

ORGANISING AN ORIENTEERING EVENT – A GUIDE

These guidelines are applicable to any orienteering event where electronic timing is used, from State Series to local club events such as MelbushO or Sprint Into Spring. Three keys to running a successful event are:

- Preparation – check and double check everything
- Promotion – tell people about your event
- Proximity – make life easier by having everything as close together as practicable

Organising an orienteering event involves liaising and coordinating. If you've volunteered to be the Organiser, then you should NOT undertake any other major roles. These include course setting, controlling, registration, first aid, start, SI/finish, or parking. You will need a good understanding of all of the above, and will need to ensure that in-forest aspects are under control, but on the day you need to be prepared to be anywhere at any time, and you cannot commit yourself to any one job. It is essential that you have volunteers to fill each of these roles.

The Organisers Toolkit on the Orienteering Victoria website contains a range of documents that will assist you to organise your event successfully, including insurance certificates, emergency response plan templates and other safety information, templates such as entry registration forms, etc. The Toolkit also provides samples to follow.

www.vicorienteering.asn.au/admin/organising

QUICK REFERENCE CHECKLIST

Each of these aspects is discussed in detail on the following pages.

The organiser of an event is responsible for the "out of forest" aspects. These include the following.

Three-six months prior:

- Arrange the map, course setter, controller and date of the event
- Visit the site with the course setter, and determine the location for parking, assembly, start and finish
- Obtain permission from landowners
- Set up the event on the Eventor calendar
- Set a budget and determine entry fees
- Order stock of Pretex waterproof paper for map printing
- Decide which type of finish and results system to use, and book OV's SI equipment if needed

One month prior:

- Open entries and publicise the event
- Hire toilets if needed, and check club equipment
- Appoint key volunteers and prepare a roster
- Check that the course setter, controller, and SI co-ordinator are working together on technical aspects
- Prepare a signage plan and ensure you have sufficient and appropriate

One week prior:

- Close entries, download from Eventor, and set up the event file with entry data
- Prepare registration lists and blank forms
- Ensure that the appropriate equipment (including SI) is neatly packed and labelled, and will be brought to the event
- Purchase stationery and consumables
- Ensure map printing is organised

Day before/On the day:

- Oversee setup of the assembly area, start and finish, signage, water, toilets, first aid
- Brief volunteers so they understand all processes
- Ensure newcomers and novices are looked after
- Be the initial point of contact for any emergency response
- Oversee pickup and return of gear
- Ensure results are uploaded to Eventor

Immediately afterward:

- Ensure splits are uploaded to Winsplits and write a report for the appropriate website
- Reconcile takings, pay levies and invoices

DETAILED GUIDELINES

*3-6 months prior*Map, course setter, controller, and date

- The Bush Subcommittee prepares the annual fixture, and your club will choose or be allocated a date, and select a suitable map. The BSC will also advise the event format, eg long or middle distance, determined by complexity of the terrain and size of the map.
- If you have not organised a Controller, the BSC can help find someone qualified and available.
- Although you can leave the in-forest details to your course setter and controller, liaise with them regularly to ensure all is progressing as it should.

Site visit/assembly area

Once the course setter has roughed out the area they want to use, visit the site with them to select the assembly area. Their considerations will include access to tracks for novice courses, and to particular terrain for hard courses. Your job is to ensure that competitors have a great overall experience, which includes convenience of parking, registration, start and finish. Keeping your assembly area compact ensures you can coordinate all aspects of the event much more easily. It also provides a more social pre- and post-event atmosphere for competitors.

- Use good all-weather access roads/tracks (not everyone has a 4WD), with parking for 80-100 vehicles, and two portable toilets.
- Have sufficient space for tents/shelters, including rego, finish, catering, O-shop and club tents, and priority parking for key volunteers who are carrying equipment.
- All of the above should ideally be close together; but Registration and Finish (Download) should ALWAYS be adjacent, and can operate successfully out of the same tent or building. These two functions are closely aligned and need to liaise constantly throughout the day. Separating them is an unnecessary headache for everyone. Refer to Information Flow Chart.
- Placing the Start close to the assembly area maximises convenience and minimises effort, but may not always be possible due to terrain constraints.
- Use bunting or tape to funnel competitors where you need them to go (eg from the finish punch to the download table), and to prevent them entering work areas or going out of bounds. Tired competitors are not good at following signs or finding their own way without guidance!
- Competitor safety may dictate the finish punch being remote from the Finish/Download (eg across a creek or fence). If so, assign a marshal to direct competitors, and provide a clearly marked route
- Make your Results display a focal point of the assembly area to encourage post-event socialising.
- Have a clearly signed area for newcomers, near (but not at) Registration.
- Sketch a plan of the assembly area and take photos.

- Take the opportunity to make careful note of driving instructions / distances / turns, so that you can include these with the event information that you'll be putting onto Eventor.

Landowner Permission

As soon as you have chosen an assembly area, obtain permission from the appropriate landowner, eg Parks Victoria, Dept of Primary Industries, local Council etc. Most organisations require completion of a standard form, along with a copy of the Orienteering Australia Public Liability Insurance certificate (download from the Organisers Toolkit), and an Emergency Response plan (see template and sample on the Toolkit). Agree on any fees at this stage – these are often highly negotiable, especially if the landowner is made aware that orienteering is a not for profit activity, and that no fee is being charged for spectators.

Event Calendar

All Orienteering Victoria events are listed on the [Eventor calendar](#). Your club's Eventor administrator will create the event, and should provide you with event-specific administration rights so you can add or modify event information as needed. If your event is part of a series such as MelbushO or Sprint Into Spring, the series organiser will have already done most or all of this for you.

Budget

Clubs are responsible for setting entry fees, and there is a Guideline for Entry Fees in the Toolkit. The following costs should be allowed for:

- OV levies – see the current Fees and Levies document in the Toolkit
- Paypal fees if prepayment is set up – 3% of entries
- Toilet hire – allow approx. \$2 per competitor (you can hire 2 towable portaloos for around \$250 for a weekend from various hire outlets)
- Map printing – allow approx. \$1 per map for Pretex waterproof paper. Allow plenty of extra maps for EODs, and for putting out and collecting controls
- Miscellaneous expenses – toilet paper, soap, stationery etc
- Volunteer reimbursements for petrol/accommodation/meals, and/or free or discounted entry
- Any land use fees

Typically your expenses will be approx. \$10 per competitor for a State Series, and \$4-5 for club events. This does not include any mapping costs or special purchases of equipment. Check entry fees for similar events as a further guide.

Maps

If using Pretex paper (recommended to save map bagging), place an order with Jim Russell, Ken Dowling or Warwick Davis as early as possible so they can arrange to have stock, and make sure they are available to print the maps in the 2-3 days before the event.

Finish and results/SI coordination

Sportident and associated event software such as OE, OR, O-Lynx and SIME, allow a range of possibilities for results management, from the very complex to the very simple, and anything in between. Each system has its pros and cons, and your choice should be made carefully. It may be determined for you if your event is part of a series. Your club's SI expert (every club must have one!) should be familiar with the options, and will hopefully have attended a Sportident Level 2 workshop. Refer to the Sportident page at <http://www.vicorienteering.asn.au/admin/organising/si/>, or contact [Ian Dodd](#).

Discuss equipment requirements with your SI coordinator, and book any required Orienteering Victoria-owned SI equipment by emailing ovsi@inet.net.au.

Bookings are shown at http://www.vicorienteering.asn.au/admin/organising/si_bookings/

Your SI coordinator also needs to liaise with the course setter and controller to ensure they are using the correct sequence of control numbers – ie, those assigned to your club's or the OV SI units (Ian Dodd can advise). Numbers on all Victorian control units are pre-allocated and must NOT be altered or removed.

1 month prior

Publicity:

- If your event is pre-entry, open entries on Eventor. Choose a closing date that allows time to download entries into your event file, order maps, and print registration lists (eg 3-5 days prior).
- Start with a single base entry fee for an adult casual (non OV) member, then use the Services function to create discounts for OV members, OV junior members, non OV juniors, and life members. Add a service for SI stick hire. Test by entering yourself and/or other club members.
- Upload an Information flyer (pdf) using the Documents function, containing driving directions, terrain notes, course lengths and any other notes (eg string course, training activity, catering arrangements etc). See sample in the Toolkit.
- TELL EVERYONE! Place ads in the weekly O-News bulletin, and news items on the OV website (every club should have someone with edit access who can post a news story). Hand out flyers at other events.
- Make sure you publicise the entry closing date. The more pre-entries you receive, the easier your registration process will be on the day, and the more accurate your map printing predictions.
- Change the wording to keep your ads and stories fresh and up to date. Include information about acceptance of late entries and EODs, and any conditions (extra fees, map choice) or special instructions.
- Use Eventor's Communication function to directly advise pre-entered competitors of any last minute information, changes etc.

Toilets and equipment

If no toilets available, you will need to hire one portable toilet per 80 competitors. Plan to fill the tanks with water, and provide toilet paper, hand soap, paper towel, rubbish bags, disinfectant, drinking water and cups. If toilets are available, still bring supplies – don't rely on them being there.

Equipment – make an equipment list and obtain anything you need (purchase, or borrow from another club). Check existing equipment is in good repair. If using the SI trailer or other OV gear, contact the last person who used it to ensure there were no problems, and/or contact Ian Dodd. It is often a good idea to check the trailer at the event prior to yours. More information about the SI trailer is at http://www.vicorienteering.asn.au/admin/organising/si_bookings/

Signage

Prepare a signage plan. If your club does not have sufficient signage, purchase some from the [Orienteering Victoria office](#).

- “Orienteering turnoff (x) m ahead” warning (large white/red) signs – designed to warn and slow high speed traffic before they turn off a busy road (NOT for minor approach roads where other traffic is negligible and already travelling slowly)
- “Runners on road” large yellow/black signs – place on any approach roads where competitors are likely to be crossing
- “Orienteering” directional signs – place at intersections on approach roads, or as occasional confirmation/reassurance on long straight stretches
- “Orienteering” parking signs – use to direct competitors as they reach the parking area

Volunteers

- Infrastructure – two people handy with tools who can erect tents, finish chutes and signs, and take care of running repairs
- Parking – two people at any one time, wearing hi-vis vests; 2-way radios are useful
- Registration – two people during the busiest time (30-45 mins prior to first Start, to 30 mins prior to last Start), then one person.
- Start – two people at any one time, preferably in two shifts across the Start window; one at pre-start to collect start tickets, and keep competitors in order; the other (the Starter) to ensure correct maps are taken, and provide last minute instructions.
- SI/Finish/Results – two people at any one time, in shifts from Registration opening time until course closure.
- Newcomers – allocate an experienced club member to look after newcomers and novices, who can help them with registration, course selection, start procedure and any coaching they need.

- First aid – allocate a qualified club member as the first aider. For State Series, the OV First Aid kit will be brought by Peter and Ilze Yeates, but they will not administer first aid. For MelbushO, Ruth Goddard will provide the first aid kit to each organising club. For other club events, ensure your club has a first aid kit available.

Prepare a volunteer roster and send it to volunteers, together with any instructions for them to read beforehand.

One Week Prior - this is arguably the most important phase leading up to the event. Time and care taken here can save many headaches on the day.

Event File and Registration List

As soon as pre-entries close, you or the SI coordinator need to:

- Export clubs and entries from Eventor into the event file (simple process taking only a few minutes). Use the event-specific IOF XML version 2.0.3 export option – if you use the version 3.0 option, any competitors who are not members of a club or association will not export, and you will have to add them manually to the event file
- Obtain the final Condes file from the course setter, and import courses (make sure the Controller has signed off on this)
- Manually associate classes (from Eventor) and courses (from Condes) - required even if courses and classes are the same
- Manually assign SI hire sticks if requested – check the list of available SI hire sticks, enter the numbers into the event file and mark as a Rental; print a list of the assigned hire sticks (or if you have the sticks, put them in an envelope with the competitor's name)
- Export an Entries report from the event file, into a spreadsheet. Sort by competitor surname, and include the following columns: Surname / First Name / Club / SI no / SI hire / Class / Course. This is your Pre-entry list for use at Registration.
- If your event has prepayment, the OV Treasurer will forward a payment spreadsheet with details, which allows you to check for any incorrect payments (or you can look at the Payments section of Eventor yourself). Annotate the Pre-entry list with any payment comments (eg competitor owes ... or competitor to receive refund ...). You might want to contact any competitors who have paid incorrectly, or not at all.
- Ask the [OV Membership Secretary](#) to forward a current list of members, and use this to check that everyone who claimed a membership discount is in fact paid up. Make a list of members who did not claim the membership discount, and offer them a refund at Registration.
- Leave a blank column where competitor car rego and/or mobile phone can be noted on the day at Registration.

- Make a printed copy of the pre-entry list for use on the day.
- Other forms – you will need Enter on the Day (EOD) forms, Changes forms and Start Tickets (samples in toolkit). Refer to the Registration procedure.

Equipment, stationery and consumables

Ensure all equipment is neatly packed (eg in large plastic, labelled tubs) and that you have plenty of stationery and consumables including pens, scissors, tape, rubbish bags, paper towel etc. Ensure water and cups are brought to the site, for use on courses and at the assembly area/toilets.

Map printing

- Check that the course setter has been told how many maps per course to print, and that the order has been placed with the printer
- Ensure there are some blank maps, and some “all controls” maps for control collection
- Order 30-40 spare maps (a few for each course) for EODs. Make a list of how many spare maps are available on each course so that Registration can keep track
- The course setter also needs to print and cut up loose control descriptions for competitors, in the same quantities as the maps

Event handout

Similar to the Information flyer prepared for Eventor, but contains safety information and any last minute instructions/changes to map or course information. Make sure you have sufficient copies to have at Registration or hand out at Parking on the day.

Day prior/On the day

Setup

Controls will be positioned the day before the event. You can also do some of the assembly setup, eg taping the finish chute, setting out a string course, clearing areas for tents etc – how much will depend on how secure your area is (eg is someone on site overnight). Otherwise you should be able to comfortably set up on the morning – allow 1.5-2 hours before the first Start.

Volunteer briefing

This important task is often overlooked in the rush to have things up and running; however it is vital to make time to properly brief volunteers so that they are confident in their job. In turn, this will enable the organiser to focus their attention where needed.

Ask your volunteers to arrive in plenty of time to receive their briefing. Be clear about who has been allocated which tasks and when. Break them into small groups according to task, and give them a specific

briefing (including safety reminders), or delegate the briefing – eg your SI coordinator should brief the Finish/Results team. Provide concise written instructions that they can quickly refer to.

Newcomers

Have a clearly signed area set aside for newcomers, and ensure Registration directs them to your newcomer liaison person. Newcomers will need help with choosing a suitable course, filling in forms, going through the start procedure, and understanding how an SI stick works. Have someone who can guide them through the whole process and take them out on the course if required. Follow up with them when they return by talking to them about their course and ensuring they know how to find the results and how to find out about forthcoming events. None of the above should be done by the Registration team – their job is to ensure that competitors are able to register as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Registration

Registration should be open at least 30 minutes prior to the first Start, and remain open until just before the last Start.

The Pre-entry list must be clearly and carefully annotated. If payments are collected, this is the only source of reconciliation for pre-entered competitors. Record the amount paid, do not just put a tick in the Payments column. If any unusual payments are collected, note what they are for as well as the amount (eg \$1 for extra map)

The Pre-entry list must be put in a safe place when Registration is closed (preferably with the cash and EDO forms).

Have two queues at the Registration table – an Express Lane for pre-entries, and an EOD and Changes Lane for others.

Forms – you will need Enter on Day forms, Changes forms, and Start tickets. EOD forms and Changes forms are standard, and are provided to each club as tear-off pads. They are also on the Toolkit page. Start tickets need to be customised for each event (depending on Start windows). The template can be downloaded from the Toolkit, amended, printed, copied and cut up.

Changes: a change is defined as any piece of information that needs to be entered into the event file. Changes are communicated to the data entry person via the Changes form. Most commonly these will be changing course or changing SI stick.

Course changes are only allowed subject to spare map availability, which must be tracked by Registration.

Hired/borrowed SI sticks:

- If a pre-entered competitor requested a hire SI stick, and you have already pre-allocated the stick number and entered it into the event file. No change form needed.
- If a pre-entered competitor requested a hire SI stick at time of entry, or requests one at Registration, and you did not pre-allocate the stick number, a change form needs to be completed for data entry purposes

- If a competitor enters on the day and requests a hire SI stick, there is no need to complete a changes form, as the hire stick details will be recorded on the EOD form

Process for Pre-entries with no changes:

- no form to complete – they come straight to main registration table (Express Lane)
- check them off the pre-entry list and record a contact phone no and car registration
- collect and record any payment owing on the pre-entry list
- verify their SI stick number and course entered
- give them a Start ticket with details completed, and direct them to the Start

Process for Pre-entries with changes (including hired SI sticks):

- complete a Changes form, clearly indicating the change to course or to SI stick number (including hires, which are all treated as changes unless they have been pre-allocated and are already in the event file)
- check them off the pre-entry list and record a contact phone no and car registration
- collect and record any payment owing on the pre-entry list
- give them a Start ticket with details completed, and direct them to the Start

Changing courses is only permitted if spare map numbers allow. You will need to keep a running tally of spare map numbers and adjust for each EOD and change.

Process for Enter on day:

- competitors need to complete an EOD form at the pre-rego table before coming to the main registration table – have someone there who can assist if required
- check all details have been filled in LEGIBLY – reject any form that is not readable
- collect payment and record details on the EOD form
- check map availability for the course they have requested
- record SI stick number on EOD form if hired or borrowed, and note any compass loans
- give them a Start ticket with details completed, and direct them to the Start

Data entry: data needs to be entered into the event file promptly and accurately. The data entry person will collect Changes and EOD forms from Registration, enter the information into the event file, on the laptop, sign off the forms and place them in a tray/container. The forms need to be retained for reconciliation purposes (the cash tin is a good place to store them).

Start

Your Start procedure will vary depending on the type of event, number of competitors and courses etc. Regardless, the functions of the Start are to:

- Verify competitors are eligible to start on a particular course (eg by presenting a start ticket)
- Provide competitors with the correct map and control descriptions for their course
- Record competitors' start times (either from a start list, a start punch, or a manual record)
- Provide competitors with any essential safety or course instructions, and ensure they follow directions of the Starter
- Record competitors who pre-entered but DNS (Did Not Start), either by having all competitors punch a designated Check control which is returned to the Finish for processing, or by checking them off a list (the first method is recommended for any event where the majority of competitors have pre-entered). Your SI coordinator will be familiar with the DNS process. It is vital that the Start team provide the Check control (or manual list) to the Finish as soon as the Starts are completed.

Finish

The functions of the Finish are to:

- Record the return of all competitors (either by the competitor downloading, or a manual record)
- Provide results for each competitor (either by the competitor downloading, or a manual record)
- Collect hired SI sticks
- Provide a list of missing competitors to the organiser (in conjunction with Registration/Start) and to advise when all competitors have returned, so that courses can be closed

Results

Display results in the assembly area and update frequently. Results provide a post-race social focus and discussion point for competitors. A list of results can be produced very simply from an SI splits printer (which does not require its own power supply), or competitors may record their own finish times manually (eg on a card stub placed on a display board). The disadvantage of the latter method is that not all competitors will choose to display their results, which means results are difficult to finalise, and more importantly, return of all competitors cannot be verified.

Emergencies

Competitor safety is your highest priority. As organiser, you are the first point of contact for any emergency response, be it search and rescue, or first aid. Make sure you have a printed copy of your emergency response plan, with contact phone numbers for medical or police assistance. Know who your club's first aiders are and where the first aid kit is. Be prepared to delegate emergency response to an experienced club member if necessary.

Ensuring everyone's safety is the number one reason for locating registration, start and finish close together. The data collected at Registration (person has arrived/car rego/mobile no/course entered), together with data from the Start (use Check control to verify person has started) and the Finish (Missing persons report, names of others on same course), provides vital information should a search need to be instigated.

Packup

Although everyone is tired and wants to go home, it is very important to ensure that all equipment is packed up carefully and checked off your equipment list. Make sure that any equipment borrowed from OV or another club is returned promptly and in good condition. Count all control units, SI hire sticks, control flags etc. Make sure control units are turned OFF when packing them away.

Results

Upload results to Eventor as soon as possible. If you are using OE, you can upload them immediately – even from the event site if you have internet access. If you are using SIME or other non-code checking software, you will need to manually process the results and post them as soon as practicable. There is a template spreadsheet which can be used for uploading non-OE results directly to Eventor, or you can upload them as a Document, where they will appear with the other documents associated with the events. Your club Eventor administrator will be able to assist.

You will also need to ensure that splits are uploaded to WinSplits.

Afterward

- Write a report for the appropriate website; include photos and a link to results and Winsplits
- Reconcile takings; pay levies (form available from Toolkit) and other outstanding expenses
- Volunteer to assist the next organiser – you are now an expert
- Relax – it's all over!