

OACT Guidelines For Event Management – Doc 6

OACT Safety and Emergency Procedures Policy

(excerpts) November 2005

The Safety Policy of the Orienteering ACT (OACT) is binding on all events organised on behalf of OACT or clubs associated with OACT.

This policy is in two parts:

1. safety considerations to be taken into account in the organisation of an event,
2. procedures to be undertaken in event of the need for search and rescue, and

This policy recognises that by its very nature Orienteering can be dangerous. Most common emergencies involved injuries (ankle, leg, or cuts and abrasions), stress from dehydration, overheating, hypothermia, or severe disorientation. The emphasis in Orienteering must be on primary safety, that is on ensuring participants minimise risk. However, provision must be made for emergencies and this policy outlines the steps that should be taken at OACT-affiliated events.

1. Reporting Arrangements

- If any search and rescue operation requires assistance from external agencies and/or an injured person requires significant medical attention, the one of the following people is to be contacted, in order:
 - Bob Mouatt – 0412 312 376
 - Bob Allison - 0408 407 141
 - Bill Jones - 0428 255 210
- Also, Conservation and Land Management ACT must be advised of any person(s) lost or seriously injured on any public forest, nature reserve, nature park or national park in the ACT - this can be done by contacting the nearest CALM office (e.g. Namadgi Visitor Centre on 62072900; Stromlo Headquarters on 62072491) or the Agency Representative through Canberra Connect (if after hours) as soon as practicable. This is important because CALM is in the best position to facilitate rapid access and in terms of monitoring the public risk as well.
- Following the event a written report from the Event Safety Coordinator is to be submitted to the Event Controller and to the OACT Office. This report should detail decisions and actions, as well as nature and extent of search/rescue/injury.

2. Event Organisation Procedures

Event Safety Coordinator

The Controller, Planner and Event Organiser must consider safety, emergency and search and rescue options in the planning of the event. An Event Safety Coordinator should be appointed. This would normally be the Organiser. The Event Safety Coordinator has overall responsibility for decisions relating to safety, search and rescue.

Pre-event Organisation

Controller, Planner and Organiser (and, if additional, Event Safety Coordinator) should meet and arrange the following:

- Identify and seek to avoid or minimise any hazards unique to event, map or proposed courses
- Identify additional hazards in case of bad weather/visibility
- Minimise hazards for orange, green and blue courses; eg do not set controls near edge of map
- Adequate water available on course, at controls and/or other key locations; location given on master maps (not a general or map corrections map) and/or control descriptions
- Where appropriate, ensure safety directions and/or a safety bearing is printed on all control descriptions lists

OACT Guidelines For Event Management – Doc 6

- Ensure that the Starter (in pre-entry events) highlights to participants relevant risks and safety procedures
- Decide time limit after which initial search for blue, green and orange participants should begin
- Ensure that registration, start and event organisation is aware of and able to fulfil safety requirements
- Ensure a list of phone numbers of search resources, hospitals, and search and rescue authorities is at hand
- Ensure a qualified doctor or currently qualified first aider will be on hand at all events
- Ensure a list of qualified first aiders/doctors from among OACT membership (available from OACT office and to be placed on event kits, expected to be with the organiser at the event)
- Ensure a sufficient number of experienced people, together with an adequate number of master maps for all courses, are on hand for search and rescue - especially near the end of an event. At least six people should remain at the event site until all competitors have finished their courses. These would usually be club members who are helping to pack up and bring in controls. Note that even without a search situation control collectors should be asked to keep an eye out for stragglers and direct them home if necessary.

Participant Registration

- Organisers must obtain from all participants sufficient minimum details to ensure emergency procedures can be implemented. At each event all participants are therefore asked to ensure they fill out registration/control card details fully and legibly. Organisers are asked to request participants who do not fill in these details to do so before issuing maps etc.
- The following data **must** be obtained from each participant/leader of a group of participants. This information is all requested on the registration cards, and is intended to allow organisers and search and rescue personnel enough basic information to make informed strategies and decisions:
 - Full name of each person entering the competition area.
 - Full address
 - Home and/or mobile phone number
 - Vehicle, make and registration number
 - Course being attempted
- Organising club and/or OACT officials present should ensure that any beginners or other inexperienced orienteers are briefed on safety issues (if relevant in the circumstances) before their runs.
- Whistles:
 - All orienteers to be encourage routinely to carry a whistle (and to know when and how to use it); and
 - Organiser to ensure whistles are available for any competitor requesting one. [subject to availability of stock – price tba]
- Ensure that all competitors know that they must report to the finish before the advertised course closure time.

OACT Guidelines For Event Management – Doc 6

Start

- For ALL events other than pre-entry events, regardless of whether *SportIdent* (SI) is used at the Start and Finish, accurate actual start lists are essential. A DIY start list is most practical and should be placed prominently at the start (as at Community events on Wednesdays).
- A standard form disclaimer by OACT of responsibility is to feature on an appropriate notice attached or adjacent to the courses menu board at all events. This notice should advise that participation in the event is deemed to be acceptance by participants of risks and responsibilities for their own safety. A similar notice will be included in annual OACT membership application and renewal forms, as a condition of membership.
- For pre-entry events an accurate Did Not Start (DNS) list must be maintained and delivered to the Organiser as soon as possible after the last start.

Organisation

- For SI-supported events, check the SI computer program for participants who are not yet recorded as finished, regularly (at least every 30 minutes after the first hour of the event)
- For events where *SportIdent* is not used at the start and finish, match start stubs with finish cards, regularly (at least each 30 mins, after the first hour of the event)
- Near the end of the event, maintain an updated list of participants still out.
- For pre-entry events, accurate actual start lists are crucial and must be matched with pre-entry list as soon as it is returned by the Starter to the Organiser or finish and results coordinator.

3. Search and Rescue Procedures

Determine the need of search

- Be certain the participant has not returned, and a search is warranted, by:
 - Double check of SI records or control card stubs
 - Compare Registration Form details with licence plate numbers of vehicles remaining
 - Ring participant's mobile phone number or home number.
- If participant has not returned within thirty minutes of course closure, consider the following points before commencing search:
 - *Participant details - gain as much information as possible*
 - Age
 - Fitness level
 - Experience and competence
 - Any known/perceived medical conditions
 - Clothing the participant is wearing
 - Equipment - watch, whistle, other
 - *Course and conditions*
 - Prevailing and likely weather
 - Course distance/terrain/hazard features
 - Course estimated winning time/compared to actual completion times
 - Estimated completion time for participant
 - Daylight remaining

If, after considering the factors above, a search is warranted, the decision to begin a search is made by the Event Safety Coordinator.

OACT Guidelines For Event Management – Doc 6

There are two levels of search. The Event Safety Coordinator may decide to initiate a comprehensive, higher level, search immediately if conditions warrant. However, it would be normal practice to initiate an initial, lower level search first.

Essential Preparations for Search

- Locate a base station where all searchers will report
- Appoint search coordinator, who should remain at base station
- Identify, as much as possible regarding participant: age, physical condition, shoe style and size, and type of clothing and equipment carried.
- Narrow the search area by asking if anyone has seen the participant while they were competing
- Develop maps showing participants course, and likely points of error/hazards
- Estimate distance travelled and prepare a perimeter map identifying bordering roadways and rights of way
- Transcribe those details onto master maps to be carried by searchers
- Issue torches to searchers if appropriate
- Ensure that due regard is given for the safety of searchers who are OACT member volunteers.

Lower Level Search

- Place observers and/or vehicles on major roads and trails
- Assign teams of two or more to walk/jog the lost person(s) course. One team should do the course in reverse order, one in correct order. Additional teams could be sent to particular hazard spots.
- Brief search party members including:
 - to protect scent articles (do not touch or relocate possible scent articles, wait for search dog handler to collect them in the event that dogs are used)
 - instruct teams to pause frequently, looking ahead, back and side to side while using voice or single whistle blasts
 - instruct teams on whistle signals to use during search and in event of finding participant and requiring further assistance
 - each team to carry water, and emergency first aid kit - at least a compression bandage – and preferably a two-way radio for communicating with HQ.
- If participant is found and cannot be moved, one member to stay with participant, and one to return to search HQ
- 10 short blasts of a car horn at 1 to 2 minute intervals to signal searchers to return to base
- All searchers to return to HQ by predetermined time (normally in time to allow any higher level-search to commence well before sunset).

Higher Level Search

- Event Safety Coordinator shall take the following into consideration when determining when to contact the proper authority
 - daylight remaining
 - amount of time search has taken so far
 - if the participant has been found and is injured
- If the Event Safety Coordinator decides to take this step, (s)he shall:
 - Notify proper authorities that a search is required
 - Notify home contact from the 'registration form'
 - Transfer information regarding the subject to the individual responsible for coordinating the search
 - Support the search as required by the responsible authority.