



Orienteering ACT (OACT) Return to Play Plan in a COVID-safe Environment

1 INTRODUCTION

Orienteering is a navigation sport in which individual participants use a map and compass to find their way around a set course in the landscape. Equipment is limited to individual timing devices (SI sticks) which are inserted into/waved over fixed readers (SI units) attached to control flags at fixed locations in the field. SI sticks can be read by computer download at the Finish.

The sport involves no physical contact between participants and little by way of mass gathering or spectators. Compared to team and contact sports, orienteering is a relatively low risk environment for virus transmission.

However, we take the safety of our participants and all those involved in organising and delivering competitions and events very seriously. We will continue providing opportunities for community orienteering with appropriate measures when safe to do so, while monitoring the situation and making adjustments as required.

Due to the rapidly changing situation, these guidelines will continue to be updated, as new information is made available. OACT will update the local orienteering community on any new changes.

This plan supersedes the OACT Coronavirus (COVID 19) Policy dated 17th March 2020.

2 GENERAL

With the Framework in this Return to Play Plan the assumption is that orienteering as a competitive community sport can fully resume at COVID-19 Preventive Measures Stage 3 with the condition that outdoor gatherings are restricted to <100 people¹. Refer, Australian Government Health Limits on Public Gatherings for COVID-19. [Link](#)

Rule #1: Stay at home if:

- you are unwell, even if you only have very mild symptoms
- you have been in close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 until the 14 days isolation period is over
- you have travelled overseas in the past 14 days, or
- you are awaiting a COVID-19 test result.

¹ On 26 May 2020 the ACT Government flagged Stage 3 for consideration by mid July 2020.

Rule # 2: Follow the physical distance rule of minimum 1.5 metres and 4m² area per person.

Rule # 3: Minimise the time at the training or event.

“Get in, complete your course, then leave.”

These Rules apply to all participants, organisers and spectators.

Be patient, courteous and respectful of others at all times. Please consider how your actions may appear in the eyes of your fellow orienteers, landowners or members of the public.

3 HYGIENE

- Participants are to wash/sanitise their hands thoroughly before and after getting to the training or event.
- Hand sanitiser will be provided at the assembly area. However, participants are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitisers as well.
- Neither water nor food will be provided. Participants are to bring their own water bottles or hydration vests as water will not be provided on courses.
- No sharing of water bottles.
- No spitting.
- The SI-units will be cleaned prior to and after training or the event.
- SIAC (Air) is highly recommended for all competitors to provide contact-less control punching.

4 PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- A physical distance of at least 1.5 metres from people is to be kept.
- 4m² area per person is to be kept to ensure sufficient physical distancing between participants. The 4m² condition is most relevant for orienteering in arranging the computer tent.
- Avoid physical contact at all times.
- “Get in, complete your course, then leave.” Minimise your time at the training or event to keep the concurrent number of people to a minimum at all times, especially at assembly, start and finish areas.

Potential high density times are upon arrival and departure as well as at the assembly area and around Start and Finish. Actions around these are covered in more detail later in this plan.

Parents or other family members from the same household are allowed to “shadow” their child/children around the course, however the physical distance must be kept to other participants and the organisers.

5 ORIENTEERING SPECIFIC CONDITIONS GENERAL

These conditions apply to all events, unless noted as exemptions and special conditions for certain types of events, which are listed in this document.

Pre-entry and pre-paid events

- Participants must pre-enter and pre-pay before an event. Exceptions will apply for Newcomers.
- Saturday Metro series Season Passes with pre-entry for all events will be available for OACT members. Members are encouraged to take up this option.
- No handling of cash will occur at the event.
- Free SI-hire will be available, limited to Newcomers and those who have not yet had an opportunity to purchase a SI stick. This is to reduce the risks associated with manual handling of equipment by organisers as well as participants.
- There will be a maximum number of <100 people at any given time during the events. The number of people includes participants, organisers and spectators. For events likely to attract greater than 100 people, organisers can either limit the number of entries, allocate Start times, or hold separate events each with a limit of <100 on the same date at the same location, separated by time.

Example: a Saturday Metro event could be split into two events each with a capping of <100: Event A has time window 9.30am – 11.00am; Event B has time 11.30am – 1.00pm.

- Depending on the event and likely number of participants, some events could be members only.
- It is important that each individual clears and checks their SI stick before their run, and punches the Start unit. This will ensure that all participants are accounted for at the end of the event.
- SI sticks are not to be shared.

Assembly area

- To avoid unintentional gatherings, participants and spectators must not linger before and after their course.
- There will no key box. Each participant is to manage their own car key.
Example: bring a bag with your belongings and have your keys inside your bag.

Start

- The start area will be organised to ensure physical distancing.
- Respect others and keep the physical distancing, including during clear and check.
- Maps will be available at the start. Arrangements could include volunteers with gloves handing maps to competitors, or the volunteer placing the map on the table for the competitor to pick up. If it can be managed safely within the guidelines for social distancing and hygiene, other arrangements for distributing maps are allowed.
- Participants are to pick up their map while keeping the physical distancing.
- Separately printed Control Descriptions will not be provided, with the possible exception for ACT League events. If provided, the event organiser must arrange for hygienic safe handling. For all events, the Control Descriptions will be printed on the maps.
- Avoid gatherings around the area.
- When approaching the start, be ready for an immediate exit.

- If multiple people get to the start at the same time, spread out as much as possible and wait for your turn.
- Remember to clear your SI before starting.
- The Clear and Check units will be located near the start.
- The Check is needed to turn the SIAC sticks on.
- The Start and Finish are to be located at least 50 metres apart, preferably near the assembly area, but not at the assembly area itself.

Around controls

- Respect each other. When approaching a control make sure to give time and space to earlier runners.
- This might mean a slightly longer time for individual runners, but this a side effect that everyone needs to accept.
- The use of SIAC (SI Air) sticks is highly recommended to maximise the distancing around controls and to provide contact-less control punching.

Finish and Download area

- The download area will be organised to ensure physical distancing.
- Physical distance of minimum 1.5 metres must be respected.
- To further protect the computer operator and fellow runners, competitors should avoid approaching the download area while still breathing heavily following physical exertion on course.
- The distance between computer and SI reader should be maximised—the full length of the cables should be used.
- Print-outs or split-times will only be given at the event if the printer can produce the print-out such that only the individual finisher touches the paper and does not need to touch the printer or table
- Participants should not return their maps after completing their course.
- No other results will be available at the finish. The results will be available online on Eventor and Winsplits after the event.

Coaching

Coaching may occur provided social distancing of 1.5 metres is kept. This includes small group training and programs such as Map Mates.

6 ORIENTEERING SPECIFIC CONDITIONS – EXEMPTIONS AND SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Mountain Bike Orienteering (MTBO)

The same general rules for hygiene and physical distancing apply to MTBO. The following Exemptions and Special Conditions apply to MTBO:

- Rented MTBO boards will be sanitised before and after use.
- Any rented equipment can only be shared between participants from the same household.

Wednesday Midday Events

The same general rules for hygiene and physical distancing apply to Wednesday Midday Events.

These events have low entry numbers and start times are typically well spaced. The following Exemptions and Special Conditions apply to the Wednesday Midday Events:

- Wednesday Midday series Season Passes will be available along with pre-entry registration and payment.
- For participants without a Wednesday Midday series Season Pass, Enter-on-the-Day is also available with exact money (cash only) payment. Registration is at the Assembly Area.
- No punch cards will be used. It will be honesty based.
- Competitors are to state their name, contact number, car registration and start time to the event organiser.
- Maps will be pre-printed.

Street Orienteering (Street-O)

Street-O is suspended for the usual winter break until September.

On recommencement, the same general rules for hygiene and physical distancing will apply to Street-O.

This Plan will be updated closer to the end August with any Exemptions and Special Conditions.

In the meantime, participants may access virtual Street-O courses in their own time, using MapRun technology and printing hard copy maps at home.

Ski Orienteering (Ski-O)

The same general rules for hygiene and physical distancing will apply to Ski-O.

If any Exemptions and Special Conditions need to apply, this Plan will be updated closer to the date of a Ski-O event.

7 COMMUNICATIONS

- All participants need to understand and comply with these rules.
- A confirmation of “read, understood and agree” may be required at the online registration.
- Information about these rules will be provided in the weekly OACT ebulletin.
- The Return to Play Plan will be available on the OACT website.
- There will be signs at the event to remind people of the distancing rules.

Volunteers

- Volunteers will be given specific briefing to ensure the distancing rules.
- Volunteers will be given briefing on how to practice good hygiene and make it easy for volunteers and attendees to practice good hygiene.
- Volunteers will also be provided with protective equipment, disinfectant etc, where applicable.

Course setters

- Course setters should take into consideration that the SI-units need to be securely mounted to avoid physical touching when punching at the controls.
- Options to consider are to choose control locations where a stand can be used, and/or limit the number of controls used for an event.

- The course setters should position the control/SI-unit to allow a through flow of runners, as opposed to a tight entry/exit on the same path.
- Course setters and control collectors are to be provided with protective equipment, such as gloves or hand sanitiser, to be used when placing and collecting controls.

Organisers

- Organisers must ensure compliance with the Return to Play rules.
- Organisers are to brief the volunteers on the rules and provide adequate equipment, such as gloves, hand sanitisers.
- Organisers are responsible for putting up 1.5 metre distance reminder signs at the parking and assembly areas.

Computer operator

- The main role of the computer operator at the event will be to set up the equipment and watch downloads for any irregularities.
- Access to the computer will be restricted.
- Results will be posted on Eventor and Winsplits after the events.

8 COMPLIANCE

The event Organiser is responsible for ensuring compliance with the OACT Return to Play Plan. Weekly review against current conditions by the OACT Office to identify and raise via email to the Board any emerging issues for out of session consideration.

9 PERIODIC REVIEWS AND MONITORING

To be reviewed by the OACT Board every 6 weeks or as conditions change.

10 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

- OACT is to maintain, for at least one month after the event, a list of all participants, organisers and volunteers present at the event. The list is to contain all names with contact details.
- If a participant or volunteer tests positive for COVID-19 the person, or someone related to the person, must inform the OACT Office as soon as possible.
- OACT will then provide the above list to the relevant Health Authorities to enable contact tracing.
- In case of an accident or injury, there is a first aid kit available at the assembly area. Gloves are provided and are to be used. Good hygiene is a must when treating an injury. If nobody from the same household is able to adequately assist or treat the injured, someone else may give first aid when needed while keeping the physical contact to a minimum, determined by the circumstances.

11 RESOURCES

1. ACT Government Health COVID-19 Website [Link](#)
2. ACT Government Return to social sport and recreation factsheet (13 May 2020) [Link](#)
3. AIS Framework for Rebooting Sport (May 2020) [Link](#)
4. Australian Government Health COVIDSafe app [Link](#)

5. Australian Government Health Good Hygiene For Coronavirus [Link](#)
6. Australian Government Health Limits On Public Gatherings For COVID-19 [Link](#)
7. Australian Government Health Social Distancing For Coronavirus [Link](#)
8. Australian Government Health What You Need To Know About COVID-19 [Link](#)
9. [ACT Government FAQs Link](#)

12 QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, please contact the OACT Office,
office@act.orienteeing.asn.au