

# Trialing Tutorial - Introduction

For most people, motorsport means strapping yourself into a car and driving as fast as possible over set course, the fastest competitor being the winner. However, this is not the only form that motorsport takes. There is another discipline which involves fast thinking more than fast driving, a discipline which was in fact the precursor to the modern day rally. This discipline is Trialing.

The basic idea behind a trial is to follow a set, correct route at the correct speed. The trick comes in the fact that the instructions (the "CRI's") which are handed out by organisers for you to follow are faulty, and while following these CRI's will enable you to reach the finish, it will not be via the correct route. Instead the competitor must apply a set of rules while following the CRI's to enable them to find the deliberate mistakes ("traps") and follow the correct route.

Where do you find out what these rules are? The rules for trialing are set out in Appendix 5, Schedule T of MotorSport Manual 27 (starting page 215), but unless you are confident in jargon and want to have your head put into a spin I would suggest that you give it a miss at this point and just read on. The other place to find the rules for a particular trial are in the Additional Supplementary Regulations ("ASR's") for the event. These tell you what you should do when encountering particular situations, but beware, the ASR's may themselves have traps for you to find. Confused yet? It isn't quite as bad as it seems, you just have to apply the golden rules of trialing:

- (1) always use your commonsense, and**
- (2) always take any instructions given literally.**

Okay then, how does the organiser know that you have followed the correct route? They could put an impartial observer in each competitor's car, but that would be impractical. Instead the organisers put a set of signs ("checks") at intervals along the correct route which the competitors must spot and list on a sheet in correct order.

As alluded to at the beginning of this article the fastest competitor will not necessarily be the winner. The winner will be the competitor who has stayed closest to the required set speed and followed the correct route most closely. To work out who has succeeded in doing this the best, penalty points are handed out for being late *or early* to specified points along the route and for missing out checks. Generally the following penalties apply:

- Early or late arrival at a time check (by more than 30 seconds)  
*1/10th point per second, up to a maximum of 180 points (ie: 6 points per minute)*
- Failing to pass and/or list a check in the correct order  
*60 points*

As you can work out, the penalty for missing one check is equivalent to being about 10 minutes early or late to a time check, and you can only lose the equivalent number of points to three checks regardless of how early or late you are. In other words, timing is important, but not as important as finding all the checks. There are other penalties which you could incur but are reasonably rare in basic club trials. These are listed on page 230 of MotorSport Manual 27.

Has all this put you off yet? I hope not, because trialing can be a very enjoyable discipline of motorsport to compete in. Read on and you can find out a bit more about each aspect of trialing.

# Trialing Tutorial - En Route

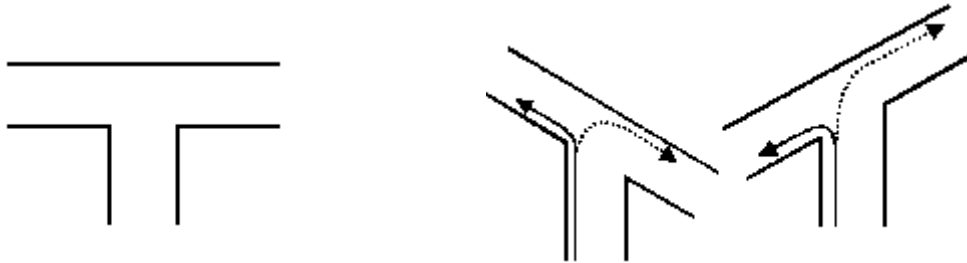
Trialing is the only discipline of motorsport which is held on public roads while the rest of the population is still using them. This can mean that you have to have 5 pairs of eyes to keep an eye on all the other traffic while trying to find checks and interpret instructions, but most of that can be left to the navigator. However the driver is the person who must interpret what the navigator is telling him/her and decide where to go. Here is a run down on some aspects of driving in a trial.

## Definition of an Intersection

An intersection is a junction of three or more roads (ie: can exit the intersection in at least three different directions). A road must be accessible on the day of the event by competitors and will usually be open to all members of the public. A definition of what is a road will usually be given in the ASR's, and will usually exclude obviously private property (such as driveways marked by letterboxes or entrances to business addresses). It should be noted that, unless otherwise stated, public car parks, driveways for parks and schools and such are generally regarded as roads.

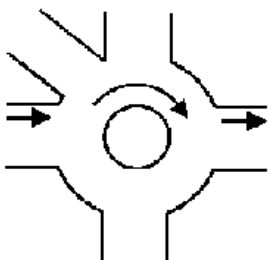
## The Tee Intersection

A "Tee" intersection is just as you would expect, an intersection which is layed out like a capital "T". For an intersection to be a Tee intersection the competitor must be travelling up the stalk of the "T" to an intersection where you can go only left or right.



## The Crossroads

A set of crossroads is the intersection of four roads (no more, no less), and must not be a roundabout. In particular, look out for crossroads which are unmarked from your direction of travel (ie: you are going down a main road and there are two side-streets opposite each other, forming a set of crossroads) as these can be easy to miss.

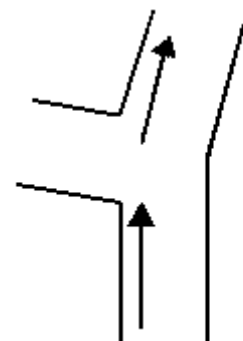


## The Roundabout

A roundabout is an intersection with an area around which traffic may only proceed in one direction. Any CRI's to be completed at a roundabout must indicate which exit on the left to exit the roundabout from (ie: an instruction such as "Left at roundabout" is not sufficient, you would need an instruction such as "Exit at the first exit from the roundabout")

## The Line of Least Deviation (aka The Straight Ahead Rule)

Line of least deviation involves following the road which causes you to deviate the least from your current direction of travel. This will not always mean that you will stay on the road you are currently travelling on.



## Non-Existent Roads

When is a road not a road? When it is deemed not to exist in the minds of the trialist. For a road to exist it must be possible for you to turn into and travel along it from your current position. This means that:

1. If you are at an intersection with a no right turn sign, a road closed sign, no entry sign etc the road on the right indicated by the sign does not exist.
2. If you are travelling along a road with a median strip preventing you from turning into a road then that road doesn't exist.
3. If the organisers have put out a "No Road" sign (see picture below) to say that a road doesn't exist. You must be careful where a road is made not to exist as it could, for example, make an intersection of five roads (non-crossroads) into a set of crossroads.

### Signs

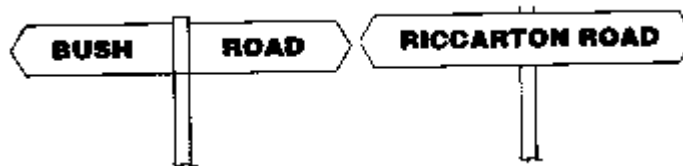
The basis for most instructions to tell competitors where to go are based on road signs. Sometimes the signs will only be used to name a road where you should do something, sometimes the sign will itself be a spot to do something.

A general convention with signs is as follows: When quoting a sign, the sign will be quoted in CAPITAL LETTERS in the CRI's; Where the sign is indicating something (eg: naming a road) then the sign will be spelt in Standard Case in the CRI's (The differences here can be subtle, but will become clearer in the Traps section)

When a sign is quoted (ie: CAPITALS) then the whole sign must be quoted word for word. There is a large difference between the signs "MOWBRAY PL", "MOWBRAY PLACE" and "MOWBRAY PLACE NO EXIT" - each of these would refer to different signs.

When a sign is naming (ie: Standard Case) then the whole sign does not have to be quoted (eg: "Mowbray Pl" would be sufficient to refer to each of the three signs above as the sign is only naming the road).

Lastly, look out for signs which appear to be one sign but are actually two. See the examples below.



One sign in each case



Two signs in each case

# Trialing Tutorial - Traps

The main skill in trialing is to find the errors in the ASR's and CRI's to enable you to follow the correct route. Traps can take many forms far too numerous to list (apart from the fact that there are new traps being dreamt up all the time) but here is a list of common ones for you to keep an eye out for.

## ASR Traps.

- Not so much a trap as a point of confusion, always check the order of priorities in the ASR's. This lists the priority that certain instructions/rules should be implemented and can become important if you reach an intersection where you could follow any of three or four different instructions. Generally instructions given in the ASR's will be most important, followed by section overriding instructions, the individual CRI instructions and line of least deviation, but check none the less.
- Check what you should do upon encountering certain check codes. It is usual for L to mean left, R to mean right etc but it is a simple and effective trap to switch the meaning of one or both around.
- Definition of signs. Look out for hidden instructions in any ASRs defining signs. All example instructions will be preceded by "for example" or "eg" - any instructions not prefixed could be able to be executed during the trial, and instructions found in the ASR's generally override all other instructions.
- Watch for requirements to execute all instructions at intersections. This trap works well with checks instructing competitors to execute a u-turn - most competitors will do a u-turn immediately after the check and miss the check further up the street before the next intersection where the u-turn should be executed.
- Always be careful of instructions setting out definitions and procedures for no exit roads, and in particular where to execute u-turns in them.
- Definitions of roads should be closely examined. Sometimes carparks are deemed to be roads, sometimes they are not. Ditto driveways without letterboxes. Watch out for roads being named which do or do not exist.
- ASR's defining how signs are set out in the CRI's can often hold traps. While the convention is for signs to be words quoted in all CAPITAL LETTERS a neat trap is for signs to be words *with* Capital Letters.
- All other ASR instructions should be scrutinised closely and implemented exactly as they read. If an ASR instruction is in there it is to either clarify points or to provide a hidden trap.

## CRI Traps

- Spelling errors. You can almost guarantee that somewhere in the CRI's there will be some deliberate spelling errors. These errors can greatly change what a CRI instruction means. Look especially out for number 5 instead of letter S, number 1 instead of letter I, number 0 instead of letter O, "f" instead of "t" (especially effective in words like "traffic lights")
- Quoting Signs (CAPITAL LETTERS). When a sign is quoted in capital letters in the CRI's, the physical sign must have exactly the same words with exactly the same spelling, and all words on the sign must be quoted. Look out for ROAD instead of RD, STREET instead of ST etc (there is a difference), the words NO EXIT where those words are also part of the sign (not where they are on a separate sign) and incorrect spelling as outlined above.
- Instructions with Quoted Signs (CAPITAL LETTERS). Here you need to take the instructions literally. take the following instructions:

*Left at MOWBRAY PL*  
*Left into MOWBRAY PL*  
*Follow MOWBRAY PL*

The first instruction can be followed (you are able to turn at a sign), as can the third instruction if the sign is a fingerboard (ie: pointing one way - you go the direction the fingerboard is pointing). The second instruction cannot be followed, because it is not possible to turn your car into a sign!

- Naming Signs (Sentence Case). Where a sign is written in sentence case in the CRI's this is usually to name a road, which is in turn named by the sign. You don't therefore have to find a sign with the exact same words on it (eg: the CRI name can omit the words NO EXIT, even if they are on the sign) but the spelling of the road name must still be the same. Again, watch out for spelling traps (1's, 5's, 0's etc)
- Instructions with Naming Signs (Sentence Case). Since you are not actually concentrating on the sign, the important object to take literally is the road. Thus:

*Left at Mowbray PI*  
*Left into Mowbray PI*  
*Follow Mowbray PI*

The first instruction can be executed because you are turning at a specific physical object (the road Mowbray PI). This time the second instruction can also be executed (you can turn into a road) but the third instruction cannot be executed (you cannot follow a road as it doesn't point anywhere the same as a fingerboard sign does)

- Stay on this road. If you get an instruction like this you must stay on the road you are on until a certain condition occurs. Take the following instructions:

*Stay on this road until turning left into Mowbray PI*  
*Stay on this road*

With the first instruction you must stay on the road you are on and not leave it until you are able to finish the instruction by turning left into Mowbray PI. The second instruction is worse because you cannot finish the instruction until it is deleted by a check. Therefore, upon reaching the end of the road you are on you will have to do a u-turn (so that you can still stay on this road) and go back until you find the check to delete the instruction.

Be aware that in determining what this road is, you should take into account road markings at intersections (always follow the road markings) and the road surface (if this changes from, say, tarmac to gravel then this road has changed and you must u-turn)

- Stay on "named road". This can be even more devious as you need to look out for a change of name in the road. For example:

*Stay on Kitchener Rd*

As you travel along Kitchener Rd you are fine, but then suddenly without warning the name of the road changes to Hurstmere Rd. There is no warning, the road still looks the same, there is no intersection as such, but the name of the road has changed. Therefore, to stay on Kitchener Rd you must do a u-turn. The only way to finish a stay on "named road" instruction is to find a check to delete the instruction.

- Crossroads. These are another favourite for trial plotters as there is only one correct spelling for telling a competitor what to do at a set of crossroads. You could encounter the following instructions:

*Left at crossroads*  
*Left at cross roads*  
*Left at crossroad*  
*Left at CROSSROADS*

Of these four instructions only the first (and possibly the last) can be executed. Instruction two indicates you should turn left at some "angry" roads, instruction three tells you to turn left at the single road (there must be multiple roads for crossroads to exist). As the the last instruction it would not be executed at a set of crossroads but at the sign "CROSSROADS".

### **"Along the Route" Traps**

There are some traps which can only be found while actually out in the car. These include:

- A road sign quoted in the CRI's or ASR's must be clearly visible in its entirety from the direction of approach. If you can't read the sign from the road it cannot exist.
- Intersections can be modified by roads which are deemed not to exist (see the En Route section for more information). Also be careful of this when counting roads for instructions like "Third road on the left".
- Line of least deviation. Often an intersection will not have an instruction, especially if the intersection is with only a minor side-street. Be aware that when there are no instructions for an intersection then the "Order of Priorities" in the ASR's apply, which will often require you to take the line of least deviation, which may just be up that side street.

## Trialing Tutorial - A Worked Example

Okay, so you are out driving the trial route and have found your first trap. What do you do now? Following is an example of a trap, and what to do.

### **CRI #7. Left into MOWBRAY PL**

#### **Order of Priorities (as set out in the ASR's)**

- **These ASR's**
- **The numbered CRI's, in numerical order**
- **Section or subsection overriding instructions**
- **The line of least deviation**

#### **Section Override - No section overrides exist**

The problem with this instruction is that we cannot turn the car into a sign, so what do we do? We first need to look to the "Order of Priorities" in the ASR's to tell us what to do.

First Priority are the ASR's. Well, they don't tell us what to do at MOWBRAY PL, so we can ignore them. Second Priority, the CRI's. Well, we can't execute the instruction in the CRI's because we can't turn into the sign.

Third Priority is the section override. There is no section override existing, so scrub that priority. Forth Priority, Line of Least Deviation. Yes we can proceed straight ahead, so that is what we will do.

We are now travelling along past MOWBRAY PL, still trying to complete CRI #7. It is obviously an instruction we will not be able to complete so we should be looking for a check to delete the instruction.

Sure enough we come across a check with the code "DUR".

Since it is a check we write it down on our sheet to show we have taken the correct route and then execute the code on it. Looking in the ASR's we see the following relating to check codes:

D - Delete the instruction you are trying to complete

U - Execute a u-turn

L - Turn Left at the next intersection

R - Turn Right at the next intersection

So, we travel past the check (as we always should), delete the current instruction (CRI #7, the one we are having problems with), execute a u-turn and turn right at the next intersection. Doing this will put you back onto the same road as those who missed the trap and check, and you will now be doing the next instruction (CRI #8).

This is a simple example of what you should do when you find a check, and as you can see it is basically a matter of using common sense and systematically working your way through the Order of Priorities. Take a look at some more examples of traps (taken from the MotorSport NZ Trialing Guide circa 1980) for some more practise below.

Remember, the best way to learn how to do trials is to go out and attempt to do one yourself. At the finish the organisers will have a sheet with all the answers and the trialing gurus will generally be only too happy to answer your questions. The best way to learn is always be your mistakes.

# Trialing Tutorial - More Examples

Following is an example of a set of CRI's with an explanation of what should be checked for:

1. Go Right
2. Go left at HILL RD
3. Go right into SMITH ROAD
4. Proceed ahead at AUCKLAND 12 km
5. Go left at tee intersection
6. Cross WHITFORD BRIDGE
7. Go left at AUCKLAND THAMES HAMILTON
8. Go right at JONES RD CITY OF MANUKAU
9. Go right at REDOUET RD
10. Go left at HOWICK 4 KM

## The Explanations

### 1. Go Right

Simply turn right at the first opportunity into a public road. Ensure that it is a public road and not prohibited by any ASR.

### 2. Go left at HILL RD

At an intersection where there is a sign HILL RD, do a left turn. Check that the sign is letter perfect (ie: not HILL ROAD); also that the sign is inside the boundaries of the intersection.

### 3. Go right into SMITH ROAD

This is a trap as it is not possible to turn into a sign. Carry on using whatever road rule or overriding instruction is in use until you find a check which deletes this instruction.

### 4. Proceed ahead at AUCKLAND 12 km

This is a trap as the sign quoted is AUCKLAND 12. As the 'km' is not in capitals it can therefore play no part in the sign. Just keep going until you get a delete check or a sign AUCKLAND 12.

### 5. Go left at tee intersection

Go left at tee shaped intersection as shown in the En Route section.

### 6. Cross WHITFORD BRIDGE

This is a trap as it is not possible to physically cross a sign. Just keep going until you find a delete check.

### 7. Go left at AUCKLAND THAMES HAMILTON

Ensure that the sign concerned is only one sign and not two. Also, that the sign is within the boundaries of the intersection.

### 8. Go right at JONES RD CITY OF MANUKAU

This is a trap because local body names can play no part in the identification of a sign. Just keep looking for a delete check.

### 9. Go right at REDOUET RD

Ensure that the sign quoted is as it appears in the CRI's. If not, carry on until you find either the correct sign or a delete check.

### 10. Go left at HOWICK 4 KM

Ensure that the sign quoted is letter perfect with the one quoted in the CRI's; however, the lettering on the sign may be "HOWICK 4 km". This is okay because the CRI must have the sign in capitals to indicate it is a sign, but the letter on the sign can be in lower case.