



Race Director Fact Sheet: Number 15

Reducing the Environmental Impact of Running Events:

Introduction

Running is a natural activity that is beneficial for the health and well-being of those who take part and should be encouraged as a cheap accessible way in which to improve the health of the nation.

One way that running is highlighted as both a competitive activity and a vehicle for improving health and self-improvement is through organised races.

The UK is currently experiencing a second running boom following the initial one in the eighties. In 2016 over five million running performances were recorded in licenced races in the UK. Whilst this growth in running and racing is to be encouraged, we should be mindful of the effects races, particularly mass participation ones, can have on the environment.

This paper is produced therefore to raise awareness of our responsibility as race organisers to consider the effect that races can have on the environment and to encourage steps to be put in place to eliminate or reduce these effects.

Key Considerations

The “Golden Rule” is to always leave the event venue as you found it, which means picking up litter, removing drinks bottles and/or sponges, discarded clothing and so on.

However, for your event to become more environmentally friendly, it’s about more than clearing the site and the route with serious consideration required to be given to:-

1. Environmental Sustainability
2. Waste Management
3. Sanitation
4. Noise
5. Impact on Flora and Fauna
6. Travel

These headings, which will be covered in more detail below, need to be taken into account in your planning and should be part of your Event Plan in particular in relation to:-

- Participant Numbers
- Spectator Numbers
- Venue and its location

Environmental sustainability

A race organiser needs to consider a number of factors to help make their event more sustainable. Small races are generally more "green" than larger ones as the collecting, recycling and disposing of waste is relatively easy. Also, it may not distribute medals, t shirts, goody bags and merchandising material so it will have less surplus and discarded stock to deal with.

For larger races the scale of discarded water bottles, clothing, bin liners and other event related waste and stock needs to be addressed.

Some ways of improving the event’s green footprint are:-

- Recycling plastic bottles.
- Giving all discarded clothing to charity.
- Having race T-shirts made from recycled material.
- Making the medals out of recycled material such as plastic, wood or glass.
- Goody bags made of 100 percent postconsumer recycled paper/material.
- Assembling and de-rigging the event infrastructure during daylight hours.
- Donating leftover bananas and other food/drink produce to charity food re-distributers.
- Emailing race information rather than posting it. If you feel that it is necessary to send out information, then print on both sides of the paper.
- Encourage car sharing to limit private car use (more below).

These suggestions are by no means exhaustive and creative thought should be given to any other initiatives that you can introduce to reduce the environmental impact of your event.

Waste Management

Most venues will now seek assurance of how event organisers provide for waste management and consideration should be given to the following:-

Receptacles – Bins/Skips (dependent upon the size of event) General Waste, Re-cycling Waste, Provision for animal waste.

Handling of Waste –litter, bottles, cups, cable ties, sponges, discarded clothes and catering litter.

Protective clothing required – gloves, overalls, footwear, high-visibility clothing and provision of hot/cold water for washing **The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992 Source: Purple Guide.**

Once you have provided for the above you now have to remove from site!

Engage a contractor or the Local Authority to remove receptacles.

Take to a Community Waste Facility – prior arrangement may have to be made.

Sanitation

It is your responsibility to provide toilet facilities for participants and spectators. Identify the numbers of participants and spectators expected and then work out the number of portable WC's, disabled toilets and urinals required for the event site and the route. **See Fact Sheet No. 2 on the runbritain website.**

Consider using environmentally friendly portable toilets that use less water and eliminate paper hand towel requirements by use of a hand sanitizer system.

Ideally, have the toilets delivered on the day of your event to ensure that they are not prone to overnight use or vandalism

Ensure that the toilets are checked regularly and replenished with toilet paper and hand sanitizer.

Noise

Be aware of any stipulation to the generation of noise by the owner of the venue whether that be from a PA System or generators etc.

Check with your landowner what if any decibel levels are set for the venue.

The landowner could also specify rig and de-rig times as well as times when PA Systems and Music can be played.

Note: If you are playing music do you have the necessary licenses?

Impact on Flora and Fauna

Most National Trust Properties introduced a Licence System for using their venues and this includes being asked what the Environmental Impact will be.

If you keep to designated trails, roads, lanes and foot paths very little will be the answer.

Of course this does not only apply to NT Property but parks, lakes, moors, fells, woodlands, coastal paths and designated Public Rights of Way.

Therefore ensure your participants are instructed to utilise designated routes.

Travel

Your event may not be large enough to create a Travel Plan with your local bus company or even train company but you can make a difference.

Encourage Car Share

Can you encourage participants and spectators to cycle to your event, if you do can their cycles be stored somewhere safe?

Identify public transport providers

The distance of your event from the Railway Station and Bus Station and where the nearest Bus Stop/Tram Stop/Tube is.

Identify Public Car Parks (capacity and opening times).

Implementing some, or all of, the measures highlighted in this paper, will help to reduce the carbon footprint of your event.

Useful links

Running Environmentally Friendly Races

<http://www.springmoves.com/running-environmentally-friendly-races/>

How Green Running Events Work

<http://adventure.howstuffworks.com/outdoor-activities/running/events/green-running-events.htm>

How to Race Green: Green Events

<http://www.active.com/outdoors/articles/how-to-race-green-green-events>