

Organized Driving Tours – Driving tours have grown to become the most popular event in PCA, as evidenced by the number of insurance requests received by the National office. Insurance requests for driving tours now total more than the requests for Driver Education, Autocross and Tech Ed combined! Driving tours are non-competitive events driven on public roads allowing club members an opportunity to drive their cars in a low risk, social environment. This is a car club, after all, and our members love to drive their Porsches. Tours can be just for the sake of driving through the pretty countryside on Porsche-friendly roads, or to arrive at a destination for lunch or a local attraction, such as a museum or car show in another town or Region. For more of an adventure, tours can include a stay at a hotel or resort. Whatever the format, the cornerstone of a successful tour depends on comprehensive advanced planning by a tour leader/host, detailed, but easily understood driving instructions and a well organized plan to get the cars and people assembled, briefed and on the road in an orderly fashion.

Starting locations are important because they need to be large enough to handle the number of cars expected without impeding local traffic. They should also be located where participants can get a cup of coffee and snacks if they want AND they need to have adequate restroom facilities! The tour leader/host needs to research these things in advance as part of trip planning and he/she needs to contact the venues to make sure they are agreeable to have a potentially large number of people and cars descend upon them. That is especially important at the destination if it is a restaurant or other eating establishment.

Selecting a good driving route is also important. There are good routes and not so good routes in terms of road quality, scenery, number of turns (twisties), etc. A tour that runs down the interstate for 50 miles is probably not going to be well received by participants who were looking for a little variety! Having said that, some regions have more curvy roads than others.

Rest stops with adequate restroom facilities and parking are also important. It is desired to plan one rest stop (for gas and restroom facilities) for every 90 minutes of driving time. Often the first stop needs to be within an hour of departure to accommodate those serious coffee drinkers!

Picking an interesting destination can be more of a challenge than the route. Pick your destination in terms of good scenery, good food, good wine (some tours end at a winery/brewery!), educational point of interest, etc. Some tours end at a member's back yard. Look at a AAA Tour guide or large scale recreational atlas for your area, as they list all the points of interest.

For most tours involving a stop, the distance selected should be short enough that it can be made comfortably in a day (out, back, plus time at the location). For example, a one hundred and fifty mile trip will take about three hours to drive, assuming good roads. If you have mountainous terrain to cover, allow 25% longer. This allows time to get to your destination, have several hours of sightseeing or whatever, and return home in time for dinner. Try not to plan every tour to take up an entire day. Short drives to an interesting destination can be fun since they increase the time to socialize at the destination.

Also, if your destination is to an area where there is an admission fee or a dining location, you may wish to make advance reservations. Discounts for groups are common. It might be advisable to collect the admission/dining fees from everyone in advance and pay for it all at once. An even better option is to handle the entire process through an online registration site such as ClubRegistration, MotorsportReg, etc, where participants can register and pay in advance. Plan your tour with enough break time that there will not be any time pressure. Routes should be chosen for their scenic value or drivability. Be aware of traffic congestion patterns on the roads at the times you will be driving them. It is always a good idea for the tour leader to dry run the proposed route once or twice in advance of the tour date,

preferably on the same day and times the tour will be run, to determine road conditions, construction areas, potential congested areas, etc.

It is helpful to list the leg mileages between turns so the entrants know when to look for the next sign or landmark. After the leg mileage, the cumulative mileage to that point should be listed since that is the mileage on everyone's odometer. Remember, this is supposed to be fun! Nothing is fun about driving miles in the wrong direction because you missed a sign or the instructions were wrong or too vague. Cell phone numbers for the lead car and sweep car should be in the instructions. It is also helpful when both the lead and sweep car have a means to communicate (as local laws permit).

Set a meeting time, a participant meeting/safety briefing and a departure time. Urge everyone to be there on time. Be sure to have everyone sign the insurance waivers. The tour leader will have these forms available at tour sign in. Don't forget there is a separate waiver form for minors (Minors as Observers Only--under age 18) that at least one of the parents/legal guardians must sign (not grandparents or in-laws!). The parent/legal guardian MUST also be a participant on the tour!

A short participant meeting (for everyone, not just the drivers) must be held before departure to emphasize safety, courteous driving and traffic law compliance. All cars must obey all traffic laws throughout the tour. Remember, PCA driving tours are not competitive events! Go over the route instructions; make sure everybody understands what they mean and how to read them. Instructions should be clear, accurate and easy to follow. The Minimum Driving Tour Standards, and the Additional Recommended Guidelines For PCA Driving Tours are located on the website at www.pca.org Forms and Documents/Region Management/Event Management – Minimum Standards and Guidelines. (Must be logged in to access.)

There is also a PCA requirement to file both a Post Event and an Observers Report after the tour is completed.

A well planned and executed tour is fun for everyone, but it takes some effort on the part of the tour leaders/hosts to make it a reality. Word spreads fast when participants have just enjoyed a fun-filled tour to an exciting destination or great restaurant and that leads to increased participation on subsequent tours. The opposite is also true when things don't go well, so plan up front for success and happy touring!