

## SCOTTISH HILL RUNNERS

### SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR COMPETITORS IN HILL RACES

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

If you intend to compete in a race conducted under SHR insurance, you must comply with the SHR Generic Safety Rules for Competitors and any additional rules imposed by the Race Organiser (RO). In addition, you must familiarise yourself with the safety guidelines given in this document. You enter the event understanding that you are responsible for your own safety. The philosophy of hill running is that for senior competitors you, the runner, are primarily responsible for your own safety whilst competing.

It is essential that competitors understand the RO's rules regarding:

- Minimum kit requirements
- Retirement procedures
- Race instructions that may be issued prior to or on race day.

The nature of the event and the RO's requirements will be set out in the Event Information Sheet published prior to the event and updated as necessary on the day of the event. Each event is unique and will therefore have rules and requirements tailored specifically to that event. It is the competitor's responsibility to ensure they have read the event information sheet before considering whether to enter. Competitors should not assume that the requirements placed on them are the same as another event and be aware the requirements for particular events may change from year to year.

#### 2. EXPERIENCE

You must make the judgement as to whether you are able and equipped to cope with the demands of the event.

You must ensure that you are fully aware of the event safety information provided by the RO, and only enter when you are confident that you have appropriate fitness and experience. Certain races require previous hill race experience or general endurance running experience. If you have any doubt about your experience to compete in a specific race then you probably shouldn't take part. Contact the RO to outline your hill running history and discuss with the RO if the race is suitable for your level of experience. Be realistic and truthful about your current level of experience.

No-one has the absolute right to enter an SHR-insured event and the RO may refuse entry on any grounds including doubting that a competitor can safely complete the event.

Anyone who competes in SHR insured events must ensure that they have the necessary skills to cope with the navigational problems, terrain and weather which may occur. In most SHR insured events navigational skills with map and compass are essential. The acquisition of these navigation skills is the responsibility of the competitor. Competitors must be able to find their own way around an unmarked route. Route marking will usually only exist where landowner constraints demand them. As well as navigating yourself around the route, an important factor to bear in mind is that if you are injured you may need to get yourself off the hill safely and quickly without the assistance of others,

and so escape route planning may be important. If you see any other persons in need of assistance, you must help them, even if it means sacrificing your race. Lives may depend on this fundamental duty.

### **3. SURVIVAL AND EQUIPMENT**

For Senior Events, all competitors including eligible juniors, should arrive at races prepared to carry all of the following equipment:

- Adequate whole body cover to protect you against hypothermia or heat exhaustion/dehydration in the severest conditions likely on the day. The RO will specify minimum clothing requirements for their event, but you are responsible for carrying more than this as necessary for your own protection. You should therefore always bring additional protective equipment to the event registration in order to be able to comply with more stringent equipment requirements that may be demanded on the day due to adverse conditions. The greatest need for clothing is not for running it is when you are forced to stop or slow, and wait what can be a very long time for rescue.
- Map of the race route and compass, both suitable for navigating the course.
- Whistle.
- Emergency food and/ or fluids as needed for the conditions.
- Any items specific to the individual competitor's needs.

Competitors found not following the ROs minimum kit requirements will be disqualified and may be subject to further disciplinary procedures by SHR. Complete or partial kit checks before and after the start of the race may be conducted and failure to comply with the rules may result in disciplinary action. Jettisoning of safety kit before the race finish will be treated very severely.

Hypothermia is dangerous. Competitors should be aware that if circumstances cause a runner to stop or slow to a walking pace then body heat is lost quickly. In cold, wet or windy weather the onset of hypothermia can be very rapid unless sufficient warm clothing is worn. This fact will influence decisions on the equipment that an RO may recommend for runners to carry in poor or unsettled weather conditions. The RO rules are a minimum requirement. Ultimate responsibility for what equipment is carried lies with the competitor.

Heat exhaustion/ dehydration is also dangerous and you should be aware of the risk and precautions you should take.

### **4. IDENTIFICATION**

Competitors must use competitor identification, such as race numbers, as instructed by the RO in their event information. In some races, marshals will record numbers at checkpoints.

Competitors may be asked to do one or more of the following: make their number visible to marshals, shout their number to marshals, ensure marshals have recorded their number before leaving the checkpoint.

## 5. RETIREMENT PROCEDURES

If a competitor decides to retire (including not starting after collecting race identification at registration) they must follow the procedures set out by the RO. This is likely to include advising appropriate officials of their retirement.

## 6. JUNIORS

Ultimate responsibility for a junior competitor and whether they have sufficient skills and experience to deal with the demands of the event is in the hands of the parent or guardian who is attending the event and has approved the entry of the junior.

Junior races are restricted in terms of the distance they can cover and are generally set out with consideration for the relative inexperience of the competitors. However these events can still be very demanding and it is essential that the parent or guardian of the junior athlete considers the event and conditions on the day when making the decision whether or not the junior athlete should take part.

### Equipment for Junior Races

All juniors must be accompanied by a responsible adult who acts as their guardian and makes safety and equipment decisions on their behalf.

Competitors in junior events should arrive at races prepared to carry all of the following equipment:

- Adequate whole body cover to protect against hypothermia or heat stroke in the worst conditions likely on the day. The RO will specify minimum clothing requirements for their event, but the parent or guardian is responsible for ensuring the junior competitor carries more than this as necessary for their protection.
- Map of the race route and compass, both suitable for navigating the course.
- Whistle.
- Emergency food and/ or fluids as needed for the conditions.
- Any items specific to the individual competitor's needs.

The minimum kit requirements for all junior races will be set out by the RO. The RO may go beyond the details outlined above and competitors must follow the ROs minimum requirements.

## 7. RELAYS

Relay legs will be treated as if they were a standalone race in respect of SHR Rules and the requirements set out in this document.

## **SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR ORGANISERS OF HILL RACES**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

If you organise a race under SHR Insurance you are required to comply with the SHR Generic Safety Rules for Race Organisers (RO) using the guidance below to help you implement your detailed safety management arrangements. This is a very important part of your insurance cover. Any RO requiring advice on the preparation of the documents outlined in these guidelines should contact the SHR Race Registration Secretary.

### **2. EVENT SAFETY INFORMATION**

It is good practice for the RO to prepare an Event Information Sheet to be used by the RO in general event publicity. It should contain at least the following:

- Event details. These should include the start time, distance, ascent and any category (if relevant) of the event. If there are multiple races and/or junior events you should also specify each race and the age group applicable to each race.
- A route description, any checkpoints, and any alternative in the event of bad weather; recommended maps that would assist the competitors on race day, and in the planning and preparation leading up to the event; a description of the route indicating the type of terrain and severity of the route, highlighting any unusual characteristics of the event which may be important for the safety of competitors. Areas that are restricted except on race day should be described.
- The level of experience required and any qualifying conditions that the RO may set as entry criteria.
- First Aid cover and emergency response available at the event.
- A clear list of minimum personal safety kit / equipment to be carried by competitors.
- The level of navigational skills needed during the race and advice on the type and extent of any course markings that will be in place.
- Information for competitors concerning all race rules, retirement procedures, safety equipment to be carried and (where applicable) checkpoint number recording and checkpoint closing times.
- Any other safety information that may be useful to competitors on race day that may be particular to the event, e.g. appropriate duty of care arrangements, local weather forecast etc.

The event information should be sufficient to allow competitors to establish their competence to safely complete the race by carrying out a reconnaissance of the route.

### **3. EVENT SAFETY PLAN**

It is good practice for ROs to put together an Event Safety Plan to cover all safety related aspects of the event. Such a plan provides a valuable tool in helping the RO take all reasonable measures to provide a safe and well organised event and contribute to compliance with RO generic safety rules. That plan should deal with:

#### **3.1 Size of Field**

Give consideration to

- The maximum number of competitors that the race organisation can monitor and control in accordance with the generic safety rules.
- local facilities to safely handle the anticipated number of visitors

#### **3.2 Course Design**

Event information should accurately reflect the nature of the course. Ensure any exceptional hazards which can be identified in advance are accurately described. It is to the ROs benefit to highlight the risks and obstacles that competitors might not anticipate from normal experience. An RO should consider carefully how any course markings are advised to the competitors. Details of the type and extent of any course markings should be included in the event information.

#### **3.3 Adverse Weather Conditions**

Should weather conditions be so severe that the monitoring of the race could be extremely difficult or impossible, the RO should consider using an alternative bad weather low level route, or in extreme conditions, cancelling the event. This should be the RO's decision and should be taken as early as possible on race day. If a safer bad weather alternative can be pre-planned then it would be helpful to identify it in advance.

#### **3.4 Qualifying Criteria**

If asking for any qualifying criteria or experience, please ensure that this is outlined in the event information, and also that there is a way of gathering the relevant information through the entry procedure. The responsibility is on the competitor to declare their information accurately. No-one has the absolute right to enter an SHR insured event and the RO may refuse entry on any grounds including doubting that a competitor can safely complete the event.

#### **3.5 Runner Identification**

It is the RO's responsibility to have an accurate record of the number of competitors starting the race and the number finishing. A simple "head count" at the finish against the number of starters is NOT an adequately secure system alone. The race finish team should have a reference list of all competitor names with their numbers to allow rapid identification of unaccounted runners at the end of the race. Race numbers are a popular and convenient way of fulfilling the RO's obligation to identify competitors. If using numbers RO must provide instructions on how to make them visible

during the event and how they should be communicated to marshals (if applicable). Other systems for monitoring runners such as clip cards, wrist bands and dibbers may also be considered.

### **3.6 Race Monitoring**

It is very important that the RO:

- can accurately identify the athletes on the start line and the total number.
- can accurately identify the athletes who complete the race.
- can accurately account for those that abandon the race or did not start after collecting their race identification.
- for races in exposed terrain, monitoring of competitors should be consistent with entry requirements based on competitor experience.
- has a plan for the timescale and method of trying to account for missing persons efficiently and a rapid response procedure for initiating search and rescue.
- considers, where practicable, the use of radio, telephone or other wireless methods of communication.
- for uphill/ downhill only races, ensure that monitoring the safe return of competitors should also cover the ascent to an uphill start, and the descent from an uphill finish.

### **3.7 First Aid**

You should have some first aid provision available at the event start/finish point. First aid may be limited to a basic first aid kit for races within easy access of professional medical assistance, but for more remote races additional first aid provision should be considered. First aid provision should be outlined for the benefit of competitors in the event Information, and posted clearly on race day in the registration area. It is not practicable to provide first responder cover in remote parts of the course, and competitors must be made aware of their personal safety and self- evacuation obligations.

### **3.8 Marshals**

Marshals' duties differ a great deal for different races and even at different locations within races, so the RO should ensure that all marshals are aware of the general safety monitoring and procedures of the race, but in addition any duties or matters that are relevant to their particular marshalling point. The RO should consider issuing each marshalling point with a written list of their responsibilities. It is important that when an RO places marshals in position to fulfil a particular role that they have the appropriate fitness, skills, experience and are equipped to carry out their role. In some circumstances the demands are unlikely to be met by a single person. ROs should consider whether to place multiple marshals at certain marshal points.

### 3.9 Retirement Procedures

These should be set out in the event information circulated to competitors before and on the day of competition. Each event will have its specific characteristics and ROs should set a policy that leaves competitors in no doubt as to what is expected of them for reporting their retirement, whilst also accepting that the marshals, first aid and emergency services also have a role to play in such reporting especially when a competitor needs assistance.

### 3.10 Personal Safety Equipment

The RO should specify minimum safety kit requirements for their event based on their experience and conditions on the day. However, the adequacy of safety equipment is unique to each competitor. The competitor must therefore accept an ROs requirements as an absolute minimum to be strengthened by personal judgement and experience. These requirements should be set out in the event information and may be amended on the day of the event subject to the prevailing conditions. Once having set out such requirements the responsibility is fully on the competitor to comply with those requirements. The RO should carry out full or random kit checks to ensure that whatever requirements they specify on the day are met. The RO should disqualify any competitor judged to be in breach of the event safety rules and report the infringement to SHR. SHR emphasises that it is for the competitor to abide by all event rules. Should they fail to do so, the responsibility for that lies with the competitor.

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October 2014