

Newcastle Orienteering Club

Risk Minimisation Guidelines

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with section 4.13, "Safety", of the OANSW Association Manual and applied wherever possible in relation to our club events.

Planning an event

- The map of an area to be used is produced so that it has distinct boundaries such as power lines, fences, roads or railways to help people who may get off course to relocate or return to base.
- The map is produced to such detail that all dangerous area (such as cliffs, deep watercourses, mineshafts, subsidence cracks, impenetrable vegetation, etc) are indicated on the map.
- Courses should be designed to avoid any dangerous features.
- Junior and novice courses are set using easy to follow features (tracks, fences, power lines etc)
- Owners and other known users of the area are contacted prior to the event to assess if any conflict of interest would occur. (e.g., car rallies, mountain bike races, hazard reduction burns, blasting or other mine activities.)
- The course planner(s) will visit all possible control sites at least once before the event and note any changes (e.g. new tracks, car wrecks) or any new hazards (new subsidence, overgrown tracks, etc) that may have taken place and consider these when course planning.
- The assembly area is chosen with all of the above in mind and with suitable access and parking in all weather conditions. (Generally events are only called off if access becomes flooded or if fires are present or predicted).

Running an event

- The event information alerts competitors to any area that may need special care or avoidance. Any corrections to the original map are also noted. (Electronic preparation of maps allows corrections to be made prior to a specific event).
- Dangerous features may be taped using bright coloured streamers (removed after the event) where the organiser feels competitors may be in the vicinity.
- Courses are colour coded to indicate the degree of navigational experience that would be needed on each course. (Blue-very easy, Green-easy, Orange-moderate, Red-difficult).
- Advice should be available to assist competitor select a suitable course for their navigational skills and fitness level.
- A strict competitor registration system must be in place where the start time, car registration and telephone number (optional) is recorded.
- All competitors must report to back registration to be checked off, even if they fail to complete their chosen course.
- Course closure time is advised and all competitors must report back to registration by this time.
- At course closure, registration is checked to see if any person is still out on the course. A vehicle inspection is carried out to see if the competitor has left the area without reporting to registration. Other competitors should be questioned to help ascertain whether the competitor is still on the course. If safe return cannot be guaranteed, a search party consisting of experienced orienteers capable of navigating that course should be set up and a search carried out using the OANSW search procedure.
- Two mobile phones should be available to assist search parties.
- A safety bearing should be noted and provide a general direction to a major feature (such as a road) that would assist a lost competitor locate the registration area.
- "Runners on road" signs should be displayed at significant access roads to warn drivers of the risk.
- "Go back, wrong way" signs may be displayed where novices may choose the wrong direction.
- Parents should "shadow" very young competitors.
- In hotter weather "water drops" should be placed on long courses where there is a risk of dehydration. On very hot days competitors should be encouraged to carry their own water.

General

- The club's first aid kit should be kept well stocked and be made available at all events.
- Coaching should be available on a regular basis to assist people to improve their navigation.
- The carrying of a safety whistle should be highly encouraged. Any distressed or injured competitor should give six short blasts on their whistle to attract assistance. Any competitor hearing six whistle blasts MUST cease their competition and render assistance immediately.
- The wearing of full protective orienteering clothes including gaiters and appropriate footwear should be encouraged.
- The wearing of sun protection by competitors and officials should be encouraged.
- Farm stock and native fauna should be avoided.
- No fires are to be lit.
- In the event of a bushfire, competitors should cease their course immediately and make way to the nearest road not in the fire's path. They should also warn other competitors and inform the organiser if possible.

*This document is never complete. Commonsense should be our constant companion in the bush.
If any club member has any other ideas relating to the safe conduct of events, then
please contact any of the committee members with your suggestion.*