOR. These Groups can generally be described as Novice (RED), Intermediate and Advanced drivers.

Drivers new to the DE program can expect to start in the RED Run group with an instructor regardless of prior experience in other High Performance driving schools or programs.

The **RED** Run Group students are expected from the level of little knowledge or skill in High Performance Driving to the following skills.....

1. Know the driving line and drive it with consistency
2. Handle all aspects of passing, or being passed in a safe, courteous manner
3. Drive at an appropriate speed for the run group
4. Develop an awareness of flag stations and flag meanings
5. Provide smooth inputs for car control (steering, braking, and shifting)
6. Display full knowledge of INWR safety procedures, flags, and driving terminology
7. Identify minor mistakes and self-correct
8. Show good anticipation of all “on track” situations
9. Look “through the corners” and well down track
10. Keep a safe distance from other cars
11. Exhibit a positive and safe attitude which complies with INWR’s DE philosophy.

Drivers in **YELLOW** Run Group are expected to refine their driving skills, increase their confidence and judgment, and learn more advanced techniques as a pre-requisite to being promoted to the Blue Run Group. During the time spent in Yellow, the student is expected to attend at least 6+ sessions of instruction and 6+ track days to accomplish objectives.

Promotion to Blue requires 2 separate instructor check out rides plus approval of the Chief Driving Instructor. To be considered for advancement to the next Run Group, the driver must demonstrate that they:

1. Drive the line consistently, using the full track
2. Brake and accelerate very smoothly
3. Have mastered “heel and toe” (if applicable)
4. Are no longer dependent on “turn in,” “apex,” or “track out” cones
5. Demonstrate competent car control and recovery skills when needed
6. Automatically use proper hand signals and sound judgment during all passing situations, as well as courtesy to other drivers
7. Calmly deal with speed differentials within their run group
8. Have a driving record and attitude consistent with INWR's DE Philosophy.

Drivers in the **BLUE/INSTRUCTOR** Run Group are expected to be expert in all the driving skills taught by INWR and should be indistinguishable from the average driver in the Instructor Run Group. Drivers in this group should be proficient in the following skill set, most are recognized from the Yellow Run Group refined by many hours on the track.

1. Drive the line flawlessly and effortlessly
2. Can alter their line when and where necessary
3. Can demonstrate the “rain line” and understand the concepts of that line
4. Provide very smooth inputs at all speeds
5. Demonstrate expert vision skills by looking well ahead
6. Understand and can carry considerable momentum through corners
7. Have mastered trail braking, throttle steer and heel and toe
8. Can handle closeness of other cars without losing focus
9. Drive at a pace appropriate for the run group and are approaching the limits of their cars
10. Always drive in a non-aggressive manner and are respectful and courteous to other drivers