

# WITNESS STATEMENT PREPARATION F&C GUIDELINES

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When the stewards request that an incident be “written up,” your report should be on an SCCA Witness Statement form. Copies of the forms should be available from your Chief. Additional copies are available from the Chairman of the Stewards of the Meet at every event.

Try to keep notes so that you can be as complete as possible when writing your Statement. Use your flag team to help confirm details, such as car numbers, colors etc. That includes those at your station as well as those at other stations. Race Control can also confirm the time of the incident call. If your turn is short handed, ask to be relieved from the rotation in order to have the Statement written up as early as possible and have your communicator advise Race Control when it is ready.

Witness Statements are one of the sources of factual information used by the stewards to determine what actually happened in an incident. The Statements thus become a basis for determining if there has been a violation of the General Competition Rules (including the event Supplemental Regulations) and what penalty is appropriate, under the circumstances. The Statements are normally reviewed by either the Chief Steward or the Stewards of The Meet, or both. The Statements can be the basis for significant penalties (fines, loss of points, probation, time/lap/position penalty, disqualification, license suspension) therefore, it is very important that they be clear, unbiased and factual. The following Guidelines are intended to help you prepare your Witness Statement.

## 1. Identifying Information

- a. Always complete all blanks on the top four lines of identifying information.
- b. “**Status at event**” will be F&C with your flag station or turn number.
- c. **Car# Class & color** refers to the cars described in your report.
- d. “**Type of License**” is Flagging and Communication (or F&C)
- e. Your “**Grade**” is your license level, Regional, Divisional or National.
- f. Please do include your **member number** (which is the same as your license number)
- g. “**Location of Event**” means the name of the track
- h. **Date and Time of Day** should be the time of the incident you are describing.

**Be sure to sign and date the statement on the bottom.**

(Leave blank the small square in the upper-right, titled Reference #. The stewards use that space.)

2. The balance of your Statement should record your version of the facts, not opinions. Described the incident in your own words and, if possible, a map or diagram. You should state **only factual information**, which is what you saw or heard. Statements could be given less consideration or discounted completely if they are not factual, that is if they are just one person’s opinions. Therefore, it is important that the Statement not suggest that it is an opinion, rather than a statement of facts.

Avoid deductions, conclusions or opinions, as they are not facts. If you use words such as “I think” or “it appeared” or “probably”, you are conveying to the Statement reader that you did not observe but are deducing, opining or concluding what you think may have happened. For example, you could say “car A changed his line and suddenly moved left into the right side of car B”, but not “A intentionally hit B,” because you cannot know the intent behind any action.

3. There should be a separate Statement from each individual witness. There should not be one Statement signed by more than one person, unless it is an approval signature by a Captain or Chief. Why? First, the identifying information in the top seven lines is not provided for each witness. Second, it is unlikely that each witness on the corner saw every part of an incident that was discussed in one person’s Statement. (You would not expect the yellow flagger and the blue flagger to be able to see everything at most corner stations.) Unfortunately this can make for more paperwork, but the hearings can result in some serious penalties, so complete reporting is very important.
4. You are encouraged to draw a diagram on the back of the form. Please include:
  - a. The area of the track where all of the incident occurred, and
  - b. The flag station with the Turn number, and
  - c. Race direction, and
  - d. The individual cars at important stages of the incident, including the car numbers.
5. Important elements to include in your narrative description and/or diagram include:
  - a. **PASS UNDER YELLOW REPORT:** (GCR 9.4.2.B)
    - i. Was it a local or full course yellow? If it was upgraded from local to full course, describe when that occurred in relation to the incident.
    - ii. What opportunity did the drivers have to see the yellow flag? (How long had the flag been up in laps or time? Did any other driver visibly react to the flag before the incident – especially drivers ahead of the ones who are being reported?)
    - iii. Describe the no passing zone. Draw a dotted line on the diagram from the flag station across the track where you determined the no passing zone to be. Also, indicate the end of the no passing zone, where the end of the incident was.
    - iv. What was the relative position of the cars as they approached the beginning of the no passing zone? What was the overlap of the cars, if any as they reached that line?
    - v. At what location on the track were the cars when they were alongside each other?
    - vi. Where were the cars on the track when one was completely past the other (no overlap)?
    - vii. What other cars were in the vicinity whose drivers might also have seen the incident?
    - viii. Were any hand or other signals observed from any of the drivers? Describe.
    - ix. Did it appear that the overtaking driver could have avoided making the pass? (This is one type of conclusion that can be helpful. The stewards will consider whether the safest thing to do was to go ahead and complete the pass if it would have been more dangerous to try to avoid it.)

- x. Was the pass voluntarily given back? The stewards might also take that into consideration.
- xi. If the condition of the track surface or the weather played any role in what happened, describe the condition and how it contributed.

**SAMPLE Pass Under Yellow Report:** During Group 2 qualifying, car 21 (white) spun off unassisted to driver's right and was unable to restart. It was positioned approximately 150 feet downstream from our station and four feet from the edge of the course. The standing yellow flag had been displayed for two minutes and traffic was slowing in response to it. Car 35 (red EP Mazda) then approached our left-hand turn with #88 (blue GT1 Camaro) closing on #35 at a high rate of speed. At about 30 feet before our station, #88 had pulled alongside #35 on its left. As those cars passed our station, the nose of car #35 was still 3 feet ahead of the nose of #88. Half way between our station and where #21 was stopped, #88 completed the pass and pulled in front of #35. No hand signals were observed from either driver before or after the pass. As the cars went past #21, car #88 slowed and #35 passed #88. Then #88 re-passed #35. Cars 10, 111 and 12 were immediately behind the incident and may have also witnessed it.

**b. UNSAFE PASS WITH CONTACT (GCR 9.1.1, 9.1.2)**

- i. What was the relative position of the cars as they approached the turn?
- ii. Did either car take a line different from what it had been taking?
- iii. Which car moved into the other car?
- iv. What parts of the cars touched first?
- v. Was there an opportunity for either or both drivers to avoid the contact or to maintain "racing room"?
- vi. It is not necessary to assign fault. Instead, describe which car took a different line, which car moved into the other, etc. The factual description will help the stewards make the ultimate determination of fault.
- vii. What other cars were in the vicinity whose drivers might also have seen the incident?
- viii. If the condition of the track surface or the weather played any role in what happened, describe the condition and how it contributed.
- ix. Did the contact result in damage, deviation in either car's course of travel or a change in position?
- x. Did any car lock up its wheels during braking?
- xi. Did any car appear to have a mechanical problem before contact? After?
- xii. What happened to the cars after contact?

**SAMPLE:** During Group 3 race, car #2 (yellow Pro-7) was overtaking car #1 (green Spec RX-7) as they approached our turn station. Car 2 pulled to the left of 1 and attempted to out-brake car 1. As they reached the apex, the nose of car 2 was even with the middle of car 1. Car 1 took his normal line and turned down to the apex, contacting car 2. The left side of car 1 adjacent to the driver contacted the right front of car 2. As a result, both cars spun off drivers' right. Car 1 was the first to continue. Both cars showed damage and/or paint transfers in the area of contact. Cars 10, 111 and 12 were immediately behind the incident and may have also witnessed it.