

# Risk Assessment for Club Activities: Guidance Notes

## Introduction

These Guidance Notes will help to explain the risk assessment process and help you to complete the Risk Assessment Template offered by British Cycling as a support for your club activities.

The Guidance Notes are offered as a starting point for clubs to manage their own club activities in a way which promotes safe and enjoyable cycling for everybody involved. They are not exhaustive and British Cycling cannot accept responsibility for the quality or content of an individual club's activities or risk assessment processes.

## What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment should be completed, prior to the first session, at all venues at which club activities take place. This assessment will allow you to document all the relevant details about the venue or route, riders and activity. You should also be able to identify any hazards and record an action plan of how to minimise/eliminate the risks presented by these hazards.

Immediately before every club session, the risk assessment should be completed and any additional hazards should be noted and assessed. It is important to implement any resolutions or actions noted prior to every session. If you believe there are unacceptable risks/hazards, you should not conduct the session until these have been addressed and assessed as acceptable. In addition to being regularly conducted, the Risk assessment itself should be formally reviewed at least once every six months to ensure that it remains relevant to the activity and location for which it was developed. There should also be a review of the Risk Assessment following any changes to the physical environment in which the activity takes place or following any accidents.

If conducting sessions at a facility that is managed by a third party, such as a leisure centre or school, you should implement the risk assessment procedures or guidelines set by that third party as well as your own. Make sure that you understand the differences between your own risk assessment procedures and those of the third party.

The risk assessment process can be divided into three key stages:

- Identifying and recording information about the venue or route and riders.
- Undertaking and recording the risk assessment.
- Reviewing and implementing the risk assessment prior to every session.

## Information about the Venue, Route and Riders

The first stage in conducting a risk assessment is recording information about the venue or route, the activity itself and the people involved in the session. This will ensure you have the appropriate information to allow you to plan and conduct effective club sessions in a safe and supervised way. It will also mean you are prepared to manage an accident or emergency effectively, should one occur during one of your sessions.

If you are using a venue or facility, the name of the facility contact person and telephone number ensures you can contact them if necessary. You need to know precise details of the venue's location to ensure you can advise the riders, or the emergency services if necessary, on how to get there. It is also important to obtain and review the venue's Health and Safety Policy and Normal Operating Procedures, which will highlight some important considerations, such as how to set up equipment and which parts of the venue can and cannot be used.

You should also have a pre-planned emergency strategy and know the venue's Emergency Operating Procedures. These will outline what to do if an emergency occurs, and includes information such as fire assembly points, emergency exits and a safe route from the area where the activity will be held. Find out if there are any existing risk assessments for the venue, activities or equipment, which may be completed by the venue staff or other coaches, and take these into account when completing your risk assessment. In the event of an accident or emergency, it is vital you can immediately contact the relevant persons/ organisations. Therefore, it is important that you identify the location of the nearest

telephone to where you will be conducting your session and know how to dial out. If your club activity takes place on a highway or trail, a mobile phone will be essential.

Keep a record of emergency contact numbers (eg ambulance, hospital, doctor's surgery) and emergency contact numbers for parents/guardians and have these available at all times during the session.

The ability to provide quick and effective first aid will ensure any accident can be dealt with appropriately. You need to identify who is responsible for providing first aid for your session. If this is not you or one of the participants in your club activity (eg some venues have a designated first-aider) you need to know their contact details. Also, make sure you record the location of first aid facilities, what provisions are available to you and how to access them. Check that you have access to an appropriately stocked first aid kit. If using a first aid kit supplied by a third party or venue, it is important to check its contents regularly to ensure it remains adequately stocked.

You need to record the date that the risk assessment was conducted, as well as the name, telephone number and signature of the person conducting the risk assessment.

## **Undertaking and Recording the Risk Assessment**

There are two key terms in risk assessment:

**Hazard:** Anything that has the potential to cause harm (eg extreme cold, improperly adjusted brakes, collision)

**Risk:** The likelihood that someone will be harmed by the hazard. Risk is assessed on a continuum from low to high.

Risk assessment is the process of systematically examining a situation, venue, route, environment or equipment to identify potential hazards that might harm people during a coaching session. It is then necessary to decide whether the identified hazards are significant and, if so, to devise and implement precautions to minimise the risk or prevent any harm. The aim of risk assessment is to prevent or minimise the risk of injury, illness or incident from participation in a club session.

**To conduct a risk assessment, follow these steps:**

### **Look**

- Look for the potential hazards to yourself, your cyclists, spectators and others involved in the session or in proximity to it.
- Inspect the facility or the route of the activity in advance and look for what could reasonably be expected to cause harm.

### **Evaluate**

- Decide who might be harmed and how.
- Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions or procedures are adequate, or whether more should be done, and who is responsible for implementing the identified actions. Also, consider if you are competent to assess the hazard or whether you need advice on how to deal with it

### **Act**

- Record the findings on the Risk Assessment Form.
- Implement the actions prior to every session to ensure that the venue is as safe as possible.

### **Review**

- Regularly review the risk assessment and revise it when necessary.

## Hazards for risk assessment

When looking for potential hazards, consider the following four key areas:

### Environment

- Check for loose materials on riding surfaces (eg gravel on tarmac surface, pot holes).
- Ensure that surrounding netting and walls are maintained in good condition.
- Remove litter, broken glass, cans and rubbish as they can create serious risks.
- Check for protruding objects or holes (eg stumps, drainage holes, pot holes)
- Ensure there is adequate space to:
  - accommodate the activities and the number of riders involved in the session
  - allow the planned activities to be located to prevent risk of collision or riding into walls or other obstacles
  - allow the planned activities to be arranged and controlled so that the safe dispersal of cyclists is promoted and unnecessary crowding of cyclists is eliminated.
- Check for parked and/or moving vehicles.
- Locate entrances and exit points.
- Locate pedestrian access points to the facility or route.
- Check for other activities that may be occurring in the area at the same time.
- Research the weather conditions which can affect riding surfaces and clothing requirements.

### Rider and equipment

- Check that every rider has an appropriate helmet. *(Note: The wearing of a helmet is not a legal requirement, but is strongly recommended by British Cycling for all cycling activities)*
- Check that clothing is appropriate to the activity and weather conditions.
- Check that equipment is in good working order; always plan to conduct a bike, helmet and clothing check.
- Monitor riders' behaviour and ensure you have established appropriate safety and rider rules.
- Check to see if any rider has any special needs for whom you may have an additional duty of care. This is especially the case for younger riders.

### Equipment used in the session

- Ensure the equipment is appropriate to the participants (consider age, height and ability of the riders).
- Ensure that the equipment has been subjected to a safety check by a suitably qualified/experienced person.
- Ensure that the equipment is in good condition and set up correctly.

### Other people

- Ensure others involved in the session have an appropriate level of competence for the tasks they are undertaking.
- Consider other users of the venue. What they might do? Where they might be?

After completing the risk assessment, you should ensure that the appropriate people are informed of the findings, any recommendations for improvement, and most importantly, whether they are responsible for implementing any of the actions identified in the assessment. This could be the official leading the club session, the club itself, the venue owner or the local authority.

## Reviewing and Implementing the Risk Assessment

The review of risk assessment takes place on the day, prior to the start of your session. The review gives you a chance to check whether any of the hazards, conditions or circumstances you recorded in your risk assessment have changed and, if so, to take appropriate action. It is also an opportunity to look for and record any new hazards.

All hazards that are identified during the risk assessment and the review of the risk assessment should be acted on prior to the start of the session.

You should record on the Risk Assessment Form that the actions have been implemented. It is important that you are satisfied at the beginning of the session that the facility is suitable for the activities to be undertaken during the session.

If you are not satisfied that the venue is safe, you must find an alternative venue or cancel the session.

The following list provides examples of actions you may take prior to conducting a session to ensure that any venue, route and environment are as safe as possible:

- If the activity is at a facility, on arrival check the schedule of other activities at the venue to make sure they have not changed.
- Conduct a visual sweep of the area looking for new hazards.
- Assess the surfaces based on the weather conditions. Surfaces will vary according to the weather. Rain, snow and frost need to be assessed and reacted to according to the degree of risk and the planned activity. Where there is a significant risk, activities should be modified (if appropriate) or cancelled.
- Check hazards identified in the risk assessment and implement all actions identified during the risk assessment.
- If additional hazards are found, or hazards identified in the risk assessment have changed, add these to the Risk Assessment Form.
- Ensure all equipment is set up correctly and is in good working condition.
- Clearly define the area that is safe for spectators to observe the session, advise spectators of the observation area as they arrive
- Complete a Register of Attendance.
- Ensure all participants have submitted a Coaching Consent Form.
- Deliver a safety briefing to ensure your cyclists understand the safety issues associated with the session, including relevant components of the emergency procedure, identification of the area to be used for the activity and safe areas for waiting and queuing.
- Highlight any hazards such as an object that could not be moved but has been clearly marked with cones or has been protected with barriers, padding, straw bales etc.