

## **AWBOP Winter Events Risk Plan – April 2016**

### **1. EVENT FACILITIES**

#### **1.1 Traffic Approach Routes**

Consideration must be given to how traffic should approach the venue. Checks should be made to avoid possible conflicts with other events taking place in the area.

#### **1.2 Parking**

An early consideration of any event must be where those attending will park. Locations should be chosen to be as close as practicable to the race base and course.

Hard surfaces are clearly preferable for parking areas. Where grassed areas are used it may be necessary to cover over areas which will experience heavy traffic e.g. entrances/exits. Arrangements may need to be in place for towing out bogged down vehicles, particularly if bad weather is expected.

The parking layout should be planned in advance - a separate entrance and exit may be necessary. Parking marshals may be necessary. They must be provided with high visibility clothing and may need to be equipped with suitable communication equipment e.g. radios or mobile phones.

Separate parking for officials (particularly starters transporting guns) and the mobility impaired, may be appropriate.

#### **1.3 Registration and Enquiries**

A suitable location must be clearly identified for taking entries and/or the collection of race numbers. Whether this should be on the course or at a separate base will be a matter for local consideration. Wherever is chosen, it is essential that those providing this service are suitably protected from the elements. If separate locations are used for dealing with enquiries, they also must be protected. Clear signage is important, particularly at larger events.

#### **1.4 Covered Accommodation**

If no suitable buildings are available or the event base is some distance from the course then temporary accommodation (e.g. marquees) may be provided near the course. Accommodation should be sufficient for all those athletes and officials who may need to use it in the event of severe weather.

#### **1.5 Toilets**

Sufficient toilet accommodation should be available close to the course (preferably near the start) and at any separate buildings used. Most competitors are likely to use the facilities shortly before their race. For larger events this is likely to require the provision of 'portaloos'; if this is the case then consider locating them in separate groups to cover different areas of the course. Facilities for disabled, officials and spectators may also need to be available. Adequate supplies of toilet paper should be provided - it is easy to underestimate the need for both paper and toilet accommodation.

## **1.6 Route to the Course**

Where the event base and/or parking is a long way from the course, the route should be clearly indicated by suitable signs or maps (e.g. in information sheets or programmes). Routes should be chosen to avoid potentially dangerous road crossings. If major roads do have to be crossed then crossing points should be clearly designated and staffed by marshals (with high visibility clothing).

## **1.7 Refreshments**

If refreshments are to be provided by the event organisers then suitable hygienic facilities, safe equipment (e.g. kettles, water boilers, with fire extinguisher available and competent staff must be used. If contractors provide refreshments from mobile units the positioning of these must be chosen so as to minimise risks to the course and pedestrian routes. Suitable litter receptacles should be provided by the event organisers and/or contractors.

## **1.8 Handling of cash**

Cross country events can involve various people in handling significant quantities of cash (entry fees, parking charges, sales of refreshments, programmes, result sheets etc.). Such people should not be situated in areas where they are alone and vulnerable to robbery. Risks can be reduced by removing cash periodically to a more secure area. The provision of radios or mobile phones to staff handling cash will allow anyone feeling threatened to call up support.

## **2. THE COURSE**

### **2.1 The Start**

The start should be of adequate width for the numbers of competitors. Competitors should be encouraged to line up with faster runners at the front. The starting straight should be sufficient for the field to spread out before any tight turns are encountered (200-300m is suggested). Any bends early on should be gradual. Steep downhill starts are to be avoided as are the presence on the course of sudden dips, trees, posts or other obstructions.

### **2.2 The Finish**

The primary concern in designing the finish will be to ensure that competitor positions and times can be recorded correctly. However, steep downhill finishes are to be avoided, as are tight turns shortly before the finish. At large events marshals will often need to be provided to separate lapped competitors from faster runners who are finishing.

### **2.3 Course Layout**

Cross country by its very nature often includes varying terrain, gradients etc. However, there are some safety considerations in planning a course such as:

- It must be of adequate width for the numbers expected. Narrowing of the course should be avoided early in the race.

- Severe dips should be avoided, particularly if competitors will be closely grouped;
- Running on severe cambers should be avoided (especially if underfoot conditions may be slippery);
- Any steep downhill sections should not have potential dangers immediately at the bottom e.g. walls, fences, ravines, deep water;
- Turns must not be too tight, taking into account the number of runners; lap length must be suitable for the numbers and capabilities of competitors. Negotiating lots of lapped runners can be dangerous as well as frustrating for faster runners;
- The course must be clearly marked with tape, marker posts and appropriate use of marshals. Going off course is never satisfactory and could introduce real dangers for very young competitors or in remote areas.

The IAAF handbook contains more detail on course design.

#### **2.4 Obstacles**

Obstacles on the course (tree roots, low branches, low marker posts etc.) will create more of a risk if competitors are unable to see them or take avoiding action e.g. when running in large groups. Where the obstacles present significant risks they should be avoided (it may be possible to prune some branches). Obstacles presenting lesser risks should be clearly marked with biodegradable paint or tape if visibility is a problem.

#### **2.5 Risks from Vehicles**

Cross country courses should avoid any roads that may be in use. Where spectators etc. may be at risk from active traffic routes near the course, use should be made of appropriate warning signs to vehicles (and possibly of marshals) to control vehicle access. Access by vehicles connected with the event e.g. officials, contractors, mobile refreshment units, may need to be restricted to certain times or controlled by marshals. Marshals may need to be used to clear routes for access by emergency vehicles.

For road races a thorough risk assessment must be carried to minimise risks related to traffic on or near to the course. An appropriate traffic management plan will be necessary. It is recommended that a course be selected to use roads with low traffic flow wherever possible. Risk reduction would also involve keeping to the most appropriate side of the road at all times (usually running face on to any traffic flow) and avoiding blind bends.

**Note that this document does not include an exhaustive list for a road race traffic management plan. It is essential that a complete risk assessment and management plan is put in place. It is recommended that you consult with those having expertise in these matters before finalising any plans relating to traffic management.**

#### **2.6 Other Nearby Activities**

Other activities close to the course could create risks to competitors. Where areas are accessible to the public (e.g. in public parks) there may be risks from dogs, informal games and other activities. It

may be possible to plan the course to avoid other conflicting activities. Alternatively problems may be avoided by using start times that do not conflict with other users.

## **2.7 Water Risks**

The possible presence of streams or puddles to negotiate is an integral part of cross country running. However, risks from deep or fast-flowing water must be avoided. In planning courses consideration must be given to how deep or fast the water may be after a period of heavy rain. It may be necessary to restrict water features on courses to those competitors who are capable of coping with them safely. Warnings to competitors may also be appropriate in some circumstances.

## **2.8 Persons Crossing the Course**

Courses should be planned to minimise the need for the course to be crossed. At large events barriers may be necessary at critical points, particularly at the start and finish areas. Tape can be used elsewhere to clearly indicate the route of the course. It may also be necessary to designate approved course crossing points which will need to be controlled by a marshal.

## **3. PERSONNEL / EQUIPMENT**

### **3.1 First Aid**

Adequate first aid provision should be arranged (and confirmed) well in advance of the event. Any first aiders should be located on or close to the course and their location indicated prominently. Where the race base is some distance away, additional first aid provision there may also be necessary. Effective communications must be established between the event organisers and first aid staff.

Walkie talkies should be issued to designated marshals around the course to enable immediate contact to be made with base if an accident occurs requiring attention

Provision should be considered for possible emergency access to the course by ambulance. There should be liaison with the first aiders about suitable access to the course for their own vehicles.

### **3.2 Traffic / Parking Marshals**

Event organisers may need to provide their own adult marshals to control traffic and pedestrians. Any marshals should be provided with high visibility clothing. Marshals should arrive well in advance of the expected time of arrival of the first competitors and officials and be fully briefed on their duties. Someone will also need to be made responsible for erecting (and removing) signs which are intended to direct traffic, pedestrians etc.

### **3.3 Course Marshals**

Marshals should be provided at any critical points on the course e.g.

- To prevent competitors following the wrong route
- To identify any poorly visible obstacles on the course

- To oversee water crossings, where appropriate
- To separate out lapped competitors (particularly at the entrance to the finish straight)
- To control course crossing points

They should be advised to bring warm and waterproof clothing and should be provided with high visibility clothing. Marshals must arrive well in advance of the first race and be fully briefed on their duties.

Marshals must remain in position until the last runner has passed. Marshals may need to be provided with hot drinks and possibly food, if they are to be outdoors for long periods.

### **3.4 Safety Briefing for marshals**

The Event Director should arrange for a suitable briefing for all course and traffic marshals before the first race.

## **4 Other considerations**

### **4.1 COURSE MAPS**

Organisers are recommended to prepare a map (or maps) of the course showing key features as a reference for competitors, officials and spectators on the day.

### **4.2 DYNAMIC RISK ASSESSMENT**

Unexpected problems can still arise and may need to be addressed. On or close to the day of the event consideration may have to be given to the effect of:

- Severe weather conditions
- Road traffic problems
- Other unforeseen difficulties.

This is a **Dynamic Risk Assessment**.

These problems could for example impact on the venue, availability of key facilities, the course water obstacles, surface condition, or visibility of tree roots, obstacles etc.

The organisers should always ensure that someone (e.g. the referee or clerk of the course) is given responsibility for checking the course shortly before the event starts. Alternative arrangements or approaches may be needed to control new risks which have arisen. These might involve:

- Provision of additional signs, personnel, equipment or facilities
- Course redesign
- Programme changes
- Warnings to competitors

If risks cannot be controlled to an acceptable degree then consideration may need to be given to cancelling the event, but this should always be a last resort.

Someone must also be identified as being in overall charge should a major incident arise during the event.