

SUVs and Convertibles at Audi Club North America Driving Events

This summary is extracted from the ACNA Driving Event Guidelines dated April 2017. It is subject to change without notice. Chapter policy may vary depending on event specifics.

2.13. Permitted Vehicle Types at Driving School Events

Rollover protection varies among manufacturers. The devices used for occupant protection at highway speeds may not be sufficient at driving school/HPDE speeds.

Therefore, these Guidelines are issued with a single caveat: "If the vehicle does not provide complete rollover protection for the body, head and limbs, don't allow it." Simply implementing manufacturer rollover protection may not be sufficient in the dynamic and high-speed environment of a track.

Accidents, collisions and rollovers can happen despite the most cautious preparation, and occupant safety is the single most important concern at all events where ACNA chapters are involved.

2.13.1. High-Center of Gravity Vehicles

High-center-of-gravity vehicles (Truck, Van, SUV-Sport Utility Vehicle, CUV-Crossover Utility Vehicle, SAV-Sport Activity Vehicle) are not permitted in Audi Club Driving School events held "at speed" (DE-Driver Education, HPDE, instructed or non-instructed lapping, track days), except those models included in the ACNA Vehicle Participation Exception List (Appendix D), updated annually.

The above excluded vehicles may participate at low speed events where maximum speed is not to exceed 50mph if the activity is:

- DS Driver Skills or exercises at a driving school held in a confined area
- Autocross or gymkhana events if the maximum speed is controlled/limited
- Teen clinics, safety schools, "car control clinics"
- Winter driving schools, in snow or ice conditions

The event master, registrar, safety steward and/or chief driving instructor has final authority to impose more stringent requirements for any event, and also has complete authority to exclude any vehicle for any reason, including those shown in the ACNA Vehicle Participation Exception List.

2.13.2. Convertibles

Convertibles lacking rollover protection are not permitted in ACNA High Performance Driving Schools (HPDE, lapping, or any events held "at speed"). Vehicles with removable hardtops or retractable hardtops lacking a rollover protection system are also not permitted at high speed events.

Convertibles with factory-installed rollover protection (either fixed or deployable) meet the ACNA minimum requirement for HPDE events and are acceptable, subject to approval by chapter leadership and event staff (event master, registrar, safety steward and/or chief driving instructor).

Targas and t-tops are not convertibles and therefore are acceptable; roof panels must be installed.

Convertibles with or without rollover protection are allowed at events where maximum speeds do not exceed 50 mph, if the activity is:

- DS-Driver Skills or exercises at a driving school held in a confined area
- Autocross or gymkhana events (maximum speed must be controlled/limited)
- Teen clinics, safety schools, "car control clinics"

- Winter driving schools, in snow or ice conditions

For convertibles without factory-installed rollover protection to be allowed at ACNA HPDEs, the minimum requirements are:

- A four-point roll cage consisting of a main roll bar behind the front seats with two rear-triangulated braces must be installed.
- Minimum of four-point safety harness with ASM (anti-submarining) technology must be used. The same equipment (harness and seat) is required for driver and passenger.
- Additional protection in the form of SFI and/or FIA approved arm restraints for both driver and instructor is recommended.
- Enforcement of the “broomstick rule” is required for all occupants. Minimum clearance (with helmet on) is two inches below a straight edge, placed from the top of the roll bar to the top of the windshield frame.

For guidance to event organizers, these [convertible] vehicles do NOT have rollover protection and therefore are not acceptable at ACNA HPDE’s unless they meet the minimum requirements set out above: pre-996 Porsche Cabriolet (air-cooled), Mustang, Corvette, Camaro, Firebird, Miata (all generations), Solstice, GXP, Solaris, first gen Z3’s, most British and Italian sports cars from the 40’s through the 80’s. (T-Top versions of these cars are allowed.)

The following convertibles have factory rollover protection and are acceptable subject to chapter approval: Porsche Cabriolet (996, 997), Boxster, BMW Z4, Audi TT and Convertibles, Nissan 350/370Z roadster, BMW M3 and 3 series (1999-present), Mercedes S, SLK and CLK. (Neither list is complete – event organizers may contact the DEC if further guidance is needed.)

We strongly recommend, when possible, driving with the soft-top in the up position or the hard top installed; otherwise, an SFI and/or FIA approved arm restraint system must be used. Full-face helmets or effective eye protection if wearing an open-face helmet is also strongly recommended.

Compliance with the above-stated requirements is solely the responsibility of the vehicle owner and must be confirmed during a mandatory examination which can be performed at the event or during the mandatory inspection required in 2.10.1 above. The designated chapter representative(s) (event master, registrar, safety steward and/or chief driving instructor) has final authority to impose more stringent requirements for any event, and also has complete authority to exclude any vehicle for any reason.

2.13.3. Windows/Doors/Sunroofs

Driver and front passenger side windows must be completely down or completely up while on the track, not partially deployed. Convertibles running with open tops must have all windows completely down. Doors should be unlocked, if possible. Sunroofs must be closed and latched. Whichever window position is approved for the event, all the way up or all the way down, an appropriate procedure for signaling a pass must be used by all participants and must be communicated prior to on track activities.

2.13.4 Piloted/Autonomous Vehicles

No autonomous vehicles are allowed to participate at any Audi Club Driving School or Clinic, unless it is included in the attached ACNA Vehicle Participation Exception List (updated annually). As these vehicles become more common in testing, or when they are approved for use on public roads and released as formal products, they may be demonstrated as a special interest in Audi Club events with appropriate demonstration setting and approval by event officials. Autonomous or driverless vehicles shall not be mixed with run groups of the primary ACNA driver training event.

Appendix D – ACNA Vehicle Participation Exception List

Updated 06/01/2016

High-center-of-gravity vehicles (Truck, Van, SUV-Sport Utility Vehicle, CUV-Crossover Utility Vehicle, SAV-Sport Activity Vehicle) are not permitted in ACNA high-speed driving events, except models included in this ACNA Vehicle Participation Exception List (Appendix D, updated annually). These vehicles cannot use R-compound tires. These vehicles may be limited to the Beginner or Novice run groups at the discretion of the Event Master, Safety Steward or Registrar.

For a vehicle to be added to this list by petition, it must meet the following criteria:

- Model Year 2012 or newer (electronic stability control became mandatory),
- with Static Stability Factor (SSF, www.safercar.gov) of 1.20 or greater,
- wheelbase shorter than 119 inches,
- unibody construction (no body-on-frame), and
- cannot use R-compound tires.

Vehicles model year 2006 or newer may be considered upon petition if they meet criteria above and are equipped with Electronic Stability Control (ESC). ACNA Members may petition to have other vehicles added to the Vehicle Participation Exception List by preparing a researched request and forwarding it to the ACNA National Office for consideration.

Specific conditions are indicated in the parenthesis (vehicle specific note). Base model designations are shown (e.g. Q5) and this conditional approval includes the derived performance models (e.g. SQ5) even if not specifically listed.

In all situations, the chapter event master, registrar and/or chief driving instructor have final onsite authority to impose more stringent requirements for any event, and also have complete authority to exclude any vehicle for any reason, including those shown in this ACNA Vehicle Participation Exception List.

Safety is the single most important concern at all events where ACNA chapters are involved. All technical inspection items used by the chapter apply to these vehicles.

HIGH-CENTER-OF-GRAVITY VEHICLES

ACNA Vehicle Participation Exception List that would otherwise be excluded under 2.13.1:

Acura
RDX (2007+), ZDX (2010+)

Audi
Q3 (2014+), Q5/SQ5 (2009+), Audi A6 allroad (2001+), Audi A4 allroad (2013+)

BMW
X1 (2013+), X3 (2006+), X5/X5M (2006+), X4, (2014+), X6/X6M (2009+)

Cadillac
SRX (2010+)

Chrysler
None.

Dodge
None.

Ford
Edge (2007+), Escape (2007+)

Honda
CR-V (2007+), Crosstour (2010+)

Hyundai
Santa Fe (2007+), Tucson (2009+)

Jeep
Cherokee (2013+)

Kia
Soul (2008+), Sorento (2009+)

Lexus
RX (2008+)

Lincoln
MKX (2007+)

Mazda
CX-3 (2015+), CX-5 (2013+), CX-7 (2007+)

Mercedes-Benz
GLA (2014+), GLK (2009+)

MINI
Countryman (2010+)

Nissan
Murano (2009+)

Porsche
Macan (2014+), Cayenne (2006+)

Subaru
Forester (2009+), Outback (2006+)

Toyota
RAV4 (2006+), Venza (2009+)

Volkswagen
Tiguan (2009+), Touareg (2006+)

Volvo
XC60 (2008+)