How to marshal on a Car Trial

Many motorsport disciplines focus on speed, but in Trials it's about how far you go, not how fast you get there. Marshals are a key part of this, as they assess each competitor as they go through the Section. For more information about the different types of Trials watch our Introducing Trial video.

What does a Marshal do on a Trial?

A Marshal has three main tasks on a Trial:

1. **Check the course is clear and safe**
2. **To check competitor's stay within the boundaries of the course**
3. **To assess how many marker stakes the competitors have passed and record the score**

Typically, one Marshal would control the start the other would record the score.



How do I get started?

The first step is to get in contact with your local club who organise Trials. Let them know that you want to volunteer, and they will give you the information about their next event and how to get started. To find a club you can look on our website at the Find a Club section. You can also contact your Regional Association for advice on a club. Other useful contacts are the Association of Classic Trials Club and the BTRDA.



The next step is not compulsory but can be beneficial and this is to register as a Marshal with Motorsport UK. In this process, you complete the Registered Marshal Accreditation Course. This short online course outlines some of the main responsibilities Marshals have across all disciplines, not just Trials, and teaches you some of the main safety aspects to look out for when you are volunteering. For more information on this, please head to the Motorsport UK website here.

How does it work?

Trial courses are set up on a rough terrain, using marker stakes. The aim of a Trial is to get up as far the course as possible, ideally reaching the top, known as 'cleaning' the section, free of penalty marks.

This means trying to maximise the available grip on the steep and slippery surface.

The driver and passenger (or "bouncer") work together to try and climb each test non-stop. While that may sound simple, the hills are steep enough to make walking up them hard enough, before trying to drive up.



The Scoring System

Organisers use stakes that mark the course are also numbered and used for scoring the event, because it is about how far the vehicle travelled without stopping.

Marshals are essential to check competitors stay within the boundaries of the course and to assess how many marker stakes they have passed. They take note of when the vehicles stop and mark the correct penalty on the score sheet.

Some Clubs may use an online scoring system instead of scoring cards so you should always check with the Club beforehand.

Why marshal on a Trial?

Sociable

- Join a community of motorsport enthusiasts.
- Meet like-minded people, from competitors to fellow marshals.
- Be part of a team to make the event a success.

Close to the Action

- Get a front-row seat to watch drivers tackle challenging sections.
- Experience the skill and precision involved in car trials up close.

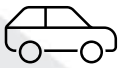
Interactive

- Play a key role in the event by scoring, guiding, and ensuring fair play.
- Learn about car control, terrain challenges, and motorsport regulations.
- Develop valuable skills in observation, decision-making, and teamwork.

Family-Friendly

- Trials are low-speed, easy to understand events suitable for all ages.
- A great way to introduce younger generations to motorsport.
- Many events encourage family participation, making it a fun day out.

Marshalling at a trial isn't just about helping out, it's about being part of something exciting, social, and rewarding. To find a Trials event near you visit our What's On Page.



How to prepare for the event.

- **Sign On:** Sign the necessary paperwork, which includes insurance and indemnity forms.
- **Attend the Briefing:** Listen carefully to instructions regarding safety, scoring, and communication procedures.
- **Collect Equipment:** You may be given a clipboard, score sheets or app, a radio, a tabard and possibly a whistle or flag.

What to do during the event.

- **Assigned Section:** You'll be allocated to a section of the trial where you'll monitor competitors.
- **Check Markers:** Ensure that cones, poles, or markers are in place and correctly positioned. You may be required to replace stakes or help vehicles manoeuvre off the course
- **Safety First:** Stand in a safe but visible location, away from the path of vehicles but where you can clearly see the action.



Types of Trial

- Car Trials are for the driver and passenger who wants to compete in a production type vehicle car.
- Sporting Trials work to the same basis, but with specifically designed and built cars.
- Classic Trials are the original form of Trials with longer competitive sections, multiple venues and road mileage. For this type of trial the competitor requires a road legal vehicle.

Additional to the above, Classic Trials have other elements!

Other elements include:

More Variety

- View numerous sections on a varied surface, each designed to test the car and driver's abilities.
- Enjoy changing scenery as Classic Trials traveling around 70-100 miles on the roads between observed sections.
- Watch determined participants complete the long distance routes in one to appear in the final results, pushing the driver and the car to the limit.
- Whereas Car Trials & Sporting Trials offer a full day at one location a Classic Trial section may be open for only 2 or 3 hours and therefore suits those with less time to spare, although if you do have the time it may be possible to observe at more than one location.
- Marshal independent or in small teams due to the remote nature of the sections.

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Final Tips for Marshals

✅ Dress for the weather—car trials often take place in muddy, uneven terrain. Stout boots and a waterproof coat are a must.
✅ Ask to buddy up on your first trial so that you can learn from an experienced marshal.
✅ Bring snacks, water, and warm clothing if needed, as you may be stationed outdoors for long periods.
✅ Stay alert and engaged; your role is crucial in ensuring fairness and safety.
✅ If in doubt, ask! Other experienced marshals and officials are there to help.
✅ Stay alert of possible vehicles rolling down the hill.

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