DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: THE HAZARD TIMER

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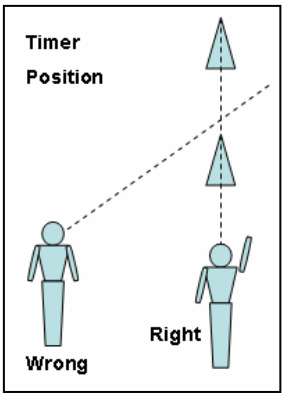
Volunteers are an extremely important component for any carriage driving show, and an internationally-rated competition such as Live Oak will require the services of over 100 volunteers! Many people have expressed doubts about their ability to volunteer, but anyone can do it! This document describes the duties of the Timer. Timers are critically important at any type of competition, whether pleasure cones, a CDE hazard, or anything else with a stop/start or entry/exit gate.

Equipment Needed: A stopwatch that measures to the hundredths of seconds is your most important piece of equipment. A backup stopwatch is nice, or a set of extra batteries. I prefer a stopwatch that makes an audible "beep" so I can "hear" when I have pushed the button because my eyes should be on the competitor, not the watch. Big buttons are another plus, so you don't "miss" the button. I also like a "big screen" display with large numbers! You might also need a pencil, clipboard, whistle, and radio, but all equipment should be provided by the show management (though just in case, I always bring my own equipment). To make yourself comfortable, also bring along a cooler with water (no alcohol!), sunscreen, raingear, bug spray, snacks, and a chair.

Timer Duties: Your job is to position yourself at the pole, cone, or marker that indicates the hazard entrance (or the start/finish gate), perpendicular to the pathway of the competitor (not at an angle), and as safely close as possible (usually about 3-5 meters away). If you don't stand directly even with the gate, your times will be biased. Start the watch as soon as any part of the turnout crosses the "in" gate (usually the nose of the horse). Stop the watch as soon as any part of the turnout crosses the "out" gate (again, usually the nose of the horse). Record the time on the time sheet. If the timesheet allows, record minutes, seconds, and hundredths. If the time sheet does not allow for hundredths, round up for any portion of a hundredth (1:47:07 becomes 1:48, but ask your judge and scorers what they want during your briefing). Write clearly, as your numbers become penalties for that competitor! You may also be asked to call the time on your radio. So there is no mistake, state all the words necessary to communicate the time (such as "two minutes, 47 seconds, 23 hundredths").You do not need to assign penalties – that is the job of the judge or the scorer. Remember to clear your watch and be ready for the next competitor!



The timer is also responsible for signaling to the rest of the crew that a competitor is about to arrive. Hold your arm up when you see the competitor approaching, and sweep it down as you press the stopwatch button. Your armsweep may also be signaling a timer at another gate, because the entry and exit gates may not be the same.

Troublespots and Holdups

Sometimes a competitor may be having trouble, and may take lots of time to try and recover. You are also responsible for handling maximum time limits. These rules differ by competition. In either a CDE or Pleasure show, the maximum time limit in Cones is twice the regular time allowed. In a CDE/ADT hazard, the time limit is 5 minutes. If a competitor reaches the time limit, blow the whistle to indicate to the competitor to leave the obstacle or cones course. In a CDE, if a competitor leaves the obstacle without going through the "out" gate, keep your watch running in case the competitor makes a correction.

If there is trouble in the hazard, and the next competitor is approaching, you need to do a "hold up." The arriving competitor is to be stopped no closer than 50 meters from the entry gate/flags. At this point, start your stopwatch. Wait until the previous competitor has cleared the obstacle, the hazard officials are reset, and give that exiting competitor at least a one-minute headstart (2-3 minutes would be better if time allows). Your hold for the arriving competitor should be timed to the nearest whole minute. Give the competitor an appropriate warning (one minute to start, 30 seconds, and a 10-second countdown). Be sure the hazard judge notes the amount of minutes for your holdup on the hazard judging sheet.

Timing is a serious job -- your timing will be responsible for the final scores of the competitors. Be sure you don't get distracted by chatting with friends or spectators. Try not to get so excited about watching the competitor that you forget to push a stopwatch button! Above all, do not consume alcohol or medications that cause slower reflexes. Although this is an important job, you can also have fun!

TIMERS' BACKUP SHEET

Sheet Number ______________________
Start_____ Finish_____ Phase ________
Timekeeper's Name: __________________

Number	Horse/carriage description	Time of start/finish	Remarks

HOLD UP TIMER

Hold Up Timer: ____

Location: ____

COMPETITOR #	TIME HELD	NOTES:

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