

Tobacco Road Relay: 2026 Team Handbook

Thank you for your team's registration for the 5th running of the Tobacco Road Relay. As race organizer, I'm excited to share the beauty of the Triangle, the extensive greenways, roads less traveled and at times, roads often traveled.

The inspiration for the Tobacco Road Relay was...well...Tobacco Road. As an alumnus of a Tobacco Road school, it's always a thrill to celebrate the competition and rivalry among the schools. But as a runner, it seemed like fun to create a race that connected the 3 corners of the Triangle and to showcase its beauty and diversity.

We receive fantastic feedback from the runners each year and the result is a course that captures a variety of terrain ranging from residential neighborhoods, city streets, rural roads, single track trails, wide gravel/dirt trails, greenways, boardwalks, State Parks and much more.

Our excitement for the TRR is surpassed by concern for everyone's safety. The following pages highlight some information that is posted on the website and some that is new. Please be diligent to review information on the website, emphasizing Rules and Regulations, Driver's Info, etc... If you have not run an event like this, be prepared, because you will be challenged. During the relay, if needed, we will text course updates such as weather alerts, emergency notes, course updates, etc... to those runners who signed up for Race Day Text Messaging. However, the Relay Officials at the exchange zones will remain the primary contact for emergency and non-emergency items.

Please remember that the Tobacco Road Relay wouldn't exist without the support of the local communities, the people and authorities. Please respect, at all times, their home.

Once again, WELCOME! to the Tobacco Road Relay. If we could assist in any way, please contact us (336-877-8888 or ken@tobaccoroadrelay.com.)

Kind regards,

Ken Sevensky
Director, Tobacco Road Relay

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The notes of this Handbook apply to all competitors, team support staff, spectators, and event staff and volunteers. This was designed to make your experience safe, smooth, enjoyable, and rewarding.

Additional References

Runners, drivers, support staff, etc... need to reference the following documents, in addition to this Handbook:

1. Rules and Penalties (found under Team Information on the website)
2. 2026 Driver Info (found under Team Information on the website)
3. Leg Map Info and Leg Map Links (found under Course Maps on the website)

Runner Exchange

1. As the outgoing runner steps into the exchange zone, verbalize your bib number to the staff/volunteer on site.
2. The outgoing runner may depart when the incoming runner is within 10 feet or you can choose to fist-bump.
3. The runner who just finished his/her leg must verbalize their bib number to the staff/volunteer before leaving the exchange zone.

Weather Conditions

Please be prepared for a variety of weather conditions...better to have a few extra clothing items rather than not enough!

Extreme Weather

In the event of extreme inclement weather or other major event, the Tobacco Road Relay will follow the advice of county emergency management. TRR runners will be spread over several hours. As such, TRR will comply with the request/advice of emergency management of any county/city through which TRR runs. Therefore, there is a risk that TRR could be suspended or terminated at the advice of emergency management. Exchange Zone staff will be notified and will enforce the decision of race management. All teams must comply.

In the event of localized extreme inclement weather, such as lightning, exchange zone staff have authority to suspend TRR at a specific exchange zone for the safety of runners, staff and volunteers. All teams at that exchange zone must comply. Ultimately, it is each team and runner's responsibility to seek shelter in the case of lightning or other extreme weather conditions.

If the race is suspended, all teams must retrieve their runner from the course so the runner has shelter in the team vehicle and then report to the nearest exchange zone. Before the race resumes, a decision by TRR management will be made regarding the progress of TRR. The decision may range from returning the runner to the course at the location of retrieval to advancing all teams a specified number of legs.

Time of day of suspension and when TRR resumes will be recorded. However, there are many external, uncontrolled circumstances that influence TRR and are part of TRR. As such, the time of suspension may or may not be considered in the TRR results. TRR management will consider the circumstances and make a decision.

Safety Concerns

Please be advised that you will be running on a course that is open to normal traffic. All runners should be alert to traffic, blind turns and road conditions.

1. Run defensively...the cars and trucks are bigger than you.
2. Run on the Left when sidewalks are not available. Use sidewalks when available. The cue sheets provide detailed turn-by-turn instructions, including which side of the road to run.
3. Runners must use crosswalks (when available) and must be compliant with traffic signals.
4. Team vehicles are NOT permitted to "shadow" their runners and team vehicles are NOT permitted to "leap-frog" their runners (please see rule II-10, 60-minute penalties). Vans must drive directly to the next EZ. Therefore, runners must carry their own support for each leg as needed.
5. You can carry a small canister of pepper spray for added precaution.
6. Carrying your cell phone may or may not offer comfort, but you can download the Leg Maps.

First Aid

Each support vehicle should carry a well-stocked first aid kit and ice. Be prepared to know how to use it.

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Emergency Communication

Dial 911 in the case of an emergency. Know where you are...road intersections, etc...

Road Conditions

The majority of the TRR course is on sidewalks/greenways. However, there are several sections of several legs which do not offer a sidewalk. Therefore, runners will be on the road shoulder. Two Cautions:

First Caution to runners: when traffic is approaching, be very careful when stepping onto the gravel/grass shoulder. Look before you step and step onto the shoulder earlier than normal to ensure good footing.

Second Caution to drivers: We need to drive with caution, awareness and on many roads below the speed limit regardless of shoulder conditions. With our runners on one road shoulder, we need to be cautious when other vehicles are approaching.

Rules and Penalties:

Please refer to the website for a complete listing. Every runner and driver **MUST** comply with the rules.

Course Markings

The course will be marked as follows:

1. One yellow directional sign (18" x 24") before each turn.
2. One yellow confirmation sign (18" x 12") with black arrow after each turn.
3. One yellow "EXCHANGE ZONE" sign will be posted shortly before most exchange zones. This is not the beginning of the exchange zone, but an alert sign that the exchange zone is approaching.

As noted in the Rules, it is the responsibility of the runner to navigate the course. Signs will read "Relay". Signs will be posted on the side of the runner's side of the road. Signs may be posted on the Left or Right to match the cue sheet. Occasionally signs do disappear. So memorizing or carrying your cue sheet is highly advised.

Team Sign-in

Teams have one option for packet pick-up: Start Line, Saturday morning, at least 30 minutes before your team's scheduled start time.

1. Race bracelets will NOT be distributed.
2. Runner bibs will be issued. Bibs sequence must match runner sequence. Bibs are to worn on the front.
3. Runner Order **must** be submitted at packet pick-up. Please reference Final Prep on the TRR website.

Restroom Facilities

Restroom facilities and/or port-a-johns will be available at all Exchange Zones. Please use them.

Food and Beverages

There are a variety of gas stations, grocery stores, restaurants, etc... along the race route. However, the team van may not have an abundance of time to stop and shop, while your runner is grinding it out. Be prepared with a well-stocked cooler of water, sports drinks, other preferred fluids, as well as a variety of food, snacks, fruits, etc... for consumption throughout the day.

Finish Line: Tobacco Road Brewery, 505 W Jones St, Raleigh

1. Teams may finish with their last runner. As your last runner approaches the Finish chute, your team may join your last runner to the Finish. Please do not interfere with finishing runners from other teams. If your runner and another team's runner are finishing close, please allow the active runners to pass before entering the finish line chute. Also, teams are NOT allowed to join their finishing runner in the parking deck access road.
2. The parking deck is accessed from N West St and is immediately behind Tobacco Road Brewery. Please be certain to use the gated section of the parking deck and not the monthly section.
3. Celebrate your finish with great food, atmosphere and beverages at Tobacco Road Brewery. Tobacco Road Brewery has outdoor seating on their patio and picnic tables near the Finish.
4. Park three hours for free in the Powerhouse Square Parking Deck, located behind Tobacco Road Brewery and adjacent to the TRR Finish. The deck uses a plate reader system. You will need to scan a QR code found inside the restaurant and enter your license plate number within 15 minutes of arrival. If you park more than three hours, you will need to scan the QR code again and provide payment information to extend the time.
5. If you choose to celebrate your finish with an alcoholic beverage, alcoholic beverages cannot leave Tobacco Road Brewery property and cannot be on the TRR course.