

Referee Training

OBRA Officials Training

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1. Priorities

1. Safety

If there is anything that jeopardizes safety (including racer, volunteer, official, spectator, or civilian), it is your responsibility to mitigate it. Primarily, you will make it known to the Chief Referee, and they will handle the problem. If this is not possible, other actions may need to be taken, including stopping the race.

Normally, the main job of assistant referee (often referred to as “road official” or “caravan official”) is to ensure the safety of the riders while they race, and to provide for a fair racing environment by consistently enforcing OBRA race rules.

2. Fair Competition

Fair and impartial enforcement of rules and judgments are critical. This course will place significant focus on application of pre-determined penalties and corrective actions in response to racing rule violations. This not only helps keep the riders safe, but also keeps them racing within the OBRA rules.

3. Integrity

Integrity means that you help ensuring the good name of OBRA and the event. Making sure that advertised prize lists are honored, and that rules that affect public opinion (public urination, foul language) are being observed. This is important and should receive attention as time permits. Littering and other misconduct are issues that can often jeopardize venues and put OBRA at risk for receiving negative press while irritating folks adjacent to our venues. It will be up to you to help mitigate these risks by enforcing OBRA rules.

4. Event Success

Although it may sound like it should be a higher priority, event success is more of a byproduct of the first three priorities. If safety, fairness and integrity are achieved, the event will be successful. However, there is also a need to simply do what needs to be done to help out and enable the event to be successful. For example, it is customary for the assistant ref to record as many people in the finishing pack as possible, then to pull off at the conclusion of the race to help the finish line place subsequent finishing fields. It's not part of the ref's job, but it can really help out the judges who are trying to get results completed and posted for review.

2. Expectations

There are several expectations of referees. These are skills and attributes that you will need to have or acquire in order to be an effective assistant referee working road races. (Road races are the primary focus of this material and the event type where assistant referees are employed.)

1. The ability to record numbers (and other data) quickly and accurately.

- You will need to do this while driving behind a pack of riders.
- You will record folks who drop off the pack to report to the judges upon the conclusion of the event who has been dropped so they know how to account for all the riders.
- You will also need to note mileage, time into the race, location on the course, etc when recording events such as centerline rules, breaks, crashes and other incidents that affect the race.

2. The ability to deal with pressure and distractions while ensuring racer safety and fair competition.

- While driving, it is easy to become complacent at relatively slow speeds riders may carry along the flats or up hills. Anticipate changes in terrain, especially the descents. If you need to position yourself out of the way of a catching group, take an article of clothing handed up by a rider, etc, be aware of where you are and what's going on around you (and coming at you).
- Visualize possible issues and changes, and figure out a plan to deal with them. Common occurrences are neutralizations when overtaking or being passed. Others may be rail road crossings (when a train is coming), livestock on rural roads, crashes, etc.

3. The ability to communicate well with others.

- You will need to be the leader of your caravan, which will consist of a lead car, support vehicle, secondary official and possibly team cars (in upper level events).
- Lay out how you expect the caravan to function. Tell the lead driver how you expect them to communicate with the impending intersection personnel. Tell the support cars how you expect them to behave...where they should be.
- THINK before you key your mic. Keep the chatter to a minimum. We're all on the same frequency.

4. Adequate experience with the commonly used technology related to refereeing.

- Know how to setup your radio, flasher, signs (if provided).
- Know how to set the channel on the radio and to work the mic (key the handset and wait 2 seconds before speaking). Identify who you are and who you're calling. If you understand, say so "copy" is the normal response.
- If you try to call someone and cannot reach them, say "did not copy". Sometimes, others may hear your recipient's response and can relay to you.

5. Some level of mechanical understanding of wheels is good.

- You may wish to carry wheels, especially for a long race, stage race, etc. Knowing the difference between a few key features will enable you to know if you can help a rider with a mechanical issue like a flat.

3. Roles

3.1 Chief Ref

The Chief Referee is the big dog. They are in charge of everything except the finish line and results. If you have a question, they are the person to ask first. If there is an issue related to serious disciplinary action, the CR makes the call about it, or it goes to the OBRA admin for evaluation.

3.2 Assistant Ref

This is you...for now. You will organize your caravan and will drive behind the field ensuring safety and fair competition. You may also hand up neutral water if approved by the promoter and CR. Carrying a set or two of wheels (even if there is a wheel support car) is not a bad idea. You may also be requested to take empty bottles, clothing and other discarded items from riders.

Your *primary* role, however, is to *ensure safety* while your group makes its way around the race course. Before the race starts, tell your riders how you will communicate with them in situations such as a neutralization, or when there may be danger (your lead driver may tell you of an obstacle, etc). Horn honking is most common if you do not have a public address system on your vehicle.

You also will help your Judging staff keep track of riders as they get dropped, flat out, etc. If there are issues on the course which may require follow-up (e.g. medical), document where when who and what surrounding the incident.

3.2.1 COMM1 vs COMM2

In smaller fields, the Assistant Ref is normally working only with a lead car and support or follow/wheel car. See Fig 1. In large fields, we often use two refs to monitor breaks if they occur and there may be team support vehicles. COMM1 stays behind the main field while COMM2 starts the race behind the lead car. See Fig 2. If a break occurs, COMM2 will pull over and let the break pass by, then jump in behind. Communication is key when this happens. You don't want to get caught by the pack when they decide to chase. **A gap of at least 1 minute** is required for the COMM2 official to drop back from behind the lead car to assume a position between the lead group and the peleton.

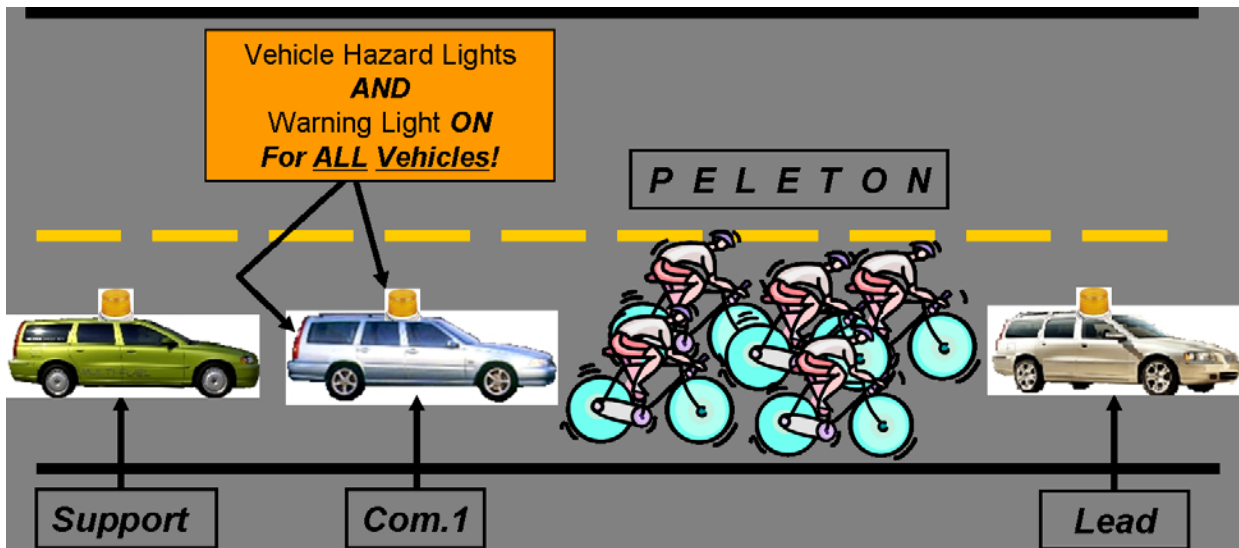


Figure 1 - Standard caravan configuration

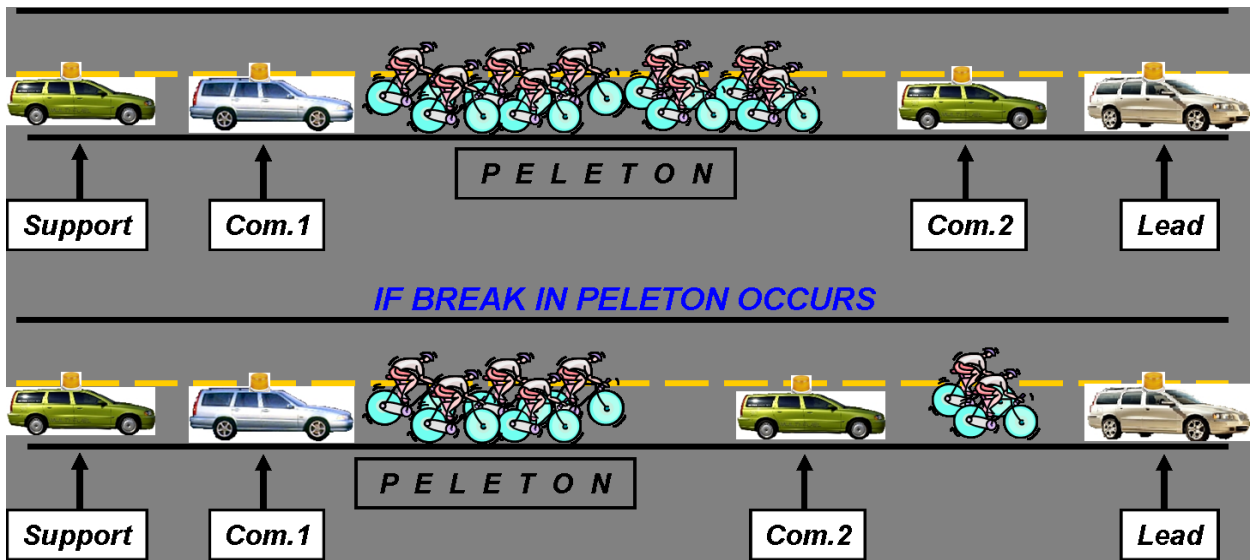
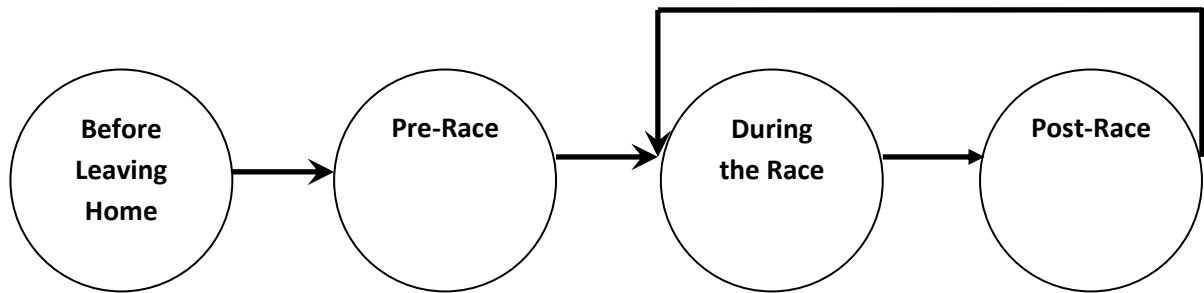


Figure 2 - Carvan for large events with Comm1 and Comm2

4. Order of Events



4.1 Home Preparation

- Make sure your fully alert: eat well, sleep well
- Double check that you have:
 - Maps, directions
 - Equipment: whistle, voice recorder, extra batteries, FRS/GMRS radio are nice to have
 - Race flyer / race bible – Know the schedule of events
 - Pre-race checklist(s) and racer briefing sheet (in case you need to brief the racers in your field before your race)
 - Pens, pencils, note pads and clipboard.
 - Food & water you may need
 - Proper clothing for staying warm/cool, dry. Include your OBRA officials gear: shirt, vest, etc
 - Option items – First aid kit, hand wipes for cleaning up after mechanicals, covers for seats if greasy bloody riders need to get in your car...expect this sort of stuff to happen.
- Make sure you give yourself enough time to make it to the race site before any pre-race meetings. A comfortable window (at least 1 hour before the first race starts) will reduce overall stress. The Chief Ref will normally work out a time and let you know.
- Record your mileage before leaving your driveway. Make sure you have adequate fuel and your vehicle is in proper working order.
- Go easy on things that will over-hydrate you or increase urination into your events. Stopping mid-race for a nature break is not optimal.

4.2 Pre-Race

- Meet with Chief Ref to be given your assignment and to find out who will be in your caravan. Exchange cell numbers with the CR if possible.

- Determine where wheels will be for your group and possibly grab a few sets. Make sure your wheel car picks up wheels and explain that they need to keep track of the wheels they give out and the riders who receive them.
- Determine who will be giving the pre-race briefing to the field. If it's you, make sure your checklist is filled out and you have the necessary info to give the racers.
- Check out flasher and radio and install and test them. Make sure your caravan staff are all equipped, too.
- Determine the location of the start line, the staging area, the finish line and where to go after the race.
- Attend the pre-race meeting for officials.
 - Listen for or raise issues impacting safety or fairness. Examples are potholes, gravel in corners, livestock, rail road crossings, etc.
 - If possible, drive part or all of the course before the race, preferably on your way to the start area. The CR is supposed to do this, so don't go out of your way.
- Double check all your equipment to make sure it works (voice recorder, pen, radio, flasher) If anyone in your caravan only has a hand-held, it is quite possible the batteries will die during the event. Anticipate this and grab a second radio if available.
- Get a copy of the start list so you know who is in your field. You may need to deliver this to the finish line after the race, so stop at the finish line and make sure the judges have what they need at the end of your event.
- Check number placement of the riders in your field. Make sure you can read their back number. It should be on the back and oriented horizontally.
- If possible, do a roll call to make sure everyone is accounted for before you leave. This is generally not done, but if there's time, it's a very good way to avoid problems later.
- Zero your odometer, or note your mileage so you know where you are on the course.
- Go before you go.

4.3 **During the Race**

- Know what is coming: the race bible will help, but listen to the race radio for clues. Things happen on the course. Fields ahead of you can warn you of issues or about proximity to each other which may require neutralization.
- If riders hand-off items to you, make them do it on the driver side of the vehicle. Make sure to tell them this before the race starts.
- Honk or signal if a civilian vehicle is overtaking your group from behind. If you need to talk to the group, check with the lead for clear road, then honk as you pull alongside the group.
- Follow a safe distance behind the lead group (15+ riders)... "go with the money". If a break develops, and feels like it could be the winning break, go with it only if there are 15+ riders. If there is a second Comm, then this is when you split up once the gap opens to 1+ min.
- Record numbers of riders dropped.

- Record numbers of riders with mechanicals or crashes. Don't just drive by, make sure everyone is ok before continuing on with the race.
- If riders cross the centerline, litter or violate any race rules, address it (more on this later). Write down details if possible (mileage, rider #, issue, time of day).
- Notify each corner ahead of you as you approach so that they may stop traffic (if applicable).
- With 1k to the finish, notify the judges that you are at 1K and give them your field name so they know who is finishing.

4.4 **Post-Race**

- Stop at the finish and hand off your start lists if they need them. If you have notes pertinent to order of finish, hand those over. Make sure you sign them so you can be contacted if there are further questions.
- Help score the finish if the Judges need your help.
- Keep folks from congregating around the finish, standing on the roadway or crossing the plane of the finish line camera (when not finishing).
- Meet with the Chief Ref to wrap up any disciplinary or procedural issues. Hand over any forms (report of occurrence) or other notes.
- Turn in wheels, flasher and radio. Don't delay returning the wheels as many folks will need to leave the race soon after they complete their event.
- Turn in mileage to Chief Referee.
- Check in with the Chief Ref before you take off.

5. Rule Enforcement

5.1 Safety, Fair Competition and Integrity

Your primary responsibility is for the safety of your riders. The rules are meant not only to keep things fair, but to keep riders safe. In order to maintain our venues, OBRA must be vigilant in our efforts to maintain good relations with the neighbors and land owners who allow us to use their property. The roads are fair game, but we need to stage, finish or travel through privately held properties. Minimizing littering, foul language, noise, public urination are also part of the job description for the refs.

5.2 Common Rule Violations

1. Centerline Rule – Riders often cross over the centerline either because they get bumped, to avoid an obstacle or collision, or to gain advantage.
2. Littering – Discarding of a water bottle is only allowed in a feed zone. Since feed zones are uncommon in one-day races in Oregon, the best way for riders to discard bottles and trash is to drop back and give it to the Ref.
3. Dropped riders mixing in with overtaking group – Riders out the back of a “faster” group often like to ride in with an overtaking group. They should stay to the right and out of the way. Record their number if they stay mixed in with your field.
4. Pushing – It is against OBRA rules to touch another rider. Riders may not help or hinder each other by touching, pushing, pulling, etc.
5. Number placement – All racers are to wear both numbers at all events. Many don’t. They omit the one across the back that enables the ref to identify them. You need to catch this at the start line roll-out. Jackets over numbers are another problem, and can be addressed before the race.

5.3 Rule Enforcement

Rule enforcement should be consistent, fair and swift. Unfortunately, the OBRA rulebook does not layout clear guidelines about how to deal with issues *during* the race. Figure 3 shows most of the documented rule violations and related penalties levied for 1st, 2nd and 3rd offenses (if applicable). However, application of the penalties to the above 5 violations is somewhat problematic during the event. A method to address this will be shown below.

5.4 Penalties

In order of increasing severity...

1. Warning – A verbal warning given to a rider.
2. Relegation – Loss of position in group. This one has a few levels to it, and will likely be your most versatile tool to wield. (Rolling time-out)
 - While on the road, single out the offending rider and have them drop back to talk to you (on the driver side of your car). SLOW the car and allow a gap to begin to form with the peleton.
 - Ask them if they understand the rule they've violated and why it is there for reasons of safety, fairness or OBRA/event integrity. Explain it to them if they give the usual shrug.
 - If it is a littering offense, tell them to go pick it up. Yes, this actually happens. If they won't pick it up, then inform them they are not following the direction of an official, and may be DQ'd, suspended or both.
 - The "adjustment" mechanism for this procedure...open a gap of 30 seconds. If it's a second offense, open a larger gap...1 minute or more. You'll become accustomed to how far this is. Generally, 200 yds is a good gage (several telephone poles, if available).
 - When you're done adjusting their attitude, make sure you and the rest of the caravan can get around them without them drafting back up. Drafting is also illegal, but it's hard to see if you've got a line of 5 vehicles piled up behind you.
3. Relegation – Loss of place at finish, normally for a centerline issue, not holding a straight line during the sprint, or for taking the hands off the bars in a victory salute.
4. Disqualification – Normally used for unsportsmanlike issues (using profanity towards race staff, spectators or other racers) or flagrant cheating (passing over the centerline).
5. Suspension – Only allowed after written submission by an official to OBRA Admin. May not be done at the event by any official.

5.5 Limits to authority of referee

You may not...

- Waive fees owed to OBRA or to the promoter
- Change categories or move riders to different fields.

- Disobey traffic laws, including speed limits, while performing your duties. This includes acting as a pace car to lead civilian traffic around the group. It may seem like a good idea, but you are not trained for this. Don't do it.
- Charge full mileage if you are carpooling with another official, racer, or if you intend to race before or after your officiating duties are complete.


Road Racing Rule Enforcement							
Updated 1/29/2008							
Increasing Severity 							
Type of Rule Infraction - Road Racing, Only	Warning	Relegation - loss of position in group	Relegation - loss of position at finish	Fine	DQ	Suspension	Notes
Racing Rules per OBRA section 15.1							
Centerline violation							
Traffic law violation while outside the caravan							
Illegal handup							
Littering							
Inteference from lapped rider							
Unauthorized finish line crossing							
Feeding outside the feed zone							
Feeding from other than right side of the road.							
Pacing from caravan vehicle (<100 m)	1st					2nd	
Pacing from caravan vehicle (>100 m)						1st	
Being pushed by or holding onto vehicle for long time (> 100m)				\$30			Charged to team manager or rider
Pushing by team personnel							
Pushing from bystanders							
Pushing between riders							
Finishing for a place after not completing the entire race.					Y		
Reporting to start line with unauthorized clothing or equipment					Y		Prohibited from starting
Riders on different laps working together (road race...ok in crits)							
Misconduct per section 11.2							
Unsportsmanlike conduct						1 2	If severe, Suspension may result after 1st offense.
Theft							
Fraud							
Illegally affecting race outcome							
Dangerous riding							
Abrupt motion interfering with another rider's forward progress							
Abrupt motion interfering with another rider's forward progress (<i>intermediate sprint</i>)			1st & 2nd offense			Upon 3rd offense	1st and 2nd offenses are different for RR and SR. 3rd offense is DQ for both RR & SR.
Abrupt motion interfering with another rider's forward progress (<i>final sprint</i>)							
Foul or abusive language							
Pushing or holding another rider							
Failure to follow a referee's order							
Completing any part of the course without a bicycle							
Equipment maint issues resulting in dangerous condition							
Riding on course when not entered into event.							
Pacing from rider or vehicle in another event.							
Rider interfering with official vehicle attempting to pass						1 2	If severe, Suspension may result after 1st offense.
Team vehicle passing without permission				1st: \$30, 2nd: \$60			3rd: Vehicle ejection from race
Team vehicle not allowing official car to pass							
Failure to sign in							
Signing in for another rider				2nd: \$10, 3rd: \$20			
Failure to wear required jersey (i.e. leader's jersey)							
Racing with modified numbers							
Violating any of the OBRA racing rules							

Figure 3 - Road Racing Rules and Penalties

6. Checklists

Personal Equipment Checklist - Done at home

Critical

- Clipboard
- Writing implements (several):
pens, pencils (rain), highlighters
- Notepad or paper
- Voice recorder
- Stop watch
- Race flyer/bible
- Map/directions to the race course
- Extra forms
- Record mileage and fuel up.

Important

- Whistle
- Food & water
- Appropriate clothing

Optional

- 2-way radios

Pre-race checklist – Once at the race

- Check out and install flasher and radio. (Paper under the magnets will help protect the car's finish.
- Confirm radio is working and on correct frequency (usually 3-15).
- Check fuel.
- Exchange cell numbers with CR and CJ.
- Note mileage.
- Gather and inventory wheels noting what you have.
- Place signs (if provided) in your windows.
- Meet lead and follow drivers. Review your process for working the race.
- Help lead and follow/support get setup with radios, flasher, wheels, signs, etc.
- Test radios...again. Hand-helds don't always hold a charge very long.
- Attend pre-race meeting with CR so you may fill out your start line announcement checklist.
- Get a copy of the start list from Registration.

Process Checklist

As race stages to start...

- Check rider number placement at start. Help fix problems before they become bigger.
- Do roll call if you have time.
- Provide pre-race message to racers using your checklist.
- Check with CR to make sure you're cleared for take-off.

During Race

- Monitor other groups on the road.
- Enforce rule violation penalties.
- Note wheels given out, mishaps, medical issues/crashes. Record mileage, time into race, time of day and other related info.
- Confirm your lead car is communicating with the corners as you arrive.
- Document dropped and DNF riders
- Capture prime sprints, if any (may need to drive ahead to do this).
- If possible, provide time splits by working with your lead car using landmarks to establish the gaps and communicate them to your riders. They like to know what's going on.
- Record the riders in the lead group to help the judges capture everyone at the line (assume their generator died and they are capturing manually).
- Hand off your start sheets and notes about rider locations to the judge.

Post-Race

- Give notes to CR, and make sure you're cleared to leave.
- Help out where needed.
- Return wheels ASAP.
- Turn in mileage to Chief Referee

7. Additional Resources

OBRA Training WIKI: <http://obra.wikidot.com>

The place to find materials from this training. The growing resources section currently includes start line instructions for criterium and road races, a race notes worksheet, and instruction information for drivers.

OBRA Website: <http://www.obra.org>

All things OBRA

OBRA Forms: <http://www.obra.org/forms/>

Includes OBRA rules and forms for medical occurrences and race charges.

USA Cycling Officials Section: <http://www.usacycling.org/officials/>

Rulebooks, manuals, and lots of useful forms.

National Association of Sports Officials: <http://www.naso.org/>

Liability insurance for officiating.