

Appendix E: Event Safety

Text in bold below has mandatory status and shall be followed by relevant event officials. Other content refers to material provided for guidance and for information. This Appendix shall be read in conjunction with the BOF Rules and shall have the same authority. They shall be considered as their extension.

1. Introduction

Rule 1.7 covers event safety and lays out the main areas for consideration. This Appendix provides additional guidance. Event Safety includes safety throughout the whole event venue, including the competition area, assembly, car parks, routes to and from these areas, string course and Trail-O.

Orienteering involves people with a wide spectrum of physical abilities making their way across potentially hazardous and challenging terrain. Despite this, the incidence of serious injury is low.

The responsibility for personal safety at the event lies with the competitor (Rule 1.7.1), and this should be highlighted in event handouts. The organiser has overall responsibility for ensuring that the necessary safety and risk management for the event are in place both for competitors and non-competitors. The planner has responsibility delegated by the organiser for ensuring that the courses are planned in a safe manner and that any risks on the courses are managed effectively. The controller has responsibility to ensure that risk management for the event has been planned and implemented where appropriate.

The Organiser shall take responsibility for completing the Risk Assessment Form for the event (available from the British Orienteering web site). The form shall then be reviewed by the Controller who will sign the form to confirm that it has been reviewed. At event level D this review, if not by a Controller, may be by one of the following: a) a person who has British Orienteering Event Safety accreditation or b) a licensed coach.

Registers of appropriately trained people are available to the club through the web database. In all instances the person signing will confirm the Risk Assessment Form has been reviewed by signing, printing their name and dating the form. In the case where an Organiser, who has responsibility for risk management, and the person signing the risk management form disagree, the signee should indicate their concerns on the form.

It is important that the preparation of the relevant Risk Assessment Form is commenced at an early stage in the planning process, so as to help identify and assess safety issues and to decide on actions that should be taken to mitigate these identified risks.

It will never be possible to run a perfectly safe event but organisers should be aware of the main safety issues and, if an incident occurs, be prepared to deal with it in a calm and effective manner.

The Controller (or, for Level D events an accredited person) shall be

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satisfied that appropriate steps have been taken to deal with safety issues.

Organisers have the right to impose whatever additional rules they think appropriate for an event; provided that competitors are clearly notified (see Rules 1.3.6 to 1.3.11). Whilst this right will only be used occasionally, Organisers should be confident that they can require competitors to follow specific instructions where to do otherwise would compromise safety.

2. Particular Safety Considerations

2.1 First Aid Cover

At all events, the Organiser shall ensure that appropriate first aid is easily available (Rule 1.7.4)

First Aid provision must be appropriate to the nature of the event. The time of year, the location, the terrain, the number of competitors and other factors, such as proximity to outside assistance must be taken into account when arranging First Aid cover.

There are several options that can be considered.

- Professional First Aid provider
- Voluntary organisations such as St John, St Andrews, Red Cross, Mountain rescue
- Trained First Aiders who are club members/coaches.

When arranging First Aid cover with outside agencies the following information should be supplied to them to allow them to quote for and provide an adequate service for the event.

- Set up and Start times, course closing time, and control collection time.
- Expected numbers and any particular needs for this event (e.g. all school children)
- If they will be required to rescue a casualty from the terrain.
- If a static First Aid point is required as well as a mobile unit.

Organisers should prepare a casualty rescue plan if they anticipate any difficulties in recovering a casualty from any parts of the competition area.

Organisers should know the location of the nearest accident hospital (is it open at weekends?) and be able to arrange the transfer of any casualty.

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Communications with the key event locations as well as for summoning for outside assistance is to be recommended. Mobile phone and/or radio coverage needs to be checked in all locations.

2.2 Weather Conditions

These may consist of the following:

- Cold
- Heat
- Wind (storm damage expected)
- Wet and cold
- Flood

Measures should be in place to deal with the likely effects of these extreme weather conditions, such as drink points on courses, clothing requirements, curtailment of courses.

2.3 Terrain

The dangers of a particular type of terrain will generally be known to local inhabitants and to local orienteers so check with them, e.g. old mine shafts. Consider all possible routes between controls, even hazards well away from the expected routes must be considered. The Planner must take into consideration all hazards that competitors may encounter (see Rule 1.7.7). Dangerous features should be marked with yellow or yellow and black tape if they are likely to be visited by any competitors and are not already clearly marked on the ground as dangerous (see Rule 1.7.8).

2.4 No Whistle/Waterproof Hooded Top No Go?

Rule 7.1.3 enables the Organiser to enforce the carrying of a lightweight waterproof hooded top or similar waterproof clothing if necessary. Rule 7.1.4 enables the Organiser to enforce the carrying of whistles.

- If you are requiring either or both to be carried, explain the reasons in the pre-race information and prominently at the event so that everyone is clear about the requirements. Make it clear whether it is a recommendation or mandatory
- As with all such safety matters, the initial decision on whistles and waterproof clothing rests with the Organiser.

2.5 Finish Location

There should always be someone at the Finish, to supervise competitors and act as the point of contact in an emergency. The finish is the most likely place for somebody to go to report a problem such as an injured competitor.

If the finish is in a remote location consideration should be given to providing a qualified first-aider, a first aid kit and a shelter at the finish, in particular if the weather is likely to be poor. A reliable means of communication also needs to be set up between the finish and assembly.

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2.6 Electrical and Other Equipment

Equipment which is designed for external use will tend to be safe provided that it is used appropriately and by suitably experienced people. There is a danger that domestic equipment used outside is not suitable for such an environment. If in any doubt, seek qualified advice.

The use of generators to support Event systems requires careful consideration to ensure that safety is maintained. For example, they must be sited away from main thoroughfares, cordoned off and spare fuel stored appropriately.

The use of computers, printers and other hardware to support event systems needs consideration with regard to the weather, electrical safety, generator support, cable runs etc.

Cable runs and connections must be suitably protected from the weather, the correct cable thickness for their function, and with protected joints. There should be protection from all traffic going over them – vehicle and pedestrian. Any cables at head height, e.g. travelling between tents and buildings, must be securely supported.

If bamboo canes are to be used at control sites, their siting should aim to reduce the chance of competitors falling on them. Cane caps or other suitable protection shall be fitted to prevent possible injuries. These requirements also apply when canes are used elsewhere such as the assembly area, start, finish and string course.

2.7 Roads and Traffic

The approach and exit routes of all vehicles should be assessed. There is the need to get vehicles in efficiently and parked safely. Measures must be in place to ensure traffic does not 'back up' onto main roads or block junctions.

Traffic flows may need one way routes into and out of the area.

Car parks need to be sufficient to get all vehicles parked and leave room for emergency vehicle ingress and egress. The layout may include an empty lane every X number of cars. As much space as possible should be left between vehicles, particularly campervans, in case of fire.

Road crossings to and from the start/ finish may need to be marshalled – a separate lane for pedestrians if they share the car park entrance is desirable. Road crossings on a course should be avoided.

Urban orienteering presents a number of potential hazards not normally present at forest based events. The most significant of these is the presence of public roads and moving vehicles. These hazards must be carefully assessed as part of a comprehensive Risk Assessment early in the organising process. Where deemed necessary, busy roads may need controlled crossings with marshals and/or timed-out controls. Particular attention needs to be given to courses

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planned for competitors under 16 years of age. In the eyes of the law, the Organiser is acting in loco parentis for children under the age of 16 and must be seen to take precautions over and above what a careful parent would take for the safety of their children. In practice this will mean that courses for M/W16 and below will not be able to cross roads with significant traffic. Roads with traffic management that induce low speeds (15mph as on many campuses) are acceptable but busy public roads are not. It should be noted that disclaimers, signed by parents, are ineffective and would not absolve the Organiser of his/her responsibility in law. M/W16's should only be allowed to run up if they have passed their sixteenth birthday on the day of the race.

2.8 Radios and Mobile Phones

Unless the competition is small and being held in a very compact space some kind of communication between Event officials is essential. Before the event, the coverage of radios and mobile phones needs to be assessed and alternative arrangements made for areas of poor reception.

3. Checks for Finishers

3.1 Introduction

It is a fundamental principle (Rule 1.7.2) that all competitors who start a competition shall report to the finish. It does no harm to remind competitors, in pre-event information and on control description sheets, of their obligation to report back:

“Once started, you must report back to the finish.”

3.2 The Buddy System

The final details may need to explain the concept of the 'buddy' system. That if anyone travelling with a competitor, during the event becomes concerned that particular competitor has not returned to the finish/download within their normal expected time, they should report their concerns to the event Organiser.

For those travelling alone current custom and practice is for their car keys to be left at download/enquiries. Unless the Organiser declares otherwise, the use of this reporting out/reporting back system is optional.

3.3 Keeping a Check on Starters

One way to check for finishers is if a 'check' has been made for starters. This can be by ticking starters off on a pre-printed start list. The list of starters is then matched against the known finishers. This system is not fool proof. It works best in good weather with a small event and an efficient finish/results team.

Electronic checks, e.g. interrogating the clear, 'check' or 'start' stations used with electronic punching, can be more effective (or at least much quicker), but still require an understanding of how to carry out the check. There should be at least one member of the download team who knows how to operate the downloading of data from check, clear and start boxes to cross check on who has started and finished and those who are overdue.

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3.4 A Missing Competitor

If a competitor is identified as not having finished then the Organiser must make a decision as to whether they are simply a bit overdue or seriously missing. Either way, the Organiser will want to get some preliminary information about the competitor, e.g. age, appearance, experience, course, start time etc.

If overdue then it could be appropriate to just wait – the lost competitor will almost invariably appear, having come to no harm. Sometimes sending someone able to identify the missing competitor round the course backwards is helpful. It is important that they don't become missing as well. They should only set out with the Organiser's permission, adequately equipped, preferably with the ability to be communicated with and with clear instructions about returning by a certain time. They should never be the sole parent or guardian of a missing child, who should always remain at the assembly/finish in order to look after the child on their return.

If the Organiser feels that the competitor is missing and that there are genuine reasons for being worried then they must be prepared to take positive action. Organisers should consider the following questions when deciding what to do.

3.4.1 Who should be doing what?

It is essential that the strategy for this has been worked out before the event. Tasks to be done include:

- Gathering the intelligence
- Controlling the progress of the initial search
- Team leaders for search teams
- Liaison with other organisations (e.g. police, mountain rescue).
- Preparation of a missing person rescue plan at major events

3.4.2 What factors should influence whether or not we search?

Age/experience of the competitor	Density of competitors still in the forest
Amount of daylight left	Nature of the terrain
Car left in car park	Elapsed time
Weather now and forecast	Time of year
Known medical condition	

3.4.3 What should we do then?

Build up as much 'intelligence' as possible. Check obvious places and check the start list and finish list again to make sure the person really is missing. Get a good description of the person, both physical and psychological. Alert potential searchers, control collectors and others. Deal with the needs of friends and relatives. Quiz finishers to check if anyone has seen the missing competitor or anything unusual. Check the car park for vehicles without owners. If a safety bearing was given, check the route back that a person following that instruction would have taken

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3.4.4 How should we conduct a search?

This depends on the environment and the nature of the problem. The deployment of searchers must be based upon probabilities and the terrain:

Which areas have the highest probabilities of containing the competitor? A field may have the same area as a piece of woodland but can be covered much more quickly by a smaller number of searchers. Allocate searchers accordingly.

If SportIdent electronic punching has been used at the event, interrogating all the control boxes on the missing runner's course will identify the last control visited by that runner.

There are two methods of search to consider:

Ribbon searching – this only covers linear features and the land on either side. A competitor injured in the middle of a thick block of forest may still be found by ribbon searching if they use their whistle or shout for help. Following the competitor's course is a sort of ribbon search but may be difficult whenever there is a route choice.

Sectoring – this involves a comprehensive sweep search of selected pieces of land. It is very slow and labour intensive - probably requiring more people than you will have available.

The reality of searching is that, if the missing person is unconscious, it could take a very long time to locate them in the sort of terrain that we use.

The search must be monitored closely to avoid duplication or omission. Any feature that cannot be 'cleared' must be noted, e.g. a mine-shaft. A map showing the progress of the search should be kept. If the area is not bounded by a good physical feature then consider the possibility that the person has strayed out of the vicinity completely. If there are perimeter or access roads then a quick tour by car may intercept the lost competitor. If and when the missing person is found, it must be possible to recall the searchers.

3.4.5 When should we contact the police and what sort of response should we expect?

There is no simple answer but, in general, the police will appreciate early notification, even if you are not actually requesting help at the time. Their response will depend on the circumstances - they will decide whether to alert mountain rescue if you are in a suitable area or to start to gather searchers, based upon the information which you supply. It is important that you give as many details as you can of the situation and the missing person including, for example, home telephone number, car registration number etc. Although an officer may attend reasonably quickly it can take a significant length of time for them to mobilise any number of helpers. Even when help does arrive, the expertise of orienteers to navigate precisely over complex terrain, even at night, should be remembered. However, Mountain Rescue will want to take charge of search and rescue, thereby relieving the Organiser of this responsibility.

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3.4.6 While the search is underway, what should be happening?

The searchers themselves may have already had a long and tiring day. If the weather is bad, are they suitably prepared or will they become casualties themselves? Are the friends / relatives of the missing person being looked after? Is there someone briefed to deal with the press (in consultation with the police)? Are the searchers' families being informed that they will be late home?

3.4.7 What pre-event preparation should be carried out?

The organising team and the Controller should discuss plans for meeting various crises. One of these crises is the overdue competitor and everyone involved should be aware of their responsibilities should the situation occur. Members of the organising club (perhaps the control collectors as a minimum) should be alerted to the fact that they should not leave for home until everyone has been accounted for. If appropriate, they could be asked to bring head torch, food and suitable clothing – just in case.

Radios can make a big difference to the efficiency of the search, provided there is good radio reception, but make sure that the batteries are not running down at the end of the day just when you most need them.

All clubs should ensure that their members are aware of the basic safety rules associated with orienteering. Running a search exercise for a missing competitor is informative and prepares the whole club for the day when it may be for real.