

SAG Duty

Ed.note: I have slightly edited and included this note that Don, W9IXG, wrote a number of years ago. While there is no longer a distinction between SAG and Course Marshall the information is now for all of us to consider as we roam the course.

(Equipment needed: vehicle, bike carrier, mobile radio-APRS capable, rotating yellow beacon. Let us know if you need any of these) Since you are assigned to be either a SAG, or in support of a Course Marshal as driver or passenger, or just driving the course, I want to bring up these things you should know.

- The loops are designed to keep you going “against the grain” with the riders coming at you. Some of these loops take you off the actual route. The reason for going against the grain is for safety- you are on the opposite side of the road and it is easier for the riders to see you and flag you down if they need help.
- We recommend that you initially take the loop in the same direction as the cyclists, before the cyclists are on the route, in order to familiarize yourself with the route and to check the signage and make any corrections that might be necessary due to vandalism or natural causes- rain or wind. When checking signage, *think like a cyclist*—they need plenty of notice if they need to make a turn, well before they make the turn. Each turn should have a minimum of 2 signs before each turn (more for fast down-hills) and one confirmation sign/pavement arrow after the turn. Sometimes those who mark the route don’t provide enough signage. It is up to you to correct these situations!
- Keep your headlights and rotating yellow beacon turned on while in motion. Use your standard vehicle flashers if you must stop to assist cyclists. Pull well off the road and check for cyclists approaching you, both forward and behind you, before opening the door. Yes, accidents happen with cyclists crashing into doors of SAGs! After servicing the cyclist, make sure there are no bicycles in front or rear of you before moving.
- Stay on your assigned loop unless instructed by Net Control. Take cyclists in need of repair or transport to the nearest rest stop.
- When passing cyclists, be sure to pass them slowly in the opposite lane. If traffic is coming, or there is a hill, wait until you have a clear opening to pass the cyclists. Provide, at least, 3 feet of clearance. Do not honk your horn with a rider directly in front of you. It can startle them and cause an accident.
- If there is an incident, an accident, be sure to fill out the LAB Accident Report Form and give it to Net Control. Call 911, if necessary.
- For minor accidents and road rash, unless you are a Certified Medic, pass the first aid kit to the cyclist for them to tend to their injury.
- If you are following a cyclist, be sure to stay well behind. Nothing unnerves a cyclist more than the *pressure* given by a vehicle behind them. The “last cyclist” is under additional pressure to make it to the end. Stay several hundred yards, out of sight, so as not to push the cyclist to go faster than they can at the stage when they are running out of gas. Put yourself in the cleats of a cyclist!

Course Marshalls

While we no longer have official Course Marshalls consider these as “other duties as assigned” and things to keep in mind as you roam the course.

- primarily responsible for maintaining route markings (route arrows) to keep riders on course. This will mean CMs need additional rolls of route arrows.
- responsible for closing stages of the ride and collecting any major trash items found on course. Not every single little piece of little, but anything major that they see responsible for collecting the orange "Bike Event Ahead" traffic signs that the event owns. This is done as part of the closing of stages.
- may help riders fix mechanical issues (flat tires, minor mechanical issues), if the CM has knowledge of how to do so.
- will notify NCS of riders that need SAG support for issues that the CM cannot fix. In general, SAGs should be taking riders to rest stops for incidents, not CMs. However, since the CM is already on location, if they feel comfortable and have the ability to take riders, we have allowed them to do so in the past.
- will identify and report riders who are breaking traffic laws (riding more than two abreast, riding over center line, etc.). This, along with maintaining route markings, is one of the biggest functions of a CM.
will identify and report any vehicles and/or citizens inferring with/attacking/abusing riders. The past few years, we haven't really gotten any reports of neighbors complaining or even sabotaging riders on ride day, but you never know. Be sure to report the incident to proper authorities if need be.
- may be asked to deliver supplies to water stations, if necessary. Last year was the first year that I had each CM take at least two (or as many as they could fit) of the blue water jugs, which meant that the Water Stops were able to get refilled rather quickly. - will perform any other duties that NCS/ the Route Commander deems necessary

As far as what the actual difference between a Course Marshall and a SAG vehicle is, over the past few years it's really become less. I would say SAGs should be more involved in picking up riders and fixing problems, while CMs should be more involved in keeping the course marked and picking up the orange signs afterwards. Point of note – you don't need to pick up the route arrows – they biodegrade.