

## **Scottish Orienteering Association**

### **Major Event Guidelines (Amended November 2005)**

#### **Introduction**

These guidelines are aimed at assisting orienteering event organisers in the planning and management of a major event.

The guidelines cover foot orienteering events organised by the Scottish Orienteering Association (SOA) and its affiliated clubs, although the general principles can be adopted by other forms of the sport, for example mountain bike orienteering.

The guidelines are designed to be read with the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code which promotes responsible use of the countryside. The 3 basic principles behind the Act and Code are:

- Respect the interests of other people
- Care for the environment
- Take responsibility for your own actions

The guidelines have taken the issue from the perspective of the event organiser, but the comments made will be equally applicable to any other interested party. They do not cover the technical aspect of planning suitable courses. This information can be obtained from the British Orienteering Federation.

#### **Timing and Location of Events**

When considering organising an orienteering event, there are times of the year and locations which may be unsuitable for land management and nature conservation reasons. These should be taken into consideration and the timing or location changed to suit, or parts of the area to be avoided. This does not mean that events cannot take place at all, but that by choosing a flexible approach, events can take place with the full approval of all concerned. Try and give as much notice as possible.

#### Bird Nesting

Generally only ground nesting birds are affected by orienteering. The nesting season varies according to species but can be between the end of March and the end of July. It may be possible to avoid areas with nesting birds if they are not too extensive and proper steps put in place to ensure competitors do not disturb them – eg course planning, taping off sensitive sites, marking competitors' maps, etc.

#### Capercaillie

The SOA has a national agreement with the Capercaillie Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group run by SNH, the RSPB and Forestry Commission regarding which forests are to be avoided at particular times to avoid undue disturbance of capercaillie. Generally this affects forests in Moray, Speyside, Deeside and Perthshire. All club secretaries in these areas have been notified of the forests affected.

## Lambing

The timing of lambing varies across Scotland, but is generally between March and May. In many cases early on in the season the sheep and lambs are in the low ground and events may take place on higher ground. Land Managers tend to be very busy at this time of year so try not to approach them during this period.

## Shooting

For many Land managers this activity is one of their main sources of income and it is important that this activity is not compromised. With proper liaison with the appropriate Land Manager conflicts can be avoided. The dates for the main shooting seasons are published on the SOA web site.

## Seasons

Is the event being held at an appropriate time of year? An exposed upland area in mid-winter may not be advisable. Similarly a large event on a small area in the winter may cause undue damage due to the wet underfoot conditions and suitable parking may not be available in fields. Consider hard standing if possible.

## Conflicts with the public

If the area is heavily used by the public on certain days at certain times of the year a large event in a country park near a city may cause conflicts with the public reducing the enjoyment of both parties. Perhaps look for other times of the year.

Consider erecting warning signs before the event informing local walkers etc that the event will be taking place giving them the choice of going elsewhere on the day of the event.

Conversely some local attractions and businesses welcome visitors and may be willing to offer accommodation and other services to the competitors and sponsorship etc to the event.

## Special Designations

Many areas of Scotland are designated with various forms of nature conservation designation such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), etc. These may place restrictions on activities taking place on the land. Check with the land owner who should be able to advise of the existence of any and speak to Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) on the implications. The existence of a special designation does not mean that orienteering cannot take place, but there may be factors which need to be taken into account and acted upon. Discuss the event with all relevant interested parties. The SOA have signed an agreement with SNH that there will be full discussions with the SOA on activities which involve designated sites.

Be aware of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 which provides legal protection to nature conservation sites and species.

## **Planning the Event**

### Land Managers

Make sure you speak to the Land Manager well in advance of any event. Sometimes it may not be clear who owns the land, but generally Forestry Commission or local farmers can be a good start point.

Make sure you establish exactly who owns what and try to see an estate map showing exact boundaries and make sure there are no gaps. Don't assume that Land Managers understand an orienteering map, take an OS map to any meetings for them to mark their boundaries. Make sure that the ownership of access tracks to areas and other aspects of the area is established.

Many Land Managers do not know what the sport is about and have pre-conceived ideas about its impact. Explain in detail the main points – numbers, start times, approximate routes of courses, number of checkpoints being used, how the competitors can be managed, etc, etc. Take along examples of maps with courses and a sample control flag. The British Orienteering Federation (BOF) have produced an excellent booklet, 'Orienteering and the Environment' which explains about the sport.

Give as much notice as possible, but be aware that owners, factors, farmers etc can change so on-going contact is advised.

Try and speak to as many relevant people who have knowledge of the land and get their input. For example a land owner or factor of a large estate may not have the detailed knowledge that a keeper, stalker, farmer, forester or ranger may have.

Establish if any forestry or other management operations are planned before or during the event. Be aware of contractors who are not directly under the control of the Land Manager carrying out work. Plan courses accordingly.

It may be worth inviting Land Managers to other events of a similar size to let them see what the sport entails.

Often it is possible to mention areas to Land Managers which have been used for orienteering previously and give the contact details of the relevant Manager for that area for references. On many occasions if the areas are close the managers may know one another.

Make sure the event is registered with BOF to obtain the Public Liability Insurance cover. Offer a copy to anyone who asks for it. The relevant forms are available on the SOA web-site.

Offer the Land Manager the names of all officials who will be entering their land prior to the event, and find out if they have to advise anyone of their presence.

If control sites, stiles etc are being taped prior to the event, make the Land Manager aware of this and use small discreet pieces of tape at all times and ensure they are all removed after the event.

If any fences or walls are to be crossed and there is a danger they may be damaged or are in a bad condition, it may be worth taking photographs of them prior to the event.

Always acknowledge the Land Manager in all publicity.

If there is a prize giving at the event ask the Land Manager to present the prizes.

The SOA and Scottish Rural Property & Business Association have produced a national agreement which includes a sample access agreement. This will be available in December 2005 / January 2006.

### Event Infrastructure

Find a suitable car parking, assembly and finish field. Ideally these should be sited adjacent to the competition area to allow a good atmosphere to build up. It is also good for event communication to have all the major components of the event together.

If there is a chance the car parking field may get damaged as a result of heavy use in wet weather, establish before the event if compensation is required. Consider fall-back parking arrangements in the case of extremely wet weather. If there is a chance the event could be cancelled due to the potential of bad weather such as snow, then consider how to warn the competitors, even at short notice.

Make sure the gateways into fields used for vehicle access are firm enough to cope with the expected traffic. If in doubt consider a couple of loads of hardcore (with the Land Manager's permission) to ensure the entrance doesn't turn into a quagmire in wet weather. Consider emergency rolls of chestnut paling fencing to put down for vehicles if the weather is very wet.

Another option is to park in a remote location and bus competitors into the area. The rules for vehicle parking still apply but it may be possible to find a piece of hard standing at a local school or similar. Make sure the buses can get to and from the assembly area, or get as close as possible.

Ensure adequate toilets are on site. Self-contained toilets are preferred to avoid problems with waste disposal as sewers are rarely found in fields. A general rule is 1 toilet per 70 – 80 competitors. An information article on the provision of toilets for orienteering events is available on the SOA web-site. If the start is some distance away from the assembly area consider placing a few as close to the start as possible, but advise the competitors the facilities at the start are limited to avoid over-use.

Ensure the officials and competitors take their rubbish away with them. After the event check all the fields used for the event thoroughly to ensure no rubbish has been left. For very large events consider placing a skip in the field. Consider asking the Local Authority to provide recycling facilities for paper, plastic, glass, etc, at the event.

Make sure that contractors supplying toilets and skips can get into the fields and there are no restrictions such as narrow gateways or access tracks, weight limits on bridges, etc. Position all equipment requiring heavy trucks as close to tracks and gateways as possible.

If a pa system is to be used for a commentary, ensure that everyone living within earshot has given their approval, especially if the event is on a Sunday.

If traders are going to be present, make sure the Land Manager has given approval. Commercial food traders must be able to provide a current hygiene certificate, and all traders must provide a means of gathering their rubbish and taking it away if a skip is not provided. A sample contract which can be used for traders is available from the SOA. Always offer local fund-raising bodies the opportunity to sell food etc at events.

Always ask Land Managers if dogs are allowed in car parks, assemblies and finish areas. If so make sure they are kept on leads and under strict control at all times, and that the owners clear up after them. If the Land Manager states that dogs are not allowed, this must be well publicised to ensure a competitor doesn't accidentally bring a dog. Additional signing on the way to the event is recommended. It may be possible to offer an alternative parking area where dogs are allowed to be kept.

If access to fields are required a day before the event for setting up, make sure this is agreed with the Land Manager. If officials are camping on site the night before an event to provide security for equipment, obtain the Land Manager's permission for this.

Try and select access roads to the car park which are able to cope with the expected volume of traffic. Alert local residents who are affected and provide marshals with radios who can stop the event traffic if required to let local residents in and out of their properties. Consider leafleting anyone affected and erecting warning signs informing local drivers of the event.

For major events contact the Police and Roads Dept to ensure they are happy with the traffic management arrangements, and that they approve of the signposting and marshalling arrangements. The Police may decide to provide assistance on the day.

If foreign competitors are attending the event, inform local Police of their nationalities in case emergency contact is required with embassies.

### Courses

Offer to show the courses to the Land Manager(s) and SNH if applicable. Abide by any requests for alterations or restrictions due to land management or nature conservation issues. As discussed earlier, make sure you talk to all relevant people – a Land Owner may not know the existence of a badger's sett or other small sensitive areas, whereas the game-keeper might know.

### First Aid / Emergencies

The person responsible for safety and First Aid is the event organiser.

For small events the minimum first aid requirement is a well-stocked first aid kit and someone on hand who knows how to use it.

For large events contact the St Andrews Ambulance Association or the British Red Cross who are always willing to provide first aid cover. The local Mountain Rescue team should also be informed of the event. Occasionally they do provide an 'on the day' presence.

When registering the event with BOF, a Risk Assessment will be issued. Make sure this is completed and the officials responsible action the risks highlighted. Copies of the Risk Assessment are available from the BOF Office.

For large events consider producing a Rescue Plan to cope with emergencies such as a serious casualty in the forest. A sample is available from the SOA web-site.

Ensure major officials and remote components of the event such as the start and drinks stations keep in touch via mobile phones or radios. Produce a list of available numbers and / or those with the radios. Be aware that occasionally injured competitors or another competitor trying to report and injured competitor can report this to a start or drinks station and communication back to the Assembly area is vital.

For major events ensure the emergency services are aware of the event by contacting the local Police, ambulance, hospitals, doctors, etc.

### The competition

Ensure that the courses are appropriately planned taking into account all requests from the Land Managers and any environmental bodies such as SNH. Generally SNH will only get involved if there are any nature conservation issues, which are covered by the appropriate designation. The BOF Course Planning Guidelines provide detailed guidance on how to mark out of bounds areas on maps, direct competitors to compulsory stiles over walls and fences, etc. These must be adhered to.

Detail all relevant information to the competitors in the advanced details which are issued to all competitors before an event, or by handing out an information sheet to everyone as they arrive at the car park, or at registration.

Spectators are generally only allowed in the assembly area. Make this clear in the information sheet and by adequate signposting.

Ensure that any routes being used to walk competitors to a start are capable of taking the numbers involved.

Any small sites which are to be avoided by competitors should be taped off if they are too small to be shown on the competitors' maps.

Consider having a small team of main officials form an emergency committee who will meet early on the morning of the event to discuss any problems and decide on appropriate actions. Give the mobile phone numbers of the members of this group to all Land Managers and other interested parties.

### **After the Event:**

Visit the Land Manager(s) and thank him / her. Then write to everyone concerned thanking them. Good PR.

Check all fields and areas round starts, finishes and water points for rubbish and take any rubbish away.

Skips, toilets and other major items should be uplifted immediately after the event.

All controls and tapes (including tape marking control sites) must be removed as quickly as possible after the event.

If there has been any damage to walls, fences or similar, speak to the Land Manager and either fix the damage yourself or employ a contractor if the damage is serious.

In the event of wet weather the car park field may get damaged. Occasionally the Land Manager will be ploughing the field after the event so this will not be a problem. If the field is damaged then the event may have to consider paying to have it re-seeded. This must be agreed prior to the event.

Disseminate good practice to others.

## **Other Aspects of Major Events**

### Campsite

Many large orienteering competitions will establish a temporary campsite. Generally a field or school playing pitches will be used. Keep the campsite away from local residents.

Ensure adequate toilets are provided, either self-contained or mains as appropriate. If the toilets are to be connected into a public sewer get permission from Scottish Water.

Provide a rubbish collection service, usually a skip. The Local Authority may also be able to provide recycling facilities on site.

Contact the local Environmental Health Department to ensure they are happy with the arrangements.

Place highly visibly fire points over the site consisting of adequate fire fighting equipment. Hand out fire regulations and procedures to all campers. Contact the local Fire Brigade Fire Prevention Officer for advice, and to ensure the Fire Service know where the site is in case of an emergency.

Provide a payphone on site for campers' use and also for contacting emergency services.

A campsite can be a tempting target for thieves. Provide a security guard when the site is quiet, usually during the day. Contact local Police and act on their advice regarding security.

### Event Centre

For large events an Event Centre provides a good focus for the competitors and organisers. The most likely place is a local school or college, although a leisure centre may be suitable. Approach the Head Teacher in the first instance but they may pass the enquiry on to the Local Authority.

Generally access and car parking at these facilities are easy with plenty of available parking.

## Economic Benefit

A major event can provide a huge boost to a local economy. Contact the local Tourist board and ask them to get involved by dealing with accommodation enquiries from competitors.

Contact local businesses and tourist attractions and see if they would like to get involved. Offer publicity in return for sponsorship and services. Remember many of the competitors are visiting the area for a holiday as well as the competition and will be interested in visitor attractions.



## Appendix 1

### Useful Contact Details:

Scottish Orienteering Association Access Officer: Donald Petrie, Tel: 01505 613094 E-Mail: [donald@scottish-orienteering.org](mailto:donald@scottish-orienteering.org)

National Orienteering Centre: c/o Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore, Inverness-shire PH21 1QU  
Tel: 01479 861713 E-mail: [nationalocentre@scottish-orienteering.org](mailto:nationalocentre@scottish-orienteering.org)

British Orienteering Federation: Riversdale, Dale Road North, Darley dale, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 2HX Tel: 01629 734042 E-mail: [bof@britishorienteering.org.uk](mailto:bof@britishorienteering.org.uk)

Janice Gray, Access Officer, Scottish Rural Property & Business Association: Stuart House, Eskmills Business Park, Musselburgh EH21 7BP Tel: 0131 653 5400 E-mail: [info@srpba.org.uk](mailto:info@srpba.org.uk)

<a href="http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com">www.outdooraccess-scotland.com</a>	Scottish Outdoor Access Code
<a href="http://www.glenmorelodge.org.uk">www.glenmorelodge.org.uk</a>	National Outdoor Centre, Glenmore Lodge
<a href="http://www.jmt.org">www.jmt.org</a>	John Muir Trust
<a href="http://www.jncc.gov.uk">www.jncc.gov.uk</a>	Joint Nature Conservation Committee for the UK
<a href="http://www.mountaineering-scotland.org.uk">www.mountaineering-scotland.org.uk</a>	Mountaineering Council of Scotland
<a href="http://www.nfus.org.uk">www.nfus.org.uk</a>	National Farmers Union (Scotland)
<a href="http://www.nts.org.uk">www.nts.org.uk</a>	National Trust for Scotland
<a href="http://www.ramblers.org.uk">www.ramblers.org.uk</a>	The Ramblers
<a href="http://www.rspb.org.uk/Scotland/">www.rspb.org.uk/Scotland/</a>	RSPB Scotland
<a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk">www.scotland.gov.uk</a>	Scottish Executive
<a href="http://www.scotlink.org">www.scotlink.org</a>	Scottish Environment Link
<a href="http://www.scottishcountrynet.org">www.scottishcountrynet.org</a>	Scottish Countryside Access Network
<a href="http://www.scottish-parliament.uk">www.scottish-parliament.uk</a>	Scottish Parliament
<a href="http://www.scottishsportsassociation.org.uk">www.scottishsportsassociation.org.uk</a>	Scottish Sports Association
<a href="http://www.scotways.com">www.scotways.com</a>	Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society
<a href="http://www.sepa.org.uk">www.sepa.org.uk</a>	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
<a href="http://www.srpba.co.uk">www.srpba.co.uk</a>	Scottish Rural Property Business Association

[www.sportscotland.org.uk](http://www.sportscotland.org.uk)

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[www.snh.gov.uk](http://www.snh.gov.uk)

Scottish Natural Heritage

[www.swt.org.uk](http://www.swt.org.uk)

Scottish Wildlife Trust

[www.woodland-trust.org.uk](http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk)

Woodland Trust

<http://homepages.ed.ac.uk/eco/env/>

Scottish Environmental Database