

Road Level 'C' Commissaire Training Guide

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Thank You!

On behalf of Cycling BC, thank you for volunteering your time. Without people who are willing to give some of their time, cycling events would not be possible.

We have created this short guide to help you prepare for your volunteer experience at the race so that you know what to expect and to explain the tasks that you will be asked to do, and how to perform them. In turn, this will lead to your certification as a level ‘C’ road commissaire after you read this manual and gain supervised practical experience at 2 races.

The organization’s volunteer coordinator and the commissaires assigned to the race will be happy to answer your questions and to help you make the most of your race experience. Remember, as a volunteer and eventually as a commissaire, you too are a participant in the sport – and we very much hope that you enjoy it.

Before the Race

Part of a commissaire’s responsibility is to arrive at the race prepared for the day. Before you arrive on the day of the race, there are a few things that you should do to prepare that will help to make your day more productive and enjoyable.

Race Information

When you were asked to volunteer (or when the organizer accepted your offer of help), you should have received some information about the race, including the following:

- The race schedule.
- Along with the race schedule, the time that you were asked to arrive.
- The location of the race, including driving directions.
- Parking instructions once you arrive.
- Who to contact / where to go once you arrive.
- A contact number to call in case you can’t make it, need directions or are going to be late.

If you have not received this information at least a few days before the race, please contact the race organizer to ask for it.

How to Prepare

As a level ‘C’ commissaire at the race, your job will most likely be to assist at the start and finish line of the race. Most of the rest of this guide will describe the tasks that you will most likely be asked to perform.

Aside from reviewing the information contained within this guide and the information sent to you by the organizer, you should do the following the day before the race:

- Check the weather forecast and dress appropriately. It is rare for a race to be cancelled because of bad weather, so ensure that you are prepared for it. Also, it is wise to bring a change of clothes, rain gear and some warm clothes; even

on a sunny day, it is possible to be cold standing or sitting in the same place for several hours. Also, bring sunscreen.

- Wear comfortable shoes; you will probably spend several hours on your feet.
- Bring some food and water. While the organizer will likely provide lunch and water for volunteers, it is wise to be self-sufficient in case lunch is delayed.
- Save the phone number for your contact within the race organization on your mobile phone.

In short, come prepared to be self sufficient while spending the day outside.

What to Bring

Aside from the points mentioned above, it would be helpful if you could bring the following:

- A copy of the race schedule sent to you by the organizer.
- A notebook or notepad and some loose-leaf paper.
- Pens / pencils.
- A wristwatch (or a fully-charged mobile phone).
- If you have one, a stopwatch. Note: It is not yet necessary for you to have your own stopwatch; however, if you decide to continue as a commissaire after a few races, this is something that you should have. The section on stopwatches later in the guide will give you some suggestions about where to get one.
- If you have one, a clipboard.

During the Race

This section of the guide provides some background about the sport and how races are run in BC.

Important!

While we are certain that your volunteer experience will be a positive one, it is important that you should be aware of the following.

As a volunteer, you are entitled to enjoy your participation in the event and to feel both comfortable and safe while there.

Your contribution to the sport, your safety and your enjoyment of the event is important to us. If you have any questions, please ask. Likewise, if feel uncomfortable with something that you have been asked to do, please say so.

Though it is highly unlikely to happen, you always have the right to refuse a task if the idea of doing it makes you uncomfortable, or if you believe that it breaks the law or places your safety (or that of others) in jeopardy.

In such a situation, you can feel free to mention your concerns to the commissaires or to the race organizer. If you don't feel comfortable doing so, or if your concerns are not satisfied, then please contact Cycling BC after the race.

Finally, should another participant in the race behave towards you in a disrespectful manner, please report the situation to the president of the commissaires' panel or

race organizer as soon as possible. Cycling BC takes disrespectful behavior towards anyone, by anyone, seriously.

Information about the Sport

Cycling BC relies on its members, clubs and teams to organize most of the races held within BC. The race at which you are a volunteer is most likely being organized by other volunteers who are affiliated with one of Cycling BC's clubs or teams.

All of these types of volunteers have specific roles and responsibilities, as follows.

Roles and Responsibilities – The Race Organizer

- To provide all of the people, equipment and materials needed to organize the race.
- Secure all permissions and road permits.
- Ensure that the race is covered by insurance.
- Ensure that the race is supervised by Commissaires.
- Ensure that the race is organized in a way that reasonably minimizes the risk of participation (for everyone – riders, coaches, team managers, commissaires, volunteers, the general public).
- To remain current with the rules of the sport and hold a valid license for the current year.

Roles and Responsibilities – The Commissaires

- To start the race.
- To record the times and finish order.
- To supervise and manage the race.
- To penalize violations of the rules.
- To ensure that the race is organized and held in a way that complies with the rules to the greatest extent possible.
- To remain current with the rules of the sport and hold a valid license for the current year.
- To ensure that the riders who start the race are entitled to do so (have a license and are in the correct category).
- To ensure that the start lists and results are correct.
- To report problems encountered at the race (and penalties) to Cycling BC.

Roles and Responsibilities – The Riders

To know and obey the rules of the sport; just a few examples include:

- To complete the entire race entirely through their own effort.
- Treat others (riders, managers, organizers, commissaires, volunteers) with respect.
- To race with caution – riders are responsible for any accidents that they cause.
- To obey the traffic laws in races that take place on open roads.
- To display the race numbers that they are given.
- To ensure that their clothing and bicycles comply with the rules and are in good condition (not represent a risk to themselves or others).
- To follow the instructions of the race organization and the commissaires.

- To read all of the information about the race and study the course in advance (they are responsible for any error they make, in case they accidentally leave the course).
- To remain current with the rules of the sport and hold a valid license for the current year.
- To submit to anti-doping controls, when required.

Types of Races

As a trainee level ‘C’ commissaire, it is helpful for you to know a few things about how the different types of races are run. This section introduces you to the format of the different kinds of races, and also briefly describes the jobs of the commissaires.

Bunch Races or Mass Start Races

These races are normally classified as either road races or criteriums.

Road races can take place either as point-to-point races (the race starts in one place and finishes somewhere else), or more commonly in BC, as multiple laps of a circuit (so-called “circuit races”). The course for such circuit races should be at least 10km long.

A criterium is a circuit race with a course that is less than 10km long. However, in North America, most criterium courses are at most a few km long with many at around 1 km.

Riders start together in a single group (also known as a “bunch” or as the “peloton”). Usually this is done by lining the riders up at the start line, and by giving a count down.

The start signal is usually a whistle or a starter’s pistol. The race time begins from the gun. However, a rolling start or “neutral” start is also possible; in this case, the riders are slowly lead out by the lead car, which stays only a few dozen meters in front of the riders; the race is not yet on. When the start signal is given (a gun, or a signal from the car such as a green flag), the lead car accelerates away, and the race begins.

For criteriums, such a neutral start (if done) is usually done at a controlled pace over 1 lap of the course, with the gun being fired as the riders approach the finish line at the end of the lap.

For races contested over multiple laps, the start and finish line are usually the same place. At this location, a line is drawn on the road, and the commissaires responsible for the finish work from that location. Also, a device called a “lap board” is used to show the riders the number of laps remaining in the race.

Most lap boards include a bell, which is rung to indicate the last lap.

For road races, each peloton is supported by a number of cars or motorcycles, known as “the caravan”. For major road events at the international level, this can comprise dozens of vehicles.

For races in BC, each caravan usually includes:

- A lead car, which drives at least 400m – 500m in front of the race, to warn on-coming traffic and the course marshals that the race is approaching.
- A commissaire car (Comm. 1), which follows the bunch. Among other things, this commissaire is responsible for watching the behavior of the riders in the race, and for recording the numbers of the riders who are dropped by the bunch.
- A neutral service vehicle. This car carries spare wheels and a mechanic and stops to assist riders with mechanical problems such as flat tires.

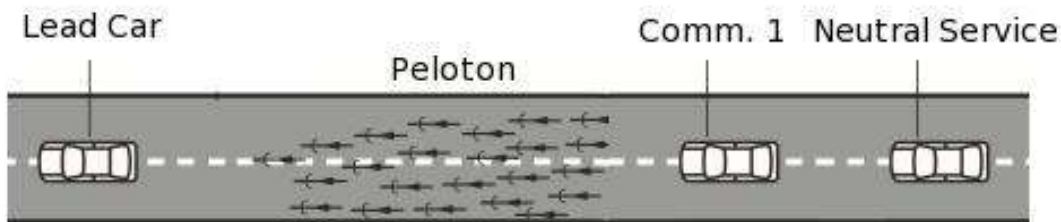


Diagram: The Typical Format of the Caravan in a BC Road Race. In this particular diagram, the full road is closed (which is often not the case). For a race taking place on an open road, all riders and cars would have to be in the right-hand traffic lane.

For road races held in BC, there can be several caravans, or races (possibly containing several categories) on the road at the same time (depending upon the length of the circuit). The faster of these groups of categories is started first, and the slower of these started a few minutes behind the first.

For criterium races, a lead car and a follow car are usually used. The lead car is used to provide a reference so that everybody knows where the front of the race is – this can become confusing on a very short course.

In a criterium, the follow car keeps a record of which riders are dropped, and also gives the numbers of any riders caught in a crash to the wheel pit (via radio), so that the commissaire there can know whether a neutralization (one or more free laps) can be given to the riders concerned.

Time Trials

The most common type of time trial is the ITT (Individual Time Trial). In an ITT, riders race against the clock over the same course; in such a race, the riders are not allowed to draft one another. The start and finish are often in almost the same location (this is an “out and back” time trial, where there is a “turn-around” at the half-way point). However, point-to-point time trials are also possible.

In BC, Team Time Trials are sometimes held. In this type of race, the riders in each team start together and are allowed to draft from each other throughout the race (though only among those in the same team). For TTT events, the finish time is normally not taken on the first rider in the team to cross the finish line; often it is the second or third rider (depending on the number of riders in the team). This is specified in the technical information provided by the organizer.

For any time trial, each rider (or team) is given a specific start time. Should they arrive at the start late for a time trial, the scheduled start time of that rider or team is used

instead of their actual start time when calculating the result, thus resulting in a time penalty.

Stage Races

A stage race is a race consisting of several “one-day” races that could include road races, criteriums or time trials (either individual or team time trials). Such races normally have 3 or more stages. Any combination of road event types can be used.

The winner of the stage race is the rider who completes all of the stages in the fastest cumulative time. This ranking, based upon time, is called the “General Classification” or “GC”. Stage races may feature other classifications such as a sprinters’ classification or climbers’ classification, or even a team classification (however, only the GC is mandatory).

This means that after every stage, both results for the stage and the GC must be produced (as well as for any other classifications).

Times in the general classification are determined by adding the race times of each stage, and then by subtracting any time bonuses for the winners of mass-start stages (note that time bonuses are only applied to the GC and not the individual stage results). GC times are reported only to the nearest second.

In case of a tie in the GC, then the fractions of seconds from any time trial stages are added back in for the riders concerned. If there is still a tie, then the places that the riders concerned received in each stage are added together (with the lower total rank breaking the tie). If there is still a tie, then rider with the highest place in the last stage will break the tie.

The Finish

The finish occurs when the leading edge of the front tire of the bicycle cuts the vertical plane rising from the front edge of the finish line. This is how the finish order is decided when there is a sprint for the finish line. The race time is also taken when this happens.

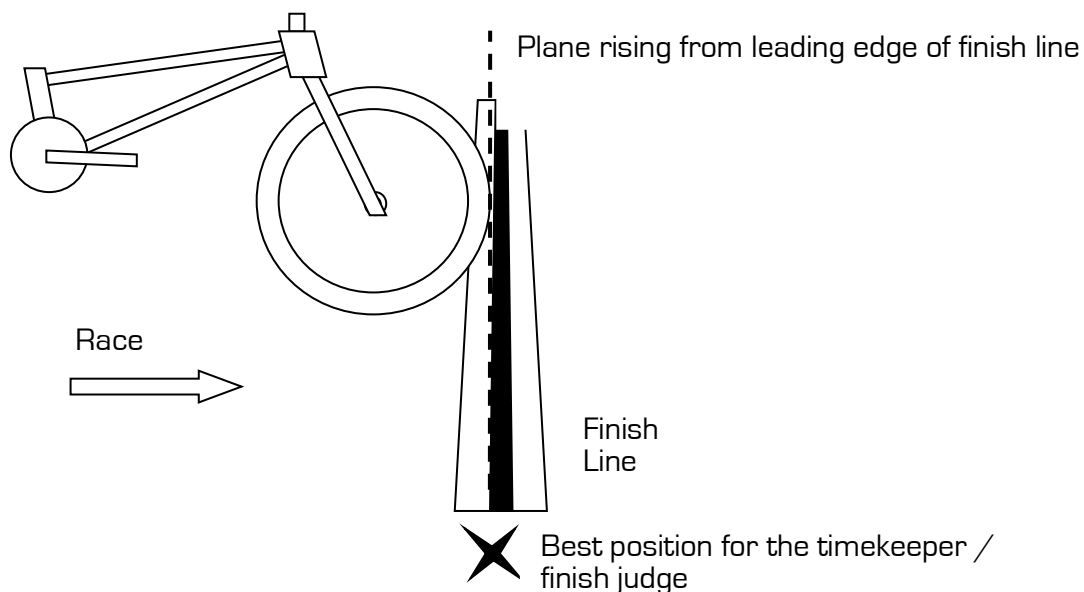
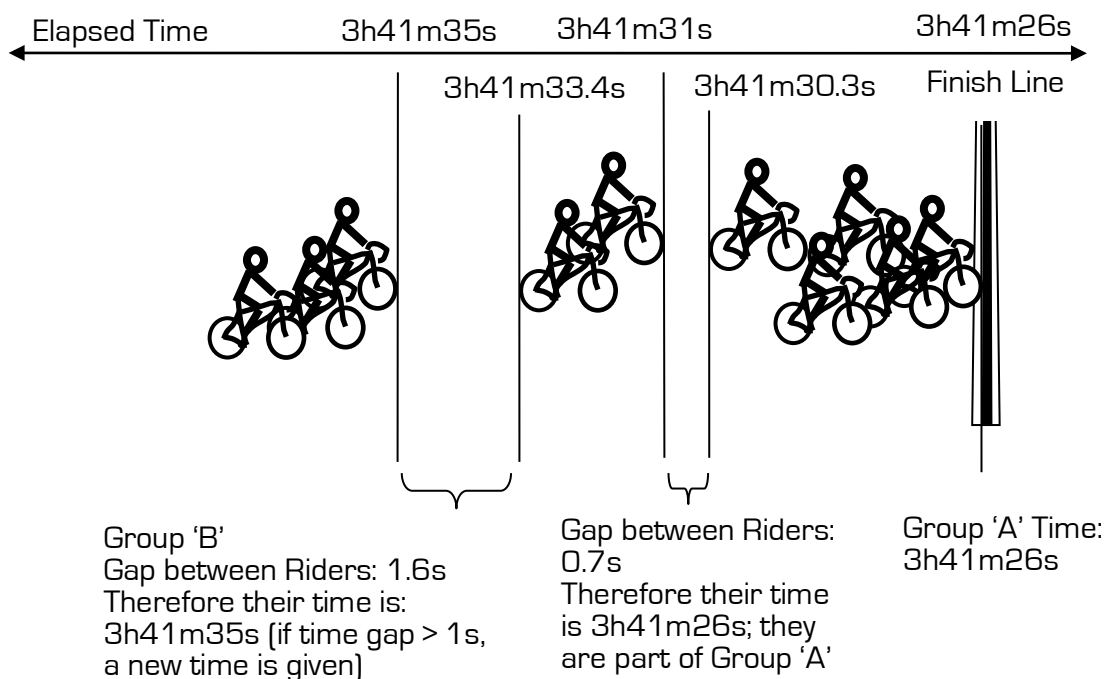


Diagram: The point in time when the finish occurs.

A rider may cross the finish line on foot as long as he or she has their bicycle with them – so if a rider crashes and crosses the finish line without first retrieving their bicycle, they are not scored as finishing. In such a case, they must carefully (not interfering with other riders), go back and get their bicycle and then cross the finish line with it in order to receive a result.

Times in Mass Start Races

For any mass-start (bunch) race, times are always reported to the nearest second. Any group of riders with less than 1 second between them, are given the same time. A new time is only given if there is more than 1 second between riders.



Times in Time Trials

In time trials, times are reported at least to the nearest 1/10th second. Precision is important, as it is time that decides the finish order. The race time for the rider (or team) is decided by subtracting the start time of the rider (or team) from the time of day that they crossed the finish line. This produces elapsed time [the race time].

Start Lists and Race Results

Before the race begins, a start list is produced, which lists all of the riders who registered the event, attended sign-in to show their license, and who have received their race number.

Start lists have the following information:

At the top of the page:

- The words: “Start List”.
- Name and date of the race.
- The category.
- The number of starters.
- The distance of the race (number of laps).

For each rider:

- The rider’s number (bib).
- The rider’s name.
- The rider’s club or team.

At the bottom of the page:

- The publication date / time.
- The page number.

In the start list, riders are listed in the order that they will start the race (or for mass start races, the order in which they are called to the start line).

In road races and criteriums, the results are determined by the order in which the riders cross the finish line after completing the full distance. In some cases, the commissaires may decide to pull from the race any riders who are lapped or in danger of being lapped.

For time trials, the results are listed in order of time, from the fastest time to the slowest.

The race results generally have the following information:

At the top of the page:

- The word “Results”.
- The posting time.
- Whether the results are “official” or “unofficial” (meaning that they have not yet been confirmed by the finish judge).
- Name and date of the race.
- The category.
- The number of starters.

For each rider:

- The finish position (or rank).
- The rider’s number (bib).
- The rider’s name.
- The rider’s club or team.
- The race time (or time back from the winner).

At the bottom of the page:

- The name of the finish judge.
- The page number.

Not all riders may be credited with a finish, depending on what happens in the race. For road events, riders who did not cover the distance (whether they were pulled or whether they abandoned) are usually not listed. Either that, or they may be listed as “DNF” (Did Not Finish) or “DNS” (Did Not Start).

If riders who are lapped by the race leaders are not pulled from the race, they are normally stopped at the finish line once the winner has finished. In this case, they are listed 1 or more laps down, depending on how many times they were lapped by the race leaders. Riders 1 lap down would be listed as a block behind all riders who covered the distance. Then riders 2 laps down, and so on. Within each block, order across the finish line determines their position.

Also, some riders may be disqualified, due to a serious fault (such as crossing the yellow center line in a race that takes place on an open road). Such riders are listed as “DSQ”.

Important Note: It is the job of the finish judges, timekeepers and organization timing staff to produce the race results from the finish order. In doing so, they produce the actual finish order for the race. If the commissaires’ panel later decides to relegate or disqualify a rider, that decision will later be reflected in the results; however, it is still the responsibility of the judges to record the order of every rider as they cross the finish line, regardless of any decisions that may later be taken.

Ties: For any type of race, if it is not possible to break a tie (e.g. with a photo-finish camera, or for a time trial with the electronic timing system), then all of the riders concerned will share the place and prizes in question, and the places immediately below would not be awarded. For example, if there were a tie for 3rd place, then the results would be listed as 1st, 2nd, 3rd (shared by the 2 riders) and then 5th place.

Commissaire Roles

As already discussed, the commissaires are generally responsible for supervising the race and penalizing infractions of the rules; also they are responsible for verifying that the results produced by the organization’s timing and results service are correct.

In order to do that, the group of Commissaires responsible for the race (known as the commissaires’ panel) executes certain tasks for each type of race.

This section will give you a brief overview of each of those tasks. Also, a few specific tasks will be covered in more detail, as it is these jobs that you will be given when working as a level ‘C’ road commissaire.

All Race Types

The President of the Commissaires’ Panel (PCP): Responsible for the overall supervision of the race, and for reviewing the technical information provided by the organizer to ensure that it is correct and complies with the rules. The PCP is also responsible for assigning the tasks of the other members of the Commissaires’ Panel and for supervising their work.

The PCP is ultimately responsible to Cycling BC for running the race and for any penalties that are given.

Road Races

The PCP

For road races in BC, the PCP is usually positioned near the finish line to deal with problems that may arise, or may also follow the Elite Races in the caravan (a position known as “Commissaire 1” or “Comm. 1”). When working as Comm. 1, the PCP has the responsibilities briefly described in the section above concerning the race caravan.

Also, the PCP will normally give the start instructions and start the race.

Other Commissaires

The other commissaires are normally assigned the following tasks:

Finish Judge: The commissaire who is responsible for tracking the position of the bunch and individual riders throughout the entire race, and for deciding the finish order (with the assistance of the timing and results service provided by the organizer). This commissaire is positioned at the finish line for the entire race, and also for noting any riders who did not start (via the sign-on sheet).

Assistant Judge / Timekeeper: This commissaire assists the finish judge with scoring the race and is also responsible for recording the times of individual riders and groups of riders during the finish. While the race is in progress, the assistant judge may also manage the lap board. This is the role that is normally assigned to level ‘C’ Commissaires for road races.

Comm. 1: Duties as described above for each of the individual “caravans” on the road at the same time.

criteriums

The PCP

For criteriums in BC, the PCP is located at the finish line. He or she gives the start instructions and is responsible for starting the race. While the race is running, the PCP is responsible for deciding which riders are to be pulled out of the race because they are no longer in contention and are in danger of being lapped.

Other Commissaires

Finish Judge: Same as for a road race.

Assistant Judge / Timekeeper: Same as for a road race. If enough commissaires are present, there will be 2 assistant judges, one of whom is responsible for the lap board.

Pit Commissaire: Is present in the pit to decide whether or not a rider entering the pit is entitled to a neutralization as the result of a “recognized mishap”, which is defined as being involved in a crash, having a flat tire, or breakage of some essential part of the bicycle (such as the frame or a wheel). Maintenance issues such as loose handlebars or derailleur adjustments are not considered as recognized mishaps.

Also, the pit commissaire keeps track of the composition of the race as much as possible, so that riders return to the race in roughly the same position that they were in when the mishap occurred. This is important – for example, a rider with a mishap in the bunch would not be entitled to return to the race in the breakaway.

Comm. 1: Follows the bunch in a car; records the numbers of riders off the back once the following car overtakes those riders.

Comm. 2: The commissaire who is in front of the race. In a road event, if the Comm. 2 position is used, it normally follows the breakaway once there is enough distance between it and the bunch. However, in a criterium, Comm. 2 always serves as the lead car (or motorcycle) and always remains in front of the leading riders to mark the front of the race. In a criterium, Comm. 2 also watches for riders taking short-cuts, helps get the numbers of riders involved in crashes, and reports these to the finish line and pit.

Time Trials

The PCP

For Time Trials, the PCP usually doesn't have a specific task; rather he or she is available to solve problems and supervise the race. This involves being available at the start, the finish and the bike measuring station.

Other Commissaires

Bike Measuring: This commissaire is responsible for verifying that the bicycles used in competition satisfy the UCI equipment regulations. For races in BC, this means measuring the saddle position and maximum extension of the aero-bars. Also, it means ensuring that gearing restrictions for junior riders are respected. As a note, checking gearing restrictions for juniors is also done for road races and criteriums.

Start Commissaire: The start commissaire is the official responsible for executing the start procedure, and for assessing a time penalty if a rider starts a second or two early. Also, it is the start commissaire who decides when it is that any riders who are late for their start can begin race.

Whip: The “whip” is the commissaire responsible for ensuring that the start order is respected and for calling the next riders to begin the race into the line behind the start.

Also he or she is responsible for making sure that riders who haven't passed through the bicycle measuring station are not allowed in the line-up. In case one or more riders miss their start times, the whip also ensures that the starter is aware of this fact.

When a rider is missing, the schedule of start times must be maintained, which means that there will be a gap in the starts. The start gap is normally 1 minute, but could be as little as 30 seconds. This position is normally assigned to level ‘C’ commissaires.

The Timekeeper: Responsible for recording the times at which the riders cross the finish line, as well as the order in which they crossed the line. Also they must verify that the results produced by the organizer's timing and results service are correct. This position is normally assigned to level ‘C’ commissaires.

The Turnaround: As most time trials are “out and back”, a commissaire is normally assigned to the turnaround to make sure that each rider completes the full course. At this position, the commissaire records the number of each rider in order, as well as the time that they reached the turnaround. Level ‘C’ commissaires may be assigned this task.

Course Commissaire: If available, one or more commissaires patrol the course to ensure that riders respect the regulations concerning drafting. Drafting between

riders is not permitted in individual time trials. Also, it is only permitted between members of the same team in team time trials.

Should drafting be noticed, the commissaire must record the speed (from the vehicle odometer) at which the drafting occurred as well as the length of time that it occurred. A time penalty is then later assessed. Should they notice that it is happening, they must also draw level with the rider who is drafting to warn him or her to stop.

Stage Races

For each stage, the tasks are the same as above for a one-day race of the same type. The timekeepers are normally responsible for creating the general classification.

Specific Tasks for Level ‘C’ Commissaires

Assistant Judge / Timekeeper Tasks

Road Races (on a circuit) and Criteriums

- Start the stopwatches when the race begins.
- Record the starting time of each race category.
- Keep a record of the composition of each race that is on the road (breakaways, number of riders in main groups (and race numbers of riders in smaller groups) and riders off the back of the bunch.
- For each race on the road, keep a record of the time gaps between breakaway, chase groups, and the main peloton as the race progresses and report this information to the other Commissaires.
- If several race caravans are on the course at once, monitor the relative time gaps between each caravan to determine if a faster race will pass a slower race.
- Verify that the lap board displays the correct number of laps remaining.
- Assign race times to each rider or group of riders as they finish the race.
- Operate the lap board.
- Assist the finish judge with verifying the race results produced by the timing / results service.

Timekeeper Task Distribution for Time Trials

- Ensure that all stopwatches used in the race are synchronized.
- Record the finish times and finish order.
- Calculate the elapsed times for the riders to produce race results.
- Verify the race results produced by the timing / results service.

Whip at Time Trials

- Using the start list as a guide, line up the next riders to start in order behind the start line; the number of riders needed depends on the start interval between riders. With 1-minute intervals, 5 to 8 riders are enough.
- Ensure that riders who did not complete the bike measuring process are not allowed in the line-up.
- Check that the riders have their race number (only 1 is needed for time trials).
- Notify the starter if anyone is missing.

Level ‘C’ Commissaire Officiating Skills

In order to work as a level ‘C’ road commissaire, you need to develop the following skills:

- Managing the lap board.
- Using a stopwatch.
- Using a voice recorder.
- Keeping a race passing order.
- Recording times and assigning them to individual riders and groups of riders.

This section introduces the basics of these 5 key skills.

Managing the Lap Board

The lap board is a vital part of races that take place on circuits (road races or criteriums). It is the main way used by the commissaires to communicate the distance remaining in the race to the riders. Also in criteriums, it is used to indicate when there will be a prime for an intermediate sprint (a prime is a cash prize given in criteriums for the winner of an intermediate sprint).

Note: There are two types of sprints in road events: 1) The final sprint, where riders who have covered the full distance of the race sprint for the win, and 2) intermediate sprints; one or more of these may take place mid-race for a prime such as in a criterium, or for points to be earned in the sprinter’s competition in a stage race.

The lap board is always changed shortly before the leader of the race approaches the finish line, not before. All riders in the race, even those off the back, need to be able to see the number of laps remaining for them.

Most lap boards have two number panels, but some may have more – 2 sets of 2 panels. Such a lap board is useful for races that have two bunches of riders on the road at once, as is typical for provincial events.



It is important that the person operating the lap board knows the order in which the races were started, and remains aware of the race situation.

Sometimes, in a road race with 2 or more caravans on the course, a faster race may catch and overtake a slower race. If this happens, then commissaires on the road need to communicate this fact to the finish line, so that the finish line knows what to expect, and so the lap board can be correctly updated.

Also, in criteriums, it is not uncommon for the race leaders to lap the field in the elite men’s category – especially if the course is short. It is the job of the PCP to decide when the field is caught.

Up until that point, the lap board will be changed on the race leaders, even though they may be just behind the bunch and about to catch them. In this situation, the lap board will not be changed for any chase group or for the front of the bunch, until the Chief Commissaire declares that the field has been caught. At that point, the lap board will then next be changed for the rider(s) who were immediately behind the leaders until the leaders finally caught the bunch (which could be either a chase group ahead of the front of the bunch, or the front of the bunch itself).

Identifying the leader of the race can be difficult. The main way of doing this is by noting the composition of the race as it unfolds, and also by watching for the lead cars of the various categories. This way after a few laps, you will know when to expect the leaders. If you are unsure, consult with the finish judge.

As lap board operator, it is possible to become confused and make a mistake. So it is vital to concentrate, especially in criteriums. This said, unless it is in the last laps of the race, a mistake is normally not a huge problem, as long as it is discovered and corrected quickly. This is why it is good practice for all of the officials at the finish line to constantly confirm between each other that what the lap board is displaying is correct and to ask the others if they are not sure.

Ring the Bell

The bell is rung by the lap board operator to indicate primes or other intermediate sprints, and also to signal the last lap of the race.

When ringing the bell, do so loudly and sharply (but briefly) for each group of riders or individual riders on the road to whom the bell applies (example: in a road race, where some riders have been lapped, and they have not been pulled from the race, then do not ring the bell for such riders on the last lap, as they may have one more lap to go if the Chief decides to let them continue once the winner finishes).

Using a Stopwatch

It is important to understand the basic operation of a hand-held stopwatch.

A stopwatch is used to accurately measure the amount of time that has elapsed since the watch was started. This is known as “Elapsed Time”. Many digital stopwatches are also capable of storing times for later recall.



Stopwatches, Elapsed Time and Time of Day

As noted above, “Elapsed Time” is the amount of time that has passed since the stopwatch was started. On the other hand, “Time of Day” is literally the time of day. Most stopwatches use Elapsed Time, although some more expensive and feature-rich stopwatches can also record and store times in Time of Day format.

Elapsed Time can easily be converted to Time of Day; in order to do this, simply add the Elapsed Time to the Time of Day that the stopwatch was started. Similarly, two Time of Day values can be converted into an Elapsed Time value by subtracting the earlier Time of Day from the later Time of Day.

For certain kinds of race such time trials, it is best to work in Time of Day. This is because the rider’s start times are given on the start list as a Time of Day.

Choosing a Stopwatch

There are many different types of stopwatches. Many wristwatches have a basic stopwatch function, as do many of the “Smartphone” types of mobile phone. More useful are the many different types of handheld stopwatch, and even printing stopwatches that print a continuous log of all the times recorded by the watch. The most useful sort of stopwatch for Commissaires has the following features:

Memory: The ability to store several times; the more times that can be stored, the better, however a useful watch should be able to store at least 30 times

Recall: The ability to recall stored times while the watch is still running

Display Resolution: The ability to display and record times accurate to the nearest 1/100 of a second. Choose your watch carefully; the most basic watches have

displays that can only show 1/10 or 1/100 of a second for the first hour of watch operation, after which the "hours" digit appears and shifts minutes and seconds over to cover the spot formerly occupied by 1/100's of a second

Watch Format: Very few wristwatch style stopwatches are able to perform the functions listed above; however, there are many types of hand-held stopwatch that can do these things. However, a wristwatch with a built-in stopwatch function can make a good backup watch

Cost: Most handheld stopwatches with the features described above can be purchased inexpensively, usually for less than the honorarium you will earn at a single race. The cost of a basic stopwatch with these features should be between about \$35 and \$60

As you gain more experience as a Commissaire and work at more and more races, you may wish to eventually purchase a more advanced watch that can store 100 or even 300 times, or that can be connected to a printer. However, for most officials, such a watch is not needed.

Where to Buy a Stopwatch

While sports department stores sell very basic stopwatches, they may not carry watches with the features described above. The best place find useful stopwatches in most cities are swimming and aquatics supply stores, or athletics / track and field supply stores. If your city does not have such a store, then you can buy stopwatches inexpensively on the Internet.

Web sites that have stopwatches suitable for Commissaires include:

<http://www.jumpstartathletics.com/> [Canada – Edmonton]
<http://www.team-aquatic.com/> [Canada – North Vancouver]
<http://www.cei-ultrak.com/> [USA]
<http://www.stopwatchcentral.com/> [USA]

Less expensive models that have or exceed the features listed above include:

EAI S-5500
Seiko S056
Robic SC-606W
Accusplit AX602
ULTRAK 495
ULTRAK 485

These are just a few of the watches available which will meet your needs. Always be sure to look up the specifications for any watch before you buy it to make sure that it has the features you need.

Basic Stopwatch Operation

Despite the variety of stopwatches available, the design and button functions of most hand-held stopwatches are about the same.

In the pictures a few pages above, the watch on the left is a more basic model, while the watch on the right has many more functions. However, the display and buttons are basically the same.

Most digital stopwatches behave as described immediately below. There may be minor differences in some functions depending upon how the watch was designed. You should read the instructions that come with your stopwatch and practice using it to become comfortable with its operation.

Start / Stop Button

The button on the top right side of each watch is the “Start / Stop” button. This button starts the watch; when pressed, the clock starts and begins counting up in increments of 1/100 of a second. If the watch is running, pressing the button again will stop the clock. Note that stopping the clock does not reset it to ‘0’ time. Instead, the Elapsed Time at which the clock was stopped remains displayed. At this point, if you hit the Start / Stop button again, the clock will begin running from the time where it was stopped.

Care must be taken to avoid accidentally hitting the “Start / Stop” button during a competition; otherwise, the clock will stop running. Some watches come with a “Safety” cap that can be put over the “Start / Stop” button to prevent this from happening. More commonly, you might start a backup watch at the same time as your primary watch in case this happens.

Split / Reset Button

The button on the top left side of each watch is the “Split / Reset” button. This button resets the watch to ‘0’ time if the watch is currently stopped. If the watch is running, then an intermediate time, called a “split” is recorded.

The time recorded when the “Split / Reset” button is pressed (while the watch is running, of course) is the time that has elapsed since the watch was started.

If the watch has a memory, then the split time is recorded in the memory for future recall.

Pressing the “Split / Reset” button will also change the watch display. For watches that have multiple display lines as both of those pictured above do, then the most recently recorded split is displayed in the top line, while the main clock continues running on the bottom line. Less advanced watches with a single line display usually temporarily replace the Elapsed Time with the split time for 2 to 5 seconds, depending upon the watch. After this, the Elapsed Time is again displayed.

Both watches pictured above also assign a sequence number to each split, on the left hand side of the top line of the display. This allows you to see at a glance how many splits have been recorded. If the watch has a memory and a recall function, this also tells you the order in which the splits were recorded.

As you may have noticed, the watch on the right in the picture above has 3 display lines. The bottom line shows the running Elapsed Time. The top row shows the Elapsed Time at which the last split was taken. The middle row shows the difference in time between the last two splits; so for instance, if Split A was taken at 10 minutes 32 seconds and 57 / 100ths and Split B was taken at 11 m 47.60 s, then the middle line will display a “Lap” time of 1 m 15.03 s.

Mode Button

Both of the watches pictured above have “Mode” buttons. Pressing this button changes the operating mode of the watch. The mode used most often for Cycling events is usually called “Timer” or “Chrono”. Most stopwatches also have a mode that will display the current Time of Day.

The operation of the Mode button for the watch on the left is a bit different; this watch doesn't have as many features as the one on the right. The watch on the left does have the ability to recall splits while the watch is running. But in order to access stored splits with this watch, the "Mode" button is used to enter "Recall" mode. The watch on the right does not have a "Recall" Mode, as it has a separate "Recall" button that can be used at any time.

Recall Button

Most stopwatches that allow memory recall of stored splits while the watch is running have a "Recall" button. If this button is pressed, the most recently stored split is displayed, usually while the bottom line continues to display the current Elapsed Time. The recalled split is usually displayed for 2 or 3 seconds. Each time the "Recall" button is pressed again within this time window, causes the watch to recall splits in order from the most recently recorded back to the very first split recorded.

If you need to take another split while in Recall mode, simply press the "Split / Reset" button again; the watch will still be running.

As a final note, most watches store splits until the watch has been reset to '0' time. Resetting the watch to '0' time usually causes all stored times to be erased. Also, if you collect more splits than the memory of your watch can handle, the watch will either stop storing new splits, or it will begin discarding splits, in the order that they were taken, beginning with the first split recorded. This behavior depends upon the design of your watch.

Using a Voice Recorder

A voice recorder is a valuable tool for any commissaire working at the finish line. While you are calling finishes, it is normally much easier and faster to talk about what you are seeing than it is to write it down.

Fortunately, it is usually no longer necessary to buy a voice recorder. Main smart-phones have a voice recording application. As long as you can record, and pause and rewind during playback, then the recorder application has all of the features that you need.

The Method

Position yourself to call the finish, then about 15 seconds before the first rider finishes, hit the record button, and say the category of the race so that you can later identify the recording. Then begin speaking as the riders cross the finish line. Try to speak clearly and calmly.

Once all riders have finished, you can then go back and listen to the recording and write out the finish order.

Important: Before relying on any voice recorder or voice recording application, experiment with it so that you understand its operation and how well the microphone picks up your voice, especially when there is a lot of background noise (such as the finish line of a race). This way you will avoid the possibility of calling the finish order while you thought it was recording, when actually it wasn't.

Maintaining a Race Passing Order

Being able to keep a written record of what is happening in the race as it passes the finish line is one of the most important skills that you can develop for managing mass start races.

This is the main tool you have to give you the information needed both to manage the race (including lapped riders) and to decide whether or not the result produced by the organizer’s timing crew are correct.

The basic method is as follows:

Label the top of each sheet. At minimum, include the name and date of the race, as well as the category racing. Also important (if known) is the number of starters. At the bottom of the sheet, also write your name. Also, be sure to include a page number.

For each lap, record the numbers of any riders off the front (in a breakaway or chasing the breakaway). Then write down the number of riders in the bunch as it passes you (if you can count them, otherwise, just write “Bunch” or “B”). For any other groups of riders too large for you to write down all of the numbers, write the number of riders in the group (example: for a group with 14 riders, write ‘14’ and then the letter ‘R’).

Finally, write down the numbers of any riders who are off the back of the bunch.

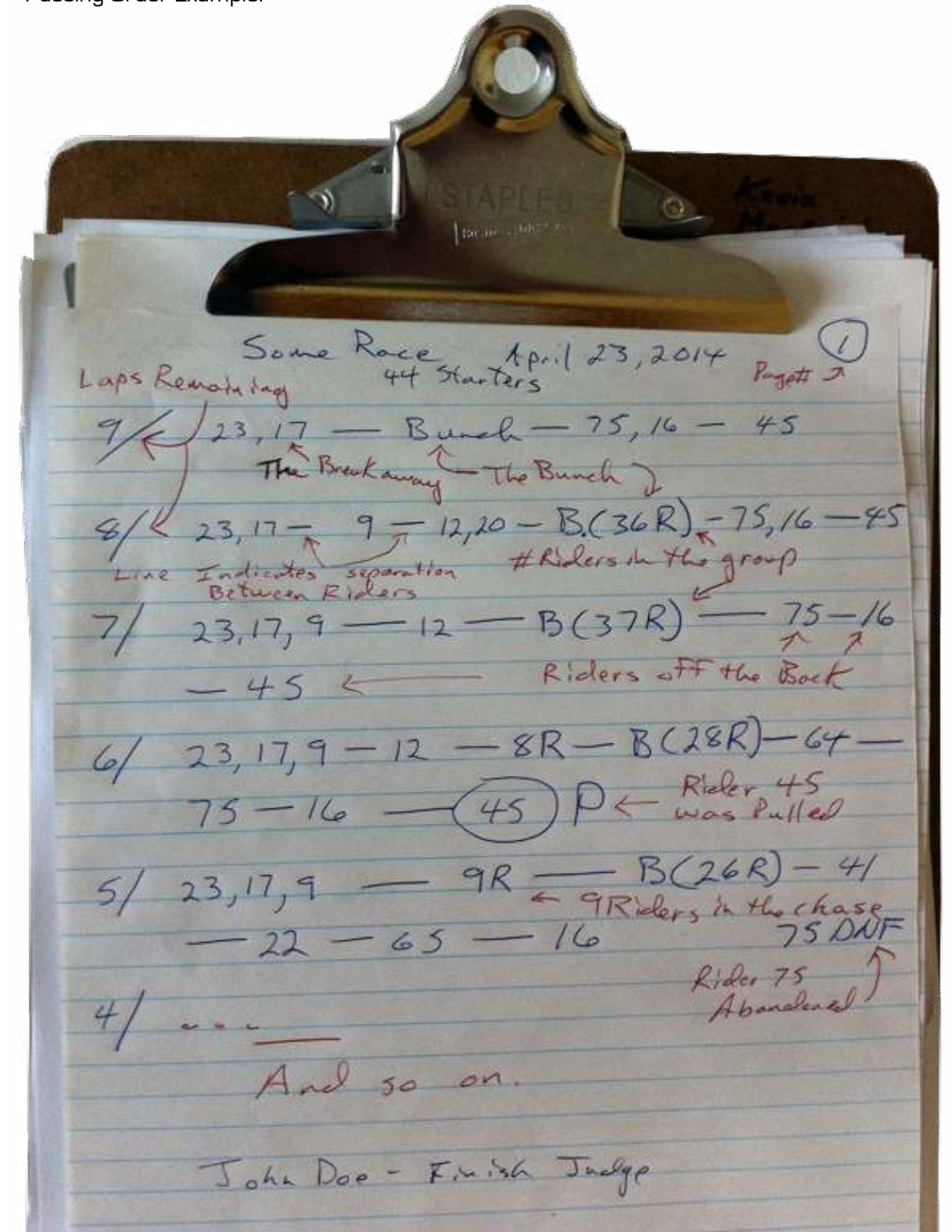
Riders off the back are particularly important, as it is these people who are more likely to be lapped.

As riders fall farther back and are lapped or pulled, circle their numbers. If a rider is pulled, write the letter ‘P’ next to the circled number. If a rider is lapped, write ‘L1’ next to the circled number to indicate they were lapped once. If they are lapped again, later in the race, again circle the number and this time write ‘L2’ to indicate they were lapped twice (and so on).

If you hear that a rider has abandoned the race, write their number in the page margin along with the letters “DNF”.

An example follows on the next page.

Passing Order Example:



Some tips:

- Prepare enough sheets (race name and category) ahead of time
- For most races, 3-digit numbers are used. Obviously, it is easier and faster to remember and write down 2-digit numbers. If there is only 1 category in the race (or even 2 categories, and the second digit of their number ranges don't overlap – e.g. category A has numbers 201 – 240 and category B has numbers 251 – 280), then you can safely omit the first digit when writing down the numbers, with the understanding that for example, '66' means '266'.
- Bring a clipboard.
- Bring a large clear plastic bag; you can put your clipboard in it and still write without getting your paper wet on a rainy day.
- Bring several pens and pencils so that you have a backup.
- Bring extra paper.

Recording Times

A fundamental job of the timekeeper is to record times and assign them to individual riders and groups.

The main tool used to do this is with a stopwatch and a time record sheet.

As the race unfolds, you will use your stopwatch to record and store times using the 'split' button.

It is inefficient to store all time splits in your stopwatch memory and then to go back and transcribe them all. In most situations, you will keep a written timing record as the race happens, using your stopwatch memory to save times only until you have a moment to go back and write them down.

Several different kinds of timing records can be kept. In some cases, you can record times on a start list, as is often the case with a Time Trial. For instance, a space is often provided on the start list for the actual start and finish times for each rider to be recorded.

However, most timing logs for mass start events or road time trials contain 3 or 4 columns, and 20 to 30 rows. There is enough space to record both the rider number and the associated time.

No matter what kind of timing record is used, you should always make sure that each page is numbered and that the name of the race, category of the riders, the current date, and your name are recorded in the header of each page. A timing record with no identifying information is useless. A sample time log for time trials is found on the next page.

For bunch races, you will have a good idea of the composition of the race from the last lap. Concentrate on recording the times of individual riders and groups (including the gaps between them) and then work with the finish judge to assign the correct times in the results.



Next Steps

You should now have the basic skills that you need to begin working and gaining experience as a level ‘C’ road commissaire.

All of the information here will seem abstract until you begin putting it into practice. The more that you work, the better you’ll become. Don’t hesitate to contact organizers to ask if you can volunteer at their event so that you can gain some experience. Also, be sure to help out with races that might be organized by your own club or team. In this way, you’ll be helping the club and also developing your officiating skills at the same time.

Most of all, don’t hesitate to ask more experienced officials for advice.

Once you have officiated at 10 races, you will have sufficient experience to qualify for the level ‘B’ commissaire course.

We hope that you enjoy your first commissaire experiences, and that you will continue to enjoy the sport – as a volunteer and a commissaire.

Should you have questions, don’t hesitate to contact Cycling BC’s officials coordinator (at the time of writing, Kevin MacCuish). officials@cyclingsbc.net