
HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

(January 2023)

GENERAL STATEMENT OF INTENT

Bristol and West AC (the Club) takes the health, safety and wellbeing of its members and other persons who may be affected by any acts and omissions associated with its undertakings seriously. This value also extends to the respect it has for property and the environment.

The Club accepts its duties to people, property and the environment under statute and common law and will put in place appropriate measures to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, these duties are met for all organised Club events.

To help ensure that the Club achieves these objectives all members of the Club are expected to follow or exceed the health and safety standards and guidance as outlined out within this Policy. It is also the responsibility of all Club members to take ownership for, and care of, their own health and safety and ensure that others are not affected by their acts or omissions.

Ultimate responsibility for the discharge of these duties falls onto the Chair.

To assist the Club in understanding and meeting its general health, safety, and environmental duties, if possible, it shall appoint a person with the appropriate training and knowledge for health, safety, and environmental protection or who otherwise has access to competent advice. This person shall be a club officer and be responsible for considering the health, safety and environmental implications associated with decisions made by the Committee.

The Club will create safe environments for events by completing risk assessments and implementing the control measures which are identified where a risk is not deemed to be tolerable.

Runs and training undertaken by Club members for their own purpose and events which are participate which are organised by other organisations / athletics clubs and attended by members of the Club are not subject to the requirements of this Policy.

This Policy was approved by the Club Committee to reflect the Committee's collective commitment to its intent.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

This section outlines responsibilities assigned to all Members of the Club with additional responsibilities for those elected to specific roles. The intention is that the successful implementation of these responsibilities will ensure that the requirements of the general statement of intent will be met.

Members

All members of the Club have a responsibility to:

- Take care of their own health, safety, and wellbeing and that of other persons, property, and the environment by what they do or omit from doing.
- Assessing their own fitness levels and maturity as a competitor when deciding what training to undertake and what competitions to enter.
- Cooperate with the Club on matters relating to health, safety, and the environment.
- Not interfering with or misusing anything provided for health, safety or the protection of property or the environment.
- Follow all safety instructions as set out within this Policy or communicated by the Club especially during pre-event briefings.
- Report any health, safety or environmental issues or concerns they may be aware of relating to the Club or its undertakings to an elected representative of the Club as soon as possible in order that the Club may act, as deemed appropriate, to address the matter.
- Report all accidents and incidents relating to the Clubs activities whether it involved them or another person, property, or the environment.
- Take care of their own safety, whilst keeping a watchful eye on others, particularly new members.
- Always consider other persons, animals, vehicles, and the environment.
- Only train if they are medically fit to do so. Members with existing medical conditions or allergies are encouraged to carry or wear a suitable means of bringing such conditions to the attention of the emergency services such as an emergency chain or card.
- Never leave “group runs” you are running in without letting others know, ideally the Run Leader, giving details of the reason if appropriate.
- New members should ensure they are known to the Coach or Run Leader before the event starts. In addition to the responsibilities above some members have additional responsibilities where they have been elected to one or more specific role within the Club as outlined below.

Chair

The Chair shall:

- Make every effort to ensure that the requirements of this Policy are implemented to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of members of the Club, other persons, property, and the environment.

Committee

The Committee shall:

- Review health and safety documentation presented to them for approval.
- Monitor general health, safety and environmental matters relating to the Club through reports, either written or verbal, from the Clubs Health and Safety Officer.
- Bring this Policy to the attention of Club Members upon joining and thereafter when significant changes are made. As best practice a reminder will be sent out at the time of membership renewals.
- Make this Policy, and subsequent revisions, available on the Clubs website.
- Lead by example and championing the implementation of the requirements and standards set out in this Policy.

- Ensure that Club coaches have appropriate training to lead Club training sessions and provide details of the Club coaches on the Club website.

Coaches and Run Leaders

For the purposes of this Policy the definition of Run Leaders also includes event organisers and Race Directors.

Coaches and Run Leaders shall:

- Complete risk assessments for events they are leading either themselves or a nominated person and forward to the Health and Safety Officer for review and logging. The Health and Safety Officer can help with the completion of risk assessments.
- Review risk assessments annually or sooner following a significant accident / incident or if the risk assessment is no longer considered to be suitable and sufficient e.g., significant changes are made to a route or surfaces. The Health and Safety Officer can help with reviews.
- Communicate the key findings of event risk assessments to those who are affected in order that they are aware of control measures necessary for preventing or reducing the risk of harm. This may be in the form of a pre-event briefing.
- Ensure that at least one person taking part in an event is carrying a mobile phone and first aid kit for use in the event of an emergency.
- Review the content of their first aid kits annually (ideally when reviewing risk assessments) – requesting replacement items from the Health and Safety Officer as required.
- Complete online accident and incident reports when they become aware of an event.
- Undertake accident and incident investigations which seek to identify the root cause and where appropriate measures that will prevent a reoccurrence.

The Club empowers Coaches and Run Leaders to determine if an event cannot proceed due to safety concerns.

Health and Safety Officer

The Health and Safety Officer shall:

- Review this Policy annually and additionally following a serious accident / incident or should it no longer be considered fit for purpose.
- Consult changes to the Policy with the Committee before presenting it for approval.
- On an annual basis remind, in writing or verbally at committee meeting, the responsibilities and duties under this Policy assigned to the Chair, Committee and Coaches and Run Leaders.
- Submit a health, safety, and environmental report to the committee.
- Identify best practice initiatives for improving safety, health and the environment and discuss with Coaches and Run Leaders and / or the Committee to determine if an appetite exists for adoption.
- Attend Committee meetings and monitor general Club communications to identify any health, safety and environmental implications which should be considered as part of general Club planning etc.
- Bring to the attention of the Committee:
 - Details of accidents and incidents and any measures identified and introduced to help prevent a reoccurrence.
 - Any concerns at the suitability and effectiveness of the Clubs health, safety, and environmental arrangements.
- Review and store event risk assessments submitted by Coaches and Run Leaders and to provide support and feedback as deemed appropriate.

- Monitor risk assessment review dates and remind Coaches and Run Leaders of the need for them to be reviewed.
- Offer help to Coaches and Run Leaders with the creation and review of risk assessments or other matters.
- Review accident and incident reports and investigations and notify England Athletics via the UK Athletics online reporting page.
- Endeavour to attend, as a participant or observer, all Club events to objectively review health, safety and environmental arrangements providing feedback to Coaches and Run Leaders as appropriate.
- Support and advise Coaches and Run Leaders and others within the Club to identify solutions to meet the requirements of this Policy.
- Provide general advice and guidance on matters relating to health, safety wellbeing and the environment.
- Seek specialist advice and information from expert bodies such as UK Athletics as necessary.
- Occasionally promote good safety and health practices through the Clubs Facebook page.
- Supply first aid kits and obtain and retain a small stock of replacement kits / content spares.
- Review at least annually the contents of the Clubs first aid kits.

ARRANGEMENTS

General Training Safety

The Coach or Run Leader will brief athletes, and if appropriate others including Marshalls, before the event begins. This briefing will include the provision of information necessary to protect participants, other persons, property, and the environment and may include issues such as:

- The route and ground conditions.
- Any known or foreseeable hazards and if known whether they have been marked.
- Emergency arrangements including details of persons trailing at the rear and first aid provisions.

When training as a group or in groups, all members of the group / groups would be expected to start and finish together otherwise it is important that the Coach or Run Leader is informed. By default, headphones should not be worn during training – bone conductors are deemed to be a safe option however will may still hinder the wearer from detecting noises that may indicate danger. As such members are advised to consider training without any type of device. Coaches and Run Leaders should be asked prior to an event if headphones may be worn. Generally, this will only be permitted when the event is off road and with no likelihood of vehicle interaction.

Road and Pathway Running

Ideally running routes should be planned to avoid roads, particularly busy and unlit ones, however where this cannot be avoided runners should endeavour to cross over a road at designated crossing points or to cross elsewhere with caution. Runners should only run along a road if it is closed to traffic or there is no footpath. For the latter it is vital that the runner can be seen, only travel in single file and should run on the right-hand side facing oncoming traffic. Extra care should be taken as tripping and falling in the road could have severe consequences.

Be considerate of others who may be walking along the footpath and thank them if they give way to you.

Cross Country / Trail Running

Off road running can be on terrain that is uneven and slippery with hidden hazards such as roots, divots, and animal burrows. Known hazards will be highlighted by the Coach or Run Leader and were deemed significant will ideally have been marked by means of spray paint etc. Pay more attention to off road surfaces that you would on roads to spot hidden hazards such as holes, roots, rocks, tree branches and thorny bushes.

It is important that the right footwear is being worn to suit the conditions e.g., trail shoes.

Be considerate of others who may also be using tracks and be aware that they may have a dog off its lead which might run into your path. Always thank others if they give way to you.

When running in fields containing animals such as cows and horses be careful not to cause them panic as they could be harmed when fleeing. Also be aware that some animals, particularly those protecting their young, may attack. Always ensure that gates etc are closed behind you.

Training Alone

It is strongly advised that when members are training alone that they carry a mobile phone and carry a means of identification. Lone training in poorly lit and / or isolated areas should be avoided wherever possible, particularly female members, but if it cannot be avoided it is advisable to carry an appropriate alarm system. Further details can be provided by the Health and Safety Officer.

Training At Night or In Poor Light

Athletes should always be able to see and be seen. As such the wearing of appropriate lights and reflective clothing is encouraged. You cannot have too much reflective material however athletes should be mindful that some lights with high lumen levels may blind others and as should be directed downwards if necessary. A red light, ideally flashing, worn on your back is also recommended.

Training In Hot Weather

Dehydration can cause symptoms such as fatigue, dry eyes, dry mouth, cramps, headache, and muscle spasms and in severe cases athletes may stop sweating. It is important that athletes are adequately hydrated prior to, during and after an event. Key to successful hydration is to know the general weather conditions and the availability of water before, during and after the event. Knowing this will allow the athlete to ensure they are carrying water if necessary. This can be in bottles or in a bladder carried in a pack.

In addition to replenishing water athletes should also consider that over longer training sessions nutrients etc are also lost and should consider their replenishment. Advice can be sought online or via a good athletics outlet.

Athletes are also at risk of being sunburnt and therefore should use a suitable sunscreen for athletes. Sunglasses are also recommended as the glare from the sun may present oncoming hazards, moving or otherwise, from being seen. If during a session you become dizzy, nauseas or have dry skin “STOP” and take a drink. If necessary, seek medical help.

Training In Cold and Icy Conditions

Keeping warm before an event is important however there is a danger of over dressing. Many organised events will have facilities for garments to be dropped off immediately before the start, collected and donated to charity. Bin bags are often used by athletes to keep warm and dry however plastics are harmful to the environment and as such should be disposed of in an appropriate way.

Layers of clothing can be removed as the session is underway and tied around the waist.

Heat is lost more through the head and hands and therefore athletes may wish to wear gloves and a head covering.

In very cold conditions athletes should be mindful of ice and other slippery surfaces.

Child Protection

Any person under the age of 16 should be accompanied by either a parent or an appropriate adult.

FIRST AID ARRANGEMENTS

Coaches and Run Leaders shall inform members of emergency and first aid arrangements prior to a training session. Multiple members of the Club have received First Aid training and the Club has a first aid kit available at Whitehall. In line with EA's coaching licence renewal policy coaches are expected to take the online EA/UKA Health and Safety course and be responsible for delivering and Health and Safety during their sessions.

The Health and Safety Officer holds and maintains the first aid kit at Whitehall.

ACCIDENT AND INCIDENTS

All members have a duty to report an accident or incident to the club, through the respective online form, which may be experienced during a Club event no matter how significant it is. By doing so the Club will have an opportunity to investigate the event with the intention of identifying the root cause and so enable steps to be taken which might prevent a reoccurrence. An unreported event on the other hand is likely to occur again and potentially have a far more serious outcome.

For the purposes of this Policy:

- Accidents are defined as unplanned events that result in injury or harm.
- Incidents are defined as unplanned events that did not result in injury or harm but had the potential to do so. Incidents are commonly referred to as near miss events.

Coaches and Run Leaders are responsible for investigating all reported accidents and incidents which will comprise:

- Gathering information.
- Analysing the information.
- Reviewing existing controls (as outlined within risk assessment).
- Determining if changes / additional control measures are required.
- Recording the outcome.
- Passing details to the Health and Safety Officer.

The Health and Safety Officer will assist if required to complete an investigation. The Health and Safety Officer is also responsible for logging the accident / incident on the UK Athletics online "accident book".