

Environmental check list

Environmental Checklist for Event Officials

This brief abstract and check-list is designed to act as a memory aid, and must be used with reference to the full British Orienteering Environmental Guidelines when planning and organising orienteering events.

At all times:

- Be sure that you have read and understand the British Orienteering Environment Policy.
- Build up contact with conservation bodies with an interest in areas in which you want to orienteer.
- Research the environmental issues in these areas.
- Keep a record of actions, meetings and activities.
- Record your actions that show you care and are responsible.

A. Before the event ... AND BEFORE STARTING TO MAP AN AREA:

1. Contact the landowner(s) regarding permission to use the area.

- Make sure they, and all other concerned outsiders, have a copy of the orienteering & conservation leaflet.
- Are there any special conservation areas, reserves or sensitive features in the area?

If Yes,

2. Research the nature and extent of any environmental concerns.

- If an area is very sensitive, is there somewhere that would do as well without the conservation issues?
- Does further permission need to be sought from a conservation body?

If Yes,

3. Contact the relevant officer as soon as possible.

- Be proactive: just writing a letter and leaving the rest to others is giving away the initiative.
- Ensure that you understand the basic conservation issues
- Be aware that they may not understand orienteering
- Try not to ask questions that could produce outcomes you don't want e.g. Replace "Can we hold the event?" with "Which parts of the area would be best for our event."
- Be aware that time of year, number of competitors, number of cars can all affect a decision.
- If you are not making progress, or encounter serious difficulty, seek advice.

B. Event preparation

It will be best to involve the land manager or conservation officer in these activities.

1. Consider how to minimise impacts on wildlife, vegetation and the ground.

- Plan how to manage people on the day so that the potential for damage is minimised.
- Walk the suggested routes, taking notes, in particular of any concerns or ideas expressed by the conservationist (show that you are listening so that negotiations can be constructive).
- Plan how people will get to the event with the environment in mind.
- Plan litter removal/recycling

2. Consider how you might become a partner in conservation, rather than simply a potential user of the area. Be sure to use all the resources within your club.

- Take an interest in the issues.
- Explore the possibility of publicising the special interest of the area in event particulars (in some cases, the conservationists will want to keep the locations secret).
- Offer local conservation bodies the opportunity to attend the event, advertise, or put on a display.
- Is there some way in which those attending on the day could help with conservation management?

3. Preparation.

- Note down (including photographs?):
- The condition of the parking and assembly areas, the start and finish and routes used between them.
- The condition of vegetation at controls that are likely to be more heavily used, or are in sensitive areas (e.g. marshes)
- Plan courses and routes to minimise the possibility of damage or disturbance.
- Agree these with the landowner, pointing out how you have responded to their concerns.

C. After the event

1. Within 24 hours

- All equipment removed from the competition area.
- All materials removed from assembly/parking areas
- Any damage to boundaries, buildings or land made good.
- Competition area checked for signs of the event and *note down results*. * Any changes to the condition of heavily used areas (parking, assembly, start, finish).
- Take comparative photographs to include in environmental report.
- Check a few examples of sensitive sites
- Check on the integrity of out-of-bounds areas
- Check on heavily used routes and controls.
- Block off potential new paths
- Tour the site with the landowner
- Get them to sign off your status report.

2. Two to four weeks after the event

- Visit the site and key controls again seek to identify any lasting signs that an event had taken place.
- Take photographs where appropriate.
- In the event that signs remain after 4 weeks, this should be noted, and the area revisited after a further 60 days. Further visits may be warranted where impacts remain visible in sensitive areas, if only to show that they were, in fact, temporary.

3. Environmental audit of the event

- Approaching conservationists with some kind of environmental audit of past and current events in hand is likely to create a favourable impression as it will be real information, and show that we are monitoring ourselves. British Orienteering has established an environmental benchmark for events, including the recording and reporting of lasting signs that the event has taken place.

4. Environmental standards for Orienteering events

- Orienteering shall operate within any legal environmental standards, and also within any framework agreed with third parties.
- No long-term or significant damage to animals, plants, landscape or archaeological features shall result from an orienteering event.

- Any temporary damage, such as plant trampling, should no longer be discernable after 12 months in the worst case.
- No litter, equipment or extraneous material shall remain once the area has been vacated.
- Where an event area contains organisms or features of special conservation interest, the event organisers will be supportive of management concerns, and assist the relevant authorities where possible.
- Event officials will record the event's performance against these standards.
- The aim is to make this a useful exercise, building a large data bank with time, but ensuring that it is easy to complete, as part of the normal process of holding an event.

5. Prepare a brief report

- Be honest about reporting findings as it will be appreciated far more than any whitewash, particularly if lessons can be shown to have been learned and acted upon.
- Submit copies to British Orienteering and the local conservation body office (where appropriate), providing opportunity for any observations on this report or from other independent sources. This should include:
 - The use made of the British Orienteering Environmental guidance and audit process.
 - The event details
 - Number of competitors and their distribution over time.
 - Number of vehicles
 - Environmental issues encountered and solutions and observations of effectiveness.
 - Pre- and post-event descriptions and comparisons.
 - Comments of relevant landowners, conservationists or bodies.