

## FIA Formula 1

# Driving Standards Guidelines

26 February 2026

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## These are **GUIDELINES** and **NOT REGULATIONS**

At all times the Stewards will adjudicate based upon the Regulations, but decisions will be informed and guided by these guidelines and the experience of their Driver Stewards.

If it has been established from points A and B below, that an overtaking driver has priority, it is the responsibility of the defending driver to avoid a collision or forcing off the overtaking driver.

However, many incidents require subjective judgement and therefore the following important caveats apply:

1. A car being overtaken, or performing an overtake, cannot simply “disappear”.
2. A lock up or small steering correction do not necessarily imply a driver has lost control
3. An apparent temporary loss of control, or a lock up, may be due to an attempt to avoid a collision, or simply the “laws of physics”.
4. The apex may vary depending on the racing line taken and/or the nature of the corner itself.

As a general policy, penalty points will be applied only for dangerous, reckless or apparently deliberate actions resulting in a collision, or other unacceptable driving behaviour or unsportsmanlike behaviour on the part of the driver

Attention is also drawn to the important note in Point F on page 3, for defending drivers who leave the track whilst defending a position.

### **A. Overtaking on the INSIDE of a corner**

To be entitled to be given room when overtaking on the INSIDE, the overtaking car must:

- i) Have its front axle **AT LEAST ALONGSIDE THE MIRROR** of the other car **PRIOR TO AND AT THE APEX**
- ii) Be driven in a fully controlled manner particularly from entry to apex and not have “dived in”.
- iii) In the Stewards’ estimation, have taken a reasonable racing line and been able to complete the move whilst remaining within track limits.

### **B. Overtaking on the OUTSIDE of a corner**

**Overtaking on the outside will always be viewed as a more difficult manoeuvre to accomplish.**

To be entitled to be given room, including at the exit, when overtaking on the OUTSIDE, the overtaking car must:

- i) Have its front axle **AHEAD OF THE FRONT AXLE** of the other car **AT THE APEX**.
- ii) Be driven in a controlled manner from entry, to apex, and to exit.
- iii) Be able to make the corner within track limits.

**Note(s):**

On long radius curves, provided point (ii) above is complied with, the Stewards will treat each case on its merits particularly where there is no defined apex or there are multiple apexes.

**C. Chicanes and S-Bends**

The above guides for INSIDE and OUTSIDE may apply for each element of the combination. Generally, priority will be given to the first corner element. However other factors such as the sequence of corners will be considered holistically by the Stewards when assessing the right to the corner.

**IMPORTANT NOTES FOR A, B & C ABOVE:**

Racing is a dynamic process. Although these guidelines indicate specific relative positions of the cars at various points, the Stewards will always look at how the situation played out in total when reviewing an incident. For example:

- i) How did the cars get to the incident? (E.g. late braking, diving in, moving under braking.)
- ii) Was the manoeuvre late or “optimistic”?
- iii) What could the drivers reasonably see, know, or anticipate?
- iv) Do we believe the manoeuvre could be completed on the track?
- v) Was there understeer / oversteer / locking?
- vi) Was there an attempt to avoid a collision?
- vii) Did either car release the brakes in order to attempt to gain priority.
- viii) Did someone position / handle their car in a way that contributed to the incident?
- ix) Did the type of corner contribute to the incident? (e.g. camber, kerbs, curve, apexes)
- x) What were the relative tyres / tyre age / grip?

**D. Track Limits**

It is considered that respecting track limits is important for both racing fairness and safety, thus **Article B1.8.6 will be strictly enforced:**

*“Drivers must make every reasonable effort to use the track at all times and may not leave the track without a justifiable reason.*

*Drivers will be judged to have left the track if no part of the car remains in contact with it and, for the avoidance of doubt, the white lines defining the track edges are considered to be part of the track, but the kerbs are not....”*

**Note(s):**

In the case of an infringement in Sprint Qualifying or Qualifying, the lap time will be deleted, and the time of the subsequent lap if it is deemed that there could be a benefit.

For the Sprint Session and Race, acknowledging that racing is a dynamic process, invalid lap times will be deleted and a “three strikes” system shall normally be applied prior to issuance of a Black & White Flag or penalty under Article B1.9.5. For the avoidance of doubt any invalid lap will be deleted and counted as a “strike” with the following EXCEPTIONS:

- i) If a driver exceeds track limits following an obvious loss of control.
- ii) If a driver exceeds track limits in order to avoid a collision e.g. Typical Lap 1, Turn 1 incident.
- iii) If a driver has been considered to be “forced off” by another car (in a decision of the stewards)
- iv) If a driver exceeds track limits and is penalised for gaining a lasting advantage or unsafe re-join.
- v) If a driver exceeds track limits during an incident which is penalised for any other reason. E.g. if a driver exceeds track limits during an incident for which they are penalised for causing a collision.
- vi) In the context of an overtaking manoeuvre, be that failed or completed, if a driver leaves the track but clearly gains no advantage, the Stewards retain the discretion to determine that no strike will be applied.

It is noted that the imposition of a “strike” remains at the sole discretion of the Stewards and that on some occasions, where it is considered a car has left the track without a justifiable reason for specific, intentional or unsportsmanlike reasons, a penalty rather than a strike may be imposed.

## E. Impeding

**Not only will Article B4.1.1 be enforced, but drivers are reminded of Article B1.8.5:**

*“At no time may an F1 Car be driven unnecessarily slowly, erratically or in a manner which could be deemed potentially dangerous to other drivers or any other person.”*

## F. Giving back a lasting advantage

**The Procedure in Article B1.8.6 will be strictly applied:**

*“Should a car leave the track the driver may re-join, however, this may only be done when it is safe to do so and without gaining any lasting advantage. At the absolute discretion of the Race Director a driver may be given the opportunity to give back the whole of any advantage he gained by leaving the track.”*

### Note(s):

If, while defending a position, a car leaves the track (or cuts a chicane) and re-joins in the same position, it will generally be considered by the stewards as having gained a lasting advantage and therefore, generally, the position should be conceded. It will be the sole discretion of the Stewards to determine if the driver of a car is “defending a position.” See also point D above.

## G. Moving on the Straight

**Appendix L, Chapter IV, Article 2b states:**

*“More than one change of direction to defend a position is not permitted. Any driver moving back towards the racing line, having earlier defended his position off-line, should leave at least one car width between his own car and the edge of the track on the approach to the corner. “*

*“However, manoeuvres liable to hinder other drivers, such as deliberate crowding of a car beyond the edge of the track or any other abnormal change of direction, are strictly prohibited. Any driver who appears guilty of any of the above offences will be reported to the Stewards.”*

**Note(s):**

In this context, moves intended to break the slipstream of a following car when the following car is a safe distance behind, considering relative speeds and position on the track, may be acceptable.

**H. Moving under Braking**

When defending, there must be no change in direction by the defending car, after the deceleration phase has commenced, except to follow the racing line.

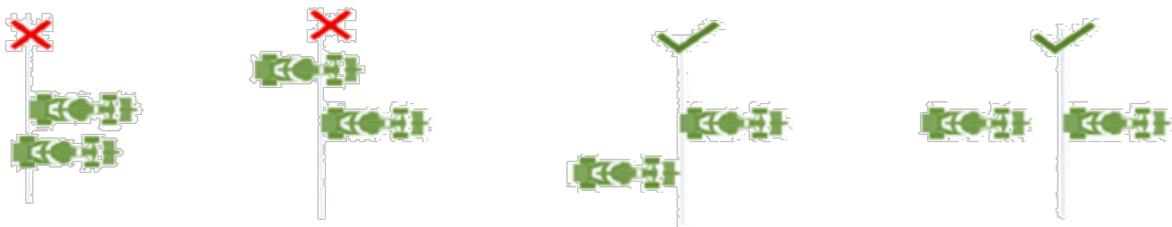
**I. Re-joining the Track**

Maintaining racing speeds in the run-off area is not acceptable. Cars on track must not be forced to change speed or line to avoid a re-joining car.

**J. Safety Car**

To avoid the likelihood of accidents before the Safety Car returns to the pits, **Article B5.13.6 will be enforced as shown below:**

*“In order to avoid the likelihood of accidents before the safety car returns to the pits, from the point at which the orange lights on the safety car are extinguished drivers must proceed at a pace which involves no erratic acceleration or braking nor any other manoeuvre which is likely to endanger other drivers or impede the restart”.*



**Note(s):**

The actions of the lead driver in particular can have a significant impact on the safety of the restart procedure. Although the leading driver has both the right to dictate pace as well as to choose the point at which to accelerate, this does not relieve them of their responsibility to avoid creating a potentially dangerous situation as defined in the Code Appendix L Ch IV 2(e).

**K. Blue Flags**

**Appendix L, Chapter IV, Article 2a states:**

*“A car alone on the track may use the full width of the said track, however, as soon as it is caught by a car which is about to lap it the driver must allow the faster driver past at the first possible opportunity.*

*If the driver who has been caught does not seem to make full use of the rear-view mirrors, flag marshals will display the waved blue flag to indicate that the faster driver wants to overtake. Any driver who appears to ignore the blue flags will be reported to the Stewards “*

**Note(s):**

Upon receiving a blue flag, the driver must allow the car behind to overtake at the earliest possible opportunity. Some tolerance will be allowed, in order to allow the overtake to occur on the next straight section of track.

Failure to allow the overtake on the next straight section of track will likely be considered a breach. The following situations will almost certainly be considered a breach:

- i) If the overtake occurs after the car has passed 8 consecutive light panels
- ii) If an overtake is delayed by the car being lapped in order to receive OVERTAKE from the car lapping.

## L. Yellow & Double Yellow Flags

It is considered that respect of Yellow and Double Yellow flags is critical for safety and important for racing fairness, thus **Article B1.8.4a & b will be strictly enforced:**

- a. Single Waved Yellow Flag: Any driver passing through a waved yellow flag marshalling sector must reduce their speed and be prepared to change direction. In order for the stewards to be satisfied that any such driver has complied with these requirements they are expected to have braked earlier and/or discernibly reduced speed in the relevant marshalling sector.*
- b. Double Waved Yellow Flag: Any driver passing through a double waved yellow flag marshalling sector must reduce speed significantly and be prepared to change direction or stop. In order for the stewards to be satisfied that any such driver has complied with these requirements it must be clear that the driver has not attempted to set a meaningful lap time on the relevant lap..."*

### Note(s):

- i) The onus rests with the driver to demonstrate a sufficient reduction of speed to satisfy the rules.
- ii) The extent of speed reduction considered acceptable may vary depending on the conditions and visibility of and through the incident.
- iii) The requirement that a driver be prepared to stop in the case of Double Waved Yellow Flags means that the speed reduction must be significantly and noticeably greater than in the case of a Single Waved Yellow Flag.
- iv) In evaluating compliance with the rules, the Stewards will pay close attention to the extent of driver input (throttle pedal, brake pedal, steering angle) prior to and through the incident location.
- v) It will be up to the driver to demonstrate to the Stewards, via the "driver input" referred to above or by the method below, that they have complied with the regulations.
- vi) One method of demonstrating compliance (but not the only method) would be, in the case of a Single Waved Yellow Flag, an increase in the time taken to traverse the flag sector, of at least 5% compared to the driver's previous lap(s) under similar conditions.
- vii) Similarly, one method of demonstrating a significant reduction of speed and preparedness to stop, (again, not the only method) would be, in the case of Double Waved Yellow Flags, an increase in the time taken to traverse the flag sector, of at least 15% compared to the driver's previous lap(s) under similar conditions.
- viii) In considering what is a lap under 'similar conditions' the Stewards will take into account tyre compound, tyre condition, fuel load, energy deployment and weather conditions.
- ix) Any car losing control under a yellow flag or double yellow flag will usually be investigated.

## **APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT OF THESE GUIDELINES**

In 2022, responding to requests from the Formula 1 drivers for clarity on how the F1 Stewards would interpret the rules in certain circumstances, it was agreed that a set of Driving Standards would be established which would act as GUIDELINES for investigation of incidents and application of any penalties.

The FIA Drivers Commission commenced work to integrate the existing Formula 1 Driving Standards Guidelines into a comprehensive document that could apply to all circuit racing categories.

Of key importance to the FIA Drivers Commission is the desire to ensure that the younger drivers in lower categories are subjected to the same standards as will apply when they eventually graduate to the highest levels of the sport.

The core objectives of the FIA Drivers Commission, in the publication across all championships, of driving standards guidelines is to facilitate and promote:

- **Safe racing**
- **Hard and competitive racing**
- **Fair racing**
- **Sporting justice**
- **Consistency across all categories**
- **Standardization of driving standards and race direction operation across all categories.**

### **Rationale**

- i) Overtaking should be incentivized and defending a position unfairly or dangerously is not acceptable.
- ii) It is very important that junior drivers race with the same guidelines as F1. However, less tolerance should be applied because the risk of an accident is higher due to their lesser experience. Being stricter in applying the rules in lower formulas is essential for junior driver development.
- iii) It is imperative to reiterate that the guidelines will be applied during the entirety of the event. The Race Director and Stewards will be available to clarify any questions that drivers and teams may have with regards to the guidelines.
- iv) The Stewards and Driver Advisor will, if possible, always attend the drivers briefing.
- v) Application of the guidelines should be enforced throughout the event, with particular attention to respect of yellow flags and track limits.
- vi) Regarding track limits, the Stewards will always satisfy themselves that the infractions are clear. Drivers will be given the benefit of the doubt when the infraction is not clear.
- vii) A Driver Steward or Driver Advisor should be appointed for each category or series [This is the case for Formula 1].