

Frequently Asked Questions About the National Community Transportation Rodeo

What Is the National Community Transportation Rodeo?

The National Community Transportation Rodeo is an annual two-day competition for community and public transportation drivers among three divisions: body-on-chassis (BOC) vehicles (cutaway), 15-passenger vans and minivans. Contestants compete in four aspects of the event: a written test, a multiple-obstacle driving course, wheelchair securement and pre-trip inspection.

How many drivers usually compete in the Rodeo?

Average attendance in the Rodeo ranges from 65 to 75 drivers, with about 2/3 competing in the BOC divisions and 1/3 in the van division. The minivan division will begin in 2013.

How is the winner of the Rodeo determined?

Scores of all drivers in each division in all four aspects of the competition (written test, obstacle course, wheelchair securement, pre-trip inspection) are compiled based on grades from the written test and scoresheets from judging teams at each obstacle and the wheelchair securement and pre-trip inspection positions. The driver with the highest score wins their division. The ultimate winner of the event – who receives the Q'Straint / Sure-Lok Otis Reed Jr. Driver of the Year Award – is the driver who won their division by the greatest margin over the second place driver.

How long does the event take?

The event begins on Saturday evening with a mandatory meeting for all drivers, which is immediately followed by the written test. Drivers have one hour to complete the test. The following morning (Sunday), drivers rotate between the obstacle course, wheelchair securement and pre-trip inspection stations. Most drivers complete the three sections on Sunday in about six hours. A reception and banquet conclude the event on Sunday evening where winners are announced.

What comprises the written test?

The written test is comprised of 25 multiple choice questions concerning safe driving procedures, customer service, accessibility for people with disabilities and other topics that are not specific to local or state-level regulations and laws. A total of 125 points are available in the written test.

What obstacles are included in the obstacle course?

The layout and sequence of the obstacle course changes every year based on the specific dimensions of the local site. In alphabetical order, the obstacles are: diminishing clearance; forward offset street; judgment stop; left turn; left-hand reverse; passenger stop; right tire clearance; right turn; right-hand reverse; serpentine and smoothness of operations. A total of 525 points are available in the obstacle course.

Please explain more about the wheelchair securement exercise.

This portion of the event includes the driver, a passenger and judge. The driver verbalizes all the activities that are done in loading and unloading a passenger. The passenger sits in a wheelchair while the driver physically conducts the process of loading and unloading, while a judge scores points for both actions and verbalizations. The exercise is timed, with seven minutes available for drivers to complete the loading and unloading process. A maximum of 200 points are available in wheelchair securement.

Please explain more about the pre-trip inspection exercise.

In this exercise, drivers conduct an inspection of a vehicle in a manner similar to how they would inspect a service vehicle each day before beginning transporting passengers. The competition vehicles are pre-set with four defects that should be detected when undertaking an industry-standard pre-trip inspection process. Like wheelchair securement, the driver must verbalize the actions they are taking as part of the inspection to the judge, and the exercise is timed at seven minutes. A maximum of 150 points are available in pre-trip inspection.

Are there any restrictions to enter the competition?

Yes. Drivers must be certified by their supervisors that they have been employed as a paid or volunteer driver in demand-response or regular-route service for 12 months prior to the competition date, and have not had any chargeable (avoidable) accidents, suspensions, disciplinary actions and more than three unauthorized absences during that same timeframe. Supervisors – who spend less than 50 percent of their time driving – are not eligible to compete.

Can multiple drivers from the same organization participate?

Yes. There is no limit on how many drivers can compete from the same organization.

Do drivers need to win a state or local Rodeo in order to participate?

No. The National Community Transportation Rodeo is open to any and all drivers, provided they meet the qualifications stipulated above.

What prizes are awarded for the top drivers?

The drivers with the highest scores in each division receive trophies and cash prizes. The number of trophies and cash prizes varies depending on the number of entries. The Q'Straint / Sure-Lok Otis Reed Jr. Driver of the Year receives a physical award consistent with the prestige of the recognition.

How is the event organized and administered?

The National Community Transportation Roadeo is overseen by the National Community Transportation Roadeo Committee, a group of nationwide experts in community and public transportation professionals who have extensive experience with Roadeo competitions. This includes administrators of transit systems, past Driver of the Year award winners, Department of Transportation officials and customer service specialists. The Committee works in conjunction with Community Transportation Association staff to plan and execute the event, and has primary responsibility to ensure competitive equity and impartiality for all participants.

What is the dress code for this event?

During the competition participants should dress appropriately for the weather and look professional. Full uniforms are allowed, but not required.

What meals are included with my entry fee as a driver?

Your entry fee includes all meals on the competition day (Sunday), including continental breakfast, boxed lunch and one ticket to the banquet dinner (additional tickets for the dinner are available for purchase for \$50).

What meals are included for volunteer judges?

Like drivers, all meals are provided for volunteer judges on the competition day (Sunday), including continental breakfast, boxed lunch and one ticket to the banquet dinner (additional tickets for the dinner are available for purchase for \$50).

Do I have to stay in the EXPO host hotel?

Although the Community Transportation EXPO host hotel is the location for the Roadeo drivers and judges meetings, written test and banquet reception and dinner, participants are not required to stay in the host hotel. Please note that if transportation to the Roadeo site is provided, it is always provided from the EXPO host hotel, but not always from other hotels.

Is transportation provided to the Roadeo site?

Transportation to the Roadeo site depends on its proximity to the host hotel. If the site is within walking distance of the host hotel – something EXPO and Roadeo organizers attempt to achieve, if possible – drivers and judges are encouraged to walk to the site,

with additional mobility options available to those unable to walk. If it is beyond walking distance, transportation to the Roadeo site is provided to all participants.

Is there a charge for my family or supervisor to come and watch me compete?

Any and all supervisors, colleagues, family, friends and other guests are welcome to observe the competition at the Roadeo site, and food is available for purchase for those who are not drivers or judges. All guests may take the transportation service provided by the event to the Roadeo site once all drivers and judges have made their way over. Please note: all guests must be mindful of competition and safety restrictions established and enforced by the Course Marshall and event staff.

Are drivers allowed to observe the Roadeo site before the competition begins?

In order to maintain competitive equity for all participants, no drivers or judges are allowed to visit or otherwise observe the Roadeo site before the official schedule begins on Sunday morning. Security is on-site following the course set-up on Saturday and will remove any unauthorized persons.

Why is there no practice session with the course vehicles and obstacles?

Again, maintaining competitive equity for all drivers requires there be no advance practice involving the competition vehicles and driving course. This insures that all drivers have the same level of familiarity with the competition elements.

How can I file a complaint about competitive equity?

The Course Marshall is available to receive and respond to all questions and concerns involving fairness in the competition. Locate any event staff or judge to request a meeting with the Course Marshall.

Are there scholarships I can get to pay for my travel expenses?

While the Community Transportation Association does not offer any national-level scholarships to attend the Roadeo, many state-level Departments of Transportation, transit associations and RTAP programs do. Some of those are awarded to the winner of a state or regional roadeo. Please contact the local offices of these entities to inquire about scholarship opportunities.