Organising & Leading Club Runs

Preamble

The MX5 Club of NSW conducts runs for the benefit of its Members.

Participation is limited to current financial Members and non-Members wanting to experience a Club run before joining.

All participants on runs (Members and non-Members) are expected to behave in accordance with the Club's Code of Conduct. The run Organiser and/or Leader(s) are authorised to ask participants to leave the run if they judge that the participant is behaving in an unsafe, irresponsible or discourteous manner.

Roles & Responsibilities

Club Captain / Chapter Convenors

The Club Captain / Chapter Convenor has overall responsibility for the arrangement and conduct of Club runs, but can appoint other Members to organise and lead runs as appropriate.

The Club Captain / Chapter Convenor will co-ordinate the scheduling of runs in the Club's Event Calendar. Runs will generally be planned to rotate around the points of the compass, and will be scheduled to avoid, where feasible, dates that clash with other Club events.

The Club Captain / Chapter Convenor will notify CAMS of the run in line with the CAMS Social Events policy.

Sign-on sheets (Member and non-Member) are to be retained by the Club Captain / Chapter Convenor:
- as a record of the participants on each run
- to allow MOTY details to be passed on to the Membership Database Secretary

Organiser

The Organiser is the Member who plans and organises the run.

The Organiser will liaise with the Club Captain / Chapter Convenor to agree the date, route and destination of the run.

Requirements and suggestions for organising a Club run are set out in the following section.

The Organiser may also lead the run, or may arrange for another Member(s) to lead the run. If another Member is to lead, it's the Organiser's responsibility to ensure that person has the appropriate experience. It's essential that first-time Leaders receive guidance and support before the event. First time leaders should:
1. follow directly behind an experienced Leader on a prior run, and
2. have an experienced Leader following directly behind when leading their first run.

Leader

The Leader is the Member who leads the run on the road.

Requirements and suggestions for leading a Club run and set out in the following section.

There may be more than one Leader on a run:
- different Leaders for different sections of the run
- multiple Leaders for sub-groups within the run

The Leader should test drive the run route shortly before the scheduled date to:
- confirm that directions provided on run sheet are accurate
- check for hazards (road works, etc)
- confirm locations for regrouping, toilet stops, refuelling, etc.

It's the Leader's responsibility to conduct a pre-run briefing. This should include:
- a welcome to any first-time Members or visitors
- an overview of the route, including key turns and regrouping points
- confirming that everyone has signed on
- confirming that everyone has a copy of the run sheet, Code of Conduct and Incident Procedures
- a reminder that the Club expects everyone to drive in accord with the Code of Conduct

While not essential, it's recommended that Leaders be accompanied by a co-driver who can:
- maintain radio contact with others participating in the run
- monitor the run sheet for accuracy during the run, so that any errors can be radioed back to those following

Sweep

The Member who is 'last in line' on the run.

The primary role of the Sweep is to communicate with the run Leader:
- confirming that all cars in the group have arrived / departed regrouping points
- advising any issues (missed turns, breakdowns, accidents, etc)

If direct communication with the Leader isn't possible (due to lack of radio or phone reception), messages should be relayed 'up the line'.

In the event of a breakdown or accident, the Sweep should:
- immediately advise the Leader
- remain with the affected Member until help arrives

The Sweep should be an experienced run participant.

Organising Club Runs

1. Meeting Point
Meeting points to start a Club run must provide:
- sufficient off-street parking for the expected number of participants
- toilet facilities

It's also preferable for meeting points to have coffee/breakfast available. The car parks attached to fast food outlets generally meet all these requirements (McDonalds, Subway, etc). They're usually also easy for Members to find.

2. Starting Time
The run should start at a time which allows ample time for the drive, a comfort break and any regrouping stops. Be conservative in your planning - it's always better to arrive at your destination a bit early than to feel pressured about running late.

Bear in mind that a group of cars will always take longer than an individual driver. The larger the group, the longer it takes.

Ask participants to arrive at the meeting point 30 minutes prior to the starting time. This allows some scope for people who are running late. The briefing should be held 10 mins prior to the advertised starting time.

3. Run Distance & Driving Time
For regular breakfast/lunch/dinner runs, distances should usually be between 100-200 kms (depending on the roads). Driving time should be around 2.0-2.5 hours.

Driving distances and times for full-day or multi-day runs should be aligned to the nature of the event and the expectations of the likely participants.

4. Breaks During a Run
There should only be a need for a single break during a regular run (ie, after about an hour). This must be at a location where the whole group can park safely and should preferably be where toilets are available. The car parks at council parks/ovals often fit the bill. The Public Toilet Map website is a helpful tool.

Depending on the type of run, the availability of a coffee or tea at the stopping point may also be appreciated by Members. Alternatively, they can bring a thermos to have a cup in a park.

Depending on the route and the type of run, additional regrouping stops should be planned. These should be no more than 5 mins and are simply to allow the group to reform.

5. Route
The route should:
- be fun to drive with some interesting sections suited to what an MX-5 does best - going around corners!
- not pose any unusual or hidden dangers for a competent driver:
    - turns on blind corners, just over crests, etc
    - narrow roads with no centre line marked
- be over sealed roads (short sections of well-maintained dirt should only be included if absolutely necessary)
- avoid high traffic routes and built-up areas where possible
- avoid unduly complicated routes that increase the risk of the group fragmenting, people missing a turn, getting lost, etc

Some nice scenery or an historic feature along the way is always welcome. A lookout might provide a suitable location for a break or a regrouping stop.

Google or paper maps are useful as a planning tool, but it's essential that the route be test driven beforehand to:
- confirm directions, street names and distances
- check the condition of the road and identify any hazards
- confirm the adequacy of locations for breaks and regrouping stops

Note that the Club has a 'database' of previous runs which can be re-visited or modified. In either case, the route should still be test driven to ensure that nothing has changed. Contact the Club Captain / Chapter Convenor for details.

6. Venue

Choose a venue that is be able to provide a sit down breakfast/lunch/dinner for the expected number of attendees.

Numbers can be estimated based on attendees at previous events, but asking participants to RSVP a week prior to the event will assist with planning (see below).

Try to avoid venues that require firm booking numbers. There will always be a few last minute dropouts and attendees, so actual numbers won't be known until the start of the run. If required, you can phone the venue to advise final numbers at this time.

The venue location should leave Members with a run of no more than 2 hours back to the to the city limits when driving home. Closer is better. Remember that some Members will still need to drive across to the other side of the city to get home.

7. Promoting the Run

Details of the run are to be published in the Events Calendar on the Club's website at least 3 months prior to the scheduled run date. If the run is to be promoted elsewhere (eg, MX5 Cartalk Forum, another website, printed flyer), a link should be provided which directs people to the Events Calendar for full details.

Contact the Events Calendar Co-ordinator to arrange an entry for the run. As well as an overview of the run and the venue, the Events Calendar entry should include links to:
- the run sheet or Google Map with directions (so that people can familiarise themselves with the route beforehand)
- the Code of Conduct and Incident Procedures
- venue and/or points of interest websites (if applicable)

The RSVP date should generally be set one week prior to the scheduled run date, however this may vary depending on the type of run and venue requirements. Responses should be requested by a means readily accessible to all Members and appropriate to the event.

Leading Club Runs

1. Sign-on Sheets

All participants (drivers and co-drivers) are to enter their details on the sign-on sheet (Member or Non-Member as appropriate). The wording of the declarations and headings on the sign-on sheets is not to be amended.

2. Run Sheets

Even if a copy of the run sheet has been included in the Events Calendar entry, have enough copies on hand for the expected number of participants, so that each car will have a run sheet.

The format of the run sheet can vary with the Organiser and/or Leader's preferences, but should always include:
- the Leader's name and mobile phone number
- left and right turning points:
  - street names and/or directional signs
  - kilometres (the meeting point will be kilometre zero)
- the address of the destination venue

The test is to ensure that the run sheet provides enough detail to allow a person who is unfamiliar with the route to find their way to the destination if they become separated from the group.

Single drivers can't be expected to follow the run sheet closely, so should be encouraged to follow a car with both a driver and co-driver.

3. Radios

Leaders must have a UHF radio to maintain contact with the group. The Club generally operates on channel 13, but the Leader can change this where appropriate. Just make sure that everyone with a radio knows what channel is being used!

As a minimum, the Leader and Sweep should have radios to maintain contact. Often, other Members in the group will also have radios, allowing messages to be relayed down the line as the group stretches out (or when driving on winding, hilly roads).

The key messages for the Leader to broadcast are upcoming turns ("Turn right into Ridge Road") and regrouping stops ("Pulling over to regroup"). The Sweep should advise the Leader when they have reached the regrouping stop, and again when they move out as the run resumes.

The Sweep (or anyone else with a radio) should immediately advise the Leader of any issues (missed turns, breakdowns, accidents, etc).

4. Managing the Group on the Road

It's not always practical, enjoyable or safe to try and keep a group of 15+ cars in a single convoy. If there are more than 15 cars in attendance, an option is to break the group into sub-groups of no more than 10 cars. Each sub-group should have a designated Leader and Sweep.

However, the cars on the run will almost always get separated at some point. This is why the Leader needs to provide:
- clear run notes (so that people can find their own way)
- periodic regrouping points

When stopping to regroup, it is essential to ensure that:
- there's enough room for the whole group to pull over by the side of the road without any cars having to be on the roadway
- the parked cars will be clearly visible to approaching traffic (eg, not just around a corner and/or over a crest)

It's often a good idea to plan a regrouping stop just before a key turn (to ensure that nobody misses the turn).

To minimise the 'rubber band' affect, the Leader should always accelerate gradually and then maintain an even speed at or around the posted speed limit. Don't slow down suddenly (unless it's an emergency) or pull over to regroup unless it will be safe for all the following cars to the same.

Another good idea is to have 2 or 3 distinctive cars grouped at the back of the convoy so that they Leader can easily recognise the end of the line among general traffic. Having just 1 car may not be distinctive enough when looking back in the rear view mirror, whereas 2 or 3 brightly coloured cars (yellow, white, red) with their headlights on makes it much easier for the Leader to see the last cars on the road and when changing direction or stopping to regroup.

5. P-Plate Drivers
If P-Plate drivers are in attendance, remember that they have limited driving experience and that special arrangements may be required. Consider:
- the difficulty of the route
- expected speeds
- road and weather conditions

Licence conditions are as follows:
- Red P-Plate:
  - Maximum 90 kph
  - Zero alcohol reading
  - Not to use a mobile phone, including hands-free (NB - Using a UHF radio is not specifically prohibited, but would not be within the spirit of the 'no mobiles' law)
- Green P-Plate
  - Maximum 100 kph
  - Zero alcohol reading