



Safety in coaching sessions

CPD package for coaches

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Aims



- **Explain how to assess risks and control them at acceptable levels, and document the risks and controls.**
- **Provide an overview of how safety requirements vary with the types of areas and activities.**
- **Get coaches thinking about hazards and risks that change during the coaching including when an incident occurs while coaching.**

Coaching safety



- Risk management

- Risk assessment is part of risk management – not an end in itself
- Perform & document risk assessment for all coaching activities.

Hazard = potential for harm

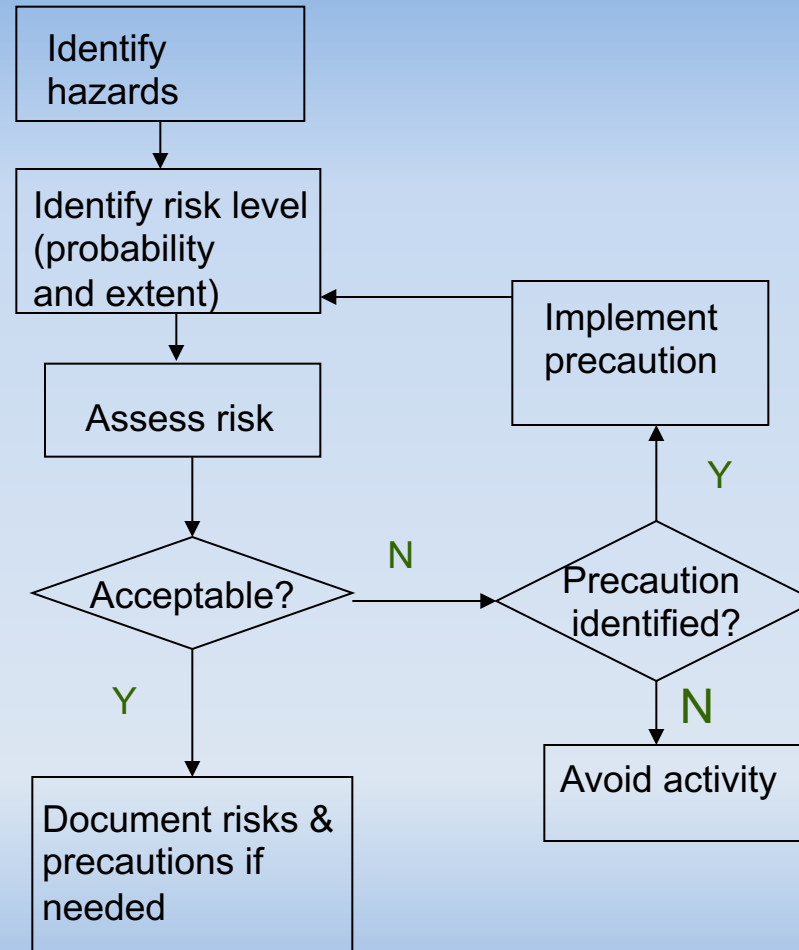
Risk = probability that this harm will happen
(includes extent/severity of harm)

Risk assessment process



- Understand the activity
- Identify the hazards
 - Include what might go wrong - are precautions for these possibilities in place
- How likely is it that the harm occurs and what is its extent?
- Is the risk of this acceptable and low?
- What precautions are needed - are they in place?
- Is the risk acceptable when precautions are in place?
- *Key part is the communication of the hazards and of the precautions specified*
- *Precautions need to be in place whenever the task is performed*
- *P*

Risk assessment flowchart



Risk assessment



- Step 1 – identify the credible, realistic hazards for the coaching session
- Consider hazards in categories
 - Area where coaching is being held – route from parking to coaching area?
 - Participants
 - Other people/activities
 - Weather
 - Equipment
- British Orienteering checklist exists.
 - Focus on main hazards

Risk assessment



- Step 2 – for each hazard identify the risk level and decide if it is trivial, acceptable or too high
- If the risk is too high (or can simply be reduced), identify the precaution(s) and repeat the consideration of the adjusted risk level
- Continue until the risk is acceptable.
- If the risk cannot be reduced to an acceptable level then this activity should not go ahead.

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Precautions



- Step 3 – document the findings in the form
 - Use the standard form provided by BO.
 - In particular when precautions need to be in place, set out who will do what to ensure that said precautions are introduced and are robust
 - Ensure that anyone with an action to reduce risk knows that they have the action.

Precautions hierarchy



When the risk level is above acceptable then need to reduce this by one or more of three routes (in decreasing order of preference)

- Remove/avoid the hazard
- Reduce the probability of the harm occurring
- Reduce the severity if the harm does occur.

Exercise (pre Covid times)



- A school group is heading to a coaching session - everyone is travelling together in a minibus. Precautions identified for travel are below: rank them in terms of effectiveness in reducing risk.
 - Each seat has a seat belt which must be worn when travelling,
 - The minibus has a working ABS system,
 - The driver has attended defensive driving training,
 - The minibus has a working lane departure alarm and automatic braking if it gets too close to a vehicle in front,
 - School policy is that the driver must be feeling in reasonable health
 - The driver should take a break from driving roughly every 2 hours.

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Suitable precautions



- Seek to match greater consequences/probability of harm with more robust precautions. 'Take care' or 'be aware' should apply to lower consequence/probability issues. Examples are
 - plan coaching exercise routes to avoid cliff descents rather than telling people to take care.
 - keep people away from busy mountain bike trails rather than having routes go close and making the trails oob.

Area dependent hazards

– open/forests



- Possible hazards to consider
 - Weather – temperature extremes, high winds, lightning, heavy rain/flooding
 - Area – Crags, lochs & fast flowing burns, mineshafts, pits, steep slopes, deep bogs, log piles, eye level branches, high fences, stone walls.
 - Participants – lost competitors/control placers & collectors, known health issues.
 - Other people/activities – road crossings, bikers (pedal & motorized), horses & riders, vehicles, dogs, wasps, deer, hunters.
 - Equipment – overhead cables, forestry work in progress

Area dependent hazards

– urban



- Possible hazards to consider
 - Weather – ice and heat, high winds, lightning
 - Area – Steep steps and slopes (slippery? when wet?), high fences/walls, busy roads, blind corners.
 - Participants – lost competitors, collisions with others on blind corners or narrow blind alleys, known health issues.
 - Other people/activities – crossing busy roads, bikes & scooters on pavements (push, pedal & motorized), collisions with members of public, hooligans.

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Area dependent hazards

– indoors



- Possible hazards to consider
 - Area – Slippery floors and solid walls at edges
 - Participants – lots of people running in small areas: collisions with others, collisions with walls, slips.



Dealing with hazards and risks that are changing

Last minute/changing hazards & risks



- Altered or different hazards can arise with little warning
 - Change in weather, injury to participant, discovery of other activities e.g. off road motorbikes using part of the area, lost person, deer or cows in the forest.....
- Possible/predictable hazards
 - Think through likely ones in advance and have contingency plans plus risk assessment ready – e.g missing person, weather.
- Unlikely/unexpected hazards
 - Requires on the spot risk assessment and control if they arise.
- For both categories, the coach needs swiftly to recognize, assess and control the risks

Example: changing hazards/risks



- A coaching session is in progress in a forest in May – 4 coaches, 20 people including 10 juniors; coaching at 3 TD levels on offer.
- Part 1. About 45 minutes into a busy session one junior complains of sore eyes, and becomes distressed. Her father is there and he takes her out of the forest to their car (400m away) to assess the issue.
- What should the lead coach be doing/thinking about at this stage?

Changing hazards/risks example part 2



- Part 2. Ten minutes later a young leader assisting the coaches complains of feeling unwell and while checking what it wrong with them, a rash can be seen developing on their neck and face. One of the coaches/first aiders is allocated to look after them – they leave the forest and ‘phone back that the rash has developed further plus the junior’s parent is about to call NHS 24.
- You are the lead coach – what has changed in your risk assessment and what should you do now?

Example – description, decisions and outcome



- Part 1. Unknown hazard is possible/likely so it raises concern about a potential issue. Possibly something in the eye. Parent a good option for checking this out. At present no other signs of issues, so carry on with session.
- Part 2. Now a more serious matter. Issue may be an allergic reaction – first aid kit does not contain anti-histamines. Source of problem unknown but likely that it affects at least 2 people. Still enough coaches to keep the session running but not enough should more participants develop symptoms. Decision taken to stop the session, everyone accounted for and everyone left the forest – no further cases developed. NHS 24 advised use of anti-histamines: obtained from local petrol station and used - they got rid of the symptoms although that person was still not 100% the next day. The two affected had been paired in an exercise and had come into contact with a fungal growth. Neither of the juniors knew of any susceptibilities/allergies.

This actually happened in 2019. The decision making process and outcomes are set out above.

Foreseeable situations



- Main ones are missing person(s) during coaching, injured person, change in weather.
- Missing person
 - Have a plan. Remember to address risks to everyone – both those missing and everybody else. It may include:
 - Search coordination (avoiding losing searchers)
 - Who should search? First aiders? Carry small first aid pack?
 - Risks to & welfare of remaining participants
 - Clarity of roles and communications
 - Involvement of additional help

Reporting injuries



- Requirements for reporting injuries are specified by our insurers – reporting goes via British Orienteering. There is an ‘Events insurance accident report form’ which is on the British Orienteering website: go to Get involved/Organising and Planning events/Resource library.
 - Specified categories are those for industrial injuries - details of qualifying injuries are in a separate file.
 - Note there is a requirement for reporting any **required** hospital visit by a member of the public arising directly from the activity (Public: people not involved with /participating in the coaching activity).

Reporting incidents



- Insurance requirement for reporting is not tied to regulations. Effectively, report incidents where you believe that a claim may be made.
- Coaching related incidents are being added to the SOA website in Resources/Coaching Support/Incidents
 - Entries will be anonymized and the focus will be on learning to be gained.
 - *Route to adding an entry is to send it to SOA coaching coordinator – they will anonymise it and ensure focus is on learning. Use coaching@scottish-orienteeing.org*

Insurance



- British Orienteering provides personal indemnity insurance for Licensed coaches but not for non-Licensed coaches
- Participants in activities registered with British Orienteering have third party liability cover.
- British Orienteering does not provide personal injury insurance for members.

Summary



- Risk assessment is a route to getting everyone to address safety risks for a task or activity
 - includes application to changes
- Risk assessment is not difficult but requires effort
 - follow the steps and systems provided removes complexity
 - address the whole activity – including what is likely to go wrong.
 - aim to be objective - wishful thinking is not a risk assessment
 - if in doubt ask others - collaboration usually improves assessments
- Risk assessment is applied common sense with a bit of structure.

Validation



- What is a hazard defined as?
- Does the hazard arising from crossing a road as a pedestrian vary with how busy is the road?
- What are the three routes for reducing risks?
- Identify 2 topics that may be in a coaching missing person plan.
- What is the hazard present when an urban control is in a narrow blind alley?

View possible answers and record your answers using Google Form at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1vGLWYi98YYOTzL-UxrMSG6cGerOVEk77SwRx1m_J6ql/edit