

## 2021 Blue Ridge Relay Driver Handbook

### Introduction

Driving the Blue Ridge Relay course requires much preparation and planning. The preparedness of the team driver(s) greatly impacts the experience of the team, the efficiency of the Blue Ridge Relay and the safety of all involved.

1. Non-running driver and co-pilot are suggested. However, some teams prefer to do the driving themselves.
2. Know the course, the rules, the driver handbook and the team handbook.
3. If you don't like runner food, be prepared with your own food and beverages.
4. Have a plan with your team, if you need to rest or sleep (alternate drivers).
5. Have a means to communicate with your second team van (if you have 2 vans).

### Preparation and Planning

Drive the Course Before the Race? If you can't drive the course in advance:

1. Thoroughly review the maps (available on the Drivers Info website page).
  - a. Leg Maps for active vans (when you are the active van, you will remain on the course, with the exception of several legs as noted below)
  - b. Leg Maps to navigate around Blue Ridge Parkway.
  - c. Leg Maps to navigate around Restricted Roads.
  - d. Maps to navigate between Transition Zones.
2. Identify exchange zones (and areas where more time will be required).
3. Know the difficult parking areas and plan accordingly.
4. Be aware of the roads that are more remote and those that run through towns.
5. Know locations for gas, groceries, supplies and additional restrooms are located.
6. Establish locations off of the course where your team vans can meet if needed.
7. GPS and other related systems may not be accurate in the mountains.

### Grayson Highlands State Park

Grayson Highlands State Park has issued a Special Use Permit to the Blue Ridge Relay. Please refer to the Rules and Penalties on the website for a full list of Park rules.

1. Grayson Highlands State Park is 45 minutes from Jefferson/West Jefferson, 1:15-1:30 from Boone. Please allow extra time because the roads, which access the Park, are windy, narrow and secondary.
2. Upon entering Grayson Highlands, each team vehicle must check-in at the gate. You must know your team name to check-in. Ultra teams are permitted to have one team vehicle, all other teams are permitted to have 2 team vehicles. Any vehicles beyond this limit are required to pay at the gate a park fee of \$15 for high occupancy vehicles and \$7 for cars.
3. All Park rules apply, including speed limit.
4. Team Packet Pick-up must be completed at least 30 minutes prior to the start of your team's wave. Sign-in at the starting line will take place 15 minutes prior to the start of your team's wave.
5. The Start is at the Visitor's Center, located 4 miles after passing through the Park entrance gate. Upon entering the park, do not stop at the Ranger's Station, which is located just inside the gate.

## **Blue Ridge Parkway**

The United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service and Blue Ridge Parkway have issued a Special Use Permit to the Blue Ridge Relay to access the Blue Ridge Parkway. In addition to the established rules and regulations of these organizations, the following will apply to the Blue Ridge Relay:

“Support vehicles are not permitted on the Blue Ridge Parkway with the exception: support vehicles can travel between milepost 373 and milepost 375, but cannot stop on the Parkway.” Therefore, support vehicles will follow a route alternate to the course for legs 12, 13 and 36. Support vehicles may use the Parkway for leg 35. Alternate vehicle routes are noted below.

## **Counties and Municipalities**

The Blue Ridge Relay has received permission from the following counties: Grayson, Ashe, Watauga, Avery, Mitchell, Yancey, and Buncombe. Permission has also been received from the towns of Jefferson, West Jefferson, Blowing Rock, Newland, Spruce Pine, Burnsville, and Asheville. Please respect these communities, which graciously are allowing our event access to their roadways.

Understand, that as a driver, you must comply with all traffic laws and regulations. If you get pulled over by Law Enforcement...that’s on you... and your team may also receive a penalty or disqualification from the Blue Ridge Relay.

## **Gravel Roads**

The course was intentionally designed to use secondary roads, when possible. Many of our gravel/dirt mountain roads are narrow and are single lane in places.

1. Please drive slowly to keep dust at a minimum.
2. Respect local traffic.
3. In places, the roads are narrow. Approaching vehicles may not be able to pass your support vehicle. Please be patient and courteous.
4. Please avoid driving the course in reverse on those legs that have dirt/gravel roads as noted on the leg maps. Two-way traffic can create unwarranted congestion on these narrow dirt lanes.

## **Road Conditions**

The roads used for the Blue Ridge Relay in the North Carolina and Virginia mountains are mostly rural, narrow and have little or no paved shoulder. Two Cautions:

First Caution about runners: when passing runners, ensure that you allow approaching traffic and runners ample space.

Second Caution to drivers: We need to drive with caution, awareness and on many roads below the speed limit regardless of shoulder conditions. In many places, if your tires leave the road you risk damage to your vehicle, getting stuck and even sliding into a creek.

## Course Markings

The course will be marked with

1. One yellow directional sign (18" x 24") before each turn
2. One yellow confirmation sign with black arrow after each turn.
3. Signs during the night legs will be highlighted with blue blinking lights.
4. One yellow "EXCHANGE ZONE" sign will be posted approximately ¼ mile before the exchange zone. This is not the beginning of the exchange zone, but an alert sign for runners and drivers that the exchange zone is approaching.
5. Van directional signs in EZ are white with orange letters.

However, as noted in the Rules, it is the responsibility of the runner (and driver) to navigate the course. Please note that signs may read "BRR" or "Relay". Signs will be posted on the Left side of the road. However, signs will be posted on the Right when the leg notes/description instructs runners to run on the right. Every turn will be signed, but occasionally signs do disappear. So read your maps and cue sheet, anticipating the next turn.

## Rules and Penalties

Please refer to the website for a complete listing. Every runner and driver MUST comply with rules.

## Driver Related Rules

Drivers are representatives of their respective team and are responsible for complying with all Blue Ridge Relay Rules. A team will be penalized if their driver is in violation of Blue Ridge Relay Rules and/or does not comply with the alternate driving directions provided.

## Exchange Zones

1. When entering exchange zone parking, roll down window to communicate with EZ staff.
2. Park as instructed by EZ staff.
3. Park in one space only. Most parking lots have limited space.

## Alternate Routes for Support Vehicles

The Blue Ridge Parkway requires that support vehicles use an alternate route for legs 12, 13 and 36. Blue Ridge Relay officials will be posted at the entrances and exits. The "Driver Info" page on the BRR website has interactive maps. Cue sheets for support vehicle alternate routes are listed below.

1. To The Start from West Jefferson and Boone.
2. Navigate around the Blue Ridge Parkway.
  - a. Leg 12
  - b. Leg 13
  - c. Leg 36
3. Navigate around Restricted Roads.
  - a. Leg 2
  - b. Leg 11
  - c. Leg 16
  - d. Leg 22
  - e. Leg 23
4. Navigate between Transition Zones.
5. Navigate to Mountain Running Company, Boone's dedicated running store.
6. Navigate to Riverside Restaurant between EZ6 and EZ12.

## Cue Sheets

The pages that follow are cue sheets to guide drivers. Please use these directions.

### Driving directions to navigate to The Start from West Jefferson (0:45 minutes) and Boone (1:15 – 1:30)

Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	In Boone, beginning at intersection of Hwy 194 and 421 South/221 North/East King St; Follow 421 South/221 North
9.00	9.00	Exit Right onto the exit ramp, following 221 North to West Jefferson
12.40	21.40	Turn Left onto S. Jefferson Ave/194 North/221 Business into <b>West Jefferson</b> at first traffic light on 221N. Ingles grocery and McDonalds Restaurant are on your Left. Follow 194 North to Warrensville.
7.00	28.40	In Warrensville, turn Right onto 194 North to Lansing.
3.70	32.10	In Lansing, turn Right on 194 North to Helton.
4.90	37.00	In Helton, turn Left on Helton Creek Rd
2.30	39.30	Enter Virginia. Remain on Helton Creek Rd/Sturgills Rd
1.20	40.50	Stop sign. Turn Right on Hwy 58/Jeb Stuart Hwy/Highlands Pkwy
3.40	43.90	Turn Left into Grayson Highlands State Park
0.80	44.70	Park Gate House. Check-in. Remain straight to Visitor Center.
3.90	48.60	Start Line. Park in rear parking lot.

### Driving directions to navigate around restricted roads.

Leg 2

Start: Grayson Highlands State Park Rangers' Station (EZ 1)

End: Creekside Christian Church (EZ 2)

Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	From the Rangers' Station parking lot, turn Right and exit the Park through the gate.
0.80	0.80	Turn Right at the Stop sign on Highlands Pkwy/Rte 58
3.40	4.20	Follow Highlands Pkwy and turn Left on Sturgills Rd (751)
3.60	7.80	Turn Left at Stop Sign on 194 North
1.00	8.80	Arrive at Creekside Christian Church on Left.

**Driver Directions to navigate around Blue Ridge Parkway**

Leg 12

Start: ReGeneration Church (EZ 11)

End: Mt Vernon Baptist Church (EZ 12)

Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	Starting at ReGeneration Church Parking Lot, continue on course on Browns Farm Rd.
0.10	0.10	Turn Right at stop sign on Old 421 North
3.40	3.50	Turn Left at traffic light (at Tractor Supply on right), onto 421 North
1.90	5.40	Turn Left on Bamboo Rd at traffic light, Mobil gas station on corner
2.50	7.90	Turn Right, enter Mt Vernon Baptist Church rear parking lot. Park in rear of church.

**Driver Directions to navigate around Blue Ridge Parkway**

Leg 13

Start: Mt Vernon Baptist Church parking lot (EZ 12)

End: Blowing Rock Pool (EZ 13)

Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	Starting at Mt Vernon Baptist Church parking lot, exit through the rear gate above the baseball field. (You cannot exit via the front entrance)
0.20	0.20	Turn Left onto Hartley Knob Rd (first left after the parking lot gate)
0.10	0.30	Turn Right onto Deerfield Rd at stop sign (police officer at intersection)
1.60	1.90	Veer to the Left to remain on Deerfield Rd
1.20	3.10	Turn Left at traffic light onto 321 South (CVS on your right, Walgreens ahead) to Blowing Rock.
5.30	8.40	Turn Right onto 221 South/Main St (Blowing Rock) at traffic light.
0.60	9.00	Turn Right onto 221 South at traffic light
0.20	9.20	Turn Left onto Clark St
0.05	9.25	Turn Left onto Lakeside Dr (Blowing Rock Pool parking lot)

**Driver directions to navigate around Restricted Roads**

Leg 16

Start: Grandfather Mountain (EZ 15)

End: Yadkin Bank Shopping Complex (EZ 16)

**Vans are NOT permitted on Old Yonahlossee Rd**

Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	Exit gravel parking lot and turn Left on 221 South (long curvy downhill)
1.80	1.80	Remain Straight through traffic light on 221 South
0.60	2.40	Remain Straight through traffic light on Hwy 181 towards Newland.
0.10	2.50	Turn Left into Yadkin Bank shopping complex parking lot.

**Driver directions to navigate around Restricted Roads**

Leg 22

Start: Mt. Carmel Baptist Church (EZ 21)

End: Ingles Grocery (EZ 22)

**Vans are NOT permitted on Cabin Rd**

Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	Exit downhill from Mt Carmel Baptist Church parking lot
0.15	0.15	Vans Turn Right on 19E ( <b>Do NOT enter Cabin Rd</b> )
0.85	1.00	Turn Right onto Oak Ave (into Spruce Pine)
0.05	1.05	Turn Left remaining on Oak Ave (follow course to Ingles)
1.15	2.20	Turn Left onto Highland Ave at traffic light
0.10	2.30	Turn Right onto Greenwood Rd
0.10	2.40	Ingles Grocery and Gas on your Left

**Driver directions to navigate around Restricted Roads**

Leg 23

Start: Ingles Grocery (EZ 22)

End: Ledger Ace Hardware (EZ 23)

**Vans are NOT permitted on Stroup Rd**

Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	Exit Left from Ingles parking lot onto Greenwood Rd.
0.50	0.50	Follow Greenwood Rd to Hwy 19E ( <b>DO NOT enter Stroup Rd</b> ) Turn Right onto 19E/226 North
0.25	0.75	Turn Right onto 226 North at traffic light
4.00	4.75	Turn Right into parking for Ace Hardware

**Driver Directions to navigate around Blue Ridge Parkway**

Leg 36

Start: Craven Gap (EZ 35)

End: Highland Brewing Company (Finish)

Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	Starting Craven Gap (EZ25). DO NOT enter the Blue Ridge Parkway. Follow Town Mountain Rd.
6.30	6.30	Turn Left onto College St
0.10	6.40	Travel 1 block, Turn Right onto Charlotte St
0.20	6.60	Travel 1 block, Turn Right onto Woodfin Place to enter 240 East
3.00	9.60	Take Exit 8 to Fairview Rd
0.40	10.00	Turn Left at traffic light onto Fairview Rd.
0.60	10.60	Turn Right onto Old Charlotte Highway
0.20	10.80	Turn Left into Highland Brewing Company
0.30	11.10	Park in rear gravel parking lot

**Transition Zones**

Transition Zones are defined as the exchange zones where teams with 12 runners will experience an overlap in support vehicles (e.g. runner 6 from support vehicle 1 will finish and runner 7 from support vehicle 2 will begin...and runner 12 will finish and runner 1 will begin). The Transition Zones will have greater van traffic and a greater volume of team members. Please note that the non-running support vehicle may pass the Relay staff and arrive at a Transition Zone ahead of staff. Please be patient, we'll be there. The following are the Transition Zones and related notes. Please note that parking will be directed at most of these locations.

Transition 1, Exchange Zone 6 (between legs 6 and 7): Frosty's Choose & Cut. Park as directed.

Transition 2, Exchange Zone 12 (between legs 12 and 13): Mount Vernon Baptist Church Ample Parking. Please park in the rear paved parking lot. No parking on grass/gravel.

Transition 3, Exchange Zone 18 (between legs 18 - 19): Christmas Tree Lot. Parking will be directed. Park nose-in or back-in to the parking lot edge.

Transition 4, Exchange Zone 24 (between legs 24 and 25): Bakersville Volunteer Fire Department. Ample parking in parking lot across the street. Plenty of grass for camping and a large indoor space in case of inclement weather. Freshly dug BAKED POTATOES to fuel up on AND HOT SHOWERS!

Transition 5, Exchange Zone 30 (between legs 30 and 31): PANCAKES! Parking at Laurel Branch Baptist Church and Pensacola United Methodist Church (down the street).

**Driving directions to navigate between Transition Zones**

Start		
From: Grayson Highlands State Park (Start)		
To: Frosty's Choose & Cut (EZ 6)		
Support Van1 to follow the following route		
Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	Travel from BRR Start to Grayson Highlands State Park Entrance
4.70	4.70	Turn Right on Highlands Pkwy (Hwy 58)
3.40	8.10	Turn Left on Sturgills Rd (count rd 751)
1.30	9.40	Enter North Carolina (Helton Creek Rd)
2.30	11.70	Stop Sign. Turn Right on 194 South to Lansing
4.80	16.50	Stop Sign in Lansing. Turn Left on 194 South to Warrensville.
3.70	20.20	Stop Sign in Warrensville. Turn Left on 194 South/88 South to West Jefferson.
3.80	24.00	Stay Right on 194 South to West Jefferson. (88 South veers to the Left)
1.50	25.50	West Jefferson: Stay Straight on S. Jefferson Ave, through downtown West Jefferson
1.60	27.10	First Traffic Light past McDonalds. Right on Beaver Creek School Rd.
2.20	29.30	Frosty's Choose & Cut is on the Right



Transition 1		
Exchange of Legs 6-7		
From: Frosty's Choose & Cut (EZ 6)		
To: Mount Vernon Baptist Church (EZ 12)		
Support Van1 to follow the following route		
Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	Right from Frosty's Choose & Cut
1.20	1.20	Left on Clarence Lyall Rd
0.20	1.40	Right on 221 South (garbage dump 0.9 mile on your Left)
9.50	10.90	Right onto 421 North/221 South to Boone
7.70	18.60	Left on Bamboo Rd. (Mobil Gas Station on corner of Bamboo/421)
2.50	21.10	Right into rear entrance Mount Vernon Baptist Church (Transition 2), park in rear of church

Transition 2		
Exchange of Legs 12-13		
From: Mt. Vernon Baptist Church (EZ 12)		
To: Christmas Tree Lot (EZ 18)		
Support Van 2 to follow the following route		
Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	Exit rear parking lot of Mount Vernon
0.20	0.20	Left on Hartley Knob Rd
0.20	0.40	Right on Deerfield Rd.
1.50	1.90	Veer to the Left, Remain on Deerfield
1.20	3.10	Right at traffic light onto 321 North/221 North/Blowing Rock Highway (CVS on Right)
1.20	4.30	Left on 105 South (Wendy's restaurant is on the Left corner)
16.90	21.20	Right on 181 North to Newland
0.60	21.80	Remain Straight through traffic light on 181 North to Newland
3.50	25.30	Left on 194 South at traffic light in Newland
1.30	26.60	Right on Spanish Oak Rd.
2.60	29.20	Left on Mt. Pleasant Rd
0.00	29.20	Left into parking for Christmas Tree Lot (Transition 3)

Transition 3		
Exchange of Legs 18-19		
From: Christmas Tree Lot (EZ 18)		
To: Bakersville Fire Dept (EZ 24)		
Support Van 1 to follow the following route		
Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	Exit Left from Christmas Tree Lot onto Mt. Pleasant Rd.
0.80	0.80	Inactive Van will remain Straight on Mt. Pleasant Rd.
0.20	1.00	Remain straight through intersection (solar panels on Left)
2.50	3.50	Right on 194 South/221 South at stop sign (after driving through Crossnore)
3.90	7.40	Right onto 194 South (which is also 3-Mile Hwy)
4.20	11.60	Left on 19E at T intersection toward Spruce Pine
7.80	19.40	Right on 226 North at traffic light
9.40	28.80	Left at traffic light in Bakersville, remaining on 226N
0.30	29.10	Left on Baker Lane to Firehouse (Transition 4)

Transition 4		
Exchange of Legs 24-25		
From: Bakersville Fire Dept. (EZ 24)		
To: Pensacola (EZ 30)		
Support Van 2 to follow the following route		
Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	Cross bridge from Bakersville Fire Department turn Right onto 226 South (Note: runners turn Left)
0.30	0.30	Right at traffic light on 226 South to Spruce Pine (CAUTION: Runners on 226)
9.40	9.70	Right at traffic light on 19E to Burnsville
12.20	21.90	Left on 197 South
4.80	26.70	CAUTION EZ 29 on Right, Remain on 197 South to Pensacola
4.40	31.10	Pensacola (Transition 5)

Transition 5		
Exchange of Legs 30-31		
From: Pensacola (EZ 30)		
To: Asheville (Finish)		
Support Van 2 to follow the following route		
Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	197 North from Pensacola return to Burnsville
4.40	4.40	CAUTION EZ 29 on Left, Continue on 197 North to Burnsville
4.80	9.20	Burnsville, Turn Left on 19E
17.00	26.20	19/23/26 South to Asheville
18.40	44.60	240 Beltway East (Expressway)
4.60	49.20	Exit Fairview Rd.
0.30	49.50	Turn Left onto Fairview Rd.
0.60	50.10	Turn Right on Old Charlotte Hwy
0.10	50.20	Turn Left into Highland Brewing Company
0.30	50.50	Highland Brewing RoofTop venue will have a wedding. QUIET Please when in front of Highland Brewing. BRR parking is in the rear gravel parking lot, adjacent to The Meadow.

**Driver directions to navigate to Mountain Running Company in Boone.**

Reference Transition 1 (Mile 18.6) above for Start location.

Start: Mobil Gas Station on corner of Bamboo/421

End: Mountain Running Company, 691 West King St, Boone, NC 28607 (828) 386-1009

Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	Mobil Gas Station on corner of Bamboo/421
2.70	2.70	Follow 421 North for 2.7 miles to downtown Boone

**Driver directions to navigate to Riverside Restaurant (EZ9) (optional stop between EZ6 and EZ12)**

Start: EZ6 Frosty's Choose-n-Cut

End: Riverside Restaurant, 7181 Railroad Grade Rd, Todd, NC 28684

Segment Distance	Total Distance	
0.00	0.00	Right from Frosty's Choose & Cut
1.20	1.20	Left on Clarence Lyall Rd
0.20	1.40	Right on 221 South (garbage dump 0.9 mile on your Left)
9.50	10.90	Right onto 421 North/221 South to Boone
1.70	12.60	Right onto Brownwood Rd
3.40	16.0	Riverside Restaurant on Right at stop sign.