

Guideline 19

Autotests

- Introduction

This Guideline has been written to help Club Officials organise Autotests and Production Car Autotests. It is vitally important that the Clerk of the Course and the Secretary of the Meeting study the specific regulations for Autotests, currently Section F of the Motor Sports Association Competitors' Yearbook.

- Aim of Autotesting

The aim of Autotesting is to drive around a set of markers/pylons/posts adhering to a set route in as short a time as possible. The route is set out in a test diagram and involves competitors using both forward and reverse gears. They are required to cross lines, stop astride lines, park in "garages", pass and circle around pylons, perform spin turns, handbrake turns and reverse flick turns. Penalties are given for striking marker pylons, line faults or incorrect manoeuvres. The competitor with the fastest time and the least penalties is the winner.

- Safety

(a) Autotesting is inherently a safe and inexpensive branch of motor sport. Speeds are not very high because competitors normally use only first and reverse gears. The lower risks for drivers results in lower costs as helmets and fire protection clothing are not required.

(b) The organisers must provide a First Aid Kit at Autotests. They must also provide Fire Extinguisher(s) of at least 5Kg in units of not less than 2Kg capacity available for **ALL** test sites.

(c) All spectators and non-essential Marshals to the test, who are not protected by a solid physical barrier capable of stopping a car, shall be kept by means of roping or fencing at least 10m from the edge of the course in each direction, and at least 20m from the finish line.

(d) "Motor Sport Can Be Dangerous" warning notices must be displayed as required.

(e) All open cars and specials are recommended to fit a safety Roll-over Bar.

(f) No passengers may be carried in a timed Autotest. One passenger must be carried in the front seat in a Production Car Autotest.

(g) Normally competitors are not permitted to travel more than 100m without having to stop astride a penalty line. In any "all forward" timed test drivers must be required to make a change of direction at most 50m after a previous change of direction.

(h) Competitors must either stop astride a penalty line or make a change of direction of at least 90° at most 25m before the Finish Line of all tests.

- (i) All safety requirements for speed events apply to any timed test run on a course/test area more than 200m in length and/or open to racing or sports racing cars.
 - (j) The minimum age for an Autotest Driver is 16 years old, and for a Production Car Autotest Driver, 15 years old.
 - (k) It is recommended for safety reasons that drivers shall be on the "inside" during forward and reverse spin turns.
 - (l) Competing vehicles must comply with all MSA Technical Vehicle Safety Regulations.
- Jobs prior to the event
 - (a) Select suitable site/venue for the event.
 - (b) Get WRITTEN permission from landowner.
 - (c) Appoint key officials – Clerk of the Course – Secretary of the Meeting – Test Timekeepers – Line/Pylon Fault Judges – Scrutineer – Results Official – Test Equipment Officer.
 - (d) Plan layout of tests and draw test diagrams. Remember the object is to test driving not memory skills.
 - (e) Apply to MSA for the vitally important Organising Permit or Certificate of Exemption and Event Insurance. The application for the permit must be made on a form prescribed by the MSA not less than 6 weeks before Clubman and National 'B' Grade events and not less than 8 weeks for National 'A' Grade events. Supplementary Regulations giving exact details of the proposed Autotest must be included with the permit application.
 - Advice on running the event
 - (a) If at all possible appoint a Clerk of the Course with past experience as an Autotest organiser or competitor.
 - (b) Consult current competitors about test layout and test diagrams, especially if an inexperienced Clerk of the Course is being used.
 - (c) Before finalising the exact layout of each test, get an experienced driver in a suitable car to drive the test at moderate speed.
 - (d) Make sure the locations of pylons and lines are carefully marked and measured so that the test will remain exactly the same for each competitor throughout the event.
 - (e) A competent Timekeeper with an accurate stopwatch is essential for each test. If possible a Timekeeping Clerk to record test times on competitor's time card and club mastersheet is recommended.
 - (f) Adequate line/pylon Fault Judges are essential for each test. These officials must be carefully briefed by the Clerk of the Course about how to recognise a fault. The Fault Judges should hold up a "Fault" flag until acknowledged by an agreed signal from the Timekeeper at the end of each test.
 - (g) Practising of tests is not permitted.
 - (h) Eligibility of Drivers and Vehicles must be checked before starting the event.
 - (i) Drivers are under starters orders when instructed by an official to proceed to the start line of a test. The driver must be seated in the car with the engine running at the start of the test.
 - (j) It is very helpful to the timekeeper if the Start and Finish lines of each test are within sight and fairly close together. It also helps to speed up the running of the event if the start and finish lines are far enough apart to allow the next competitor to wait safely on the start line while the previous competitor is executing the test.
 - (k) It is recommended that a "rolling" start line is included about 0.5m before the actual timing start line. This allows the Timekeeper to start the stopwatch when the front wheels cross the start line.
 - (l) It is also recommended that competitors should stop astride the finish line. This allows the Timekeeper to stop the watch when the front wheels cross the finish line and not when the car stops.