

MINI CLUB DRIVE DIRECTIONS

A. Drive Director Duties – An experienced club member will be assigned to assist and coordinate all drives.

1. Get with the drive leader as soon as the potential drive is proposed. Make sure that the drive leader has club drive experience or arrange for him/her to participate in at least 2 drives before leading the proposed one.
2. Offer to help with the initial layout of the route, by maps or Google; the format of the written directions; and then one of the checkout drives. This is especially helpful if the drive will involve observation rallye questions.
3. With the drive leader, explore if the drive will be intended as a “spirited or enthusiastic” drive. If so, consider having two groups with the spirited group starting first, and a separate drive leader for the “normal”/“leaf looker” group. Indicate such in drive descriptions. Keep in mind for planning the route and timing. Some drives are best as unofficial gatherings not under club sanction.
4. Either participate in the driver’s meeting before the drive or have an experienced designate help out. This is also to ensure that the drive guidelines for all the participants are read and understood by all and that the liability waiver is signed by all drivers and passengers.

B. Preparing for the Drive – As drive leader it is your responsibility to lead a safe and fun drive. In preparing for the drive:

1. Make sure there are clear written directions with mileage called out for each turn based off an odometer reset at the start. Clearly have the address of the drive end, so that if someone gets separated, they can find alternate routes to the finish.
2. Drive the route multiple times in order to familiarize yourself with the route.
3. Find places along the route suitable to regroup, make rest stops every hour or so, enjoy the view, etc.
4. When the drive is to go through a town with multiple stoplights and intersections, pick the most straightforward route, usually by route number, for the group or separated individual cars to follow. It is difficult for groups to stay together in towns, so plan for a large regroup spot just outside of town.
5. Time the drive adjusting for the expected traffic on the day of the drive. Know how long the route will take at the speed limit. Make appropriate reservations with attractions or restaurants at the end.
6. Send a brief description of the drive for inclusion in the Newsletter, Website, Mailing List, etc. to the appropriate parties or mailing lists. Summarize the drive and include start times and location as well as directions to that starting point. Remind the group to arrive at the start with a full gas tank and empty bladder. Be sure to send this information in early enough to be included in the appropriate newsletter.

C. Before Your Drive – Read through the following:

1. As drive leader, it is your responsibility to lead a safe and fun drive.
2. Make sure you arrive at the starting point early, have your radio with spare batteries and maybe some spare radios, have one set of printed directions (with your cell phone number and the address of the ending point) for each of the signed-up cars plus spares.
3. Introduce yourself to any new members that are on the drive. Make them feel welcome.
4. Encourage everyone in attendance to give you feedback on the drive and/or to send their comments to the club officers.
5. You should always keep the drive within the posted speed limits, adjusted for road conditions.
6. Make sure you have a navigator who knows the route, will follow the directions and a map, and will keep a hand on the radio to quickly send and hear messages. No drive leader should try to lead solo – too much to do.
7. Designate a “Sweep” car to bring up the rear. This driver should be someone experienced with club drives and must have a navigator who will have and use the FRS radio so that you can easily and frequently communicate with them. The sweep car should announce when the group gets split and when all are back together and after all major turns. This car should be the only vehicle in the group to have their headlights on at all times so they can be easily seen from the front of the pack. The rest of the cars should have their parking lights on.
8. If there are a significant number of cars on the drive, consider splitting the drive into multiple groups to keep the packs to about 10 cars each (makes for a more manageable and enjoyable drive).
9. You should, as often as possible, be able to see your entire group behind you. Each car is responsible for the car behind them, but you are responsible for all the cars behind you. This may mean pulling over to regroup (try to minimize), adjusting your speed, etc. as needed.
10. If you see the need to pull over to regroup, it is important that you find a large, safe place to accommodate the entire group, and allow the entire group to pull out at the same time (the LeMans start). Minimize the times that you pull over, slow the group down instead, in many cases the cars that get “caught at the light” can catch up as local cars pull off.
11. After a pull-over or stop, the sweep car is responsible for seeing the gap in traffic where the entire group can re-enter the road. In some cases, the sweep car will need to pull out first and “block” traffic to allow the group to enter together. The sweep car must notify the group by radio on the timing of restarting so that everyone is ready.

D. Driver's Meeting – Be sure to go over the following with your group in a drivers' meeting:

1. Sum up the drive for the group. (Make sure everyone is on the right drive and that they all understand the basic route and pace of the drive. You don't want someone expecting a leisurely drive and getting a twisty romp or the other way around.)
2. Take a minute to let the group skim the directions. Make sure everyone understands the drive directions and maps. Explain the direction format and basics ("SS-S" = Stop Sign – Straight, Trip Odometer Readings, etc.) Explain the "main road rule" that when the directions place you on a certain road by name or number, you are to proceed on that road through various intersections, until the next instruction can be executed.
3. SAFETY, COURTESY, COMMON SENSE! Overstate them! We don't want anyone getting hurt; or worse – hurting someone else.
4. Make sure everyone has signed the liability waiver, drivers and all passengers.
5. Emphasize the importance of everyone being responsible for themselves and their car. If anyone is not comfortable at the speed the group is going, they should slow down. The car in front of them should not lose them (see #6 below). This way the pace of the entire group will adjust to the slowest participant.
6. This is key: Make all the drivers aware that they are responsible for making sure the car immediately *behind* them stays within sight. Nobody should make a turn and proceed if they can't see the car behind them. If they do, the following car might not know which way to turn. *If the car behind you gets lost, it's your fault, not theirs!*
7. Experience has shown that a 1.5 to 2.5 second space between cars allows for the brake lights to be seen from the car in front on twisty roads, but still gives you enough time to react to anything unexpected.
8. All cars to signal all turns early and relentlessly.
9. Arrange the line of cars with newbies right behind the leader, and more experienced (faster) cars in the back. If persistent large gaps develop, the leader shall move slow cars toward the front of the group at stops. Cars with solo drivers may be best alternated with cars that have navigators.
10. NO PASSING within the group unless specifically waved around and you are in a marked passing zone. Passing is best coordinated with the radios, and you don't need the whole group to pass together. Good radio use will get the convoy back together.
11. When on a 4-lane or Interstate, keep to the right (slow) lane, but at least maintain the speed limit or keep up with the general flow of traffic. It is not imperative that only club cars be in a solid line. If an OTM (other than Miata/MINI) needs to merge or to cut through the line to exit, make it easy. When there are three lanes of traffic, consider the middle lane.
12. When passing through towns or congested areas with a lot of stop signs and traffic lights, do not try to keep together. Rely on the clearly written route instructions for everyone to follow to the outside of town. There the leader will

have pulled over to a large visible spot on the right (called out on the radio) for the whole group to reassemble.

- 13.** Use the individuals' FRS (family) radios! One for yourself and one for the Sweeper (last car) at a minimum. Share the frequency with the other cars/drivers, typically channel 7.1, and have the Sweep alert you if any cars get separated from the main group. Stay in touch with the group throughout the drive. Call out warnings of oncoming traffic on narrow (no center line) or twisty roads. Encourage all cars to have their FRS radio on continuously; you may need to have some members loan a spare radio or the clubs' radios to the newbies.
- 14.** NO CARS without a navigator may "just follow the car in front" without an operable FRS radio set to the proper channel and monitored for the route change and/or the opposing traffic callouts. The best position within the group for single drivers is near the front or just behind an experienced driver/navigator combination. The radio check before starting should confirm that single drivers are monitoring the channel and can properly respond to callouts.
- 15.** Encourage Feedback! After the drive, ask if any one would be willing to do a quick write-up for inclusion in the following club newsletter. If the drive is a scored rallye, ask the winner to do the write-up.
- 16.** Pass out your cell phone number to the group – just in case.
- 17.** Get a car count and write it down. Return with as many cars as you leave with or more!
- 18.** *HAVE FUN!* Honk and wave to the kids and people along the way! That is what this is about, after all.