

What is SIAC/Air+?

SIAC is a more advanced version of standard Sportident sticks. It stands for Sportident Active Card and has the following advantages over the more traditional SI sticks:

- you don't have to physically punch the control; just get to within 30cm of it.
- your stick flashes and beeps as well as the control to confirm that you have "punched".
- Punching response is twice as fast.
- more punches can be recorded on the stick.

Air+ refers to the system which allows SIAC sticks to be used in this contactless mode. Simplistically, this means programming the SI controls in a different way. However, there are also often extra control types set up to enhance the overall experience as is the case at this Carnival.

Is it fair having both SIAC and non-SIAC sticks at the same event?

Strictly speaking, if you have a SIAC stick you will have an advantage compared to an SI 8 stick as you don't have to stop and physically punch. However, the courses have been arranged so that this advantage is no more than a few seconds per control. Also note, however, that this extra advantage also applies to other technology used for orienteering. For example:

- SI 10 sticks record punches twice as fast and ComCard combined stick/compasses just need to be placed on top of the control; these also confer an advantage.
- Thumb compasses compared to regular compasses can give an advantage.
- different orienteering shoes and clothing can give an advantage.

So the argument on fairness is really just one of degree. If we want the sport to be truly fair, all the equipment should be prescribed or at least available to be used. This Carnival has ensured that SIAC sticks are available for all who wish to use them, either through personal purchase or hire.

Why does my SIAC stick flash and beep? Specifically, 3 rounds of 3 beeps.

This is a confirmation signal that you have punched the SI control; the SI control will also flash and beep as normal. Many users hold the stick up beside their ear to check that it is really their stick which is beeping! Your SIAC stick should produce this confirmation from every control EXCEPT for the CLEAR control; the reason for this is that subsequent punches will not be registered while your stick is beeping which can cause problems for the usual CLEAR then CHECK punch that many competitors do. So, the CLEAR control has been specifically programmed to prevent this.

How should I wear my SIAC stick?

Many people wear it like a normal SIAC stick but upside down (with the pointer pointing into the palm of the hand). In this way, they can "wave" their hand over the control and then hold it up to their ear to hear the confirmation beeps.

What is that SIAC battery test control in the Assembly area for?

SIAC sticks have a battery within them. By physically punching this control you should receive a normal confirmation beep from the control station. If you don't then talk to an official about getting a replacement; without a working battery, you will still be able to use the stick but may need to physically punch each control as you would for the more traditional SI sticks. You may also not receive confirmation flashes or beeps from your SI stick.

What is the SIAC Test Control for?

After you have Cleared and Checked your SIAC stick (as you would for any SI Stick), your SIAC radio should be turned on (Actually the Check control does this). This needs to be on if you want to be able to register your punch by waving at the control. If your radio isn't on, you will not hear a confirmation beep/flash from your stick and you will need to physically punch the control. To confirm that this is the case, you should "wave" your stick within 30cm of the SIAC Test Control

and this should give you the confirmation beep/flash from your stick. This control does not get recorded on your stick nor does it initiate a "Start" of your run; it is just a check that the radio is on and working. Start Officials should direct you here.

Why do I have to stay away from the Finish area while on course or after entering the Start gates?

When you enter the start gates, an official will ask you to punch a Clear control. This is to record that you are running the course so we know who is out there for safety reasons. The Clear Control also turns on your SIAC radio so you can "wave" rather than physically punch. In order to conserve battery, the Finish control also turns off the SIAC radio. Therefore, if you run through (or too close to the Finish area after you have Checked, you risk having your radio turned off. You will still be able to physically punch controls and the Finish, but you won't be able to register the punch with a "wave".

Can I register a punch at every control with just a wave?

No. Every control on the course should be registered with just a wave. However, controls at the Start and Finish are specifically programmed not to do this to avoid confusion between multiple competitors. Specifically, the following controls must be physically punched:

- SIAC battery test control must be physically punched (as your SIAC radio should be off).
- Clear and Check must be physically punched.
- If you are a late starter (or are directed to use a punching Start by the starting official), the Start control must be physically punched.

What do I do at the Finish?

The Finish controls are very specific. For SIAC sticks you only need to cross the Finish line as there are special controls that will register when you cross the line. For those not using SIAC sticks, there will be standard Finish Controls at each end of the "Finish Line"; these controls can be physically punched by any SI stick (including SIACs). In practice, you would only do this if the radio on your SIAC stick wasn't functioning.

What can go wrong and what do I do if it does?

- The most likely scenario here is that you "wave" at a control on course but do not get a confirmation flash/beep from your stick. In this case, you should physically punch your stick. If you do this and don't get the confirmation flash/beep from either your stick nor from the SI control, then you should use the backup manual punch. It could be any of the following problems:
 - your SIAC radio is off (either it wasn't turned on at the Start, you went too close to the Finish area after Clear/Check (this turns off your SIAC radio) or your SIAC radio has malfunctioned.
 - the SI control has not been correctly programmed in Air+ mode.
 - the SI control has failed (e.g. run out of battery).

If you follow the above procedure, all these scenarios should be catered for.