

Not-a-Boring Competition 2027

Abbreviated Rules and Requirements

Last Updated April 2026



Teams at the 2026 Not-a-Boring Competition at The Boring Company's Headquarters and test tunnel portals. April 2026

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Introduction

Created by Elon Musk, founder of Tesla and SpaceX, The Boring Company (TBC) creates safe, fast-to-dig, and low-cost transportation, utility, and freight tunnels. TBC's mission is to solve traffic, enable rapid point-to-point transportation, and transform cities. In September 2021, TBC hosted the first Not-a-Boring Competition (NABC), which challenged engineers to build tunnel boring machines (TBMs) in an effort to accelerate innovation in tunneling technology. Talented teams from around the world answered the call and demonstrated innovative tunneling technology.

This year, TBC is again inviting teams to design, build, and race their own tunneling machines!

TBC is also hosting a Mini Competition which aims to provide a lower barrier-to-entry, to rookie and pre-collegiate teams, who want to get involved with NABC. The rules for all will be included in the same document, abbreviated here and released in full to registered teams soon. Visit boringcompany.com/competition to register your team now!

General Information

This document does not represent the full scope of the rules governing the Not-a-Boring Competition. Rules are subject to change.

Main Event

Full Competition teams in the 2027 Not-a-Boring Competition will compete with a single objective in mind: Maximize tunneling distance.

Competitors in all categories should design a tunnel boring machine meeting the following top level requirements. Your machine shall:

1. Dig a tunnel with a cross section of at least 0.2m^2 (equivalent to a circular tunnel cross section of 0.5m in diameter)
2. Be capable of following a nominal tunnel alignment (tunnel path) which meets the following criteria but is otherwise up to the team:
 - a. Tunnel length will be determined by the linear distance travelled by the front face of the machine, commonly referred to as "chainage"
 - b. The TBM should breakthrough within 0.5m of the nominal alignment
 - i. Deviations from the nominal breakthrough location exceeding 0.5m will be penalized in dig distance, but not disqualified

- c. The tunnel crown (top of the supported tunnel) must reach a depth of greater than 0.5m at its deepest point
 - d. The maximum depth of the tunnel crown is up to the team (within reason)
 - e. The following applies to tunnels beyond 10m in chainage:
 - i. A vertical or horizontal turn must be conducted which changes the tunnel trajectory by at least 5 deg
- 3. Be of your own design, including any supporting equipment
 - a. You will be asked to provide a list of out-of-house manufactured assemblies and provide evidence of collaborative design at minimum. During Competition Week safety inspections, teams will be expected to have in-depth knowledge of the assembly and operation of all out-of-house manufactured assemblies (hydraulic power units, electrical enclosures, etc.)
- 4. Be monitored, controlled, and powered according to the following criteria:
 - a. The machine's 6 degree of freedom (6DOF) state including position and orientation must be reported at all times
 - b. Report relevant telemetry at a rate of at least 0.1 Hz
 - c. Be remotely controlled from the surface
 - i. No human or animal shall ride in any tunneling machine or in any in tunnel transportation device during the competition or during any pre-competition access
 - d. Not utilize combustion engines or explosive materials on board

In all categories, excessively large or complex launch pits will be penalized in tunnel distance. The exact formula for this will be outlined in the Full Rules document, but is expected to be proportional to the volume of dirt removed by heavy equipment.

Mini Competition

Mini Competition teams will be competing for the same awards as Full Competition teams described above. TBC reserves the right to add or remove Mini Competition categories as the year progresses. The currently-anticipated Mini Competitions are described below.

Digging Mini Competition

Create an innovative soil excavation system for a TBM by designing and building a machine which meets the following requirements. Your machine shall:

- 1. Complete a vertical bore with a cross section of at least 0.2m² (equivalent to a circular cross section of 0.5m in diameter) to a target depth of at least 1m
- 2. Be of your own design, including any supporting equipment
- 3. Be monitored, controlled, and powered according to the following criteria:

- a. Report relevant telemetry at a rate of at least 0.1 Hz
- b. Be remotely controlled from the surface
 - i. No human or animal shall ride in any tunneling machine or in any in tunnel transportation device during the competition or during any pre-competition access
- c. Not utilize combustion engines or explosive materials on board

Eligibility

Both student and non-student teams are eligible to enter the competition so long as they adhere to the following rules:

1. Student led teams must have a Faculty Adviser
2. Teams may consist of students from multiple schools, or individuals from multiple companies
3. The team structure is flexible with a minimum number of 2 team members and no maximum number (within reason)
 - a. Team member lists must be submitted with each deliverable and approved by the team's registered point of contact

For any question regarding eligibility, please contact us prior to the competition via email at competition@boringcompany.com

Changes in your competition category will be accepted up to 1 week prior to the Preliminary Design Briefing.

After registering your team, unless otherwise stated, communications to and from The Boring Company should only be made from the address of your team's registered point of contact and to competition@boringcompany.com.

Recommendations and Additional Notes

Historically, TBC has recognized that teams which do the following tend to be more successful:

1. Iterate rapidly - design necessary parts quickly to meet the minimum viable criteria for success. Test them, learn from them, and improve them. Unnecessary parts should be deleted altogether.
2. Test early - This goes for individual subsystems where possible (especially your high power systems), but also your entire TBM. A full scale test dig highlights flaws in designs and operation plans. Conducting a test dig yourself will be a logistical challenge, but you will be infinitely more prepared and ready to race on Dig Day if you've powered on your machine and touched dirt before Competition Week.

3. Fundraise year round - Building a TBM is expensive, and building relationships with supporters, sponsors, and donors takes time and dedication. Do not underestimate the fundraising side of the competition. Not all of this is going to come from direct cash donations, consider in-kind donations of parts you're going to use, tools, logistics support, etc.

TBC encourages teams to:

1. Design, build, and test as many (all) of their machine's systems in-house (within reason)
2. Minimize dependency on heavy machinery during competition week (no cranes will be provided).
3. TBC will provide, at a minimum, small forklifts and telehandlers to be operated by TBC employees (but at the direction of teams). If a team supplies appropriate certifications, they may bring and operate their own equipment
4. Simplify as much as possible, especially your launch setups
5. Lean on the experience of industry, academia, and veteran competition teams, but always verify that the information you receive is relevant to your team's specific operational circumstances
6. Consider the budgeting and team management challenges of the competition in addition to the technical and engineering challenges. Manufacturing and testing your designs takes significant planning, budgeting, and team member input.

Competition Format

Once formed, interested teams must apply for the competition using the form on boringcompany.com/competition. Applying teams are screened on their eligibility per the requirements outlined previously. Once screened, teams will receive additional information including requirements for the first milestone (Team Overview and Plans Briefing) and a non-abbreviated version of this document.

Ultimately, teams selected to advance to Competition Week must successfully pass the following pre-competition milestones where they will be judged by TBC advisors:

1. Preliminary Design Briefing
2. Final Design Package
3. Mining Readiness Review

After passing these milestones, selected applicants and their machines will compete during Competition Week. During Competition Week, teams will conduct several tests and additional briefings on their machines and operations to prove safety and reliability to TBC advisors. After completing these final assessments and passing the safety and reliability check, at TBC's discretion, teams will be allowed to test their tunneling machine on Dig Day.

The Boring Company, at its sole discretion, may allow or disallow entrants from accessing the site or from participating in the competition.

Competition Schedule

The 2026 Not-a-Boring Competition schedule will be updated and amended throughout the season. Dates are subject to change, No Earlier Than (NET) milestone dates are provided below:

NET Date	Milestone
May 10th, 2026	Unabbreviated Rules and Requirements document released to teams
Jun. 7th, 2026	Team Overview and Plans Briefing*
Jul. 12th, 2026	Mid-Summer Check In*
Sept. 6th, 2026	Preliminary Design Briefing due
Sept. 13th, 2026	Preliminary Design Briefing due for rookie teams
Winter, 2026	Final Design Package due
Spring 2027	Mining Readiness Review
Spring 2027	Competition Week

*early registration teams only

All teams, regardless of which competition category they are competing in, will follow the same competition schedule.

Revision History

Rev.	Date	By	Description
A	April 2026	CK, FR, PD	Initial Release