



2026 ANNUAL TAM ROADEO GUIDE

I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2026 Annual Transportation Association of Maryland Statewide Roadeo.

The TAM Roadeo is an opportunity for drivers to gain recognition locally and nationally for their driving skills. The Roadeo is an opportunity to test your limits, meet others in the transportation profession, and have a good time!

The following information is being supplied to all contestants and judges so that everyone is familiar with the Roadeo events, the course layout, rules of conduct and scoring.

Important Information on Scoring

The total number of points that a Roadeo driver can earn is 875.

Here is the breakdown of the Roadeo scoring:

<u>Driving</u>	<u>Wheelchair Securement</u>	<u>Pre-Trip</u>
525 (60%)	200 (22.9%)	150 (17.1%)

General

1. Watch out for vehicles (and volunteer/judges) at all times! Do not get hit!
2. Wear comfortable shoes, you will be on your feet all day long. If you have a question during the Roadeo, raise your hand for assistance from one of the roaming judges.
3. Exercise good judgment about social distancing, mask wearing, and other hygiene matters. Be respectful of other participants and their choices.
4. **WEAR YOUR SAFETY VEST!** Safety vests (your own or provided by TAM) MUST be worn by judges and volunteers at all times. This is NOT optional.

Rules of Conduct

In order to clarify some common sense rules regarding the competition, the committee has adopted the following rules of conduct:

1. Following the initial walk through of the course, drivers will not be allowed on the

driving course for any reason (except for their actual competition).

Rules of Conduct (cont'd)

1. Contestants must wear their name badges at all times. Each driver will be assigned to a group (A, B, or C). Drivers must follow the instructions of their Group Leader.
2. Drivers must remain outside of the pre-trip inspection and wheelchair securement areas until they are called to participate in these events.
3. Drivers are not to engage in unnecessary conversation with judges.
4. **No alcoholic beverages will be permitted at the Roadeo site.**
5. **Unsportsmanlike conduct of any kind will not be tolerated.** This includes profanity, aggressive behavior toward another contestant or official, abuse of equipment and unsafe driving maneuvers.
6. **Once completed with the competition, drivers are not to discuss the competition with drivers who are still waiting to compete.**
7. Violations of the rules of conduct are to be reported to the Course Marshal as soon as possible.
8. The Course Marshal shall have the sole authority to determine if a violation has occurred and the corrective action to follow. Depending on the severity of the infraction, the corrective action may include either deduction of points from a contestant's score or suspension from the competition.

II. SPECIAL NOTES FOR INDIVIDUAL EXERCISES

These guidelines are for use by **both** judges and drivers. As such, you will see instructions for judges mixed in with instructions for drivers. In this way, all those involved in the competition will be aware of the same information.

There are three events in which Roadeo drivers will compete: Pre-Trip Inspection, Wheelchair Securement, and Driving Course

Keep in mind that the actual order of the exercises on the course may differ from the order in which they are presented in this Guide.

A. Pre-Trip Inspection

The instructions and judging for this exercise have recently been modified, so please read these instructions very carefully.

General Instructions

1. There will be a 7-minute time limit on this exercise.
2. Total possible points: 150
3. Four (4) safety defects will be pre-set on the vehicle. These will be the same for all contestants. Drivers will receive twenty-five (25) points for each safety defect found. We realize that every transit system may have different pre-trip inspection checklists. As a result, all participants will be sent a standard pre-trip form with their rodeo packet. Defects that have been planted should be familiar to everyone.
4. Contestants must conduct their pre-trip inspections in a logical and systematic manner (i.e., moving from front of the vehicle to the back, left to right, or top to bottom). Drivers will earn twenty-five (25) points for doing so.
5. Drivers will earn another twenty-five (25) points for completing the inspection within the 7-minute time limit.
6. Safety defects may be found anywhere on the vehicle, **including under the hood**. (The hood will remain unlatched for each driver to access.)

During the Inspection

Each contestant will conduct their inspection by verbalizing the item or area of inspection and then checking it. As contestants identify defects, they will describe that defect to the judge. The judge will write the defects described by the contestant on the contestant's Pre-Trip Inspection score sheet. Contestants may identify additional defects beyond the four preset on the vehicle, although they will only get credit for identifying the four preset defects. If a contestant has identified 4 or more defects and has not yet completed the full vehicle inspection, he/she must finish the inspection in order to earn twenty-five (25) points (subject to the seven minute time limit).

Upon request, judges **can** assist contestants with their inspections, though for specific tasks only. For instance, the judge may press the brake pedal, and shift the transmission into reverse with the ignition switch in the "on" position, but without the engine running. The judge can also assist the contestants in checking turn signals, brake and back-up lights, and turning on the headlights.

Contestants are **not** required, or allowed, to:

1. Complete a full lift/engine interlock inspection or cycle the lift: Contestants are required to perform a visual inspection of the lift and its immediate surroundings.

2. Brake Inspection: Due to the time constraints of a Roadeo, the brake check will be limited to verifying that the service brake pedal is firm. Contestants will not be allowed to set the parking brake and attempt to move the vehicle.
3. Complete under hood examination: Contestants are required to verbalize all areas under the hood that they would (if there was allotted time) inspect and check.

The judge will read a script to each contestant addressing the rules of this obstacle before the contestant begins the pre-trip.

B. Wheelchair Securement

The seven (7) minute time limit will be enforced. The 7 minutes does not include the time spent by the judge testing the wheelchair securement.

At the start of the Passenger Assistance exercise, the contestant will meet a passenger and judge. The contestant should approach the passenger as though the passenger were a person to be transported. The contestant must verbalize to the passenger all of the activities that he/she will perform in the process of loading and securing them in the vehicle. Contestants must say these activities loud enough for the judges to hear.

For example, the contestant must verbally ask the passenger if they have all of their belongings, not merely look around the area. The contestant must say that they are checking the handgrips on the wheelchair, and physically try to twist them. The contestant must say to the passenger that they are going to back them onto the lift. The contestant does not have to memorize a specific statement, but they must tell the passenger what they are going to do before they do it!

The passenger may be wearing a postural belt in the wheelchair. Before maneuvering the passenger on to the lift platform, the contestant must check the lap belt to verify that it is secure. The lifts should be equipped with rear safety plates. The contestant must physically check the rear safety plate to verify that it is engaged. Similarly, after the lift platform clears the ground, the contestant must physically check the front safety plate to verify that it is secure. Contestants will not be penalized for removing their hand from the wheelchair to check the front safety plate. For the purposes of this Roadeo, contestants will not be permitted to ride the lift platform. Don't leave passenger on lift.

After loading the passenger in the vehicle, the contestant must secure the wheelchair and passenger. After the contestant has positioned the wheelchair in the securement area, secured the front and rear tie downs, set the wheel locks and secured the lap belt/shoulder harness, time stops, and the driver will exit the vehicle. At this point, you have completed the exercise. The judge will release the wheel locks and attempt to roll the wheelchair and passenger forward and backward. If the wheelchair does not roll or slide in either direction, the contestant will receive 24 points. If the wheelchair rolls or slides by any amount, the contestant will receive zero (0) points for this portion of the exercise. Judges must be consistent in evaluating this portion of the exercise!

The judge or passenger will use a stop watch to record the elapsed time for this exercise, from the time that the contestant first greets them to the time that the contestant has completed securing the wheelchair. There will be a 7 minute time limit for the performance of this exercise. After 7 minutes, the exercise will be stopped and the contestant will be scored based on their performance to this point.

You will note on the two score sheets that almost every item for this exercise indicates a point value for “verbal”, and a point value for “performance”. These are the points that the contestant receives for verbalizing what is being performed, and for the actual performance. If contestants do not verbalize what they are going to do before they do it, they do not receive the verbal point value. If they verbalize it, but they do not perform it, they do not receive the performance point value. Judges may want to circle point values on the score sheet as the contestants earn points, and total them at the end of the exercise.

The score sheet lists activities and their point values in a particular order. The items performed under “Sensitivity & Awareness” do not necessarily have to be performed in the exact order listed. However, the other activities do follow a logical order that must be followed. If contestants perform these activities out of order, they will not receive points for the activity that they skipped, or performed late. For example, if a contestant does not check the front safety plate until after he/she has backed the wheelchair into the vehicle, they would not receive 16 points for that item.

Drivers may not utilize a printed checklist or instruction sheet during this portion of the competition. Any drivers observed using such an aid will lose all possible points from this section, subject to the decision of the Course Marshal. Any permanent visual aids present on vehicles, equipment or facilities that are visible to all drivers may be referenced.

C. Driving Course

Judges should be aware that they lend credibility and expertise to the Roadeo. Judges must render objective evaluations of each contestant. On the driving portion of the course, a judge’s responsibility extends from the completion of the previous exercise to the completion of the exercise they are judging. Judges should note the location of the judge icons on the score sheets. These are preferred locations for viewing the exercise, without interfering with the contestant’s ability to perform the exercise. Under no circumstances should a judge run in front of vehicles as they are being driven. It is dangerous, and it disrupts the contestant’s concentration.

Once a cone (barrel or ball) or a curb is hit or touched by a vehicle, it is circled on the score sheet. Additional penalty points are not assessed for hitting the same curb or cone twice.

A cone is “hit” when any portion of the vehicle comes in contact with the cone or its base. This includes the tires, body, and bumpers. A cone does not have to be knocked over to be “hit”.

Judges must reset the cones, or the curb, after they have been touched or hit. Do not reset the

cones until after the vehicle clears the skills test. If a cone is being dragged, try to get the operator's and the onboard judge's attention so that the vehicle can be stopped and the cone removed. The timekeeper should stop the clock under these circumstances, and restart it when the cone is cleared. If a dragged cone hits other cones before the vehicle is stopped, the judge must determine if the cone that was hit by the dragged cone would have been hit by the vehicle if the cone was not being dragged. Judges should use their best judgment, and be consistent.

Place the cones or curb in the same place. Do not make any adjustments to the course by altering the placement of the cones! The key to a fair course is that the same skill tests are the same for all operators.

It is permissible for the operator to stop on the course. Penalty points will not be assessed for a stop (except for Judgment Stop), only for transmission shifts into reverse that are not required by the skill test. The clock will continue to run during a stop as long as the stops are not required by a judge.

Be careful that you do not unintentionally give the contestant's guidance through any means, including hand signals. You are not directing the contestants, you are scoring them. Keep your hand on the clipboard, or in your pockets! Similarly, spectators are not permitted to follow vehicles as they progress through the course. Nor are they permitted in the Pre-trip inspection area or the Wheelchair Securement area.

Note that different cones have different point values at the various exercises. Review the score sheets ahead of time. Sometimes it may be better for the contestant to take a five (5) point penalty for backing up than it is to hit a 25-point cone.

Special Notes for the Driving Portion of the Roadeo

1. For the driving portion of the Roadeo, there will be a 7-minute time limit. Contestants requiring more than 7 minutes to complete the driving course will be assessed a penalty of 1 point per second over 7 minutes. At 8 minutes the clock will stop and point accrual will cease. The on-board judge will announce the 7-minute mark, but will not announce the 8-minute mark.
2. Seat belts must be worn by drivers. There will be a 5-point penalty for not wearing one. The penalty will be assessed by the on-board judge.
3. The use of turn signals is required on the course. Turn signals must be used on all skill tests that require a turn or lane change. Three points will be deducted for each improper use of turn signals. Turn signals will not be required for unscored left or right turns necessary to follow the course, and points will not be deducted if the signals are used for these turns. Turn signal use will be scored by the judges on the course for that particular exercise.
3. The penalty assessed for each non-required transmission shift into reverse is 5 points.

Driving Course (cont'd)

Individual Driving Exercises:

Right Turn

Note the location of the right, outside rear (or curbside) tire as it crosses the 45-degree line from the pivot cone. This is the point at which you must decide which interval the tire crossed. If any portion of the line marking the next 6" increment on the 45-degree line is visible as the tire crosses the 45-degree line, penalty points are earned. The cones most likely to be hit are the driver's side entrance cone (tail swing), and the pivot cone and the exit cones. (**Turn signal required.**)

Left Turn

The two entry cones are the ones most likely to be hit. Remember, they each have a 25-point value. Watch for the right entry cone being hit by the tail swing of the vehicle. (**Turn signal is required.**)

Serpentine

The cones that are most likely to be hit are the two entrance cones, the point and the pivot cones. Contestants are likely to stop and shift into reverse, so you must remember to check to see if cones are hit when the vehicle is traveling backwards. Remember, a cone can only be hit once, and additional points are not lost for hitting the same cone two or more times. (**Turn signal is not required.**)

Right and Left Hand Reverse

The vehicle must come to a complete stop so that the judges can determine where the rear bumper of the vehicle is with respect to the rear marker cone. **The contestant must place the vehicle in park and sound the horn to signal the judges that the backing maneuver is complete and it is safe to measure the distance from the rear of the vehicle to the rear marker cone. The timekeeper must stop the clock when the horn is sounded, and start the clock when signaled to do so by the judges with a slap on the side of the vehicle.** Judges should determine the location quickly. All contestants and judges should note that the various marking cones have different point values. These exercises are likely to experience a cone lodged between the tires and the body. Be ready to alert the contestants to stop the vehicle if necessary. Judges must remember to watch the vehicle as it departs the exercise because points are deducted for cones hit while exiting the exercise, keeping in mind that the cone can only be hit once. (**Turn signal not required.**)

Right Tire Clearance

Judges may need to crouch down to see if the tennis balls are being hit. It makes no difference if the tennis balls are hit by the front or rear tires. Once a ball is hit, points are lost. As with the cones, tennis balls can be hit only once. Keep in mind that the tennis balls have varying point values. If a hit tennis ball rolls into another ball, the judges must use their judgment to determine if that ball would have been hit by the tire anyway. Again, be consistent. (**Turn signals not required.**)

Passenger Stop

Consistency in measurement is the key to this exercise. Measure the distance from the top edge of the curb to the center of the tire below the axle at the same height as the top of the curb. Be sure that the yardstick is perpendicular to the curb when you measure. Measurements are rounded up. If you measure 8 1/4" or 8 3/4 ", it should be recorded as 9" on the score sheet. If the vehicle is more than 36" from the curb, you must use your best effort to measure the full distance the vehicle is from the curb and record it on the score sheet. Hitting the curb or cones at any time, either entering or departing the stop, loses points, so be careful to watch the cones and curb as the vehicle departs the exercise. **The contestant must place the vehicle in park and sound the horn to indicate to the judges that it is safe to measure the distance between the curb and the tires. The timekeeper must stop the clock when the horn is sounded, and restart the clock when signaled to do so by the judges with a slap on the side of the vehicle.**

(Turn signals required when entering and exiting the passenger stop.)

Offset Street

Judges should be careful to watch the last cone in the entrance set on the driver's side. This cone is likely to be hit as the rear of the vehicle swings through the turn. Watch the entrance cones on the second set for bumper contact, and watch the tires of the bus as they pass by the base of the cones. **Judges:** A cone is considered "hit" whether the tires touch the base of the cone or the body of the cone. **(Turn signal required.)**

Diminishing Clearance

In this exercise, the vehicle must travel at least 20 mph. The radar gun, not the vehicle speedometer, is the official measurement device, so judges must watch the signal of the radar gun operator. The vehicle must reach this speed before entering, or while in this exercise. Judges should be careful to stand away from the barrels. **(Turn signals not required.)**

Judgment Stop

In measuring the distance between the cone and the front bumper of the vehicle, it is very important to be consistent in your measurements. Measure the distance from the cone to the bumper by placing the yardstick on top of the cone, with the 1" increments on the yardstick starting at the end toward the vehicle. Read the distance where the yardstick crosses the outside of the cone. Measurements are rounded up. If you measure 8 1/4" or 8 3/4", it should be recorded as 9" on the score sheet. **(Turn signals not required.)**

Smoothness of Operation

The on-board judge will determine if contestants make any sudden starts, stops or abrupt turns, and will indicate whether contestants wear their seat belts/shoulder harness while driving the course. The judge should be consistent in scoring all contestants.

Time Keeper

The timekeeper starts the clock when the vehicle is put into motion at the start line. The clock is stopped when the vehicle comes to a stop at the right and left hand reverse exercises and the passenger stop, and started again when signaled to do so by the judges (by a slap on the side of the bus). The clock is stopped when the vehicle comes to a final stop at the judgment stop. One point will be deducted for each second more than 7 minutes required to complete the course. Timekeepers are required to notify the contestants when they have reached the 7-minute mark and instruct contestants that they have one minute remaining to complete the course. If the contestant is still on the course after 8 minutes, the timekeeper will make a note as to the last completed exercise and no further points will accrue. Points will be deducted by the scorekeepers for each obstacle incomplete. (Note: After the 7 minute mark no time points will be announced and contestants will be permitted to complete the course.)

Timekeepers must note the total elapsed time required to complete the course. Time keepers should mark each course completed in the proper sequential order with an 'x' on the appropriate box.

All contestants will be ranked by score with the highest score being the winner, second highest score being second place and so on. The total driving time is used as a tie breaker in the event of a tie score between two or more contestants. In the event of a tie, the contestant with the lower elapsed time will be scored higher.

Thank you for your participation!