



ROAD RACE DIRECTOR GUIDE



Athletics Canada Road Race Director Guide

Purpose:

At the risk of reinventing the wheel, this guide aims to take elements from existing resources (see Conclusion for acknowledgments) to provide a consistent message on the following important areas of road race organization:

- Emergency planning
- Medical planning
- Course planning
- Race Administration
- Youth running
- Hosting Elite athletes

As such, the purpose is to outline the steps a road race director/event organizer needs to take to meet the standards of a professional race in Canada, as designated by the Athletics Canada Supporter Program Approved Event and Competitive/Elite Race Badges.

The Approved Race Badges are the primary vehicle through which Athletics Canada recognises and supports races which build community, promote and celebrate running, are safe, well-organised and technically sound, and offer a great participant experience. They aim to provide a uniform standard of race experience across Canada. The process of applying for the badge is intended to assist race organizations in reviewing current operations and educate them on good practices within the sector to improve the overall quality of events.

An Athletics Canada Approved Event must be sanctioned by their provincial branch, if applicable. Provincial branch sanctioning differs from province to province, however the goal is the same: to ensure events are safe, well-organised and technically sound as it pertains to each provincial community.

Emergency Action Plan

The Emergency Action Plan must be specific to your event site and date, and to the personnel on your team. Communication is key when dealing with an emergency situation. Have all volunteers, officials, medical personnel equipped with walkie-talkies (cell phones are less reliable due to connectivity and battery issues, but can also be used) so that everyone is in constant contact. Staff, volunteers, participants, partners including municipality, police, fire, military, and ambulance as required should all have access to the same emergency channel.

Prior to the event, there should be a briefing which will explain how emergency instructions will be communicated to the event community. There should be a hierarchy of communication so that each person knows who they should contact in an emergency situation. The event participants should be notified of the status of any emergencies through an Event Alert System. The Event Alert System communicates the status of course conditions to participants, key staff, volunteers, and the general public leading up to and on race day. The status is based on a variety of factors including weather and security. The system is a series of colour coded signs that inform participants of the potential risk level of conditions.

Using a common EAS throughout Canada will provide a standard for both organizers and participants and ensure safe participation relative to conditions.

Make sure to post this chart prominently on your website, and at the race site so that participants are aware of the recommended actions for each set of conditions.

ALERT LEVEL	EVENT CONDITIONS	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
EXTREME	EVENT CANCELLED/EXTREME AND DANGEROUS CONDITIONS	PARTICIPATION STOPPED/FOLLOW EVENT OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS
HIGH	POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS CONDITIONS	SLOW DOWN/OBSERVE COURSE CHANGES/FOLLOW OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS/CONSIDER STOPPING
MODERATE	LESS THAN IDEAL CONDITIONS	SLOW DOWN/BE PREPARED FOR WORSENING CONDITIONS
LOW	GOOD CONDITIONS	ENJOY THE EVENT/BE ALERT

If evacuation is required, make sure that your emergency plan includes shelter (or muster) locations, safe places where people can gather during the emergency. This could be a nearby school, an emergency tent, or an open area away from the race site, depending on what the emergency is.

Bad Weather During the Event

Extreme weather is a significant factor in race emergency procedures. Throughout the event you should be monitoring the weather, especially if the forecast is calling for thunder, lightning, extreme temperatures or wind, etc.

If you experience bad weather then you will need to implement your emergency plan. All participants should be notified by the responsible person to seek shelter immediately and remain sheltered for a minimum of 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder, last sight of lightning, etc.

Once all individuals have been notified and safely attended to you will have to decide whether you can safely continue, or cancel the event.

Leading up to your event you should be monitoring the weather and if it doesn't look good, you should provide updates to your participants, staff, vendors and partners regarding the decision to cancel or proceed and the protocol that you will follow during the event. Making the call to cancel an event is not an easy one, as you may have participants travelling to your event from further distances and especially if you do not provide refunds for events cancelled due to weather (see Race Administration section).

1. The decision to be made whether to cancel or proceed should be made 90 minutes prior to the earliest indicated start time (earliest wave or group). This should give you time to monitor the weather online (Environment Canada radar is recommended) and assess the conditions on site. If you are still experiencing inclement weather (visible lightning, repeated thunder, torrential rainfall, extreme winds or extreme temperatures) at the 90-minute mark then you should likely cancel the event.
2. If signs *strongly* indicate that the inclement weather is ending at the 90-minute mark and good weather is soon to follow, you can consider postponing the event start time, but only if this reasonably works for your participants and only if the course is still safe. You would again monitor the weather and make the final decision 1 hour prior to the new event start time. If there is still any doubt at this juncture, then you should cancel the event.
3. If you make the decision to proceed with the event, follow Environment Canada Guidelines, specifically as it pertains to thunder and lightning. If you experience thunder or lightning

within 90 minutes of your indicated start time then stop operations, seek shelter and ensure all others do the same. All participants should remain sheltered a minimum of 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder or sight of lightning.

4. If the inclement weather has subsided prior to the 90-minute decision deadline, but the course is considered unsafe in any way (ie. flooding), then you should cancel the event.
5. Communication is critical if you are considering cancelling or postponing an event. If a cancellation looks likely then forewarn all stakeholders (participants, staff, volunteers, facility partners, vendors, police marshals, etc.) several hours in advance. Advise them of your 90-minute decision deadline and indicate how the decision will be communicated. As soon as the decision is made, notify all participants. Don't rely on one channel of communication! Use the EAS, as well as email, the event site, twitter **and** any other applicable medium (ie Facebook). Post signage at the entrance of the event site for those who may not have received your communication or who arrived early. Get staff to help you communicate the message quickly and via a wide net.
6. Extreme weather includes (but is not limited to) flooding due to heavy rainfall, tornadoes, hailstorms, and strong winds. Winds in excess of 65km/hr are considered to be strong winds and should result in a wind warning. Temperatures are also considered to be 'inclement' weather. If, at the 90-minute mark, temperatures are forecasted to exceed 45° C with the Humidex *at any point during your event*, or air temperatures are forecasted to reach -28° C *at any point during your event*, you should cancel the event. Cancellation is also recommended for heat temperatures (with Humidex) that exceed 40° C and cold air temperatures that drop below -23° C.

Here are some guidelines for extreme temperatures, adapted from the MEC Race Director's Guide.

Extreme Cold Temperatures

Air Temperature	Public Message/EAS	Action
< -28° C	Activity Cancellation/ Black/Extreme	Cancel. Dangerous; hypothermia possible.
-23° C to -28° C	Active Participant Communication/ Red/High	Recommend cancellation or voluntary withdrawal. If proceeding course distance should be no greater than 10km, and following all steps listed below. Multiple communications with advice on dressing for extreme cold weather activities. All marshals carry foil space blankets Additional vehicle on course to offer shelter to runners who need to stop. Increase first aid presence and warm drinks at finish of event – all participants receive foil space blanket.
-18° C to - 22°C	Active Participant Communication/ Yellow/Moderate	Multiple communications with advice on dressing for extreme cold weather activities. All marshals carry foil space blankets Additional vehicle on course to offer shelter to runners who need to stop. Warm drinks at finish of event to warm up participant
> -18° C	Participant Reminders/ Green/Low	Proceed as usual

Extreme Warm Temperatures

Temperature With Humidex	Public Message/EAS	
>45° C	Activity Cancellation/ Black/Extreme	Cancel. Dangerous; Heat stroke possible
35° C to 45° C	Active Participant Communication/ Red/High	Great discomfort and exertion should be avoided. Recommend cancellation or voluntary withdrawal. Increase number of water stations on running route to MINIMUM every 2.5km
26° C to 34° C	Active Participant Communication/ Yellow/Moderate	Recommend participants at increased risk for heat collapse slow pace. Warn entrants of increased risk of heat collapse. Increase number of water stations on running route to MINIMUM every 2.5km.
<25° C	Participant Reminders/ Green/Low	Proceed as usual. Establish number of water stations on running route to MINIMUM every 3km.

Safety and Security Operations Plan

In addition to emergency preparedness, there should be a general safety and security operations plan in place. Examples of safety and security concerns include but are not limited to debris on the course, police action, protests, construction...etc.

Elements of this part of the plan should include a clear command and responsibility structure, so that every staff member and/or volunteer knows who to contact. For example, each person at a water station should know who the leader of that table is. That water station leader should report to, in the case of a large race, an area leader, who reports to the head of volunteers, who reports to the race director. This way, information can quickly move up the chain. In a smaller race, the water station leader might report directly to the race director.

There should be a plan in place to check the course on the morning of the event for hazards and declare the course safe and open. This could mean checking for signs blown over in a storm, or moved overnight, potholes, rocks or branches in the way, making sure barriers are in place to block traffic, and ensuring that all volunteers and marshalls are in place. This person may be the race director herself, or the course director, if there is one, or the course measurer, who can also ensure that the course has been marked out as measured.

The same procedure should be followed at the end of the race, first to let staff and volunteers know when the last participant has passed, or failed to meet a cut-off point or has been injured and has been removed from the course. Once the race itself is over, the tear-down of the course should also be followed by a sweep of the circuit to see if anything has been left behind, and all garbage has been cleaned up.

While everyone working at the race should be responsible for identifying security issues, there should be one person, usually the race director, who makes the final decision with respect to any delays, changes or cancellations. This person should also be the one to communicate with the media, if need be, unless there is a specifically named media-relations person on staff (more likely the case for larger races).

The Medical Plan

The medical plan involves the contracting or hiring of professional and trained medical personnel to ensure any injuries or illnesses are dealt with appropriately during the event, and to coordinate with the hospital. The plan should lay out all the equipment you will need (for example, chairs, cots, blankets, bandages, water, ice, disinfectant...this is a non-exhaustive list), where it will be placed (medical tent), and how medical personnel will be deployed. There should always be a medical station (usually the main one) located within 100m of the finish line, and there should always be medical personnel out on the course. The number of personnel will depend on the length and layout of the course, and number of participants. Medical personnel should be linked by radio communication.

The plan should include a procedure to follow during a medical emergency, a list of all medical personnel and their credentials, key phone numbers, who is to take responsibility for each necessary step, an ambulance route, and a procedure for transportation to hospital. All key people at your race should have a copy of this plan and the race director should be made aware of all medical situations. Allow emergency vehicles direct access to the finish line and to your medical tent should the need arise.

This plan will be approved by the lead medical person. Ideally this is a doctor, nurse or paramedic. Even if this person is not on site to lead the team (in the case of many small races, the medical is staffed only by volunteer first aiders), having a medical professional look over your plan will help ensure it is safe and feasible, and lend authority to your plan that the volunteers can trust.

Take into consideration the amount of people participating and spectating your event. The smaller the event, the less medical personnel you will need, but the more medical personnel you have, the better. At the minimum, your medical personnel should be Certified First Aid Responders (qualified first-aiders, licensed nurses, paramedics or physicians are generally appropriate personnel). Any non-professional medical volunteers should be trained by medical professionals before the event.

The local hospital or emergency medical service should be made aware of the event by the race director or through the appropriate local authority. If an ambulance and paramedics can be present on site, that is preferable.

As part of registration, you should collect participant medical information in case of an emergency. This would include emergency contact information and any allergies or medical conditions. Often this is collected on the back of the race bib, however, participants usually neglect to fill this out. The pertinent medical information should be available to event medical

staff, either through a binder or online app. The information should be kept securely (accessible only by those who need it according to privacy legislation) and deleted after use.

The Course Plan

Course Certification

Athletics Canada believes that every runner deserves to run on an accurately measured course. Our course certification program confirms that the advertised race course distance has been accurately measured according to international standards and the measurement data is reviewed by an accredited certifier.

Course certification provides an opportunity to be able to conduct meaningful comparisons between different race courses for the achievement of personal best performances, as well as ensuring the fair administration of qualifying times and establishment of records. A properly measured course also helps timing companies to position timing equipment at the appropriate location.

The standards for course measurement are jointly established by the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS) and the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF). The system is managed by experienced course measurers. In Canada, this service is managed under the authority of Athletics Canada. To certify your course, the course needs to be measured according to these standards for course measurement.

Who can register a course for certification?

Course certification is available to any individual/event organizer wishing to have a course certified. Fees collected are used to cover the cost to maintain the registry of certified courses, review course applications and train and upgrade course measurers. Fees are currently \$50 for a road course and \$15 for a calibration course. These fees are paid to Athletics Canada.

Measurement Costs

Certification fees must be paid for the registration and validation of all course measurements. Measurement costs are above and beyond the cost of registering a course measurement for certification and are negotiated directly between the course measurer and the race organizer. Some provincial/territorial branches offer course measurement services to race directors. Measurers can charge a variety of rates depending on the complexity and length of the course.

Here are some guidelines of what you can expect from expert measurers:

5k or less	\$375 to \$550
10k:	\$750 to \$1000
Half Marathon	\$1250 to \$1750
Marathon	\$2000 to \$3000

In general, \$60 to \$100/km with a minimum of \$375. These fees are paid to independent course measurers.

Who sets the standards for course certification?

The standards for course measurement which form the basis of course certification are jointly established by the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS) and the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF). In Canada, the issuance of certification is managed under the authority of Athletics Canada.

Who can certify a course?

In Canada, **anyone can measure** a course and apply for certification, it is not necessary to enroll in formal training. The [measurement manual](#) is designed to guide a novice measurer through the steps, lists the necessary equipment, and provide the forms for completing the paperwork.

Elite level races including IAAF and AIMS designated events and Athletics Canada Championship events may require that measurement has been completed by a graded measurer.

All measurements are validated by an accredited course certifier prior to granting certification. The instruction manual can be downloaded [here](#).

What is the difference between course certification and race sanctioning?

Course certification provides a guarantee with regards to the accuracy of the course measurement including distance and changes in elevation, while sanctioning formalizes the agreement of the race director to abide by guidelines relating safety, the adherence to stipulated racing regulations and other guidelines put forth by the governing body for road running in the designated region.

Different sanctions will provide different guarantees based on the nature of the event being sanctioned and may or may not include a requirement that the course be certified. All sanctions within Canada have three primary requirements: proof of insurance on the part of the race organiser; demonstration of application of minimal safety requirements for race participants and acceptance to abide by other regulations tied to the granting of sanctions.

For more information on sanctions [contact your provincial/territorial branch](#).

How do I know if a course is certified?

Until an event is included in the national certification database, it isn't certified - regardless of the claims made by the race organization. The size and prestige of an event do not ensure a certified course.

View the list of certified races [here](#).

What qualifications are required to become a course measurer?

Anyone can measure a course and apply for certification, it is not necessary to enroll in a seminar. The measurement manual is designed to guide a novice measurer through the steps, lists the necessary equipment, and provide the forms for completing the paperwork.

Seminars are offered from time to time and they allow a measurer to gauge his or her riding ability against that of experienced measurers. Though they are helpful in boosting a measurer's confidence, they are not mandatory unless a measurer seeks IAAF or AIMS credentials. Courses that are measured for the IAAF or AIMS must be measured by an "A" or "B" level measurer.

What is the maximum allowable net change in elevation between the start and finish for a point to point race?

A "standard" course will have a drop of no more than 1 m/km, or 21.1 m for a half-marathon. This eliminates downhill aid to the runner. Also, the start and finish must lie no farther apart than 50 percent of the race distance - 10.5 km for the half-marathon or 5 km for a 10k. This mostly eliminates aid due to wind. Only runs made on "standard" courses may qualify for records.

There is no prohibition against races that exceed the "standard" limits. One may put on a race at any distance along any route. The only thing different is in the potential for records. This is not in the measurement manual because it has little to do with measurement - it's a standard set up to facilitate record keeping and to allow meaningful comparison between race results.

Non-certified courses

Smaller races may not want to go through certification requirements. You can do measurements by GPS, bike odometer, online measuring tools or even measuring wheel.

Please note that runners *will* complain if the distance is not correct and events that are not certified will not be included in any rankings.

Course planning and set-up

In addition to measuring and certifying your course, you must plan for how you will set up the course so that it is clearly marked and safe for participants. A course plan will include not only the certification map, but also indicate signage (distance markers, water stations, emergency services, important course turns, traffic crossings), and how the course will be marked out: with barriers, cones, tape, fencing, etc. The start and finish lines should be clearly marked, and should have their own inset image plan that shows any start corrals, arches, finish chute directions, starter and timers areas and equipment, and washroom facilities. Washroom facilities should be available in a ratio of 1 per 100 participants, spectators, staff and volunteers. For extremely large races, this ratio may be difficult to achieve, but for smaller races it is reasonable.

The start area should remain wide enough for an appropriate length to allow unimpeded flow of participants. That means no tight turns or quick funnels in the first few hundred meters of the race, depending on the number of participants. The more participants, the longer the start area should remain wide.

There should be a lead vehicle, either a car or a bike, to open the course. The course measurer or certifier, if available, can ride in the lead vehicle to ensure the right course is taken. If a bike is

the lead vehicle, the cyclist should be able to keep ahead of the lead runners (not always a given, depending on the relative strength of the bike vs. the runners).

Distance markers should be at least every 5 km, however participants normally expect them every km. Water stations offering drinking water to all participants should be positioned at least every 5km along the course, with more density for longer races and on hot days. A course map, including km markers and water stations and washrooms should be easily viewable and downloadable from the (mobile friendly) event website, and a physical course map, large enough for several people to read at once, should be posted at the race site.

The course should have at least one lane closed to traffic. Many rural races run on the shoulder of the road, and municipal road closures can be expensive, however the safety of the runners is paramount. Without the proper separation and signage (cones, etc.) participants may be at risk.

The event should also have a trail vehicle, again either car or bike, to follow the last participant and close the course.

Race Administration

There are certain administrative and financial requirements in putting on a professional road race.

Budget

A race budget can vary from event to event, depending on the number of expected participants, the race distance, the number of races offered, the municipality, and the services you wish to offer. According to the 2015 Athletics Canada Road Running Survey, the top 5 reasons runners choose one event over another are:

- the location of the race
- the date of the event
- the distances offered
- that it is chip-timed
- the reputation of the organizer.

Among the **least** important reasons were awards, entertainment on course, and having an expo. So you can judge from that where you want to spend your likely limited funds.

Here are some categories on which you are likely to need to spend, and where you can bring in cash.

1. Equipment
 - a. Cones
 - b. Tape
 - c. Cups
 - d. Van/Truck rental
 - e. Storage space rental
 - f. Signs
 - g. Toilets
2. Insurance
3. Pacers
 - a. Pace bunnies
4. Food
 - a. Post-race
 - b. Staff and volunteers
5. Staffing
 - a. Paid staff
 - b. Volunteers
 - i. T-shirts
 - ii. Meals

- iii. Thank you gift/donation to volunteer organization
- 6. Timing
 - a. Timing company
- 7. Permits and policing
 - a. City permits
 - b. Police costs
- 8. Marketing and communications
 - a. Social media
 - b. Advertisements
- 9. Medical
 - a. Emergency services
 - b. Emergency equipment
- 10. Elite runners
 - a. Travel costs
 - b. Accommodations
 - c. Prize money
 - d. Appearance fees
- 11. Course measurement
 - a. Jones counter
 - b. Professional measurer
 - c. Certification
 - i. \$50/course
- 12. Sanctioning
 - a. Varies per province, \$100-\$500
- 13. Awards
 - a. Finisher's medals
 - b. T-shirts
 - c. Age-group awards
 - d. Overall awards
 - e. Draw prizes
- 14. Charity
 - a. A % of revenue
 - b. Collected by participants and sent directly to the charity
- 15. Sponsorship
 - a. Potential to cover costs
 - b. Can be coupled with marketing
- 16. Entry fees
 - a. Figure out your costs and set your entry fee to cover them

Insurance

General liability insurance (of at least \$5 million to satisfy Athletics Canada Approved Event requirements--any event crossing a CN railway can require up to \$10-\$15 million in liability depending on the province) is the first, basic need. Even with insurance, you should have a waiver of participation vetted by your legal expert. Note that in the province of Quebec, a waiver is not valid: participants can not legally waive their right to sue for bodily harm.

City Permits

City permits are a very important part of putting on a road race. If you want to have an event on city streets, the city needs to be a valued partner. At the minimum, filling out the forms on time is vital, however, developing a relationship with the right people at your municipality can go a long way to getting your event approved. Every city is different, so you should research who is the right person to contact for your event, and meet with them in person, to find out what they need. They may be looking for particular aspects of an event in order to give it the go-ahead. Safety and security are a given, however, there may be other elements, charity or not-for-profit status, inclusion of youth, connection with existing community groups, international element choice of date, that will help your event become an important one on the municipal calendar. In this case, you are not only competing against other road races (though you may be) but against events of all kinds: concerts, street festivals, gran fondi, etc.

Police, as well as other emergency services, must be valued partners. The city may require you to use police officers to marshal certain parts of your course. This can be a significant expense, so make sure to have your policing plan in place early, so you know what to expect.

Even if your race is not planned for the road (it may be in a park or on private property), it is still a good idea to contact the local authorities, as they may be able to provide logistical and promotional support. Permits are likely still required for parks in any case and developing a good relationship with political partners is always a good investment.

Provincial sanctioning

The purpose of sanctioning is to communicate to race participants, event partners and the general public that a designated event is being conducted in a fair, safe and responsible manner, in accordance with the rules and standards of the sport based on the nature of event

being offered and where the event is registered as a competitive event, results achieved will be recognized by other national governing bodies for the sport and the IAAF.

When a member branch of Athletics Canada issues a sanction and an organizer accepts a sanction, it is understood that:

- The event organizer will abide by all rules and regulations implicitly or explicitly referenced within the description of the sanction they are receiving;
- The sanctioning body will advertise the event on its calendar of events and provide support to organisers consistent as specified by the sanction;
- The event organiser will advertise the event as a sanctioned event in accordance with the guidelines described within the sanction;

IMPORTANT: Course certification and sanctioning are different. Course certification specifically references the distance and change in elevation of a course while sanctioning refers to the standards and rules which will be upheld during an event. Sanctions must be renewed annually.

For sanctioning information in your province/territory, [contact your local branch](#).

Transfers and Refunds

It is important to have a policy for transfers and refunds. There are a variety of ways to go about these policies, and no one way is recommended above the others: so long as there is a policy in place that is well-communicated to participants. You can allow transfers between events, but no refunds; no transfers, but refunds; refunds and transfers...it's up to you to figure it out. Once you do, make sure the policy is clearly communicated to participants and that whatever you decide is easy for them to do!

Timing and Results (thanks to Maurice Wilson and Mark Nelson for most of the content of this section)

For the purposes of all records (Athletics Canada, IAAF, Masters, age-group) the official time shall be **gun time**. Races should account for this with an appropriate corral system and make participants aware of this rule. For events that wish to be included in the Athletics Canada rankings, and considered for records, the official results may list both gun and chip time, however gun time should be referred to as the official time and results should be listed in order of gun time finish. This requirement is in addition to Athletics Canada course certification.

See the note to IAAF rule 165.24(5):

Note: The official time shall be the time elapsed between the firing of the starting gun and the athlete reaching the finish line. **However, the time elapsed between an athlete crossing the start line and the finish line can be made known to him, but will not be considered an official time.**

In terms of timing and results, the expectation of race organizers, and certainly of participants, is that results will be instantaneous and 100% accurate. Of course, this is the ideal, but often not the case. The reality is that results from large races often take several days to correct: placings, age-groups and even times can be incorrect. Here are some useful tips to help you at least get close to that ideal.

First, we want to ask why mistakes occur. Data entry errors are the most common reason: runners entering the wrong age, or gender, sometimes even spelling their own name wrong. Runners may switch from one race to another, or give their bib to a friend. Runners may cut the course. These errors are sometimes not brought to light until days or weeks after the race.

The phenomenon described above is known as “garbage in, garbage out.” Don’t blame your timing company for these mistakes, as they can only deal with the information they are given. Don’t assume that your timer will know to correct these errors, unless they have been working your event for years, and know everyone’s name by heart!

If you meet with your timing company several months ahead of time, you can set expectations about what they will do for you and when. This can help your planning and your response to questions (or demands) about results.

One solution you can discuss with your timing company is validation of the information. This means you can send each participant a message before the race, asking them to confirm their entry information. Most registration systems should allow you to do this. You may already send an automatic confirmation as soon as the participant enters. You should send another message asking for validation at a later date, as most participants won’t notice a mistake if they just did entry.

Another great tool to help cut down on mistakes is to ask runners to enter an expected finish time. That way, if you see that Runner A expected to finish your marathon in 4:30, but shows up in a record setting 2:00, you can safely assume they have switched events without telling you.

You can also seed the race according to expected finish time, which can increase fairness with respect to age-group awards (which, as mentioned, should be given based on gun time--but regardless whether you choose to award based on chip or gun time, communicating your decision clearly to runners ahead of time will limit, but not eliminate, negative feedback).

Having intermediate timing mats will also allow you to track runners and see where they may have stopped or gone off course. Asking your timing company about their backup system, whether it’s a video or secondary chip or simply a watch, can allow you to plan for post-race results problems.

Having a clear policy of transfers or deferments can help your timing company deal with unexpected results. If changes are made ahead of time through your system, runners will be less likely to do them on their own. It will be less hassle for you and work your timing company to allow changes. Policies for protests should also be in place in advance.

Make sure you let your timing company know well before the race what your needs are for reports: what categories will you use for awards? Do you have a race series for which points must be calculated?

There should be a clear start procedure: the start line can be closed (to avoid extreme latecomers confusing the results) but only if you let your timer know about it. The same is true for the finish line. Let your timer, and of course the participants, know when you will close your finish line.

There should also be some accounting for participants who identify as neither male, nor female. You may rarely come across this situation in your event, but you should have a procedure in place for it, should it occur. It is not difficult for the timing company to create a third gender, though if you can put this option in place for registration, even better. You should also decide, depending on how many such participants you get, if there will be a separate awards category for them.

Participants with disabilities

Participants with disabilities should be accommodated to the best of your ability as an event organizer. If included, wheelchair participants should be afforded an early start, so that they are unimpeded by the larger field. Note that hand-cycles should not be permitted as they are not governed by the sport of athletics: insurance may not cover their inclusion. Consult your provincial branch to find out if this is the case or not.

Guidelines for the inclusion of children in road running events

Athletics Canada has published guidelines for the inclusion of children in road running events. Systematic training and participation in long distance endurance events pose certain risks for individuals who have not yet reached full maturity. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide guidance to organizers of road races on the minimum ages for entry to mass participation races and the recognition of performances. That said, they are guidelines only. You may restrict entry based on age to certain events if you wish (be prepared from pushback from parents and coaches). On the other hand, if you let children participate in your event, you may get pushback from other parents and coaches who view this practice as unsafe.

Overview

It is widely agreed that a progression of maximum distance at younger ages is recommended. Children are not small adults; their anatomy and physiology are developing and not fully mature. Some of the reasons for such recommendations include:

Risk of Overuse Injuries

- Stress fractures are a function of the number of repetitions and amount of applied force per repetition. A child with shorter stride length subjects himself to more repetitions of impact to cover the same distance as an adult.
- Immature articular cartilage is more susceptible to shear force than adult cartilage and predisposes children to osteochondritis dissecans. Injuries to the growth plate from repetitive trauma are possible factors in adult onset arthritis of the hip.
- Children are also prone to injury at apophyses such as the tibial tubercle, resulting in Osgood-Schlatter disease, and the calcaneus, resulting in Sever's disease.
- Asynchrony of bone growth and muscle-tendon elongation. During periods of rapid growth, bone growth occurs first with delayed muscle tendon elongation and resultant decreased flexibility.

Female Athlete Triad

Participation in certain sports predisposes female athletes to developing the female athlete triad. This triad consists of three interrelated conditions: disordered eating, amenorrhea, and osteoporosis, and is directly associated with intense athletic training. Sports which place athletes at higher risk of developing this condition include those in which leanness is believed to improve performance, such as long distance running.

Heat Adaptation and Thermoregulation

- Children adapt less well to exercise in the heat, especially at temperatures above skin temperature.
- At any exercise level, children produce more metabolic heat per kg of body weight (i.e., are less efficient).
- Their larger surface area/body weight ratio permits greater heat absorption from the environment when air temperature exceeds skin temperature. The smaller the child, the greater the potential for heat absorption.
- Children produce less sweat. Thus, the ability for evaporative cooling is lower. This is critical, as evaporation of sweat is the most important means of heat dissipation during exercise, especially under hot conditions.

- Children require longer to acclimatise to a hot climate.
- Hypohydration (lower body water content) has more profound effects on children.
- Children must be trained to drink frequently even when not thirsty.

Context

While a progression in maximum distance as an athlete develops is widely accepted, apart from common consensus that 18 is the recommended minimum age to run a Marathon, there is variation in recommendations of maximum distance for younger ages. General consensus is that 10K and over should not be undertaken until after puberty; recognizing that each individual will enter and exit puberty at a different age and on average girls reach puberty one to two years prior to boys.

To learn more about these differences and how to manage athlete's training consult the Canadian Sport for Life Resource Paper: The role of monitoring growth in Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) available at:

<http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/resources/role-monitoring-growth-ltad>

It is possible that given proper biomechanics and anatomy, a quality training program which progressively increases volume and intensity, in relation to the individual maturity, development as well as cognitive and mental abilities, a young athlete can have a positive experience from participating in distances beyond those recommended; however these individuals are the exception and not the rule and should be managed accordingly by qualified coaches and medical professionals. It is also noted, that the risks associated with such participation increase with the number of events in which a participant undertakes in a given year and the volume of specific training which is associated.

Recommendation

After review of recommendations from other jurisdictions, consideration of the growth and development factors at play and recognition of the most commonly run distances in Canada, the Run Canada Committee recommends the following progression of minimum age to participate in road races.

Age	< 10	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Max Distance	3k	5k	5k	8k	8k	10k	10k	21.1k	21.1k	42.2k

Provincial/Territorial branches may choose include the application of minimum age requirements as a condition for sanctioning. While participation at these recommended distances is endorsed, caution is emphasized in not over-training/over-specialising athletes at a young age. Entry into races should emphasize participation and individual improvement, not performance. It is well

documented that athletes born early in the year have a definite advantage over athletes born later in the year, simply because they can be up to 12 months older than their peers and that athletes of the same age may have significantly different biological ages. Therefore, events are encouraged to reward all athletes equally in these age groups by recognising participation, the achievement of personal best, maintaining consistent splits etc...

For these reasons, provincial/territorial branches do not offer provincial road running championships for younger age groups; do not keep records; do not keep rankings; and do not present annual awards.

References

- The IAAF Medical Manual
(<http://www.iaaf.org/about-iaaf/documents/medical#iaaf-medical-manual>)
- International Marathon Medical Directors Association, Advisory Statement
(<http://aimsworldrunning.org/articles/Children&Marathoning.pdf>)
- Canadian Sport for Life, Long Term Athlete Development
(<http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/>)
- Athletics Canada, Long Term Athlete Development
(<http://www.athletics.ca/page.asp?id=347>)
- Canadian Sport for Life, The Role of Monitoring Growth in LTAD
(<http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/resources/role-monitoring-growth-ltad>)

Hosting Kids' Events

The majority of participants in our events are adults with a focus on health and fitness. What better opportunity than a road race to show a good example to kids, and to give them an opportunity to join the running community as well? Many of your runners will be parents, and in addition to “looking for something to do” letting their kids feel like they are part of the day can increase the positive experience of your event, and start their own journey build physical literacy, fitness and health. Here are some guidelines on how to achieve both of those ends from an organizational perspective.

1. Have a kids coordinator.
 - a. A staff member dedicated to this area will allow all to go smoothly and reduce stress on the operational aspects. Check if your Athletics Canada branch has a Run Jump Throw coordinator who can be a valuable asset to the kids coordinator on your staff.
2. Keep a low barrier to entry.
 - a. Keep prices low or free, depending on your capacity.
 - b. Keep the distance to 1k to 2k, focusing on participation and completion, rather than competition for kids under 12.
3. Recruit in schools and community youth programs
 - a. Contact your local elementary schools through teachers, parents and administrators and partner with their physical education programs. Each school will be different in their needs and interest, so be flexible.
 - b. Promote your event through the community's youth sports network.
 - c. Promote your event through school based running programs where they exist, both competitive and participatory programs.
 - d. Athletics Canada and your provincial branch can help you get in touch with schools and community groups involved in our Run Jump Throw program.
4. Respond promptly to parents/teachers
 - a. This group of may require significant attention. This is why a dedicated kids coordinator is key.
5. Provide as much information as possible ahead of time.
 - a. Establish early the start time, the course, snacks available, other programming.
6. Involve elite athletes in your kids event
 - a. Schedule the kids' race so your elite athletes can be involved to start, pace, or cheer on the race.
7. On race week/weekend/day
 - a. Prepare a welcome package with information about physical literacy, LTAD, and other community youth programs. See Active For Life, below.
8. Post-race
 - a. Make sure the kids are well fed. Provide a variety of options.

- b. Have a unique memento for kids, a medal or a t-shirt is ok, but be creative. Leave them with something they will cherish and remember your event by.
- c. Say “Thank you!” and invite them back.
 - i. Nothing helps more than a “thank you,” the more personal the better, but even an email acknowledgement is helpful.
 - ii. Follow up with teachers, parents, community leaders about how to make your kids event even better next time.

An invitation from our partner, Active For Life:



Active for Life helps Canada raise physically literate kids. At activeforlife.com, parents, educators, and coaches will find fun activities, engaging articles, and free resources to get kids active, healthy and happy.

If you are hosting a kids’ event, looking to increase the number of families involved, supporting a balanced and healthy approach to sport, or seeking to enrich your community engagement and communications plans, Active for Life (AFL) can help.

AFL shares content with partners like Athletics Canada, and that includes Race Directors. Contact Lynn (lynn@activeforlife.com) for to request AFL’s Content Use Guidelines.

Their physical literacy [infographic](#) is a great place to start. At the [Athletics Canada landing page](#) you’ll see a selection of relevant articles or search for topics using the search bar. With over 1000 pieces on the website, there is lots of choice.

Hosting Elite Athletes

Sport is often thought of as secondary to the larger running project of health and community activity, however attention to this aspect can yield gains in the latter areas. The athletes in the front end of the race have great potential to enrich your events, if they are well-treated and encouraged to engage with the community. Here are some guidelines on how to achieve both of those ends.

1. Have an elite coordinator.
 - a. A staff member dedicated to this area will allow all to go smoothly and reduce stress on the operational aspects. Athletics Canada, or in some cases your provincial branch, can be a valuable asset to the elite coordinator, but having someone on staff/on site is vital.
2. Set deadlines for elite applications, but be flexible in their application if you can accommodate.
 - a. This allows athletes to plan their season accordingly. Expect athletes to drop out at any point in the process due to injury or change of race plan.
3. Set clear performance standards for support.
 - a. Athletes should know, as closely as possible, what support they can expect to have based on their performance. With a limited budget, a race organization may not be able to give exact figures until the elite list is set. If this is the case, it should be made clear to athletes during the application process.
4. Recruit Canadian athletes
 - a. It is not necessary to recruit and pay for top international athletes (but if that is your goal, note the section below). There are many fast local, provincial and national level runners that can enhance your event by their presence. Recruit men and women equally. Though you may not end up with an equal number of each in the end, the amount of financial support/number of athletes supported should be equal if possible.
 - b. Athletics Canada and your provincial branch can help you get in touch with Canadian athletes.
5. Respond promptly to athletes
 - a. This group of athletes may require significant attention. This is why an elite coordinator is key. Responding promptly to athlete communications, even if you cannot accommodate a particular request, sends the message that they are valued and being listened to, which will lead them to be more favourable to your engagement requests (see below).
6. Provide as much information as possible to the athletes during the application process
 - a. Hotel location and amenities offered
 - i. Once your hotel rooms are filled, in order to stretch your budget and increase your elite field, recruit local runners to host athletes in their homes. Athletes enjoy “homestays” as it allows them to connect with the

local culture and it also provides someone to show them around. It also connects the local community to the elite athletes and gives them a reason to cheer for them.

- b. Provide space for medical treatment/massage
 - i. Treatment schedule
 - c. Course map
 - d. Bus schedule
 - e. Meal schedule
 - f. Local running trails/routes
 - g. This information may be preliminary at first. In that case, have the information on your website and update when necessary. When athletes arrive they should receive all this information in hard copy. The online information should be updated and can be used for reference, but athletes will appreciate a hard copy. Post this information in the hotel/at the course as well.
7. Gather as much information as you can about the athletes
- a. Not only their personal bests and hometowns, but where they went to school, what their job is (if they are not a full-time runner), information about their family, interesting stories. Etc. The goal here is to help create a narrative about these athletes as relatable people.
 - b. Add fields for social media handles for the athletes to fill in to be added to bibs
8. Confirm your athletes
- a. Communicate with the athletes you are accepting into the race with support and confirm their participation at a certain time. If you can confirm upon receipt and review of each application that is good, or you may want to confirm everyone at the same time. If the latter, then make sure athletes are aware of the timeline. The earlier you can confirm with the athletes, the better for the athletes.
9. Promote the athletes
- a. When your elite list is settled, or at a certain time before the race, promote your confirmed athletes. Use the information you have gathered to generate interest both in the competition to come, and their personal stories.
 - b. Host a dinner or reception with the athletes and media
 - c. Feature confirmed athletes in the build up in the social media schedule
 - d. Have a live social media Q and A with high profile athletes and any record attempts, etc. in the build up to event
10. Involve the athletes in your event
- a. Make clear to athletes that the support from the race (be it free entry, accommodations and travel support or appearance fee) is in exchange for participation in community events.
 - b. Make sure you have events planned which will make good use of the athletes, for example:
 - i. Leading your kids' run (depending on the schedule: it shouldn't conflict with the race they are about to run)

- ii. Meet and greet at Expo (encourage them to ask participants about their stories, and to find common ground. “that’s my favourite gel flavor, too” or “I also like to run in that shoe” or “it IS hard to wake up early to train.”)
- iii. Talk or presentation (about training, their story, nutrition tips, other)
- iv. Leading training runs (if the athlete is local or available in the weeks and months before the race).
- v. Help with packet pick up (this may not be popular if it is the day before the race, but might be considered if the job is not too strenuous and they can sit down).
- vi. Press conferences/media events (this should be done immediately after the elite briefing in the same venue). Q&A with athletes and media is helpful.

11. On race week/weekend/day

- a. Prepare a welcome package that updates all the information from the application process, as well as any new information, and a gift of local flavour.
- b. Have a room in the host hotel where athletes can go to socialize with food and drink and wifi.
- c. Schedule an elite/VIP dinner.
 - i. Timing should be open, and a variety of food (vegetarian, vegan, gluten free) available for athletes.
 - ii. Invite homestay families and sponsors to meet athletes.
- d. Schedule the technical meeting in a convenient location (race hotel or race site or expo) and provide transportation for athletes to get there and back if necessary.
 - i. Provide a course tour or course explanation as part of the technical meeting
 - ii. Explain the doping procedures
 - iii. Explain awards procedures, reminding athletes of prize money available and any requirements.
 - iv. Collect bottles for tables if providing that service at the elite briefing
 - v. Explain what nutrition is available on the course
- e. Make sure the athletes are well fed. Provide a variety of options.
- f. Coordinate airport pick up
 - i. This is a branding/sponsorship opportunity: sponsor for airport transport, as well as shuttles from hotel to race site for briefing, course tour and race start/finish.

12. Post-race

- a. Make sure athletes get to the airport for their flights home
- b. Make sure the hotel offers late check-out if needed
- c. Follow up with a survey to provide athletes with the opportunity to give feedback on your event.
- d. Massage available in the elite lounge for after
- e. Pay prize money promptly!

- i. CCES testing can take 4-6 weeks. Make sure the athletes understand this delay. Make sure you have the correct mailing address
 - f. Say "Thank you!" and invite them back.
 - i. Nothing helps more than a "thank you," the more personal the better, but even an email acknowledgement is helpful.
 - ii. Elite athletes like to plan in advance, but also stay flexible. Offer them the opportunity to "pencil in" next year's race as early as possible.
- 13. Doping Control
 - a. Doping control is important to the integrity of the sport, and the legitimacy of races welcoming high level athletes, domestic or international.
 - b. The costs are around \$600 per test.
 - c. A race may test any number of athletes. In Canadian championships, testing is required, and the cost is covered by Athletics Canada's agreement with CCES.
 - d. Contact CCES for more details.
 - e. [CCES Event Testing Memo](#)
- 14. Recruiting International Athletes
 - a. There are two categories of international athletes: those that need VISAs and those that don't.
 - i. For those that don't, the process is much easier and can be the same as that used for Canadian athletes.
 - ii. For those that need VISAs:
 - 1. You will need to provide an invitation letter. The letter should contain information about what the race (date, location), what the organization is providing (travel, accommodation, entry, etc) and who you are inviting (try adding details like passport number that make it easy for it to be matched to the applicant).
 - 2. Visit the <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/index.asp> page. Consider applying as a "Special Event" if you intend to invite a number of international athletes.
 - 3. Work with approved IAAF agents whenever possible. You will get a number of requests from individual athletes but most of those will likely not pan out (the athletes are out of shape, are not top athletes but simply trying to get a VISA, will simply not show up).
 - 4. Keep track of which agents are dependable. There are a very few that will try the bait and switch: present you with a great athlete and mediocre athlete, but at a later date withdraw the top athlete.
 - 5. Be prepared to wire transfer money to the agents/athletes after the event. In a lot of countries, the athletes won't be able to cash Canadian cheques or the cheques are held a prohibitively long time (even the US requires about 1-2months for a Cdn \$ cheque to clear).

Conclusion

A good race director is always learning. No matter how many years of experience you have, the event can always be improved. The suggestions and best practices listed here are a guide. They should be applied to the particular circumstances of your event, in your city, in your region, in your province.

Thanks to MEC, Active For Life, Canada Running Series, Calgary Marathon, Run Ottawa, The Run Canada Committee, Run New Brunswick, Race Roster and BC Athletics for their contributions in building this guide.

This is a living document, and will be updated periodically with new information and changes in standard practice. If you have suggestions to add to this living document, or seek further advice, help or details about putting on a road race, please contact Athletics Canada via our Road Running Coordinator.

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