

Autocross Work Assignments
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What is this document?

This document provides information to help you quickly understand what is expected of course workers at an Autocross. This is important for safety, accuracy of results, and a quick event startup (which means more driving). Please read this before the event. This document focusses on two classes of workers – 1) Course workers at “stations” on the course, and 2) Grid workers at staging. Other jobs are typically very specialized and are performed by experienced Autocrossers with prior training.

Autocross Basics:

Autocross is a “solo” form of racing, against the clock, in a class. The fastest time through the course wins. However, to keep things fair and to ensure that you drive the course properly, and precisely, two forms of penalties are assessed:

1. 2 seconds is added to a run for every cone infraction. A cone infraction means that a cone is knocked down or moved so that no part of the cone remains inside the chalked box or touching the line. If the cone magically travels to the moon and lands upright, touching the line, there is no infraction.
2. If the driver misses a gate or for any reason leaves the course and drives a different line, the run does not count at all and the driver is called “off course”. This basically means going AROUND a gate. If the driver hits one of the gate cones, with the car mostly outside the gate – it is still just a 2-second penalty. If the driver spins, and then continues through the gate properly, there is no penalty (but probably a rotten time). Just because it is ugly does not make it off course.

That’s pretty much it.

Work assignments:

Drivers are divided into two “heats”. While one heat drives, the other works. You CANNOT drive and then leave! To ensure safety, efficiency and our mutual enjoyment of the event, all drivers will be given work assignment and are required to report to that assignment when their Run Group is not driving the course/track. During registration or via an email prior to the event, you will be notified of your assignment. If you have experience with a specific assignment such as Starting Grid Worker, Starter or Corner Captain, please let our registration staff know when signing-in. Make sure you know your assignment, work location and what is expected of you early. If you don’t know, ask.

During the mandatory drivers’ meeting, you will be introduced to the **Chief of Workers**. The Chief will briefly discuss the requirements of each assignment and answer any questions that you may have. There are no stupid questions; so please take this opportunity to gain a full appreciation of what is expected of you. You can also ask other workers who have more experience and will be happy to help you along.

Corner/Station Workers (eyes and ears in the field/cone shaggers)

The predominant work assignment is that of Corner /Station Worker, an assignment that is critical to the safety and success of the event. The course is divided into corners and at the Meadowlands, each corner is designated by the light pole identification sign at that corner, such as “J-3.” Your work assignment will carry a corner designation. Each corner will be numbered, typically 1-5 or 1-6.; know your station/corner number because that is how we communicate with you, and you with us.

Immediately report to that designation when it is your turn to work -- quicker transitions equal more driving time. Each corner will have a Corner Captain, who will be responsible for communicating with Control via the walkie-talkie and for directing the corner workers. One corner worker will act as a flagger. If traffic is impeded by a disabled car, or if another corner worker may be in the way of traffic, the flagger is responsible for waving off on-coming cars. Always remember safety first;-- drivers who were unable to complete their run will be given a rerun. The remaining corner workers will be responsible for replacing downed or moved cones into their respective boxes and reporting the number of such cones to the Corner Captain (or whoever is manning the radio). Again safety is key--replace cones quickly BUT safely.

While at the event and especially when you are on the course, ***never ever turn your back on a moving car or try to out run a car.*** Another tip is to spread out. It may be fun to hang out and talk, but that means: a) you are not paying attention to what’s happening on the course and b) you may be far away from cones which results in placing you in a dangerous position and extended setup time. Spread out; but pick safe spots – typically where cars will skid, spin or move AWAY from you. If you don’t know where they are likely to skid – ask your Corner Captain or an event organizer. In fact, if you don’t know, you need to learn this in order to drive the course more aggressively and effectively!

Radio communications must be clear and concise. When initiating contact with Control, be sure the channel is not in use, press the talk button and wait for a beep. Proceed by identifying your corner--for example—“Station 1 to Control”. Control will acknowledge you by stating—“go Station 1”. Provide the required information that includes the car number and the number of cones or DNF (off course). Control will confirm the information by stating for example--Car 24 DNF, thank you. Please maintain this protocol by saying “acknowledged” – the radios are often very noisy and it is easy to miss information with 5 or 6 stations reporting in.

To summarize:

- Watch cars and call in a) cones, and b) off-course infractions on the radio
- Watch for safety issues and wave red flag
- Reset cones, safely
- Call in any situation that looks dangerous, or may compromise the fairness of the course

Work assignments, while not as much fun as driving, are critical to the operation of the event and provide you with an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the course. They also give you a great view of the track, so you can see who does well and what they are doing (so you can try it). Please check in (with the Chief) and report to your assignment promptly. *Failure to report*

for an assignment without being excused will result in voiding of your scores and potential disqualification from future events. It's simple – we can't run these events without everyone's participation.

Grid/Staging Workers:

The next most common work assignment is “Grid” or “Staging”. Grid workers manage the pool of cars in each heat that are taking their runs, coming off the course, returning to the “grid” and then “staging” in line for their next run. The job of grid and staging workers is to:

- Maintain safety – direct cars on a safe path; move them safely to the starter and starting gate.
- Check cars/helmets/ occupants for safety, specifically:
 - Does driver have a wristband
 - If there is a passenger is one occupant an instructor? (Only a driver and an instructor are permitted in the car per New Jersey State Police rules)
 - Helmet on? Chin strap buckled? Doors and trunk closed? etc.?
 - Seatbelts on
 - Windows down
 - Car remains empty, as after tech
 - Car has a number and is correct
 - No leaks or visible defective/missing parts
- Keep cars in the proper run order so we all get the same number of runs
- Guide cars to the starter
- Identify cars that need instructors or drivers that need them ☺
- Immediately alert Control of “instructor run” (a run where the instructor drives the student's car) as these runs do not count against the student and if timed corrupts the database)
- Operate a second line for “dual driver cars” – these are cars that have two entrants, two drivers and two numbers. They need to run twice as often as single driver cars to stay on schedule –grid workers identify one or two cars in the main grid and slot dual driver cars in before or after them during each run-cycle.
- For dual driver cars ensure that the number is properly switched
- Alert the starter and Control of instructor runs (so that the timing is not assigned to the wrong driver)

Bottom line, course workers manage the cars and course while cars are running, ensuring safety and noting violations. Grid workers manage the cars while they are NOT running, but waiting for their next run, in an orderly, safe and efficient manner. More efficiency = more runs, more run = more fun. Any questions? If you do, we are here to assist you. Remember our objective is safe, serious fun.

Looking forward to working with you at the next event.