

# FRA SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR FELL RACES

## ORGANISERS PLEASE NOTE

*Failure to implement the FRA Safety Requirements could invalidate an organiser's FRA Membership or Race Permit.*

*Fell-Running attracts competitors with a wide range of ability and experience. Those who are unfit and inexperienced in meeting the hazards which mountain terrain and weather present are at greatest risk of personal harm. However, we know only too well that anyone participating in a fell race may suffer an accident, the consequences of which may be extremely serious.*

*The race organiser takes overall responsibility for the event. This includes responsibility for ensuring that the race is organised in accordance with the FRA's rules and safety requirements, and that appropriately experienced marshals and other officials are used to monitor and control the race.*

### **1 SENIOR EVENTS**

The general philosophy behind the following requirements is that the COMPETITOR should take primary responsibility for his/her own safety on the fells. The organiser has the responsibility of making sure his race is as safe as it can possibly be by ensuring that the nature of the race and the rules relating to safety have been drawn up and formally communicated to each individual runner and that the event organisation is geared to monitor and control the race so that, if an incident occurs, help is directed to the needful party without delay.

### **2 JUNIOR EVENTS**

The above philosophy applies to senior events. In junior events the youth, inexperience and greater vulnerability of competitors to bad weather require that the ORGANISER takes primary responsibility for safety. This involves taking decisions on behalf of the runners that would normally be taken by the runners themselves in senior races.

### **3 SIZE OF FIELD**

This must be limited to numbers that the race organisation can completely monitor and control; that will not cause environmental damage and will not create a risk of accidents to runners because of overcrowding.

### **4 COURSE DESIGN**

Courses must not be unnecessarily dangerous and should be designed to prevent any temptation to gain advantage by negotiating rock climbs or steep unstable slopes, where dislodged stones may fall on those below. Compulsory sections **must not include** such hazards or comparable foreseeable dangers. Organisers of courses which traverse high mountain or moorland terrain should consider having an alternative route available for use in adverse weather conditions.

### **5 ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS**

Should weather conditions on the hills be of such severity as to endanger competitors, or prevent marshals carrying out the race checking procedures efficiently, the race must either be abandoned or the bad weather alternative route used. The main factor in making such a judgement must be the safety of competitors and race organisers must be prepared to take firm decisions which may prove unpopular at the time. Consultation with experienced marshals, mountain rescue personnel and consideration of an up to date weather forecast will help race organisers to arrive at a decision in marginal cases. It is preferable that the conclusion is reached by more than one person but the race organiser's decision is final and all competitors must comply.

## 6 MARKED COURSES

Bearing in mind that visibility in bad weather can be reduced to a few yards, organisers should NEVER describe a course as "OBVIOUS" or "MARKED" unless flagged or taped to the appropriate standard or unless a rider is added about weather conditions.

## 7 EVENT INFORMATION

General publicity must indicate the nature of the event, its severity, type of terrain and suitability, or otherwise, for novices. Specific information concerning race rules, race route, retirement procedures, equipment to be carried and checkpoint closing times must be available for competitors prior to the race day and displayed at the point of registration. Competitors should always be provided with an up to date local weather forecast on the day of the race.

## 8 ENTRIES

All entries for the race must be made on the official race entry form, a typical example of which is reproduced below (by request hopefully large enough and clear enough for people to photocopy and use for their own races). Clearly some of the items on the form will vary according to the race but the basic format is applicable to most events. The disclaimer on the entry form does not protect the organiser if, in the event of a claim, he is found to be negligent. Details of transport arrangements obviously need to be collected on the day. The signature of the competitor on the form is the formal indication that he is aware of all matters pertaining to the race and the organiser must therefore ensure that this information is available and presented in an easily assimilable form in a prominent place. If a runner is under 18 the form should be signed by a parent or guardian.

RACE NUMBER _____								
_____ REGISTRATION FORM								
MINIMUM AGE TO ENTER _____ YRS								
FULL NAME _____				AGE _____				
ADDRESS _____								
_____								
PHONE NUMBER _____				VEHICLE REGISTRATION _____				
EMAIL ADDRESS _____								
CLUB _____								
CATEGORY (CIRCLE BELOW AS APPROPRIATE):-								
MALE	MU23	MV40	MV45	MV50	MV55	MV60	MV65	MV70
FEMALE	LU23	LV40	LV45	LV50	LV55	LV60	LV65	
EMERGENCY CONTACT _____				PHONE NUMBER _____				
I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS RACE IS HELD IN ACCORDANCE WITH BOTH THE RULES AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS OF THE FRA. I CONFIRM THAT I AM AWARE OF THE ORGANISER'S INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH THIS RACE. I ACCEPT THE HAZARDS INVOLVED IN FELL RUNNING AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I AM ENTERING AND RUNNING THIS RACE AT MY OWN RISK. OTHER THAN THE ORGANISER'S LIABILITY FOR CAUSING DEATH OR PERSONAL INJURY BY NEGLIGENCE, I CONFIRM THAT I UNDERSTAND THAT THE ORGANISER ACCEPTS NO LIABILITY TO ME FOR ANY LOSS OR DAMAGE OF ANY NATURE TO MYSELF OR MY PROPERTY ARISING OUT OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS RACE.								
SIGNED _____				DATE _____				
<i>Competitor/Parent or Guardian (for U18 runners)</i>								

## **9 EQUIPMENT**

Competitors should arrive at races prepared to carry any or all of the following equipment:-

- a. Windproof whole body cover.
- b. Other body cover appropriate for the weather conditions.
- c. Map and compass suitable for navigating the course.
- d. Whistle.
- e. Emergency food (long races).

These requirements constitute “best practice” and are mandatory at all Category A Long and Medium races.

However any race organiser is free to impose additional safety requirements (e.g. waterproof as distinct from windproof whole body cover) and competitors must be prepared to accept such requirements as a condition of race entry.

In the event of settled fine weather, confirmed by a local weather report, the organiser **may** decide to waive some of the above requirements for races of other categories.

Organisers must ensure that whatever requirements they specify on the day are met by holding complete or random checks before and after the start of the race.

Race organisers should be aware of the dangers of hypothermia if injury to runners causes them to stop or slow to a walking pace. Body heat is lost quickly and in cold, wet or windy weather the onset of hypothermia can be very rapid unless sufficient warm clothing is carried. This factor should influence decisions on the extra equipment runners are required to carry in poor or unsettled weather conditions. If necessary the fact that the weather creates a high risk of hypothermia should be stressed to competitors.

## **10 COMPETITION NUMBERS**

These should be waterproof. Once the event is under way each competitor is uniquely identified by his number. He should be aware of the procedure for recording his number at checkpoints. It is vital that the organiser records the time and competition number of every competitor passing through a checkpoint.

## **11 RETIREMENT PROCEDURES**

Retirement may occur due to either competitor or organiser decision. Race control should be informed as quickly as possible. This must be done by either :-

- a. Reporting to a checkpoint and then returning directly to the finish to report to race control.
- b. Reporting directly to race control when retiring between checkpoints.
- c. Telephoning the race emergency number or the police. (This may be necessary when getting completely lost and arriving in the wrong valley).

## **12 RACE MARSHALS**

Race marshals should be experienced fell walkers or runners who are dressed and equipped to withstand severe weather conditions over a prolonged period. They should carry first aid and sustenance, as appropriate, depending on such factors as the length, severity and remoteness of the event, to help competitors in an emergency. They must have a thorough knowledge of the race organisation's monitoring procedure. Strategic checkpoint marshals should be in contact with race control and consideration should be given to their being equipped with a KISU type of shelter or a tent for use in emergencies. The decision as to whether to do this should be based on such factors as the length and severity of the race, the remoteness and altitude, the available communications and what other forms of shelter exist. If weather conditions prevent them carrying out the monitoring procedures efficiently, race control must be informed.

## **13 RACE MONITORING AND RESCUE PROCEDURE**

Progress of the race must be monitored in such a way that the organiser is always in a position to make a reasoned judgement as to the need to abandon the race or call out the rescue services. This means that each individual runner must be checked around the course in such a manner that if he becomes overdue at a control point the fact is known to race control. Since accurate timing of a call-out is often vital (literally

sometimes a matter of life and death) it is often quite inadequate to wait until the completion of long races before an alert is raised.

The monitoring system used is the responsibility of the race organiser but advice can be obtained from the FRA Secretary.

When possible race organisers should arrange for the local MRT, Red Cross or St.John's Ambulance to be on standby.

The organiser must have an intimate knowledge of the course, terrain, possibilities for error and likely weather conditions.

The FRA strongly recommend that, if it is feasible and appropriate for the course, all long and medium category "A" races which traverse high fell country should be monitored by the use of radios at strategic points. Subject to availability, sets of radios can be obtained on loan to race organisers by contacting the Radio Officer (see committee details in the Fixtures Calendar and Handbook). Alternatively the local Raynet organisation may be able to provide assistance.

#### **14 RELAYS**

Because there is a possibility of less experienced runners being included in a relay team, in addition to the procedures above, the organiser MUST ensure that :-

Every competing club has been vetted as experienced for this type of event.

Sufficient copies of information/rules/safety procedures are sent to competing clubs for distribution to each competitor. Clubs must give the organiser formal assurance that this has been done.

Competitors MUST carry the equipment specified in Requirement 9. All leg winners and at least 10% of other competitors MUST have their equipment checked on finishing and any transgression of the organiser's requirements MUST result in instant disqualification of the offending team.