

FI SAFETY CAR & VIRTUAL SAFETY CAR

FI SPORTING REGULATIONS (30th April 2017) - changes from previous year are pink

39) SAFETY CAR

- 39.1 The FIA safety car will be driven by an FIA appointed driver and will carry an FIA observer capable of recognising all the competing cars who is in permanent radio contact with race control
- 39.2 Fifty minutes before the start of the formation lap the safety car will leave the pit lane and take up position at the front of the grid and remain there until the five minute signal is given. At this point (except under 39.16 below) it will cover a whole lap of the circuit and take up position.
- 39.3 The safety car may be brought into operation to neutralise a race upon the order of the clerk of the course.
- It will be used only if competitors or officials are in immediate physical danger on or near the track but the circumstances are not such as to necessitate suspending the race.
- 39.4 When the order is given to deploy the safety car the message "SAFETY CAR DEPLOYED" will be sent to all teams via the official messaging system, all FIA light panels will display "SC" and all marshal's posts will display waved yellow flags and "SC" boards for the duration of the intervention.
- 39.5 No car may be driven unnecessarily slowly, erratically or in a manner which could be deemed potentially dangerous to other drivers or any other person at any time whilst the safety car is deployed. This will apply whether any such car is being driven on the track, the pit entry or the pit lane.
- 39.6 The safety car will join the track with its orange lights illuminated and will do so regardless of where the race leader is.
- 39.7 All competing cars must reduce speed and form up in line behind the safety car no more than ten car lengths apart. In order to ensure that drivers reduce speed sufficiently, from the time at which all teams have been sent the "SAFETY CAR DEPLOYED" message via the official messaging system until the time that each car crosses the first safety car line for the second time, drivers must stay above the minimum time set by the FIA ECU at least once in each marshalling sector (a marshalling sector is defined as the section of track between each of the FIA light panels). In addition, any driver entering the pit lane at the end of his first or second lap after deployment of the safety car, must be above the minimum time set by the FIA ECU at the first safety car line as he enters the pit lane.
- The stewards may impose either of the penalties under Article 38.3a), b), c) or d) on any driver who fails to stay above the minimum time as required by the above.
- 39.8 With the exception of the cases listed under a) to h) below, no driver may overtake another car on the track, including the safety car, until he passes the first safety car line for the first time when the safety car is returning to the pits. However, if the safety car is still deployed at the beginning of the last lap, or is deployed during the last lap, Article 39.15 will apply.

The exceptions are :

- a) If a driver is signalled to do so from the safety car.
- b) Under 39.12 or 39.16 below.
- c) When entering the pits a driver may pass another car remaining on the track, including the safety car, after he has reached the first safety car line.
- d) When leaving the pits a driver may overtake, or be overtaken by, another car on the track before he reaches the second safety car line.
- e) When the safety car is returning to the pits it may be overtaken by cars on the track once it has reached the first safety car line.
- f) Whilst in the pit entry, pit lane or pit exit a driver may overtake another car which is also in one of these three areas.

- g) Any car stopping in its designated garage area whilst the safety car is using the pit lane (see 39.11 below) may be overtaken.
- h) If any car slows with an obvious problem.
- 39.9** When ordered to do so by the clerk of the course the observer in the car will use a green light to signal to any cars between it and the race leader that they should pass. These cars will continue at reduced speed and without overtaking until they reach the line of cars behind the safety car.
- 39.10** Except under 39.12 below, the safety car shall be used at least until the leader is behind it and all remaining cars are lined up behind him.
- Once behind the safety car, the race leader must keep within ten car lengths of it (except under 39.13 below).
- 39.11** Under certain circumstances the clerk of the course may ask the cars and the safety car to use the pit lane. In these cases, a signal to use the pit lane will be displayed before the start of the pit entry and all teams will be informed via the official messaging system, all cars must then enter the pit lane, drive through it and re-join the track. Any car entering the pit lane under these circumstances may however stop at its designated garage area. A penalty under Article 38.3(c) will be imposed on any driver who fails to enter the pit lane when required to do so.
- Other than when the cars and the safety car are required to use the pit lane, no car may enter the pits whilst the safety car is deployed unless it is for the purpose of changing tyres.
- 39.12** If the clerk of the course considers it safe to do so, and the message "LAPPED CARS MAY NOW OVERTAKE" has been sent to all teams via the official messaging system, any cars that have been lapped by the leader will be required to pass the cars on the lead lap and the safety car.
- This will only apply to cars that were lapped at the time they crossed the Line at the end of the lap during which they crossed the first Safety Car line for the second time after the safety car was deployed.
- Having overtaken the cars on the lead lap and the safety car these cars should then proceed around the track at an appropriate speed, without overtaking, and make every effort to take up position at the back of the line of cars behind the safety car. Whilst they are overtaking, and in order to ensure this may be carried out safely, the cars on the lead lap must always stay on the racing line unless deviating from it is unavoidable. Unless the clerk of the course considers the presence of the safety car is still necessary, once the last lapped car has passed the leader the safety car will return to the pits at the end of the following lap.
- If the clerk of the course considers track conditions are unsuitable for overtaking the message "OVERTAKING WILL NOT BE PERMITTED" will be sent to all teams via the official messaging system.
- 39.13** When the clerk of the course decides it is safe to call in the safety car the message "SAFETY CAR IN THIS LAP" will be sent to all teams via the official messaging system and the car's orange lights will be extinguished. This will be the signal to the teams and drivers that it will be entering the pit lane at the end of that lap.
- At this point the first car in line behind the safety car may dictate the pace and, if necessary, fall more than ten car lengths behind it.
- In order to avoid the likelihood of accidents before the safety car returns to the pits, from the point at which the lights on the car are turned out 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.
- As the safety car is approaching the pit entry the yellow flags and SC boards will be withdrawn and, other than on the last lap of the race, replaced by waved green flags with green lights at the Line. These will be displayed until the last car crosses the Line.

- 39.14 Each lap completed while the safety car is deployed will be counted as a race lap, except the first lap when the procedure set out in 39.16 is followed (see also Article 5.3).
- 39.15 If the safety car is still deployed at the beginning of the last lap, or is deployed during the last lap, it will enter the pit lane at the end of the lap and the cars will take the chequered flag as normal without overtaking.
- 39.16 If track conditions are considered unsuitable to start the race at the scheduled time the start of the formation lap may take place behind the safety car. If this is the case, at the ten minute signal its orange lights will be illuminated, this being the signal to the drivers that the formation lap will be started behind the safety car. At the same time this will be confirmed to all teams via the official messaging system.

When the green lights are illuminated the safety car will leave the grid and all drivers must follow in grid order, no more than ten car lengths apart, and must respect the pit lane speed limit until they pass pole position. The safety car will continue until conditions are considered suitable for racing.

Any cars that were starting the race from the pit lane may join the formation lap once the whole field has passed the end of the pit lane for the first time. Any such cars may complete all formation laps but must enter the pit lane after the safety car returns to the pits and start the race from the end of the pit lane in the order they get there. A penalty under Article 38.3(d) will be imposed on any driver who enters the pit lane under these circumstances and whose tyre(s) are changed for a different specification before leaving the pit lane.

Any other car entering the pit lane during the formation laps may re-join the track but must enter the pit lane after the safety car returns to the pits and start the race from the end of the pit lane in the order they get there. A penalty under Article 38.3(d) will also be imposed on any driver who enters the pit lane under these circumstances and whose tyre(s) are changed for a different specification before leaving the pit lane.

Overtaking during the lap(s) behind the safety car is only permitted under the following circumstances :

- a) If a car is delayed when leaving the grid and cars behind cannot avoid passing it without unduly delaying the remainder of the field, or
- b) If there is more than one car starting from the pit lane and one of them is unduly delayed.

In either case drivers may only overtake to re-establish the original starting order or the order the cars at the pit exit were in when the formation lap was started.

Any driver delayed in either way, and who is unable to re-establish the original starting order before he reaches the first safety car line on the lap the safety car returns to the pits, must enter the pit lane and may only join the race once the whole field has passed the end of the pit lane after the start of the race.

A penalty under Article 38.3(d) will be imposed on any driver who fails to enter the pit lane if he has not re-established the original starting order before he reaches the first safety car line.

Once the safety car has entered the pit lane all cars, with the exception of those required to start from the pit lane, must return to the grid, take up their grid positions and follow the procedures set out in Article 36.9 to 36.13.

If, after several formation laps behind the safety car, track conditions are considered unsuitable to start the race, the message "START PROCEDURE SUSPENDED" will be sent to all teams via the official messaging system and all cars must enter the pit lane behind the safety car. The procedures described in Articles 41 and 42 must then be followed and there will be no standing start.

40) VIRTUAL SAFETY CAR (VSC)

40.1 The VSC procedure may be initiated to neutralise a practice session or a race upon the order of the clerk of the course.

It will normally be used when double waved yellow flags are needed on any section of track and competitors or officials may be in danger, but the circumstances are not such as to warrant use of the safety car itself.

40.2 When the order is given to initiate the VSC procedure a message "VSC DEPLOYED" will be sent to all teams via the official messaging system and all FIA light panels will display "VSC".

40.3 No car may be driven unnecessarily slowly, erratically or in a manner which could be deemed potentially dangerous to other drivers or any other person at any time whilst the VSC procedure is in use. This will apply whether any such car is being driven on the track, the pit entry or the pit lane.

40.4 When initiated during a race, no car may enter the pits whilst the VSC procedure is in use unless it is for the purpose of changing tyres.

40.5 All competing cars must reduce speed and stay above the minimum time set by the FIA ECU at least once in each marshalling sector (a marshalling sector is defined as the section of track between each of the FIA light panels). In addition, any driver entering the pit lane whilst the VSC procedure is in use must be above the minimum time set by the FIA ECU at the first safety car line as he enters the pit lane.

All cars must also be above this minimum time when the FIA light panels change to green (see 40.7 below).

When initiated during a race, the stewards may impose either of the penalties under Article 38.3a), b), c) or d) on any driver who fails to stay above the minimum time as required by the above.

40.6 With the exception of the cases listed under a) to d) below, no driver may overtake another car on the track whilst the VSC procedure is in use.

The exceptions are :

- a) When entering the pits a driver may pass another car remaining on the track after he has reached the first safety car line.
- b) When leaving the pits a driver may overtake, or be overtaken by, another car on the track before he reaches the second safety car line.
- c) Whilst in the pit entry, pit lane or pit exit a driver may overtake another car which is also in one of these three areas.
- d) If any car slows with an obvious problem.

40.7 When the clerk of the course decides it is safe to end the VSC procedure the message "VSC ENDING" will be sent to all teams via the official messaging system and, at any time between 10 and 15 seconds later, "VSC" on the FIA light panels will change to green and drivers may continue the session or continue racing immediately. After 30 seconds the green lights will be extinguished.

40.8 Each lap completed whilst the VSC procedure is in use during a race will be counted as a race lap.