

PRINCIPLES FOR STAGING ROAD AND MT RUNNING EVENTS DURING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

Version 1.0

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Introduction

On June 10th the UK Government made the following statement regarding the return of outdoor sport and recreation: -

Businesses and venues following COVID-19 Secure guidelines can host larger groups. This is also the case for events in public outdoor spaces that are organised by businesses, charitable or political organisations, and public bodies, provided they take reasonable steps to mitigate the risk of transmission, in line with COVID-19 Secure guidance and including completion of a risk assessment.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation/guidance-for-providers-of-outdoor-facilities-on-the-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation#introduction>

Covid-19 continues to cause significant challenges. Regardless of size or scale of events, our sport will be affected, and we all need to look into ways of conducting races in a safe way for all participants, including competitors, volunteers, the event delivery team and the general public.

The resumption of events will be defined by:

- Social distancing requirements
- Required safety and hygiene controls
- Any additional controls, such as local lockdown measures

UK Athletics/England Athletics and MSO (Mass Participation Sports Organisers) have produced this guidance document in collaboration with Sport England to help event organisers consider what measures need to be implemented at events to fulfil their duty of care in providing a safe environment for participants to take part. **This guidance at this stage applies to English races only.**

It is important to note that the event delivery principles set out in this guidance document will need to be applied across the range of events that take place – from small local races to large mass participation events. Event organisers will need to assess how the delivery principles will be implemented for their events and if they have the necessary resources to stage them.

Please note that this guidance suggests principles for controlling the transmission of coronavirus at events. The transmission method of the virus is common, either surface or aerosol transmission. This guidance seeks to respect social distancing requirements or maximum attendance set out by the UK Government.

It should be noted that events may have to react to regional lockdown conditions and may not be able to go ahead even if they have implemented all necessary mitigating measures.

Race organisers should bear in mind that it is a condition of runbritain race licencing that events have local authority approval. Under Covid-19 conditions, local authorities and other stakeholders such as

landowners may be required to consider what additional measures have been implemented by an event organiser before giving approval for their event to take place.

It is important to state that this guidance will be kept under review and may change as and when further Government directives are issued.

This guidance document can be found here - <https://www.runbritain.com/covid-19-uk-road-race-guidance> and is supported by:

- Participant Code of Conduct
- Spectator Code of Conduct
- FAQ's
- Advice on PPE

Key Principles for Staging Events Safely

This document provides guidance for licensed events relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. It should be read alongside the existing event delivery guidance available.

Events must update their risk assessments based upon these guidelines which reflects the requirements of the Sport Activity Outdoor Event Framework issued by the Government. Normal operating procedures and emergency action plans must be updated to reflect any changes made as a result of this guidance.

Event organisers have a responsibility to take reasonable steps to ensure their activities and the event environment is as safe as possible for all.

Medical provision must remain in line with the runbritain 2013 guidance. Additional requirements specific to the current Covid-19 situation are detailed in section E of this document.

A. Communication

All key principles must be underpinned by clear, consistent messaging from the organisers to staff, volunteers, participants and the wider public, including potential spectators.

Organisers should develop and deliver a comprehensive communications plan that reinforces all key points below to the relevant audience.

B. Application of Principles

Organisers should ensure that where applicable these principles are applied by all staff and volunteers and by all third-party suppliers, venue staff and contractors, throughout all stages of the delivery of the event, including planning and at all times on site.

Organisers should commit to demonstrating to their normal licensing authorities that these principles are adhered to throughout the planning and delivery of the event.

C. Staff, Volunteers, Suppliers & Contractors

All staff, volunteers, suppliers and contractors must receive and acknowledge appropriately detailed briefings on these guidelines / regulations and appropriate ways of working before arriving at any event site or meeting.

Mitigations such as increased on- site working and welfare space should be put into place. Additional time to build and take down the event should be factored in.

Staff must be issued with suitable PPE where appropriate and there must be appropriate collection, renewal and disposal facilities.

Organisers must develop suitable plans to monitor staff for COVID-19 symptoms. Staff showing COVID-19 symptoms, and those who have been in close contact with them, must follow all up-to-date Government instructions regarding isolation and contact tracing.

Event Organisers must appoint a named COVID-19 Officer (who could be the Race Director or other individual involved with the organisation of the race) who shall be the first point of contact

for all contractors and staff throughout the build and takedown period, and the event itself. The COVID-19 Officer will be responsible for oversight of the risk assessment and mitigation planning and will ensure that the necessary standards are met.

The Event Organiser must develop a COVID-19 risk assessment and mitigation plan. Consideration should be given to the following:

- A Code of Behaviour for all contractors and staff throughout the build and takedown period which provides guidelines and details of sanctions in place for breaches of protocol.
- An appropriate education programme for all contractors and staff.
- Any activities during the build and takedown period where social distancing cannot be easily maintained should be risk assessed and mitigated.
- Limiting all non-essential activities during the build and breakdown period, such as on-site catering provision.
- A map of the venues and the course/route defining all areas/zones, routes and access/egress points.
- The maximum capacity and layout for each area/zone to allow social distancing to be maintained.
- Information on the management, movement and scheduling of contractors and staff and their vehicles to allow social distancing to be maintained.
- A security plan, screening process and accreditation system that defines the access control system throughout the build and takedown period.
- A transport plan for staff and contractors for travel to and from the venue/site which minimises the usage of shared or public transport.
- A signage plan to support the implementation of the guidelines.

D. Social Distancing of the Event

Organisers must design their event so that the applicable Government advice on social distancing can be maintained by participants and staff. Advice can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-phased-return-of-outdoor-sport-and-recreation>

The event timetable and event areas should be designed in order to maximise the available space for each participant and minimise the amount of time participants spend in proximity to each other.

Organisers must assess carefully the capacity of their events, such that social distancing is possible; based on the time and space available to the organiser. Crowd flow modelling tools should be used where appropriate.

The event timetable is determined by the capacity and flow required to achieve social distancing across the event period. A level of contingency for evacuation plans, rendezvous points and so on need to be planned to maintain social distancing if these plans are enacted.

Before the Event

Ensure that race information is sent out sufficiently far in advance to allow competitors to ask any questions and receive a response before event day. Consider providing an FAQ section on the event website and update regularly in advance of the event. Online video briefings which are emailed to competitors in advance of the event could be provided.

Pre-event communication to all participants must include reminders not to attend the event if they have been unwell in the last 14 days. Event organisers must include links to the current NHS advice on coronavirus/Covid-19. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-Covid-19/>

Event organisers are not required to have evidence of competitors' pre-health screening; however, information about appropriate health screening should be communicated to competitors in advance of the event and prior to event entry where possible

Consideration should be given to holding a pre-event online webinar or forum for competitors to ask questions

Only competition-essential materials should be included inside the race pack such as the race number (e.g. no promo materials) whilst reducing packaging as much as possible.

Where possible, timing chips should be included in the race pack to avoid additional stations and time spent in registration. Consult with your timing company to determine if disposable chips or bib timing systems are a viable option.

On the day, briefings should not take place unless last minute critical information needs to be shared.

Tannoy announcements, social media and text messaging services should be considered.

All competitors should have entered the event in advance and all queries need to be dealt with over the phone or email and not on race day.

Limit queues and dwell time and minimise contact / touch points. Social distancing and PPE need to be planned in for any in person dealings with participants.

Travel to and from the Event

Organisers should assess whether it is possible for the public to maintain social distancing when travelling to and from the event.

Organisers should adapt event schedules, event areas and event capacities to ensure public transport systems can cope with volumes of people attending the event.

Organisers should, if need be, coordinate with local transport authorities to ensure sufficient capacity.

Organisers should consider providing facilities to enable alternative means of transport where appropriate, such as bike parking and car parking with clear directional signage for participants from each transport arrival node to the event site. Participants should be told a specific arrival point.

Before the Start

Organisers must ensure that areas are designed so that participants do not need to assemble in a manner which conflicts with social distancing guidelines.

Organisers should consider whether facilities (e.g. baggage drop, customer information) and activations are necessary at the event and remove event elements likely to cause participants to congregate or mitigate that congregation (e.g. queue lines / markers etc).

Organisers should consider marking out spaces on the floor or providing additional signage to remind competitors to conform to social distancing.

Start Line Management, Course and Finish

Organisers must design start line procedures such that the density of participants at the start line is within social distancing guidelines. This could be achieved by:

- Maximising the space available at the start line and the time available for participants to cross the start line.
- Clear messaging to participants to follow start line protocols (e.g. seeding by predicted time).
- Reducing the dwell time before the start to an absolute minimum. Move participants more rapidly to the start line.
- Modelling the start “release” time. This would include lengthening the release time to allow social distancing to be maintained throughout the course and have a buffer built in to reduce the flow rate and compensate for compression on the course due to emergency access, pedestrian crossings, incidents etc.

While it is anticipated that by slowing the rate of starters sufficiently to permit social distancing at the start line, consideration should be taken on the location and width of the narrowest point of the course to avoid pinch points.

Event features that may lead to congregating on the route (e.g. pacers, entertainment) should be withdrawn.

The density of runners on the course should allow for socially distanced overtaking.

Ideally experienced crowd flow dynamics experts should be employed where appropriate (such as on multiple-lap courses or where there are pinch points) or in races where in excess of 5000 participants are taking part.

Organisers should ensure that finishers are dispersed quickly away from the finish line and should take measures to guide participants safely away from the event site.

Unnecessary touch points (e.g. handing out of medals) should be removed from the finish areas.

Feed Stations

Use of feed and drinks stations by participants should be minimised, and participants encouraged to bring their own hydration and nutrition to the event, using bottle belts and hydration backpacks etc.

If drinks stations must be used, they should be configured to minimise contact time. Sealed bottles are recommended rather than cups. Bottles should be picked up by participants and not handed to them.

Finish Area

Whilst the finish of any event is a positive environment, social distancing and hygiene measures must remain of paramount importance.

Where possible, increase the width of the finish chute to give competitors more space when crossing the finish line. The minimum finish line width will be determined by crowd flow modelling.

Ensure competitors avoid lying or sitting down in the finish chute/finish area (unless in the case of medical need/problems). Identify a pool of volunteers on duty at the finish line to look out for runners looking weak/light-headed and then encourage them to keep walking and not to stop. These volunteers should wear PPE appropriate to their role and have hand washing/sanitiser facilities available.

Following their finish, all competitors must be directed to an open space and organisers should have a plan to disperse everyone off site as efficiently as possible.

E. Medical Considerations

Organisers must undertake, in conjunction with local and/or national NHS planners, detailed and regular assessments to minimise the impact of staging the event on the wider community and healthcare systems.

Organisers should engage a named COVID-19 Medical Officer familiar with the emerging evidence related to post-COVID-19 pathology.

Organisers must ensure that provision of PPE, other equipment and medical supplies does not impact on supply for key workers.

Organisers, where appropriate, should arrange provision of dedicated local medical triage centres. Treatment should take place on site wherever safe and possible to reduce transfers to hospital unless necessary.

Organisers must develop a plan to manage individuals presenting with COVID-19 symptoms at the event.

Currently it is unknown what impact Covid-19 will have on the long-term health of those who contracted the virus. Based on the best available evidence at this time, it is strongly advised that:

- Those who were hospitalised due to Covid-19 should undergo a form of health screening prior to taking part in an event. This screening is best led by a doctor with specialist training in sports medicine however other doctors may feel competent to make decisions on the participants' fitness to compete and to decide any appropriate investigations that might be required.

Organisers should adapt the activity level, numbers of participants and time to allow social distancing as covered elsewhere in these guidelines.

The below list of recommendations is to be discussed between the event organiser and medical provider:

- Plan an isolation area within the main medical facility where potential Covid-19 patients can be taken. This needs to be entirely separate to the main medical post to allow containment and thus prevent transmission of the virus to healthier individuals. This could be a 3x3m gazebo or a separate room within a permanent venue.
- Patients placed in the isolation area should be asked to wear a surgical mask unless clinically impossible (e.g. due to vomiting).
- Given the medical team working in the isolation area are unable to fulfil their duties within social distancing rules, they should wear surgical masks, visors, plastic aprons and gloves as a minimum level of PPE for every patient contact.
- The PPE (other than masks or visors) is single patient use and therefore should be changed after each contact.
- Masks may be worn continuously but must be changed when they become damp. If a mask is removed for any reason it must be disposed of immediately. Masks and visors should also be changed if moving from an isolation to a non-isolation area to reduce the risk of cross infection.
- The medical team should follow the current Resuscitation Council Guidelines on the management of cardiac arrest during this pandemic which includes specific advice about levels of PPE required in a cardiac arrest situation:

<https://www.resus.org.uk/media/statements/resuscitation-council-uk-statements-on-Covid-19-coronavirus-cpr-and-resuscitation/Covid-community/>

- Provision of medical personnel needs to take account of additional requirements to allow for separate management of potential COVID patients in isolation areas.
- Ice baths, ice vests and water buckets should be changed between each patient. This will increase the amount of ice and water required by the medical team.
- Hand sanitiser should be freely available throughout the event site, including the medical posts.
- Medical teams should be aware that an ambulance used to transport a potential Covid patient will need to be sterilised before it can be reused so may not be able to return to the event immediately. Therefore, medical planning should consider increasing provision of ambulances
- Event Medical guidelines will need to take account that it is common for healthy competitors to finish a race with temperatures up to 39oC (or higher if developing exertional heatstroke). therefore a "temp >37.8oC" in a competitor during or after the event should not be automatically be considered a likely COVID-19 case but should be reviewed by the medical team in the context of the patient's presentation
- A regular water supply and/or running water (via a temporary or permanent sink) is strongly recommended within the main medical facilities to help maintain hygiene standards. Separate sinks should be available for the isolation area. All the above must be discussed and arranged with medical provider.

F. Hygiene

Organisers must implement an appropriate education programme for all staff, officials and volunteers with an emphasis on the maintenance of strict and frequent personal hygiene measures, particularly handwashing. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

Organisers must ensure that a sufficient supply of personal and hand hygiene equipment and consumables is provided for staff, officials and volunteers at the event site .at all times. Provision should take account that these will be changed frequently so likely to be more than previously required

Organisers must ensure that all relevant areas of the event site are cleaned at the standard defined in the government guidance for post-COVID-19 case non-hospital facilities cleaning (prior to the event) and government guidance for non-hospital facilities cleaning (before and after the event). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

For all clinical areas, the relevant Public Health Authority standard will apply. High contact surfaces such as door handles and light switches should be considered a priority for disinfection on a frequent basis.

G. Promoting Individual Responsibility

Have a Participant Code of Conduct that is provided to all entrants

Have a Spectator Code of Conduct that is provided to all participants so they can ensure any friends or family understand the protocols

H. Venue & Facility Considerations

Any venue being used as part of the event is likely have their own procedures and protocols in place which event organisers will need to fully adopt and work within. Event organisers should work with the venue operator to ensure that all working spaces and facilities used are organised in a way that social distancing is respected.

In cooperation with the venue provider, ensure hygiene standards are maintained and cleaning of door handles, toilet handles, taps, sinks etc. is carried out in line with the procedures set out by the venue provider.

Where a permanent building containing toilet facilities cannot be used or is inaccessible, consider increasing the number of portable toilets to reduce queuing and ensure these are fully stocked and replenished with hand sanitisers or soap and water and paper towels.

I. Spectators, Residents & Businesses

Organisers should develop comprehensive communication plans to deter the number of spectators and supporters from attending the event, emphasising alternatives to follow the event where provided.

Where appropriate organisers must take pre-emptive action to mitigate known points of spectator crowding, including preventing access to those areas if necessary, removing entertainment and attractions, or applying one-way systems etc.

If appropriate organisers must update existing plans for spectators and crowd flows to help to ensure social distancing is maintained.

Organisers must develop comprehensive communications plans in order to inform local residents and businesses that the event is taking place, explaining how the event is being held safely and how they can contribute towards ensuring the event remains safe.

J. Elite Athletes travelling from abroad

Organisers must ensure that all considerations around elite athletes follow COVID-19 related guidance from Government, UK Sport and/or relevant governing bodies.

Organisers should consider:

Create a bio-secure environment for arrival, competition, presentation and departure of athletes.

Observe current quarantine rules. Provide digital facilities to permit media engagement for remote coverage and interviews

Provide additional frequent testing as required of all athletes, support staff and facilities staff within the quarantine environment.

Provide bio-secure areas for accommodation, training, transit and pre-race preparation. current stage 4 guidance can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation/elite-sport-return-to-cross-border-competition-guidance>

Useful Links

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