

*"Orienteering is a challenging outdoor adventure sport enjoyed by people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds."*



**British Orienteering**

## **Risk Assessment Case Study**

### **Based on an incident at a Night Street League Event**

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**Risk Assessment Case Study (1)**

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**British Orienteering**

- **An orienteering club intends to hold one of its Night Street League Score Events at a sports club which it has used previously for similar events.**
- **Since the last event was held there, a new path has come to light, which is used daily by local dog walkers.**
- **The Planner is keen to add the path to the map as it provides an additional access to the club grounds, thereby giving competitors additional route choices compared with previous events.**

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## Risk Assessment Case Study (2)

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- The Organiser reviews the previous event's Risk Assessment and identifies an additional hazard when he walks along the new path in daylight.
  - There is a drop of some 60 cm between an unlit fenced car park and the sports ground, and a corresponding step up in the other direction.
- In co-ordination with the Planner he considers what risk reduction measures would be appropriate.

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## Risk Assessment Case Study (3)

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- The Planner produces a map extract of the sports ground area which (along with Out of Bounds areas and all the accesses) identifies the large step, and copies of the map extract are put on show near Registration.
- The Organiser prints off 2 A4-sized yellow "Warning: sudden drop" signs from a Warning Signs supplier's webpage.
- He laminates them and puts one on the fence next to the gate and one on the gate itself, and (after considering visibility) locates them at chest height.

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## Risk Assessment Case Study (4)

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### HOWEVER...

- During the event, a competitor limps into the Finish having fallen down the 60cm drop and badly sprained his ankle.
- He had not seen the yellow signs at the gate warning competitors of the drop.
- Following the event, the Organiser completes an Accident Report Form for the Series Co-ordinator to send to the BO National Office.

*How can the club learn from this incident so that at future events the risk of injury at this hazard is reduced to an acceptable level?*

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## Risk Assessment Case Study (5)

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### Lessons Learned

- If the Organiser had visited the drop hazard *at night*, he may well have realised that A4-sized yellow warning signs would not be sufficient to warn runners of the hazard.
- Advising competitors of hazards on a map at Registration does not guarantee that they will have seen them, nor that they will remember the location of any hazards when they're out running.
- If the event is one of a series, then competitors will expect that the risks are no different from those at the other events, so...
- ***Keep any hazard messages brief, and concentrate on what is significant and specific to the event.***

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## Risk Assessment Case Study (6)

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### What could be done at future events here?

- Remove the hazard by deleting the new path from the map, or mark it Out of Bounds, *or*
- Have a marshal stand at the drop telling competitors to take care, *or*
- In addition to *large* yellow warning signs, hang hazard warning tapes and perhaps place a traffic cone at the gate.
- Add a purple hazard note to the competition map with an arrow pointing to its location saying "BEWARE: 60cm STEP"
  - NB it is only a 'drop' from one direction (in a score event both directions are possible)
- Give prominence to the hazard in a brief oral message at the Start as it is the only *abnormal* hazard at the event.

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