

Club Drive Guidelines

Vermont Miata Club
Drive Guidelines
Get in, be moved

GENERAL: The purpose of the Vermont Miata Club is to provide Miata enthusiasts with the opportunity to meet other enthusiasts and to enjoy all the benefits that come with those relationships. This may mean the thrill of having autumn leaves flying up in front of your car caused by a line of Miata's in front of you, to sharing your knowledge of technical issues pertaining to the car. It means comraderie, fun, friends and exploring Vermont's beautiful roads with others.

We are a group that has as many different ideas of what goes into a perfect club event as we have members. But one thing that is central to all perfect events is SAFETY. We want to end the ride with just as many beautiful Miatas as we began with. So we drive within the legal limits, we drive courteously and we are respectful of other cars on the road. How we behave as a group reflects on Miata owners as a whole. It is each drivers responsibility to drive safely and within the limits of law. If you find the group driving a bit too fast for your comfort, it is your right to slow down. The driver ahead of you should keep you in sight and the "slinky" effect of this will be to slow the entire caravan down. Better yet, if you are in radio contact with the group leader, ask him/her to dial it back some. This is a good place to point out that contrary to conventional wisdom the toughest position in line to maintain is the last car position. We will call this driver the SWEEP CAR. The Sweep is always playing "catch-up" after waiting to cross busy roads, or after a traffic light. It's kind of like "snap-the-whip", with the Sweep Car being the tail end of the whip. It's fun, but not for the timid. We do NOT PASS other cars in our line, we maintain our original order. We drive with headlights or parking lights on (makes it much easier for lead car to keep everyone in sight), it also emphasizes that we are a group and most other drivers will respect our line. If they don't, it's OK, they are not required to, we will regroup as soon as it is safe. We try to STAY CLOSE TOGETHER IN CONGESTED AREAS to avoid having BRAND X Cars (Miata wanna-be's) cut into our line, and to keep the line of cars as short as possible for better radio communication. We are highly visible as a caravan so we try not to attract the attention of LEO (Law Enforcement Officers). Drive as you normally would and you will be fine. Always arrive at the starting point with one full tank and one empty tank as we will not be stopping for an hour or so. Due to the nature of many events and the need to make restaurant reservation times or ferry times it may be crucial that the group depart precisely at the advertised starting time. If you arrive a bit late and nobody is there, call the leader and coordinate a rendezvous point where you can join up.

LEADERS: OK, you have a fun idea and want to host an event. Great!!!!!! There is a lot of help for the asking. You've got the idea which can be the hardest part. I like to do a dry run of the route unless it is one I am VERY familiar with. Pick a starting point with lots of room for people to socialize a bit and get organized. Not all our members have

GPS so it is helpful if you distribute a detailed description or map of the route with distances between waypoints marked. Try at all costs to avoid dirt roads unless you enjoy having people cuss you for the next year or so, though they eventually seem to get over it. Plan regular bathroom breaks and preferably on the right side of the road as that facilitates getting under way again once all bladders are drained. If there are more than 16 or so cars, consider dividing the group into two parts, assigning a second leader. Accept the fact that the group will get broken up in congested areas and choose a safe place to regroup after the congestion. Communication is essential to a good trip and it enhances everyone's experience listening to the back and forth banter that invariably happens. The club uses CB Radio to communicate during club rides. We have several handheld loaners that are made available at the start of each ride, but if you need a loaner, arrive early at the start point, they go fast. The group leader should also make his/ her mobile phone number available to everyone. Whatever means you choose to communicate make sure that EVERYONE in the group knows the channel, or phone number to use. After a roadside stop to regroup, the most efficient way to get underway again is to have the SWEEP car pull out first, blocking the lane and signaling to the rest of the group (who are watching him in their rearview mirror) that it is time to move out. Then all cars can pull out and the group remains intact. Call ahead to restaurants with a final headcount, they appreciate it. Remember that there is really nothing that can go so wrong that it can't be fixed and laughed over later. You NEVER get lost, though you occasionally do some unplanned exploring. It's all OK. Have fun.

PARTICIPANTS: Arrive early with a full tank and be ready to depart at the scheduled time. Keep the following car in sight and slow down to accomplish that if need be. It's not fair to expect them to speed up to keep you in sight. Stay in tight formation in congested areas to avoid BRAND X intruders. KNOW the CB channel, or phone number of the leader. If you are new to caravanning, choose a spot close to the front of the line. Don't pass other participants.

SWEEP: Sounds easy but the SWEEP CAR is a vital element of the ride. If I am leading I will always have an extra CB, FRS and my cell phone in the car so I can share with the SWEEP. Make sure that you and the lead car can communicate. Advise the lead when all cars have completed turns, made it across intersections, through traffic lights etc. The leader will have trouble keeping the group in sight but you won't. Keep the lead informed at all times. You are there to assist any vehicle that might pull over as well. The key is communication.

Have fun!