

ARC SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR FELL RACES

ORGANISERS PLEASE NOTE

Failure to implement ARC Safety Requirements could invalidate an organiser's insurance cover

Fell Running attracts competitors with a wide range of ability and experience. Those who are unfit and inexperienced in meeting the hazards of mountain terrain and weather are at greatest risk of personal harm. However, anyone participating in a fell race may suffer an accident, the consequences of which can be extremely serious.

The race organiser takes overall responsibility for the event. This includes ensuring that the race is organised in accordance with ARC rules and safety requirements, and that appropriately experienced marshals and other officials are used to monitor and control the race.

1. SENIOR EVENTS

The general philosophy for the following requirements is that the COMPETITOR should take primary responsibility for his/her own safety on the fells and the organiser has the responsibility of making sure the race is as safe as possible. This is by ensuring that the nature of the race and safety rules have been drawn up and formally communicated to each runner and that the organisation monitors and controls the race so that help is available without delay.

2. JUNIOR EVENTS

The above philosophy applies to senior events. In junior events the youth, inexperience and greater vulnerability of competitors to bad weather require that the ORGANISER has primary responsibility for their safety. This involves taking decisions on behalf of the runners that would normally be taken by the runners themselves in senior races.

3. SIZE OF FIELD

This must be limited to the number of runners that a) the race organisation can completely monitor and control b) avoids damage to the environment, and c) avoids risk of accidents due to overcrowding.

4. COURSE DESIGN

Courses must not be unnecessarily dangerous and should be designed to prevent any temptation to gain advantage by negotiating rock climbs or steep unstable slopes, where dislodged stones may fall on those below. Compulsory sections **must not include** such hazards or comparable foreseeable dangers. Organisers of courses that traverse high mountain or moorland terrain should consider having an alternative route available for use in adverse weather conditions.

5. ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS

Should weather conditions on the hills be of such severity as to endanger competitors or prevent marshals carrying out the race checking procedures efficiently, the race must either be abandoned or the bad weather alternative route used. The main factor in making such a judgement must be the safety of competitors and race organisers must be prepared to take firm decisions however unpopular at the time. Consultation

with experienced marshals, mountain rescue personnel and consideration of an up-to-date weather forecast will help race organisers to arrive at a decision in marginal situations. Preferably, this decision should be reached by at least two people although the race organiser's decision is final and all competitors must comply.

6. MARKED COURSES

Bearing in mind that visibility in bad weather can be reduced to a few yards, organisers should NEVER describe a course as "OBVIOUS" or "MARKED" unless flagged or taped to the appropriate standards or unless a rider is added about weather conditions.

7. EVENT INFORMATION

General publicity must indicate the nature of the event, its severity, type of terrain and suitability, or otherwise, for novices. Specific information concerning race rules, race route, retirement procedures, equipment to be carried and checkpoint closing times must be available for competitors prior to the race day and displayed at the point of registration. Competitors should always be provided with an up-to-date local weather forecast on the day of the race.

8. ENTRIES

All entries to the race must be made on the official entry form, a typical example of which is reproduced in Appendix 1. Some of the items on the form will vary according to the race but the basic form is applicable to most events. The disclaimer on the entry form does not protect the organiser if, in the event of a claim, he is found to be negligent. Details of transport arrangements obviously need to be collected on the day. The signature of the competitor on the form is the formal indication that he/she is aware of all matters pertaining to the race and the organiser must therefore ensure that this information is easy to understand and in a prominent place. For runners under 18, a parent or guardian must sign their form.

9. EQUIPMENT & WEATHER

Competitors should arrive at races prepared to carry any or all of the following equipment:

- a) Windproof whole-body cover
- b) Other body cover appropriate for the weather conditions
- c) Map and compass suitable for navigating the course
- d) Whistle
- e) Emergency food (long races)

These requirements constitute "best practice" and are mandatory at all Category A Long and Medium races.

However, any race organiser can impose additional safety requirements (e.g. waterproof, as distinct from windproof, whole body cover) and competitors must accept such requirements as a condition of race entry.

In the event of fine and settled weather, confirmed by a local weather report, the organiser **may** decide to waive some of the requirements for races of other categories.

Race organisers must ensure that requirements they specify on the day are met by holding complete or random checks both before and after the start of the race.

Race organisers should be aware of the dangers of hypothermia if injury to runners causes them to stop or slow to a walking pace. Body heat is lost quickly and in cold, wet or windy weather the onset of hypothermia can be very rapid unless suitable warm clothing is carried and used. This factor should influence decisions on the extra equipment runners are required to carry in poor and/or unsettled weather conditions. If such conditions are likely to occur, the high risk of hypothermia should be stressed to competitors.

10. COMPETITION NUMBERS

These should be waterproof. Once the event is underway, a unique number identifies each competitor. He/she should be aware of the procedure for recording their number at checkpoints. It is vital that the organiser has the time and competition number of every competitor recorded as they pass through a checkpoint.

11. RETIREMENT PROCEDURES

Retirement may occur by either competitor or organiser decision. Race control should be informed as quickly as possible by any of the following:

- a) Reporting to a checkpoint and then returning directly to the finish to report to race control
- b) Reporting directly to race control when retiring between the checkpoints
- c) Telephoning the race emergency number or the police. (This may be necessary when completely lost, such as in the wrong valley)

12. RACE MARSHALS

Race marshals should be experienced fell walkers or runners who are dressed and equipped to withstand severe weather conditions over a prolonged period. They should carry first aid and sustenance, as appropriate for such factors as the length, severity and remoteness of the event, to help competitors in an emergency. Race marshals must have a thorough knowledge of the race organiser's monitoring procedure. Strategic checkpoint marshals should be in contact with race control and consideration should be given to their being equipped with a KISU type of shelter or a tent for use in emergencies. The decision to do this should be based on the race's length and severity, the remoteness and altitude, the latest weather forecast, the available communications, and what other forms of shelter exist. If weather conditions prevent marshals carrying out the monitoring procedures efficiently, then race control must be informed.

13. RACE MONITORING AND RESCUE PROCEDURE

Progress of the race must be monitored in such a way that the organiser is always in a position to make a reasoned judgement as to the need to abandon the race or call out the rescue services. This means that each individual runner must be checked around the course in such a manner that if he/she becomes overdue at a control point, the fact is known to race control. Since accurate timing of a call-out is often vital and can make the difference between life and death. It is inadequate to wait until the completion of long races before an alert is raised.

The monitoring system used is the responsibility of the race organiser.

When possible race organisers should arrange for the local MRT, Red Cross or St John Ambulance to be on standby.

The organiser must have an intimate knowledge of the course, terrain, possibilities for error, and likely weather conditions.

ARC strongly recommend that, if it is feasible and appropriate for the course, all long and medium category “A” races which traverse high fell country should be monitored by the use of radios at strategic points. The local Raynet organisation may be able to provide assistance.

14. RELAYS

Because there is a possibility of less experienced runners being included in a relay team, in addition to the procedures above, the organiser **MUST** ensure that :-
Every competing club has been vetted as experienced for this type of event.
Sufficient copies of information/rules/safety procedures are sent to competing clubs for distribution to each competitor. Clubs must give the organiser formal assurance that this has been done. Competitors **MUST** carry the equipment specified in Requirement 9. All leg winners and at least 10% of other competitors **MUST** have their equipment checked on finishing and any transgression of the organiser’s requirements **MUST** result in instant disqualification of the offending team.

APPENDIX 1

<p style="text-align: center;">RACE NUMBER.....</p> <p style="text-align: center;">.....REGISTRATION FORM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MINIMUM AGE TO ENTER.....YRS</p> <p>FULL NAME.....AGE.....</p> <p>ADDRESS.....POST CODE.....</p> <p>PHONE NUMBER.....VEHICLE REGISTRATION.....</p> <p>EMAIL ADDRESS.....</p> <p>CLUB.....</p> <p>CATEGORY (CIRCLE BELOW AS APPROPRIATE)</p> <p>MALE MV40 MV45 MV50 MV55 MV60 MV65 MV70</p> <p>FEMALE FV40 FV45 FV50 FV55 FV60 FV65</p> <p>EMERGENCY CONTACT.....PHONE NUMBER.....</p> <p>I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS RACE IS HELD IN ACCORDANCE WITH BOTH THE RULES AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS OF ARC. I CONFIRM THAT I AM AWARE OF THE ORGANISER'S INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH THIS RACE. I ACCEPT THE HAZARDS INVOLVED IN FELL RUNNING AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I AM ENTERING AND RUNNING THIS RACE AT MY OWN RISK</p> <p>SIGNATURE.....</p>
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