

## 1. Objective.

The purpose of this document is to give Run Leaders some advice and provide guidelines on how to manage the runs they are supervising and to provide a framework within which we know the club, the run leader and the group will be most likely to be protected by the insurance policies which are provided via the club's England Athletics affiliation.

## 2. Background

We have been liaising with England Athletics on the issues of safety of Runners and liability of Run Leaders and the club itself in the event of an accident, injury or 3<sup>rd</sup> party liability claim. The EA view is that although their *preference* is that all club activities should ideally be led by a qualified Run Leader or Coach (Leader in Running Fitness or above) they accept that practically speaking this may not always be possible – especially for a relatively small / new club like ourselves. This is not a problem to them, and cover is still provided so long as Leaders of activities are aware of and generally abiding by the club guidelines which have been produced by qualified and experienced Run Leaders or Coaches.

Hence, we are asking all current and potential Run Leaders to read these guidelines and indicate to the club that they will follow them so far as is practicably possible. Please note that if the run leader is following these guidelines and the risk assessment then they cannot be held personally liable.

Although historically the club has struggled to get people involved in leading activities it is hoped that the introduction of these guidelines, rather than dissuading people from leading, will actually encourage more people to come forward, knowing that there is a framework of some kind for them to work within.

In addition to this document, there is a generic risk assessment filed at <http://tiny.cc/6g07dz> which you should read before signing this document.

## 3. Training and Preparation

Although the club has quite a lot of LiRF and above qualified leaders, we always need more. The club will budget to pay for a number of people to go on EA LiRF courses (and potentially other courses) each year on the strict understanding that if the club is paying, there is an expectation that the attendee will regularly lead runs and other activities at club sessions.

You can begin preparing to lead runs by being a 'buddy' to the run leader on any run. Listen to what the run leader does and says and reinforce it with the group. If there is something you don't understand (why did he do that?) discuss it with the leader afterwards.

Please take a look at our club ethos statement on the website. The idea of running with a club is that it's a social event too, so when we run, we want to be in a group. Sometimes that means that each of us runs a little slower than we are capable of to stay with a group. Sometimes other people will be slowing to look after you. It's important that the group comes back with the same number of runners as it went out with. We never leave people behind and especially not on their own.

## 4. Run Guidelines

These are mainly simple, common-sense steps which all run leaders should adhere to.

- **Leader Role**

If you are volunteering to take out a group you need to make sure that everyone in the group knows you are leading. Introduce yourself.

- You need to specify the distance you intend to take the run, the approximate pace you are aiming for and note if any particular equipment is required – e.g. trail shoes, head torch, hi-viz. If possible, advertise your run (via FB etc) in advance. Once the groups have been sorted out, make sure everyone in the group is comfortable with the planned run, or suggest they move to a more appropriate group. Be aware that many new runners have no idea what pace (or distance) they currently run.
- As the leader you should be running well within your capabilities. If you ‘can’ run at 8 min per mile you should lead runs at – say – 9 min miles. That way you will be able chat to the runners (especially new members) about what they are training for etc and, should the need arise, you will be able to run faster to round up the group.
- Appoint a ‘leader buddy’ if you possibly can to help manage the group and learn from you.
- At the beginning of the run you should explain to the group that they need to keep together via looping and, if the group doesn’t loop unprompted, you will be shouting out ‘loop’ from time to time if the group begins to split. Everyone should be able to hear / see you at all times. Ask the slower runners NOT to loop – let the fast people keep the group together.
- As the leader you should always carry a phone and wearing hi-viz is a good idea, even in the summer.
- Before you start to run, check everyone is well (not carrying an injury that might affect their ability to run your activity) and then lead the group in some simple mobilisation and warm up exercises. No matter how basic, this is far preferable to running cold straight away.
- Lead the group from the middle or the back – never the front - where you can’t see the rest of the group or who is struggling.
- Call out hazards as you approach them and encourage all runners to do the same. “Roots” or “Kerb” is sufficient. When running on country roads etc and a car is spotted approaching don’t just shout ‘Car Back’ or whatever – people won’t know what you want them to do. Instead shout “Car behind – Stay Right” as appropriate.
- Make sure people know to let you know if they intend leaving the group before returning to the club. Do not allow people to go off alone.

- **Routes.**

There are numerous pre-mapped routes in the ‘leader resources’ box at the club. You are welcome to run one of those or you can devise your own provided you have researched and ideally run it before. Try to build up your local knowledge.

- From time to time you might want to go out and research a brand new route. That is fine but if you do it you should only do so with a group of runners whose capabilities you know well. Do not under any circumstances run an untried route with a runner who is new to the club or who’s capabilities you are unsure of.
- Don’t be persuaded by a member of your group to do a different route that you don’t know.
- Stick to the route you have ‘advertised’. From time to time circumstances may force you to make an adjustment whilst on the run. That’s fine but try to keep it as close to the advertised distance as possible.

- **Road Safety**

Please set an example to the group in terms of road safety and hi viz clothing. Please be aware that we have no more rights on the road when running as a group as you have individually.

- Generally use the footpath if there is one or run on the RIGHT facing traffic if on the road. There will be places where it is safer on the left. Give clear instructions to everyone to cross (when its safe) and then return to the right after the hazard.
- Cross roads **as one group**. Do not allow the first person who gets to the road to cross on their own – following runners will not know if they should cross or not. You may need to shout to people to ‘wait at the road’ in order to all cross together etc.
- Looping is good but NEVER loop on an open road in front of on-coming traffic.
- Head torches should always be worn by leaders during the winter months. Makes it easier for people to see – and see where you are.

- **When something goes wrong.**

If something happens – like a fall or an injury – although we always stress that people run at their own risk, leaders should still be taking charge of sorting things out as best we can.

- If you run with a phone that could be very useful in getting help, if needed.
- Actions. Consider the options which might include splitting the group or getting somebody responsible to escort the injured person back to the club. If they are more seriously hurt then one person might need to stay with them while two good runners return to the club to get help. If it’s really serious it might be a case of knocking on the nearest house door to raise the alarm or simply dialling 999.
- Never allow an injured person to remain alone.

- **After the run**

- **Cool Down**

Yes, officially its cool down, not warm down. Now is the time for stretches – the objective being to return the muscles back to their normal length. They shorten during exercise. By all means show people a few stretches. Encourage gentle stretches held for 15 to 20 seconds – no ‘jerks’. There are links to stretches on our website.

- Chat with your group and make sure they enjoyed it. Do any of them need to be in a higher / lower group next time?
- Chat with the Run Leader buddy to see what they learned / didn’t understand
- Any major problems or general feedback to a committee member please.

**Run Leader Signature**

**Date**

**I have read the above guidelines and will follow them when leading club runs and other activities.**

**I have also read the Club Runs Risk assessment. If necessary, I will amend the Generic Risk assessment to make it relevant to the particular activity I intend to lead.**