

New Zealand Masters Track and Field Events

RISK ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT – June 2017 (V1)

Part 1: Risks.

The event is covered by the Athletics New Zealand third party insurance and accidental injuries by the Accident Compensation Corporation. Neither of these removes from those involved the standard of “reasonable care”. By giving examples of some known or anticipated risks and applying the agreed strategies the organisers are discharging their obligations for “reasonable care” and should not be liable under civil or criminal law.

1.1 Athletes

1.1.1 Injury risk from normal participation: strains, sprains, blisters, spiking, falls.

Such injuries are the normal and accepted risk from participating in the sport of athletics. As event managers we must accept this and be prepared to minimise the consequences by e.g.

- Provision of first aid room or facility, including privacy screens;
- Adequate equipment in facility: blankets, ice, bandages, plasters, strapping, scissors, panadol;
- Provision of competent first-aiders: The room needs to be staffed while athletes are present at the ground, either for competition or warm-up / warm-down;
- Provision of qualified sports medical staff for more serious injuries;
- Arrangements with Ambulance service for the evacuation of serious casualties;
- Adequate access for emergency vehicles.

1.1.2 Injury from other athletic activities

These are events the organisers need to manage. They are things such as access to and movement in the competition area. Competitors and officials should be aware that the competition area presents many potential hazards including:

- Crossing the grass infield in the path of thrown implements;
- Crossing the track in the path of athletes;
- Athletes not removing spikes before leaving the competition area

These are managed by clear instructions on the PA and proper supervision by track and the field managers and officials.

- The accepted rule is that there should be nobody inside the competition area who is not immediately involved in an event;
- There should be a strategy for dealing with recalcitrant offenders;
- Officials need to ensure that athletes, officials and observers do not stand with their backs to the throwing areas;
- The track events starting in the vicinity of the throws areas (e.g. 200m or 1500m) can be a risk area if a throwing event is in progress;
- Space made available at the finish line for athletes to remove spikes and officials stationed at the gate to monitor this.

1.1.3 Risks arising from Grounds, Facilities and Environment:

Most such risks arise from undisciplined behaviour on the part of athletes, and are very much their own responsibility. Known incidents have included:

- Falls in the grandstand and stairs
- Playing in the trees surrounding the ground
- Injuries on unsupervised high jump pads.

- Injuries from misuse of hurdle equipment.

There is also a need to control traffic in the immediate vicinity of the ground, including the warm-up areas.

Other potential risk areas are:

- Unauthorised throws warm-up taking place in the warm-up area;
- Foreign objects in Long Jump Pits;
- Weather (heat/sun/cold exposure, high winds);
- Bee stings and hay-fever from summer growth;
- The potential for delays, missed events, inadequate timing reminders at warm-up venues
- Warm-up injuries in the warm-up area, when the medical facilities are situated in the Main Stadium;
- Equipment failures.

To reduce the potential for such risks:

- All warm-ups in the designated area/s;
- No throws allowed on warm-up ground;
- Throwers to be allowed a practice throw at their competition venue immediately prior to competition;
- Long Jump pits to be dug over and raked before competition begins to look for dangerous items and to fill the hole that occurs through use.
- Bulk sun-block to be available;
- PA speakers able to be heard in the warm-up area/s;
- All equipment will comply with IAAF specifications and there should not be fractured throwing implements. The throwing cages should restrain implements that hit them. Extreme winds might affect discus flights;
- Technical officials measuring athletes' personal implements need to inspect and pass these implements for safety as well;
- High jump bars are expected to be in good condition.

1.1.4 Motor Vehicle Safety

There is likely to be a four wheel vehicle with trailer with the ability to pull hurdle trolleys etc. and moving other equipment and athletes' gear inside the field of play.

Possible hazards are:

- Inexperienced or juvenile drivers;
- Passengers riding in unsafe positions;
- Children on vehicles or trailers;
- Conflict with athletes warming up or waiting on the track;

To reduce the potential for such risks, safety should be managed by:

- Authorisation to use the equipment is given by senior officials in relation to the need of the event and only issued to approved drivers;
- All drivers to be advised not to allow "substitutes";
- All drivers to be reminded that athletes may not expect to meet them on the track: onus is on the driver;
- No passengers except in emergency situations for transportation of an injured person.
- No children riding on vehicles or trailers.

2.1 Officials

2.1.1 Risks arising from normal fulfilment of duties:

These are the sorts of things they can reasonably anticipate in the activities they undertake:

- Miss-thrown implements ricocheting off protective cages;

- Risk to Officials and helpers in the field during all throwing events (from both directions);
- Exposure to elements.

It is desirable that at Officials Meetings officials are reminded that with high standard of competition implements will be thrown with more force and range than is generally experienced at local meetings.

They should also be reminded to use sun-block, and have suitable hot, cold or wet weather clothing and hats available.

2.1.2 Risks arising from adjacent events

- Officials need to be reminded of what is happening elsewhere within the competition area, particularly at both jump sites, 1500m and 200m starts where they may have their backs to throwing areas;
- While officials should know basic safety rules, it doesn't necessarily follow that all volunteers do. Officials are responsible for ensuring that their helpers conform;
- If there are additional athlete helpers then they need to be specifically reminded to keep clear of danger areas when asked to do things.

2.1.3 Environment

- Officials should be used to the normal athletics environment;
- They need to be aware of the unusual: there will be tents and marquees: watch for guy-ropes etc.;
- Cabling for electronic equipment should be safely located. It should not be draped over floors in control rooms and result areas;
- With the influx of additional equipment, the adequacy of power supplies and outlets should be monitored;
- If an auxiliary power source is arranged, an electrician should supervise the safety and location of any power lines.

2.1.4 Officials and Safety

A safety briefing is to be conducted prior to the event by the meeting manager or a designated safety manager who has overall responsibility for safety at the event. Any new officials that start during the event also must be safety briefed. The officials in charge of each event and location need to be reminded that they are responsible for the operational safety in their area.

The meeting management needs to be confident that the officials pay as much attention to event safety as they do to the correct conduct of events.

3.1 Spectators

Spectators are expected to behave in a reasonable manner. The organisers cannot be held responsible for actions which spectators could reasonably be expected to know are dangerous or risky.

- Perhaps the most important safety rule is that spectators (including children) and non-competing athletes should not be allowed inside the competition arena. Outside the competition arena they are relatively safe. They need to know, with notices and regular PA announcements that they aren't allowed inside the arena – including sitting on the grass just inside;
- Notices should be large enough to be noticeable and legible to partially sighted athletes and spectators.
- Playing with rugby, soccer or other round or oval sport balls is prohibited in or around the competition area.
- Riding of bikes and use of skate boards are prohibited around any grandstand and or spectator areas.
- The ground is a no smoking area.

3.1.1 Children

Parents are totally responsible for their children. This is another thing they need to be reminded of. The same rules apply to children as to other spectators, but the people responsible for the children are accountable for their understanding.

Risks include:

- Straying into the field;
- Playing in the water-jump
- Playing on or in jump pits;
- Playing within the tree's and using broken branches as toys
- Straying outside the ground into other areas
- Stranger danger. The organisers cannot be responsible for members of the public at a public event who might accost unsupervised children.

3.1.2 Traffic

Where we are managing traffic (and parking) we are responsible for the safety of its movement. We can't be responsible for aberrant driver behaviour, but we are responsible for allowing vehicles to move into heavily trafficked pedestrian areas.

3.1.3 Risk to Property:

Any equipment set up for the competition (and the facility itself), as well as any contractors' equipment, will be at risk of theft, interference or vandalism while events are not in progress.

It must be noted that the Athletics New Zealand insurance policy generally does not cover property.

- For multi day events then after-hours security coverage may need to be organised by the organising committee;
- Athletes and spectators need to be regularly reminded to keep their personal belongings with them, or leave them in the custody of people they know and trust;
- They need to be regularly reminded that care of personal effects is their own concern;
- If it is windy, visitors need to be reminded to watch for belongings simply blowing away;
- A lost property venue needs to be provided.

4.1 Summary and Safety Strategy:

4.1.1 Emergencies:

- First Aid equipment to be checked and replenished;
- First-aiders to be arranged for first aid room;
- Sports Medical staff to be arranged;
- Contact and arrangements made with ambulance service;
- Access for ambulance/ emergency vehicles to be maintained
- Contact and first-aid access for warm-up areas;
- Provision of bulk sun-screen.

4.1.2 Athletes:

- Athletes expected to behave in a reasonable manner;
- If possible publish athlete code of conduct in the programme;
- Athletes responsible for their own equipment and personal safety;
- Athletes are required to follow instructions from event and ground officials and failure to do so is at their own risk.

4.1.3 Officials:

- Meeting manager or designated safety manager to take overall responsibility for ensuring safety rules followed and to conduct any safety briefings
- Event officials responsible for safety at their event;
- Safety briefing to be conducted for all officials prior to event start;
- Event officials to be reminded of hazards from adjacent events;
- All officials to be reminded to prepare for all weather possibilities;
- Safe location of electric and electronic cables;
- Competent electrician or engineer to review electrical and electronic set up.

4.1.4 Spectators:

- Spectators expected to behave in a reasonable manner;
- Spectators responsible for their own safety;
- Spectators responsible for their children;
- Spectators to be reminded that their support is encouraged, but spectator noise can disrupt track starts, and nearby events such as high jumps.

4.1.5 Traffic:

- No access to competition area precincts;
- Public parking to be designated

4.1.6 Vehicles

- Only authorised people are to use the equipment and only for the purpose of the smooth running of the meeting;
- All authorised drivers to be advised not to allow “substitutes”;
- All authorised drivers to be reminded that athletes may not expect to meet them on the track: onus is on the driver;
- No passengers except in cases of emergencies/injuries;
- No children riding on vehicles or trailers.

4.1.7 Event Management:

- Regular PA announcements to public and non competing athletes about keeping outside the track perimeter fence – the competition arena;
- Regular reminders on PA to parents to keep children inside the venue area and in sight;
- Large print notices reminding unauthorised people to stay outside the field of play;
- Official with communication equipment in the warm up areas to manage safety;
- Technical officials to check safety of equipment as well as ensuring IAAF compliance;
- Officials and helpers to be briefed on their own safety;
- Officials and helpers to be briefed on their responsibilities for safety at their events.
- Meet Manager to ensure Official in Charge of Long Jump is aware of the need to dig and rake Long Jump pit.