



Risk control

Events cycling



Introduction

According to British Cycling more than two million adults in England are now riding bikes at least once a week. Cycling is now the third most popular sport in England.

This article reviews some of the good practice that may be applied to organised cycle events. It does not address the risks associated with lone cyclists using the public highways.

Planning

Many cycling events do not require authorisation from the Police or Local Highways Authority. Well run events should have a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) that involves consultation with the Local Highways Authority. These will include details on how the event will be managed e.g. using marshals or stewards. However, the Local Highways Authority cannot prohibit an event taking place except in exceptional circumstances.

There are a number of professional cycle event management companies that can provide everything from logistics and start-line set-up, to health and safety assessments and pre-ride checks and evaluations. Other advice can come from national bodies such as the British Cycling Association, which provides advice on cycling behaviour.

Most local authorities will have a Safety Advisory Groups (SAG), recognised as an essential forum for safety planning. This reflects legislative requirements on authorities in respect of certifying sports stadia and licensing public events.

Whilst it is the event organiser / management team that is ultimately responsible for the health and safety planning of a cycle event, the SAG provides independent advice to event organisers. This may include co-ordination with emergency services, emergency planning and other key local authority officers such as environmental health (health and safety), highways, building control, licensing and waste management.

The SAG and events management team should have a single point of contact for the event to ensure consistent professional advice and support.

SAG Procedures

The SAG may have an Events Management co-ordinator, who will be consulted on all proposed events, even when there are anticipated to be fewer than 500 participants. At the outset, the organiser should approach the council and other land-holders, with proposals for the event. The proposals may consist of the following items:

- The Event Management Plan, which the Joint Resilience Unit within Emergency Planning departments will request sight of, and consider it in conjunction with the provided risk assessments.
- Traffic Management plan – which may include details of a street plan, use of surrounding roads, land-closures (to prevent trespass), and consideration of car parking and traffic issues.

- The use of, and checks necessary, on any demountable Structure – such as marquees, tents, temporary seating, that come within the Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015.
- The use or installation of roadside banners and signposts, requiring approval of the Highways officer.
- Consideration of street-works, and other activities that might impede the smooth running of the event.

A First Aid provider will be commissioned, who will be responsible for certificates and the medical plan. Organisations such as St Johns Ambulance should be familiar with the process of providing the medical plan, and this should be confirmed locally with the First Aid provider.

Where Licencing is required, such as donation collections, the selling alcohol, food or other activities, these will be notified to the Environmental Health Officer. Occasionally Health and Safety and Environmental Health teams may be consulted, at the discretion of the event organiser.

Legal Contract

A legal contract should be drawn up between the two parties. The authority's Events Management application form should be completed and circulated to Environmental Health, Licencing, Emergency Services and the multi-agencies who may require an input into the application. For larger one-off, or high-risks proposals, the Organiser may be called to the SAG make a formal presentation.

Route Plan

The race provider will supply a Cycle Route plan, and complete land checks with neighbouring estates. This may involve walking of the route, in order to identify significant risks, and engage both the Highways and Health and Safety teams.

Whilst there is nothing within legislation requiring event organisers to liaise with the Police or local authority, best practice dictates that this should take place. Both of these parties have designated teams who can examine, support and guide plans providing reassurance to organisers that they are both operating safely and not in competition with any other use of the designated route such as abnormal loads, proposed emergency road works by other agencies.

Police Complaints, Discipline and Inspection

The SAG would not normally request sight of risk assessments for outside events, but an Environmental Health department can provide advice and guidance. The route should be risk assessed and any particular hazards pointed out on the entry form or route sheet. Hazardous features should be avoided if possible or alternatives given. Risk assessment should consider the obvious risks such as event terrain, adverse weather, Highway design or maintenance, other road users and riders' equipment, health and stamina. Where the route inspection reveals severe potholes, quantities of gravel or other loose surfaces, and fixed hazards such as dangerous junctions or severe descents, then warning signs or marshals will be expected to be provided by the organiser.

Consideration should be given to those who are not legitimate participants (that is, those not having paid an entry fee and/or signed a declaration). Whilst the event organiser can have no contractual responsibility for such participants, their presence cannot be unexpected, and therefore must be considered for under legislation such as sections 3 and 4 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Insurers' Liability Cover

The SAG must ensure that the Event Organiser has the appropriate Insurance Cover – Public Liability of £5m is sometimes acceptable, but more commonly cover is set at £10m. It is not thought there is any other insurance cover necessary for this type of event.

Conclusion

All local authorities will wish to support and promote sporting events that encourage business and visitor engagement. Use of key risk management principles such as a single point of contact for the Event, consistent professional advice and support, and thorough assessment of the event itself will result in safer and increasingly popular attraction.

Further RMP Resources and Articles

For access to further RMP Resources you may find helpful in reducing your organisation's cost of risk, please access the [RMP Resources](#) or [RMP Articles](#) pages on our website. To join the debate follow us on our [LinkedIn](#) page. Additionally we have specific discussion groups for the [Education](#), [Emergency](#) and [Government](#) sectors.

Get in touch

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