

Your First Day with HOOKED ON DRIVING

First of all, congratulations on taking the first step in enjoying your car at a higher level than is prudent on the streets and highways. Having seen hundreds of men and women take this first step, we can safely speculate that this will be one of the best moves of your hobby life. Most participants with Hooked on Driving come away from their first day with us invigorated, somewhat humbled, challenged to improve, and downright giddy. This is fun stuff. That having been said, this is also a step that you should not take lightly. While we have an excellent safety record at Hooked on Driving, taking your street car onto a race track is not without inherent risks. You will do so on your own responsibility and liability. There is no insurance coverage for property damage or bodily harm through Hooked on Driving.

Enough with the warnings. You've decided to join us – now what's next? Here is a list of items that you are accountable to tend to before you arrive at the track:

Inspect (or have a qualified technician) inspect your car.

Items to check include:

- o Wheel bearings, for excess play or wear
- o Brake pad/shoe depth – a minimum of 50% remaining
- o Brake fluid – we highly recommend a flush and replacement with high temperature synthetic fluid
- o Tires – pressures should be increased 2-3 lbs. from standard pressures (see your expert for more precise guidance on this – and you really should buy a high quality air gauge with dial readout) – tread should have 50% remaining
- o Wheels – snap on parts should be removed and lug nuts should be tightened to recommended torque (usually in the 85 lb range, but check manufacturer recommendation)
- o Belts and safety equipment – is all the factory equipment in good shape?
- o Fuel – its best to arrive with a full, but not topped off tank – You'll use fuel quickly on the track and your car is probably engineered to handle properly with a reasonably full load – fuel is available at the track, but it's a bit pricey
- o Coolant/fluids (OK air-cooled guys, you're off the hook on coolant) check all appropriate fluids – oil should be topped off (except dry sump Porsche engines, which should be at the low end of gauge/indicator)

Next, its time to clean out the car. Believe it or not, I recently drove a participant's car for a lap to find that there was a Maxfli rattling around under the pedals!

Garage door openers, child seats, junk in the trunk, all need to be stowed safely. We all end up with a pile of stuff that we store by the car at the track. No one has ever had a problem with theft.

You'll need a helmet. If this is your first time, and you're not sure if you'll like what we do, you can rent a helmet from the track for \$25. This may be a good option rather than borrowing an old motorcycle helmet that doesn't fit. If you are already hooked on driving, we suggest buying an SA Snell certified auto racing helmet. This type of helmet is quite different than a motorcycle helmet, for good reasons. We'll not expound on this here, but

feel free to ask if you're ready to buy. Also, a full face, with large eye port is a good idea. Lastly, its more expensive, but Kevlar makes for a much lighter and thus, safer helmet.

Last but most important, have yourself ready. We highly recommend checking in to the local motel the night before. Its downright brutal to make the sunrise run, drive hard all day, and have to drive home all in one day. For Thunderhill, we recommend The Golden Pheasant Best Western in Willows (530-934-4603), which has been very supportive, has a Hooked On Driving rate of \$59, and is spacious and clean. Try to wind down business issues for the day. This is an intense activity and you'll want a clear mind while you're on the track. Turning off the cell is a very good idea, especially since most don't work at the track. While there is a good lunch provided, we suggest bringing a snack, fruit and plenty of water. With all these steps taken, you're sure to have an awesome day.

See you soon!