

TIR NOTES FOR DRIVERS

(UPDATED FOR 2024)

Thank you, TIR, drivers for serving your teams by driving. It is a very important role! Please always be safe and kind.

Important Notes:

- It is recommended to have this document, the event maps (online or printed out), a GPS device (and its charger), the exchange coordinates, the written directions for the runners, and perhaps even regular maps in both vans in order to be fully prepared.
- For a large majority of the TIR, vehicles can follow the same route as the runners. So, it is important for drivers to have easy access to the course maps and / or written directions.
- In addition to the course maps, there is a pdf document called Exchange Coordinates and Hours (found on the Relay Resources page of the website (texasindependencerelay.com/resources)). This provides the coordinates of the exchanges (as well as the hours that they are open) so that you can use a GPS or phone to find the next exchange if you get lost. The coordinates are also on the course maps and detail pages for those maps.
- Remember the number of an exchange is AFTER that leg. For example, the very first exchange occurs when the first runner makes the hand off to the leg 2 runner at the end of leg 1. Exchange 2 is at the finish of leg 2, and so on.
- PLEASE DO NOT PARK WITHIN 20 YARDS OF AN EXCHANGE.
- Always get the next runner to the next exchange before the next runner gets there (but don't drive dangerously in order to do so!).
- Legs 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9 are mostly on dirt roads. Also, a significant portion of Leg 20 is on a dirt road. Depending on recent road maintenance and weather conditions, the dirt / dust can sit well or be easily and widely dispersed in a huge cloud behind you as you drive along. Regardless, DO NOT DUST TIR RUNNERS!! Dirt roads at the TIR are "NO DUST ZONES!" As you are passing a runner, slow down well beforehand. Drive about 10-15 mph (giving wide berth) until you are well beyond them. If you look in the rearview mirror as you are passing a runner and see dust being kicked up, you are going too fast. Likewise, when you see raised fists and other gestures from runners after you go by, this just might possibly be a hint that you may not be doing it right.
- NEVER PASS A RUNNER ON THE SMALL ROADS AS YOU ARE CRESTING A HILL WITH LIMITED VISIBILITY.
- Always remember that the roads are not closed. Vehicles not participating in the relay are also using them.

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- If parking on the side of a road – ESPECIALLY IF SUPPORTING A RUNNER IN THE MIDDLE OF A LEG - get as far off as possible, but do leave two tires on the pavement, especially if it has rained recently. NEVER park in a way that impedes traffic (regular traffic OR the TIR's).
- DO NOT DRIVE SLOWLY ALONGSIDE OR RIGHT BEHIND YOUR RUNNER. At night, if you are staying near your runner, use a technique called shadowing, where you drive up ahead until the runner is about 400 meters behind, pull off the road (maybe leaving just two tires on pavement). Watch the runner pass and get 400+ meters ahead, and then cautiously pull out and repeat this process.
- At night, consider using your hazard lights the entire time to indicate that you are with the race. Also, if a team's runner is near to or passing the team's van (for example, the runner is running on the shoulder facing traffic, and the van is on the other side of the road on that shoulder), the van MUST turn off it's headlights. The reason for this is because oncoming traffic will see the van's lights but will not see the runner or their light. This is not good for anyone.
- Relatedly, ALWAYS MAKE SURE to turn off the brights when there is an oncoming vehicle approaching.
- If any teammates get out of the van in the middle of a leg at night to give encouragement or water make sure they have reflective gear and use due caution.
- It's a great idea to use Brazos High School (at Exchange 25, just east of downtown Wallis on Hwy 36) to get out of the van, have some R&R, perhaps take a shower, and get coffee. The school uses this as a fundraiser for its annual teacher appreciation banquet, and they request a \$10/person donation.
- If you have a team of 10 - 12, you will most likely have van-to-van exchanges at Exchange 19 and Exchange 25. Both vans will want to go to Exchange 30 (you don't want to miss Good Times Running Co and their delicious breakfast tacos at Exchange 30!)

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The following is specific / important leg and exchange information, so do not overlook these notes. If there are no instructions for a leg or exchange, then follow the course, using the same good discretion as always.

EXCHANGE 4

Please go into the landowner's property and park in a way that makes sense (not blocking others), but relatively near the exchange. If it is wet, however, be very careful to not get stuck.

EXCHANGE 11

Definitely do not park in any way that impedes traffic on 1295. Also, do not park in the driveways or yards of any of the homeowners there. Teams may visit St. Mary's, one of the famous painted churches, BUT there is a Saturday Mass at 4:30, so it is strongly recommended that relayers admire the church from afar between the times of 4:00 and 5:45pm.

EXCHANGE 15

Continue on CoRD 253 (Jackson) and park either on Jackson (between Center and Mechanic) or at the parking area that is diagonally from the exchange, on the SE corner of Main (90) and Mechanic.

EXCHANGE 17

Vans may park off of 90 on the small road that runs alongside it (to the right). This road is Front Street.

EXCHANGE 19

When approaching Exchange 19 (at the airport south of Columbus), you will see a small green sign that says Co Rd 103, and then another sign directing motorists to take a right to reach the airport. Take this right on Co Rd 103 and then take the immediate left on CoRd 102 to park at the airport. Go ahead and take a right into the parking area for the airport (right at the exchange). However, driving around and parking on the airstrip itself is not recommended (Yes, it's been done).

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LEG 20

Instead of going alongside runners on the small dirt road, vehicles should take a LEFT on CoRd 101 (while runners stay straight). This is just under 2 miles from the previous exchange at the airport.

EXCHANGE 23

There is parking at the eastern (far) end of the Giant Grain Elevator, but it is very dark (so use appropriate caution). Teams should not park on 1093.

EXCHANGE 24

If calling ahead to team members hanging out / sleeping at Brazos HS, keep in mind that the leg 25 runner (the one receiving the baton at Exchange 24) has just over 6 miles to reach Exchange 25.

EXCHANGE 25

Exchange 25 is in front of Brazos High School. However, ALL VANS should take a right on Educator Lane (which is just before the school), and then take a left at the second driveway that goes around the school. Vans will pass the back entrance where all those sleeping for a few hours will enter the school. If it appears that most of the parking spaces are used up, there is additional parking on the west side of the school. When leaving, All VANS should go out to Cougar Drive, the road that is east of the school, parallel to Educator Lane. They will take a left on Cougar, and then a right on Hwy 36. ****NO VANS SHOULD USE ANY PART OF THE DRIVEWAY THAT IS DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL.****

EXCHANGE 27

The end of the Leg 27 and the beginning of Leg 28 is an out and back for the relayers, so drive with caution all around the intersection of 1489 and 1093.

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EXCHANGE 30

Plan to stop at Good Times Running Co! HOWEVER, if driving a big white van (like almost everyone), do NOT park in the garage. There are plenty of spaces going around the Villagio Shopping center.

LEG 31

To reach Exchange 31, vans should continue east on Westheimer Pkwy until reaching Barker Cypress (there is a traffic light here, and it is a brightly lit intersection at night). Take a left on Barker Cypress and enter George Bush Park to reach Exchange 31. Parking can be limited at times, so be sure to not block anyone in and to leave enough space for vans to maneuver in order to get in and out. Consider sending only one van go this exchange. Also, do not block the runners' path that is demarcated by the solid white line. If you have to park along the long driveway-type road that goes into the park (leading to the small-ish parking lot), BE SURE to keep 2 tires on the pavement even if it appears dry.

LEG 32

To go to Exchange 32, teams leave the George Bush Park, and take a left on Westheimer Pkwy. Westheimer Pkwy T's into FM 1093 Westheimer Rd. (It looks like you could go straight, but you would be going into a shopping mall parking lot. Take a left on FM 1093 Westheimer Rd. The next traffic signal, a little more than 400 meters after this turn is Hwy 6 – Addicks Howell Rd. Turn left and go north on Hwy 6. After passing Briar Forest (there is a traffic signal and Briar Forest is on the right), look for Briar Hills Parkway. It is almost a mile north of Briar Forest, and there is a traffic light. Take a right on Briar Hills and then take a left to park in the parking lot for the 3-4 story beige building with dark tinted windows.

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EXCHANGE 33

The easiest way to reach Exchange 33 is to go back out to Hwy 6, take a left on Hwy 6, and then take a left on Briar Forest. The exchange is located at Wilcrest and Briar Forest.

EXCHANGE 35

If it is a pleasant day, and if there is another event happening on the southern side of Memorial Park, there's a good chance that the park will be busy and parking could be scarce. To reach the exchange, take Woodway (going east) from Exchange 34. After passing beneath 610, you'll be coming into Memorial Park. Just under a half mile from 610, you'll see a couple of bridges that span over the road (which becomes Memorial Drive right about here). The first bridge is a train track and the 2nd bridge is a circular pedestrian bridge. You then will go under two tunnels (you can't miss these). After the second tunnel, get in the right lane because in a quarter mile, you will take a right on S Picnic Lane to reach the exchange. It is quite possible that the parking nearest the exchange is filled up. If there is a spot, take it, but if not, do not worry. Simply continue around the loop and reach the TIR-recommended parking that is ~200 yards from the exchange. **DO NOT** wait for a parking spot, park in a non-parking spot place, or otherwise impede traffic. The park is vigilant against such activities, and it can cause issues for us. Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

FINISH PARKING

If your leg 36 runner is all set and the rest of the team is anxious to reach the finish, you can use Googlemaps or Maps to go to Saint Arnold Beer Garden (2000 Lyons Ave, Houston, TX 77020). It usually is about a 15 minute drive from Memorial Park. When arriving, you will take a right on Lyons (from Nance) and immediately after going under the Elysian Street flyover, you'll use the parking lot that is on the east side of Maury St. If your team is ambitious in wanting to support your leg 36 runner, knows the area extremely well, and/or is not as concerned about possibly not reaching the finish before the runner (which, of course, is a bummer if the last runner were to arrive before the team) there are a couple of spots where a team may see their last runner. The Jackson Hill Pedestrian Bridge (about 2.5 miles into the leg), is across from Cleveland Park. The back of Lot H (a paid parking lot off of Memorial Dr) reaches the Buffalo Bayou path at close to 4.5 miles into the leg. Finally, the parking lot at UHD (under I-10) is free on Sundays and is a good place to make sure the leg 36 runner comes off the trail at the correct place. This is at 5.7ish miles (less than 1 mile from the finish). This year, we're willing to let teams drop off a team member to join their last leg runner for the last mile, but again, the best plan is likely to just head to the finish.