

Boeing Employees' Autosports Club (BEAC)

Autocross Driving School FAQ

What to expect at the Boeing Employees' Autosports Club Autocross Driving School:

This is a two-part class that will introduce you to the learned skills of driving a car at its handling limits, in the context of a type of driving event known as “autocross.” It will not make you an expert driver (you may already be one), but it will show you how much there is to learn about driving a car at its limits.

You may want to attend the class for some of the following reasons.

1. You want to learn to drive better and to handle a car more safely.
2. You're interested in learning how to drive fast and in control.
3. You have a desire to compete against other drivers.
4. You want to see just how fast your car can take a corner in a controlled, safe environment. Without getting a ticket.
5. You'd like the chance to see how well those anti-lock brakes really work, or, if your car doesn't have them, then how well your foot works.
6. You always wanted to know what the “friction circle” was, and to feel how it's applied.
7. You want a free technical inspection on your car.
8. You have an almost worn out set of tires and you need a reason to buy new ones.
9. You want to experience what it's like to actually “race” your car against the clock.
10. You'd like to see just how good a driver you really are.

The following are some typical questions asked about the school:

Question: How often is the driving school offered?

Answer: The BEAC school is offered once a year, typically in the spring.

Question: How much does the school cost?

Answer: There is a nominal \$50.00 charge for the BEAC school. This helps cover the costs of renting the site and supplying lunches. This is also the club's annual membership drive (dues are \$15.00 individual or \$20.00 family, if you choose to join). You will find little pressure to join during the school but you are more than welcome to, if you enjoy the sport.

Question: Who can take the BEAC school?

Answer: Boeing employees; on-site vendor employees; spouses and other dependents of Boeing employees; Boeing retirees. Driver's license (learner's permit okay if parent also takes the school) is required. Sorry, no friends, brothers-in-law, cousins, nephews of retirees, etc. Boeing Recreation requires participants to only be those eligible to join BEAC.

Question: What kind of car can I bring to the school?

Answer: Any street-driven car that can pass a basic Tech inspection and doesn't have a known significant potential for rollovers is acceptable. For example, the following are discouraged: full-sized vans, VW Vanagon, Suzuki Samarai, tall narrow SUV's, pre-1969 VW Beetle

Question: How hard is this on my car?

Answer: It's as hard on it as you want it to be. Generally, the worst thing that happens is tire wear. You will advance the wear of your tires somewhat more than if you were driving in a straight line down the highway. The most important thing to do to protect your tires is to have the proper air pressure. The proper tire pressure for autocross is normally at least 10 to 15 psi higher than your owner's guide says.

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Question: Are dual-drivers (i.e. 2 drivers) allowed for 1 car?

Answer: Yes. The driving periods will be structured to handle this.

Question: What is it like to drive autocross?

Answer: See the following youtube video as an example:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dw2euhfVP8>

Question: My car is lowered, can I drive it at the school?

Answer: If you can drive it on the street, you can drive it at the school. You need to be aware of any issues your car may have with suspension travel and wheel/tire clearance, since cornering forces in autocross tend to produce noticeable amounts of suspension deflection.

Question: My car is 'stanced' (i.e. with negative wheel camber), can I drive it at the school?

Answer: That would have to be handled on a case-by-case basis. Autocross cornering does work the suspension somewhat harder than street driving, so a Tech inspection would need to verify that the overall suspension configuration is sound

Question: Any required safety equipment for this activity?

Answer: All you should need are a car that meets the basic vehicle safety requirements of the Tech checklist, and a Snell-2005-or-later helmet (that one's an insurance requirement, and we can loan you one for your driving practice runs)

Question: How safe is this autocross school?

Answer: Every effort is made to make this experience as safe as possible. Helmets are required, your car will be inspected, only one car is allowed on course at a time, and an instructor will be in your car giving instruction. You will be required to sign a Release and Indemnity Agreement prior to starting the class. We have never had an accident at one of our schools.

Question: Will we still have the school if it rains?

Answer: Yes, the school is held rain or shine. You must be prepared for any weather conditions. You will be out in the weather for most of each day. Rain makes it much more interesting to stay on course when you're driving fast.

Question: Any suggested items I should bring with me to the BEAC on-site driving session?

Answer: Sunscreen (you never know)

Light rain gear (just in case)

Waterproof box or bag to stash your stuff in (you'll have to empty out all the loose items in the car, including anything under the seats, before you can finish the Tech Inspection for driving)

Comfy shoes (to walk the course in) and possibly lighter, thinner shoes to drive in.

12V air pump for inflating tires (if you have one)

Tire pressure gauge (if you have one)

Work gloves (for when you are out putting cones back up that other people hit)