

Page Title: Auto Racing Suit Buying Guide | Behrents.com

Meta: An auto racing suit protects you while you're on the track, but a poorly fitted or insufficient suit can leave you at risk. Find the best racing suit with our tips.

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How to Choose an Auto Racing Suit

When choosing your auto racing suit, look for an option that fits well, is comfortable, and meets any track regulations—then consider the extra features that you may want. This auto racing suit buying guide covers all of the steps necessary to find the ideal option for you based on race type and track, certification requirements, size, and proper fit.

What to Look for in a Racing Suit

When it comes to [fire-retardant clothing](#), your racing suit is a high-priority item that must meet stringent standards. With so many options available, it can be difficult to know where to start.

Consider your preferences when beginning your search:

- Do you like a two-piece jacket and pants set, or is a full-body [racing suit](#) more your style?
- Are all zippers and fasteners easy to access and use?
- Do you want additional cooling features?
- What other [safety equipment](#) do you wear?
- What gear must your suit be compatible with?
- Do you want sewn-in panels for added comfort?
- Should the cuffs and neck allow adjustment?
- Are there other comfort or style features you want?

Explore racing suits from the best brands in the industry, including [Impact](#), [RaceQuip](#), [K1 Race Gear](#), and [Simpson](#) decide which style works for you.

Auto Racing Suit Certification Requirements

Just like when buying a [racing helmet](#), you must refer to the track certifications to ensure you're getting the racing suit you need for your intended motorsports participation. Auto racing suit certifications include SFI Foundation and FIA (Federation Internationale De L'Automobile), which confirm that they are designed and tested for burn protection, measured in calories per unit area per time of exposure. SFI certifications range from nine to 40 seconds. Other listed specifications may include Thermal Protective Performance (TPP), which discloses how well the suit protects against second-degree burns in case of fire.

What SFI Rating Do I Need?

Commonly required ratings include SFI 3.2A/1 (SFI-1), SFI 3.2A/5 (SFI-5), and FIA 8856-2000. The last digit of SFI ratings indicates the length of protection—the higher the number, the longer

the protection. To determine which certification your suit must carry, refer to the regulations set forth by the track: The rules will list the minimum required certification so you can choose the racing suit that meets the standards. International tracks rely on FIA ratings, so drivers who visit tracks outside of the USA may need two different racing suits, or may choose one that meets both FIA and SFI requirements.

At the most basic, SFI ratings indicate:

SFI Rating	Seconds Until a Second Degree Burn
3.2A/1	3 Seconds
3.2A/3	7 Seconds
3.2A/5	10 Seconds
3.2A/10	19 Seconds
3.2A/15	30 Seconds
3.2A/20	40 Seconds

Lower protection ratings may be the minimum standard at most tracks—always check with the rules as set by sanctioning bodies to determine the appropriate rating for you. FIA 8856-2000 is similar to SFI-5, and you may even find suits that carry both certifications, making it a versatile option. Higher protection requirements are usually required for drag racing.

One-Layer Versus Two-Layer Auto Racing Suits

When deciding between a one-layer or multi-layer racing suit, consider cost, how often you race, and any track requirements. One-layer suits are cheaper and are often used for entry-level or casual racing. Most sanctioning bodies and race series require two-layer suits. Three-layer suits are also available, but having more layers does not necessarily equal a safer suit: Other factors come into play, such as material type.

Nomex® Versus Flame Resistant Cotton

Nomex is a high-temperature-resistant fiber that doesn't melt when exposed to flame and is an effective barrier against heat, providing drivers with enough time to escape in the event of a fire. Flame-Resistant Cotton (FRC) and Flame-Retardant Treated (FRT) cotton materials are chemically treated for flame retardancy, creating a protective layer against flame and heat. Both FRC and Nomex can be washed, but there is a limit to how long FRC/FRT chemical treatments last. Cotton racing suits may last up to 50 washes, while Nomex suits can last up to 5 years or 125 washes.

Flexibility and Comfort

Auto racing suits feature flexible panels and gussets for better fit and improved mobility. Slimmer fit suits reduce material bunching, which improves overall comfort while you're driving. High-end suits offer moisture-wicking and cooling properties, but the most important thing is that you have freedom of movement while driving and moving.

If you're working on the sidelines, rather than driving or as a member of the [pit crew](#), you're able to prioritize better comfort and maneuverability over a higher SFI rating—but don't underestimate your needs: Crewmembers should always refer to the uniform standards set by each specific track, and aim to meet or exceed the minimum requirements for fire protection.

Material Type, Thickness, and Weight

The most noticeable difference in fire suits is material thickness and weight: Higher-priced suits are almost always the lightest and thinnest, even when they carry a higher SFI rating. Generally, a lightweight suit is more comfortable and easier to wear, but suit cut, material type, and construction play a big part in comfort as well. Many factors go into crafting a lighter-weight racing suit, including how many layers and what materials are used, types of thread, zippers, and installed padding.

Higher-end suits often feature built-in flexibility patches—including lumbar patches to make it easier for a driver to bend over or stretch, as well as arm, shoulder, and waist gussets for added flexibility. Lightweight, breathable racing suits keep you cooler—a high priority for drivers in the hot cockpit—and when paired with moisture-wicking drying systems, performance may get a boost.

Custom Suits

Some brands, including K1, Impact, and Simpson, offer custom-built racing suits crafted to fit a driver based on their individual measurements, either provided by the customer taken in-house by a Behrent's professional. These suits not only offer a personalized fit, but can be customized to suit your preferences in terms of design, color, and embroidery. Custom auto racing suits allow you to choose from a variety of stretch panel, gusset, pocket, lining, and shell options to meet your comfort and safety needs.

Size and Fit

A proper fit is essential for safety and comfort, allowing better movement and control behind the wheel. When determining your ideal racing suit size, look for options that provide a loose, comfortable fit that allows a wide range of motion. The latest racing suits from K1, Simpson, and Impact are following the trend of a more "European" style cut: Tailored and tighter-fitting, rather than loose. Consider more than how it feels while you're standing up: Your suit should fit

comfortably while you're sitting, because that's the position you'll be in most while wearing it, as well as when you're walking, reaching, and moving around.

How to Determine the Right Racing Suit Size

Fit may vary from brand to brand, so measure—or have yourself professionally measured—so you know what size to try. To measure for a racing suit, get a flexible tape measure (or a length of string and a ruler) and measure:

- Chest: around the fullest part of your chest, under the armpits
- Waist: Find your waistline (across the navel)) and measure around
- Hips: Measure around the fullest part of your hips
- Height: Stand up straight against the wall—with your heels together and touching the baseboard—and measure from the floor to the top of your head
- Inseam: On the inside of your leg, measure from the anklebone to the crotch
- Thigh: Wrap the measuring tape around the thickest part of the thigh, about three inches below the crotch, for your thigh measurement
- Arm: Holding your arm out horizontally, measure from the wrist bone and up to the shoulder
- Neck: Get your neck circumference by measuring at the base of your neck, where your collar rests

Compare your measurements to the individual brand size charts to determine the best size range for your body type. Then, try on various racing suits, across styles and brands, to find the one that offers the best fit and comfort. Try on the suit over any [fire-resistant base layers](#) you'll wear with the suit for the best results.

<<INCLUDE PDF SIZE CHARTS HERE>>

The experts at Behrent's can help you with your safety gear questions, from sizing and fit to [keeping your racing suit clean](#). Explore our Resource Center for more auto racing gear tips and information.