

Summary of MSA Regional Committee Meeting 11 February 2015

SACC were represented by Roger Reed & Pete Weall

There were apologies from both Rob Jones and Ian Davies of the MSA both of whom were required to attend an urgent meeting with the Forestry Commission following up on the Scottish Government review into motorsport safety. The importance of this review, and the high priority being given by the MSA to creating an action plan, was stressed to all the Regional delegates. It was confirmed that the MSA Safety Review Group has been established to take this forward.

The Review itself was discussed at some length. The main initial concerns within the MSA were safety plans, appointment of safety delegate, marshals training and the licensing of marshals and media accreditation. There was a very strong view expressed that the MSA were not communicating to clubs and/or anyone else about what they were doing. This point was taken on board.

The review has added impetus to some things that were already under way. In particular, on the subject of active rally tracking, the various proposals presented to the MSA have been narrowed down to four. These four will be the subject of field trial on two events (Mid Wales Stages and the Malcolm Wilson) during February & March. The importance of marshals has been further reinforced by adding a marshal representative at MSA Council level.

All of this has moved on considerably since the Regional meeting and is thus not covered in any detail in this Committee update to SACC. A separate report of the Special Meeting of SACXC held on 24th February will be provided.

The attention of all clubs is drawn to the MSA annual report which can be downloaded from the MSA website <https://www.msauk.org/assets/annualreport2014.pdf>. Attention is also drawn to the club development fund. Again, details and the application form on the MSA website <https://www.msauk.org/assets/clubdevfundapplicationform.pdf>.

The importance of the ongoing work by the MSA on managing the very valuable insurance cover was stressed. The premiums, which are part of the cost of every permit, are set in advance but through prudent management and excellent claims experience, the MSA is delighted to have been able to process rebates to clubs of around 16%.

The topic of championship date changes has been raised previously and discussed at length in various forums. The firm and final decision of Council is that no pre published championship date can be changed without 100% approval of registered competitors. The suggestion is that all championships consider including 'reserve' events/dates from the outset.

Progress on the closed road legislation is still positive. This is part of a much wider piece of Parliamentary legislation going through the many stages but it is still hoped that these will be completed before the General Election. But with the follow on work still needed, it is unlikely that any events will run until 2016.

Rallies Committee had received a note from John Symes with useful buying advice on seats (text included below). Clubs are encouraged to share this with members. Rallies committee also noted that the additional MSA radio frequency will mean reprogramming radio sets (not all of which may be suitable for this). Revised radios will be re-certified for 3 years as part of the upgrade process.

There was a discussion on the use of 'drones' at MSA events. There has been a noticeable rise in the use of these used to carry still and video cameras. Marshals, organisers and competitors have expressed concern over the use of them both at, and more especially over, competition venues. There are very clear CAA Regulations governing the use of "aircraft" of this type, but there is concern that a majority of people with these drones are probably unaware of these, as a lot of these things have been purchased as "toys" rather than working craft. The MSA is working with a properly licensed drone operator towards a set of guidelines and regulations concerning the use of drones at motorsport events.

In the meantime, organising clubs need to take a responsible attitude and should be aware that, unless CAA permission has been granted, the pilot cannot:

- Fly over or within 150m (492 ft) of a congested area
- Fly over or within 150m (492 ft) of an organised open-air assembly of more than 1,000 persons
- Fly within 50m (164 ft) of any vessel, vehicle or structure which is not under the control of the person in charge of the aircraft
- Fly within 50m (164 ft) of any person

Inter Association events were discussed. A separate note will be prepared on this.

Go Motorsport activity in 2014 included 625 RDO led activities which was a slight increase on the year before. This is stable and positive that it is still moving forward. For 2015, the RDOs are looking to take the grass roots message to local shows where motor sport is not the main attraction. All SACC clubs should think about what more they could do and engage with Alison accordingly.

On the subject of training & development, Allan Dean-Lewis said that to date in 2015 the Club Development Fund and Rescue Development Fund has seen 8 applications in January with grants totalling £27,000 awarded. This fund is available for all clubs and venues. He also mentioned the report commissioned by Dumfries and Galloway local authority to evaluate the benefits of providing financial support totalling about £60,000 to the three forest stage rallies held there. The report estimates benefits of £591,000 to the area.

Business raised by Associations included a question about checking that vehicles are taxed (where this is a requirement) in the absence of paper tax disks. The MSA response is to make it part of the declaration at signing on in the same way as insurance. Since the paper MOT will soon be a thing of the past too this is the way that it is going.

Clubs are again encouraged to make full use of the online Fixtures and Permits system. The meeting was advised that by mid February 2014, 1,200 events had applied for a permit, whilst at the beginning of February 2015, there were 2100 events on the system. The permits system currently receives 20 online permit applications per day which equates to 60% of permit applications being made on-line.

In the context of marshal registration, and in particular licence grading, there was a discussion on the topic of 'Grandfather rights'. The MSA response is that if a marshals wants to apply first time and they requested something other than entry level, the applicant needs to send in with CV which will be reviewed by the Marshals Training Group and note why are they apply for a different grade.

Pete Weall

Buying guidance in respect of FIA homologated safety equipment

Many items of FIA homologated Safety Equipment have a defined period of homologation. With seats it used to be that seats carried a manufacture date and the homologation was valid for a period of 5 years from that date. This has been changed so that seats are now marked "Not valid after XXXX". The five years is the period after the year of manufacture. Harnesses have always been labelled "not valid after XXXX". There is no homologation period for extinguishers but to retain the validity of the homologation extinguishers must be serviced by the manufacturer or agent every two years, otherwise the homologation lapses. Overalls have no homologation period and only cease to be acceptable if the homologation is no longer accepted. Helmets are almost exclusively SNELL and the FIA accepts the current SNELL standard and that which preceded it. SNELL generally update every 5 years. Currently SNELL SA2010 and SNELL 2005 are accepted (Note: SNELL SA2005 will cease to be valid after 31/12/2018). Clearly when purchasing an item that has a 'shelf life' it is prudent to check how long a life it has. If the item has been in stock for a significant period so as to shorten that life period, the price should reflect this.

Only purchase items of safety equipment from reputable sources, there are significant quantities of equipment on the market purported to be FIA homologated which are counterfeit. Familiarise yourself with FIA homologation label requirements.

Ensure you purchase the correct size. With seats most manufacturers offer the same seat in two widths 'standard' and 'wide'. You need to be a snug fit in the seat, not rattling around it. Helmets should be a snug fit not loose and try the roll off tests as detailed in MSA Regulation K10.3.2. Overalls should be slightly loose not skin tight but equally not over generous in size.

Whatever the equipment, read and understand the manufacturers installation, care and maintenance instructions. With seats make sure that the mounting bolts are correctly torqued up and that the mounts attach to the structure of the car with suitable counter plates as detailed in MSA and FIA Regulations. Check the installation of the harness complies with MSA/FIA Regulations and that the mounting points meet Regulatory requirements.

The seat and harness work as a partnership, each is dependent on the other being correctly specified and installed.

There are two FIA seat homologations 8855/1999 which is the most common and has a FIVE year homologation. There is a wide variety of seats available. The performance criteria that seat must meet is identical, irrespective of the price of the seat. As a general rule the more expensive the seat the lighter in weight it is. Trim materials etc. can also affect price.

8862/2009 is mandatory in such as World Rally Championship, the performance parameters are substantially higher than for 8855/1999 and these seats have a ten year homologation period. The price of such seats is substantially greater.

In summary:

- Ensure the equipment is of the correct size and fit for you.
- Ensure the equipment you are purchasing meets regulation requirements for your activity.
- Buy from a reputable source.
- Avoid buying second-hand safety equipment for it may be damaged but it might not be readily visible that this is the case.
- Buy the best you can afford.
- Be familiar with labelling requirements so you can spot fraud.
- Install and use equipment in accordance with the manufacturers' instruction.
- Once purchase and in use, check the condition of equipment regularly.
- Do not rush out and buy equipment such as seats and harnesses as phase one of your car build and then spend 5 years preparing the car. The homologation could have run out by the time you compete.