

***A guide for clubs and orienteers on how to  
orienteer in a COVID-secure manner and in line  
with the current Government guidelines in England.***

***Approved***

***13 July 2020***

# Orienteering – Operational guidance for resumption of the sport in England



## OVERVIEW

Orienteering takes place in the fresh air, offering physical exercise in the outdoor environment. With additional social distancing measures and controls, British Orienteering believes that the sport is well-placed to offer a safe and enjoyable orienteering experience during this period when restrictions are being relaxed.

British Orienteering has been working hard on when and how orienteering can safely re-start and can't wait to welcome everyone back. We have produced these guidelines for clubs to provide orienteering in a way that is compliant with the current Government guidance in England.

It is already the case that small training or coaching sessions can take place with no more than six people in a group. There may be more than one group in a location at the same time provided the groups remain separate. Guidance for coaching activities can be found [here](#).

**From Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020, small-scale orienteering events, using electronic punching and timing equipment can take place.**

It is absolutely vital that any orienteering activity complies with both the letter and the spirit of the Government guidance and the guidance in this document. **In particular, event must be organised so that the prohibition on outdoor gatherings of more than six people from different households is observed**

Demand for orienteering may be high so clubs are asked to follow the guidance below closely when organising any orienteering activity, to ensure all participants can enjoy our great sport safely, and to maintain the excellent reputation of our sport.

These guidelines apply to England only. They have been produced in line with the latest Government guidelines on COVID-19 restrictions, in particular the guidance [on the phased return of outdoor sport and recreation in England](#), for [providers of grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities](#), and (where relevant) the [return to recreational team sport framework](#).

Key points from the Government guidance (as published on 10 July) include:

***You can now exercise alone, with members of your household, or with up to 5 other people from outside your household. Up to two households are permitted to gather in groups of more than 6 people indoors or outdoors, provided members of different households can follow social distancing guidelines. Otherwise, gatherings of more than 6 people indoors or outdoors continue not to be permitted, unless this is essential for work purposes.***

***Social distancing guidelines should be followed between people from different households wherever possible. This means a distance of 2m between people from different households, or 1m plus mitigations (such as face coverings or avoiding face-to-face contact) where 2m is not possible.***

We will continue to work closely with DCMS and Sport England to develop best practice guidance for those responsible for delivering different aspects of orienteering.

As the weeks progress, the current Government restrictions may or may not be eased further. If they are, British Orienteering will update our guidance accordingly. It's essential everyone is clear about the restrictions and works together to manage social distancing and strong hand hygiene.

The guidance outlined below allows orienteering clubs to resume small orienteering events and activities in line with the current Government guidance, minimising the risk of spreading COVID-19. They include measures to maintain hygiene and minimise unnecessary interactions with others. We hope that this will be

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an intermediate step towards resuming activities at a larger scale as and when further relaxation of the current restrictions allows gatherings involving larger numbers of people to take place.

Orienteering areas across the country are all different and clubs operate in different local contexts. An assessment of whether a safe environment can be provided will depend on a range of factors, which apply differently at each venue. It is the responsibility of each club or coach to make that assessment based on their local environment.

Clubs should be ready to cancel any activity or event at short notice, should changes to local or national guidelines dictate.

Failure to respect this guidance could

- invalidate the insurance for the event or activity
- potentially cause irreparable damage to the reputation of the sport
- seriously jeopardise our ability to obtain permission for future events, both locally and nationally.

## Detailed guidance on aspects of the event organisation

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## 1. Risk assessment

Clubs should conduct their usual careful and comprehensive risk assessment for every event and activity, taking into account the current environment and conditions. Risk assessments must include measures to manage social distancing and for effective infection control. A COVID-19 Risk Assessment template is available [here](#).

## 2. Hygiene and cleaning requirements

Hand sanitizer or hand-washing facilities should be available on arrival at the event, at download, at any toilets and at the start area.

Should someone display symptoms of COVID-19 at an event or activity, the following [government guidelines regarding cleaning of equipment](#) will help explain the steps you need to take.

There are very few items of shared equipment in orienteering, and the risk of COVID-19 transmission through fomites is accordingly very low. The most likely potential vector is through contact with electronic punching units.

Care should be taken to clean any electronic punching units used on a course.

- All units, including clear and check units, must be placed on stakes, tables or on the ground, and not held by an official.
- Competitors should be reminded in the pre-event information and at the start to avoid touching the units.
- The clear, clear, start, finish and download units should be cleaned regularly with a disinfectant spray or wipe throughout the event.
- Units on the course should be cleaned with a disinfectant spray or wipe prior to being collected at the end of the events or alternatively control collectors should wear gloves.
- All wipes used should be disposed of immediately after use. If collecting controls, a separate bag should be used to hold used wipes which is disposed of when appropriate.

Detailed manufacturer guidance on cleaning SPORTident equipment can be found at Appendix A to this document. Equivalent guidance has been requested from EMIT, and will be added once it is available.

Pin punching must not be used.

Clubs should encourage participants to arrive at the event in their orienteering kit, and where possible to travel home to change. It is unusual for changing rooms and showering facilities to be provided at an orienteering event, and these should be avoided where possible.

## 3. Social distancing

The risk of droplet transmission at an orienteering event is low. There should be little reason for participants to come within 1 metre of each other or of volunteers, and it should normally be possible to maintain 2-metre distancing.

All participants and officials must comply with the social distancing guidelines set out in the government [advice](#): 2 metres, or 1 metre with risk mitigation where 2 metres is not viable. If a club is not able to maintain 2-metre distancing, they must consider and set out the mitigations they will use as part of their risk assessment.

Areas where people are particularly likely to gather or form a queue, such as hire card collection, payment, start, finish, download and toilets, must have clear signage reminding participants of the importance of social

distancing, and may need to be marshalled to ensure compliance. Signage is available from British Orienteering [here](#).

Clubs should ensure that steps are taken to avoid people needing to unduly raise their voices to each other. This is because of the potential for increased risk of transmission, particularly from aerosol and droplet transmission. If a call-up official is used at the start, they may say the names of competitors, but should avoid shouting them. Generators should be positioned so that the noise of their operation does not make normal conversation difficult for the volunteer(s) working on download.

## 4. Participant Code of Conduct

Everyone taking part must follow the Participant Code of Conduct at all time. The Code of Conduct can be found [here](#), and key considerations include:

- Acting as an ambassador for the sport of orienteering at all times, and considering how their actions may appear in the eyes of landowners or members of the public.
- Observing social distancing at all times, including keeping their distance from other participants, volunteers and members of the public.
- Using hand sanitizer on arrival and departure.

***Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19, who is living in a household with someone who has a possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection, or who has been asked to isolate by NHS Test and Trace should remain at home.*** People who are classified as clinically extremely vulnerable can now consider taking safe exercise outdoors and meeting up with one person outside their household; however, it is unlikely that they would be able to safely take part in an organised orienteering event or activity.

## 5. Permissions

Permission must be obtained from landowners for any orienteering event or activity, and any local or landowner-imposed restrictions must be adhered to.

Permissions should be sought in the usual way, but clubs should be aware that they may be required to provide additional information to demonstrate that they are able to deliver a COVID-secure activity. This document can be shared with landowners and local authorities in support of obtaining permissions if required.

## 6. Registration with British Orienteering

All orienteering events and activities are to be registered with British Orienteering through the usual registration process via British Orienteering, which ensures that insurance cover is provided as long as these guidelines are followed.

Any orienteering activities for which a set of results is produced must be registered as an event, and will be subject to the usual British Orienteering levy.

These guidelines have been approved by the British Orienteering Federation board for the resumption of orienteering events in England. Should clubs fail to adhere to, or deviate from these guidelines, or to any local or national Government restrictions, this may lead to the invalidation of the insurance cover for that particular club event or activity.

## 7. Pre-registration, payment and allocation of start times

### 7.1. Pre-registration only

All events are to be pre-registration only, with no entries taken on the day. This will allow clubs to manage the number of participants, in order to comply with restrictions on the size of gatherings, avoid queues of people on the day, and minimise the need for face-to-face interactions. Clubs can use established providers such as SI Entries or Fabian4 or establish their own pre-registration system.

It is up to organisers to decide whether to allow open entry, or whether to give priority to members of their own club or to members of British Orienteering. Events or activities should not be targeted at novices due to the requirement for additional support and guidance which is difficult whilst maintaining social distancing.

### 7.2. Pre-registration form requirements

All participants taking part in orienteering must use a pre-registration system which records specific details about competitors. This will allow the club to share information with NHS Test & Trace ([guidance here](#)) should it be required. Similar information must also be recorded about all volunteers.

This information should be retained for 21 days, unless it is necessary to retain it for longer for another purpose.

The information that a club may be required to share with NHS Test & Trace about each competitor or volunteer is:

- Name
- Contact telephone number
- Arrival and departure time (or an estimate of this based on start and finish time)

Further details can be found [here](#).

### 7.3. Pre-registration form: COVID-19 status and Participant Code of Conduct

Pre-registration forms require entrants to acknowledge that they must not attend if they or a member of their household has COVID-19 symptoms, or if they have been asked to isolate by NHS Test and Trace, and that they will abide by the Participant Code of Conduct at all times.

### 7.4. SI/Emit card hire

It is for clubs to decide whether or not they hire or lend out equipment. Any equipment must be cleaned before it is hired or lent out, and cleaned again upon return.

If required, SI or Emit cards must be hired prior to the event, as part of the pre-registration process. Cards should be cleaned and individually bagged prior to issue at the event. A number of spare cards should be prepared as a back-up.

### 7.5. Payments

Clubs should ideally take payment for any entry, card hire or car parking fees prior to the event, using an online payment platform such as SI Entries, Fabian4 or bank transfer to the club account. If this is not feasible then taking payment on the day using contactless payments is advised. These approaches may require more administration before the event, but will reduce the need to collect and handle money on the day, or to visit a bank afterwards. The use of cash should be avoided.

## 7.6. Refunds

Clubs should offer a full refund to anyone who needs to withdraw their entry because they or a member of their household has COVID-19 symptoms, or because they have been asked to isolate by NHS Test and Trace, with the club to bear any admin charge imposed by the entry system provider.

Clubs should also make clear what refund policy will apply if the event has to be cancelled or postponed at short notice, including as a result of a change in local or national restrictions.

## 7.7. Allocated arrival/start times

No more than six people, including any officials, must be present in the immediate start area at any one time, and social distancing must be maintained between people from different households.

To limit the number of people in the start area, all participants must be allocated either a start time or a fifteen-minute start window.

No more than ten entries must start in any fifteen-minute window from each start location.

Competitors at each start location must start at least one minute apart, regardless of whether or not they are on the same course, unless they are in the same household (or support bubble).

The organiser must ensure that they leave sufficient free slots in the start list that people who miss their allocated slot do not need to wait at the start area for a long period.

To accommodate the expected number of participants, clubs could consider extending the time period for which the start is open, or providing two separate start locations for different courses.

## 7.8. Event promotion

Events can be promoted through newsletters, social media and emails. However, novices may require additional support which it may be difficult to provide in a COVID-secure manner. Therefore, events or activities should not be targeted at novices and clubs should avoid attracting novice participants by paying for adverts on social media or publicising events to external groups.

## 8. Communications

Clear communication to participants, volunteers and orienteers is critical to ensure that they take all reasonable measures to comply with social distancing and hygiene measures at all times, before, after and during an event or activity.

Clubs are to ensure that all participants, prior to attending organised orienteering events or activities, are provided with information which explains how operations at the venue will take place. Clubs should provide information on their website and via email directly to the participant. As well as the information that clubs commonly distribute prior to events, the following must be included:

- **A reminder that participants must not attend if they or a member of their household has COVID-19 symptoms, or if they have been asked to isolate by NHS Test and Trace.**
- The participant's allocated start time or start window.
- Where the start will be located relative to the parking area.
- A link to the [Participant Code of Conduct](#).



- A reminder that participants should make every reasonable effort to arrive at the event in time for their allocated start time or start window, including allowing extra time to travel to the venue where necessary.
- Clubs should encourage participants to arrive at the event in their orienteering kit, and where possible to travel home to change.
- A reminder of what participants should do on arrival, at the start, at the finish and at download.
- A reminder that competitors should avoid touching control units when punching.
- Any other changes to how the club usually runs an event, such as results not being visible at the venue.

Clubs must ensure that any participants or volunteers who develop symptoms of COVID-19 during the activity are sent home immediately and records are made of who they have been in contact with and for how long.

If someone who has taken part in an orienteering event or activity later develops symptoms of COVID-19, it is not the role of the club to communicate this to their volunteers or to other participants. Doing so has the potential to create issues for the club under data protection law. The club should, however, keep records of all participants and volunteers at an activity for 21 days, and share these records with NHS Test and Trace if requested by them to do so.

## 9. First aid

### 9.1. Extensions to certificates

The HSE has announced that if your First Aid at Work or Emergency First aid at Work certificate expired on or after the 16 March and you were unable to access training to requalify due to the coronavirus outbreak, the validity of these certificates can be extended to 30 September.

Although certificates are being extended until the end of September, an attempt should be made to sign up for a course at the earliest opportunity if courses are available.

Most training providers are hoping to return in July.

Those whose qualifications which will run out are advised to book onto a course as soon as possible. Due to the likelihood of trainers only being able to take smaller groups, places on courses will be limited, so book early.

### 9.2. First aid provision at events/activities

As before, first aid provision must be appropriate to the needs of the event or activity.

Always and only provide first aid within your qualification training and guidelines.

### 9.3. Additional COVID-19 guidance

Appropriate PPE should be available for use by the designated first aider, including gloves and face covering (covering the nose and mouth, such as buff or fabric mask).

When appropriate, for minor injuries (cuts, bruises, sprains) provide first aid support to injured person by directing the injured person in treating their own injuries.

CPR – follow normal procedure with the following important changes/exceptions (taken from St John's Ambulance advice):

- Do not place your face close to the casualty (so with initial assessment don't listen closely for breathing)
- Keep other helpers 2m away from you and the casualty

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- Before you start CPR, use a towel or piece of clothing and lay it over the mouth and nose of the casualty
- Do not give rescue breaths, just continue with chest compressions

For major injuries follow normal first aid procedure within your training/qualification, being particularly careful not to touch bodily fluid and open wounds without gloves.

## 10. Signage

Appropriate signage is to be clearly displayed around the venue (hire card distribution or payment areas, start, finish and download areas, toilets) to remind participants of the importance of social distancing and good hygiene. Downloadable signage can be found [here](#).

Signage to be displayed should include:

- Social Distancing - to be displayed anywhere where there could be a build-up of participants e.g. at hire card collect, payment, toilets, start, finish and download areas.
- Personal Hygiene - washing hands
- Information on who should not participate – those with COVID-19 symptoms

## 11. Toilets

If toilets are available at venues, then local regulations must be adhered to.

If mobile toilets are ordered by the club and used, the units should be spaced out and the queue structured to comply with social distancing requirements. Handles must be disinfected frequently throughout the event.

In the current circumstances, there is no requirement for clubs to ensure toilets are available at the venue. However, if toilets are not available then clubs must highlight this to participants in the pre-event information.

## 12. Catering

Catering should not be provided unless it can be arranged in a COVID-secure manner and in line with the relevant Government guidance.

## 13. Orienteering event/activity layout

### 13.1. Parking

Consideration should be given to allowing extra space between cars where the parking area permits.

### 13.2. Participant route at the venue

Clubs must plan for the route those taking part will take at the venue. Appropriate signage is to be in place (see section [above](#)) and social distancing allowed for. Where possible, when not out on the course, participants are to flow in one direction from car to hire card distribution/payment to start, then finish to download to car.

### 13.3. Payment on the day

If payments for entries are taken on the day by contactless card, the arrangements for taking these payments will need to be arranged so that those queuing adhere to 2m social distancing requirements. No entry on the day can take place, and all registration information should be captured as part of the pre-registration process.

## 13.4. SI/Emit hire card distribution

Hire card distribution will need to be arranged so that those queuing adhere to 2m social distancing requirements e.g. Those wishing to hire a card will have indicated this on their pre-registration form, and cards should be prepared in advance. A spare supply should be available in case this is required.

## 13.5. Key drop

As there is no requirement for registration, and to reduce the risk of fomite transmission, we recommend that clubs do not provide a key drop service.

## 13.6. Start layout

Starts will need to be arranged so that those queuing to start adhere to 2m social distancing requirements e.g. a formal start layout with large, clearly defined boxes, or a more informal punching start with sufficient space for participants to observe social distancing while queuing, and with no more than six people in the immediate vicinity (including any officials) at any one time.

Given the restriction on the number of starters from a single location, organisers may wish to provide two separate start locations for different courses. If two start locations are used, these must also be sufficiently far apart to ensure the groups of participants waiting to start remain separate, and must not be merely multiple lanes at the same start.

Where the venue permits, the start location(s) should be close to and, ideally, visible from the parking area, to reduce the likelihood that people will arrive at the start area significantly in advance of their start time.

## 13.7. Map distribution

If multiple courses use the same start, maps should be placed in map boxes that are appropriately spaced, and arranged in such a way that participants should only need to touch a single map. Maps must not be reused.

## 13.8. Finish layout

The finish must be sufficiently far from the start area(s) to ensure that those who have finished remain separate from those waiting to start. Participants should be encouraged to move clear of the finish after punching, and signage to encourage this is available.

Ensure there is sufficient space available after the finish to allow participants to recover before they download, while observing social distancing requirements. Signage maybe required to direct participants to the download area.

## 13.9. Download layout

Queues should be marked out to comply with social distancing requirements, including a suitable distance between the event volunteer(s) manning download and the participant. The download unit must be cleaned regularly.

Clubs can provide print outs of participant's times. The participant must be able to access the print out themselves. The printer must also be cleaned regularly.

No results are to be displayed (see section [below](#)).

## 13.10. Hired and returned SI/Emit cards - Hygiene

A system will need to be in place to store and clean hired cards after they have been returned. Cleaning all hired cards immediately on return with disinfectant wipes or cleaning fluid is recommended. (See section [above](#) for further information)

Consideration could be given to longer term hire, allowing participants to retain a hired card for a period of time or a set number of events. This would reduce the frequency of cards changing hands, and consequently the cleaning and administration required.

## 13.11. Post event equipment – Hygiene

Controls and other equipment must be cleaned after use. (See section [above](#) for further information)

## 13.12. Spectators

It is unusual to have spectators at events. Clubs should ensure that any spectators are to remain socially distanced whilst attending events.

## 14. Course planning considerations

Courses can be linear or score and no relays will be allowed.

Courses should be planned to enable social distancing and reduce the risk of face-to-face meetings between competitors and the general public. In particular, planners should:

- Avoid setting legs that could result in competitors running in both directions through the same narrow pinch points (small paths/gates/stiles).
- Avoid areas of the venue where gatherings of the general public may take place.

## 15. Volunteers and coaches

### 15.1. Duty of care

Clubs have a duty of care to volunteers to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. ***Nobody should be required to work or volunteer in an unsafe environment.***

### 15.2. Training

Core training for all volunteers on COVID-19 mitigations is available for free through [CIMSPA](#).

### 15.3. Volunteer plans

Specific consideration needs to be given to how the volunteers or coaches will deliver the activity or event. Detailed arrangements should be made between the volunteers prior to the event or activity. Each plan should include:

- Event timings including set up, delivery and break down of event.
- What each individual role will entail, including where each volunteer will be located at the venue.
- Who will be doing each role.
- Emergency procedures, including what they should do in the event of a suspected COVID-19 case arising.
- How many volunteers or coaches will be required to ensure a safe event or activity.
- Identifying whether any volunteers will be required or advised to wear face coverings or other PPE.

- Identifying which roles need new processes and procedures, such as for hygiene or social distancing.

#### **15.4. Clinically vulnerable volunteers**

It is possible that some regular volunteers may be classified as clinically vulnerable, including those aged over 70, or may live with people who are classified as clinically extremely vulnerable.

These individuals should be offered the option of the safest available on-site roles, enabling them to maintain social distancing from others. If they have to spend time closer to others than permitted by the government guidance, the organiser should carefully assess whether this involves an acceptable level of risk. As for any risk, the organiser must take into account specific duties owed to those with protected characteristics.

People classified as clinically extremely vulnerable should not volunteer, or be asked to volunteer, at an orienteering event or activity.

#### **15.5. PPE and face coverings**

Except for situations where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is very high, the role of PPE in providing additional protection is extremely limited.

There are some circumstances when wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure. The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect the wearer, but it may protect others if the wearer is infected but has not developed symptoms.

The evidence of the benefit of using a face covering to protect others is weak and the effect is likely to be small. Face coverings are not a replacement for other ways of managing COVID-19 risk, including the social distancing and hygiene measures set out in this document. The Government guidance is that face coverings should not be relied on for the purpose of a health and safety risk assessment.

## **16. Displaying results**

To reduce the possibility of participants congregating in one place, results should not be printed out or displayed on screens at the venue. Clubs may be able to provide live results at the event by Wi-Fi, which can be accessed on participants personal mobile devices.

## **17. Safeguarding**

British Orienteering's Welfare and Safeguarding Policies must be followed. The O Safe policy and further information can be found [here](#).

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## Appendix A – Guidance on cleaning SPORTident equipment

The main SPORTident products are SI-Cards and SI-Stations.

### SPORTident STATIONS

Stations are touched by the course setters when being set out and collected. Minimise the number of helpers who are in contact with the stations during this process. Before and after handling the stations the helper should carefully wash or disinfect their hands.

If the stations can be dried and left in a box for three days after being collected in, there is no need to clean or disinfect them as the virus will not survive. This is the preferred course of action and it is a simple solution.

If the stations need to be handled again without being left for three days then there are two options:

- Dip each station briefly in a bucket of warm water containing a reasonable amount of washing-up liquid which has created a really good lather. Use a sponge to ensure that a good lather is wiped all over the surface of the station. Stations should be left covered in lather for a while and then rinsed with water. A 100% hypoallergenic washing product is good as it is suitable for those with sensitive skin and strong allergies. Product can be purchased in 5L plastic containers. Stations should only briefly be immersed in water as the seals are water resistant but not guaranteed to be waterproof when immersed.
- Or Wipe each station using an alcohol-based surface disinfectant, preferably with 70% isopropanol or 80% ethanol. Other surface disinfectants could damage the plastic surface of SPORTident products

### SPORTident SI-CARDS

- The team issuing hire cards should adhere to social distancing requirements, both from one another and from participants, and should carefully wash or disinfect their hands before and after handling the SI-Cards. **HIRED SI-CARDS USED ONCE**

If it is necessary to hand out hired SI-Cards, the card and elastic band should be issued from separate containers. The participant carefully takes the two items and touches only one piece each. The participant returns both parts separately. The elastic band should be washed afterwards and a standard cycle in a washing machine should be sufficient to kill the virus. If the SI-Card needs to be used again within three days, clean it in the same way as described above for SPORTident Stations. SI-Cards other than **SI-Card 5 and SIAC** should only briefly be immersed in water as the housings are water resistant but not guaranteed to be waterproof when the card is immersed.

- **HIRED SI-CARDS USED MORE THAN ONCE THE SAME DAY**

We suggest that each SI-Card/elastic band is wiped or immersed in an alcohol-based surface disinfectant, preferably with 70% isopropanol or 80% ethanol

### DURING THE EVENT

Participants should be encouraged not to touch the stations during the race. An Si-Card can be dipped in a station without touching it.

### SI-CARD DOWNLOAD

The SI-Card readout process should be done by the participant and the Download Station should be located at a cable length (1 metre minimum, and ideally 2 metres) from the person managing results. SiTiming software offers some new DIY download options that make it unnecessary for a helper to be in close attendance. A splits printer may be used to provide a DIY splits print if the printout is cut automatically and no interaction by a helper is required.

The results team should adhere to social distancing requirements, both from from one another and from participants. Participants should be briefed to **NOT TOUCH** the Download Station or the splits printer.