

APPROVED CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE SAFE CONDUCT OF TRACK AND FIELD TRAINING

Revised Sep 2022.

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2022 Code of Practice changes

In 2022 a content review of the 2017 Code of Practice was undertaken and material revisions to that version have been shown as **blue text** within this document.

CODE OF PRACTICE (TRAINING)-Introduction

“THE SAFE CONDUCT OF TRACK AND FIELD TRAINING”

RESPONSIBILITIES

Safety in Athletics: Safety should be an integral part of all athletics disciplines at all levels, from recreational running through to the highest level of track and field.

In terms of legal requirements, “Duty of Care” is a common legal duty that applies to all individuals and organisations. This law requires that all coaches have a “duty of care” for those over whom they have a responsibility.

It is the responsibility of all coaches and athletes to ensure that all training sessions are conducted in a safe manner.

In order to guarantee the above the following approved code of practice should be followed, however in view of the wide-ranging circumstances in which athletics events take place, alternative risk assessed control measures may be employed which either eliminate any risks or reduce them to an acceptable level.

Pre-activity responsibilities and expectations

- a) Visual inspection of the condition of any equipment to be used
- b) Risk assessment of the environment including other users
- c) Risk assessment of the athlete / group.

During activity responsibilities and expectations; training activity is by nature constantly changing and dynamic and therefore requires:

- a) Continuous re-evaluation of risk of the activity
- b) Continuous re-evaluation of the environment including other users
- c) Continuous re-evaluation of risk to the athlete/group.

General responsibilities and expectations

- a) To be familiar with and remain up to date with UKAs Code of Practice for Safe Training
- b) To be familiar with and remain up to date with UKAs Generic and Event Specific Risk Assessments.

Many of the coaches’ responsibilities may not entail direct action by the coach in person, but rather the need to bring the problem to the attention of facility staff.

Note: Attention is drawn to the fact that in the Code of Practice the words ‘responsible/responsibility’, ‘must’, ‘ensure’, ‘shall’, indicate a compulsory measure; while the word ‘should’ indicates a strong recommendation.

UKA Health & Safety Policy

It is the responsibility of all Coaches and Leaders to be familiar with the UKA Health & Safety Policy and to adhere to the H & S values of the company.

DEFINITIONS

- 1) **Hazard** – A hazard is something with potential to cause harm to an individual. This can be an object, an activity, a **medical condition (diagnosed or unknown)**, **environmental conditions** and even substance abuse. In Athletics, examples would include the following:
 - Objects-javelin, discus, shot, **club**, hammer, pole vault **poles and stands**, high jump stands and cross bars, running track **edge, road kerbs** etc.
 - Activity – running, **pushing**, walking, **hurdling**, jumping, throwing etc.
 - **Medical condition** – for example **cardiac, neurological or respiratory conditions and current illness status**.
 - **Environmental conditions** – **Water in water jumps and in the form of rain, snow and ice on track / road / trail surfaces, wet leaves, mud. Reduced light or darkness and extremes in temperature** etc.

- 2) **Risk** – Risk expresses the likelihood that the harm from a potential hazard is realised. Risks are normally categorised as low, medium or high.

The principles of Risk Assessment are:

- a) Identify the hazard
- b) Identify those who might be harmed and how
- c) Evaluate the risk (low, medium or high) and decide whether there are existing precautions and if these are adequate or if more are required
- d) Record the findings
- e) **Ensure the findings are implemented**
- f) Review the assessment and revise if necessary
- g) Report new risks or violations of existing risk assessment to facility provider or appropriate club member.

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT

In order to discharge the duty of care to provide a safe environment for track and field events, it is necessary to identify hazards, assess the associated potential risks, then take action to eliminate the hazard, or failing this, take action to eliminate the risks or reduce them to an acceptable level.

RISK SHOULD BE ASSESSED IN TERMS OF:

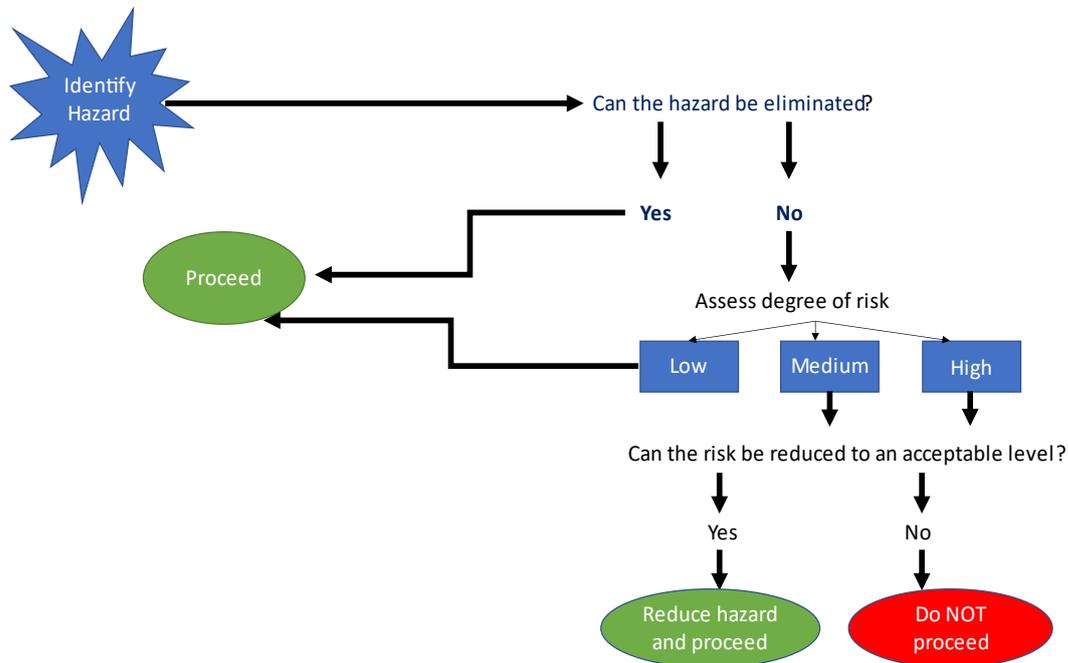
LOW – MINIMAL RISK OF INJURY OR INCIDENT

MEDIUM – SOME RISK OF INJURY OR INCIDENT

HIGH – HIGH RISK OF INJURY OR INCIDENT

Only if the risk has been assessed as “LOW” should a competition or training session be allowed to proceed.

The following schematic outlines the procedure to be followed.



FIRST AID PROVISION DURING TRAINING EVENTS

Under common law, voluntary organisations and individual volunteers have a duty of care to each other and others who may be affected by their activities. Where something goes wrong, individuals may, in some cases, sue for damages using the civil law if they are injured as the result of another person’s negligence.

First Aid provision at club training sessions

Athletics Clubs have a duty of care to ensure that participants can enjoy athletics in a safe environment; part of that responsibility is to conduct a first aid needs assessment* and ensure that there is appropriate first aid provision available at all training sessions.

*H&S Executive First Aid Training Needs Assessment

*H&S Executive First Aid Training Needs Assessment Case Studies

First Aid Provision by Coaches and Leaders

UK Athletics regards First Aid as an essential skill for all Coaches and Leaders and considers that they have a responsibility to maintain their competency in this area. UKA First Aid Guidance for Coaches and Leaders can be found [here \(document 2.\)](#)

GENERAL

The range of events, exercises, drills and activities which athletes and coaches use is such that it would be impossible to specify each individually. Coaches and Leaders must be aware, particularly, of the following:

- a) Any risks attached to the event, exercise, drill or activity which an athlete is undertaking
- b) The maturation level, experience, skill level and physical ability of the athlete
- c) The location of the training
- d) The competence and experience of the coach and others involved in supervising the training
- e) Equipment type required for the training
- f) Other factors, such as environmental conditions and other users of the training location
- g) First Aid Provision.

Coaches should be aware, that they are responsible for the safety of their athletes not only during a training session at which they are present, but also for the training set in training programmes which the athlete has been instructed to carry out outside of supervised training sessions. Coaches should make it very clear to their athletes what training it is reasonable for them to do on their own and what training activities must be supervised. NB: see supervision ratios ([document 3 here](#)) and Coaches Code of Conduct [here](#) for further guidance.

EVENT SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENTS AND TRAINING GUIDANCE

The links [here](#) provide training guidance that highlight some of the common safety hazards associated with track and field plus off-track training along with the recommended steps required to control the risks.

UKA [requires](#) that every venue, facility and club conduct their own risk assessments for events and activities they cater for and equipment they provide. [Each venue and facility is different and as a coach, it is your responsibility to think about the hazards and controls relevant to the training or activity you have planned. Even when the training or activity hazards are the same, the control measures you adopt may have to be different from those of the venue or in UKA risk assessments and guidance in order to meet the particular conditions at the venue or needs of the athlete.](#)

Please click [here](#) for the H&S Executive guidance to risk assessments.

SUPERVISION OF TRAINING

A Young Athletes (Under 17 years) must always **be supervised by a competent person***. Please refer to UKA Guidance on appropriate levels of supervision for children and young people [here \(document 3\)](#).

B Junior Athletes (Under 20 years) or **vulnerable** / inexperienced senior adults:

- a) **Must be supervised by a competent person** for events or **activities** in which there is a risk of accidents to themselves **and/or** others for example, pole vault, throwing events, S&C training, gymnastic exercises and **frame running**.
- b) **Must be indirectly supervised with other competent athletes/coaches** present in the immediate vicinity and within sight of the athlete for: events or **activities** which have low risk of accidents to the athlete **and/or** others, for example hurdles, horizontal jumps and high jump.**
- c) **Can be unsupervised** for events and **activities** which are relatively risk free, for example warm ups and most track running and **pushing** events.

B Experienced Senior Athletes

- a) **Must be supervised by a competent person** for events or **activities** in which there is a risk of accidents to themselves **and/or** others for example, pole vault, throwing events, S&C training, gymnastic exercises, and **frame running**.
- b) **Must be indirectly supervised with other competent athletes/coaches** present in the immediate vicinity and within sight of the athlete for: events or **activities** which have low risk of accidents to the athlete **and/or** others, for example hurdles, horizontal jumps, and high jump.**
- c) **Can be unsupervised** for events and **activities** which are relatively risk free, for example warm-ups and most track running and **pushing** events.

*UKA recognise that young people may wish to train when not at a formal session. It is particularly important that physical impacts of training are openly and honestly agreed with coaches, and form part of a training plan. If agreed with a parent, a young person could complete low risk training activities between formal coached sessions. In this scenario we would encourage the parent to fully understand the location, duration and risks associated with what a young person is capable of doing safely in an environment better known to the parent as this is anticipated to be around the immediate area lived in by the parent

** Each venue and facility is different and as a coach, it is your responsibility to think about the hazards and controls relevant to the training or activity you have planned. Even when the training or activity hazards are the same, the control measures you adopt may have to be different from those of the venue or in UKA risk assessments and guidance in order to meet the particular conditions at the venue or needs of the athlete.

INSURANCE

Coaches

A Coach or Leader who holds a current UKA licence in the discipline being coached is automatically provided with public liability insurance cover which applies while you are involved in athletics activities. This not only relates to training, club/region administrative meetings but also

when undertaking coaching for other non UKA affiliated bodies. It covers unqualified people so long as they are under the direct control of a qualified licensed Coach or Leader and are merely carrying out instructions given to them by that Coach or Leader. Whether a coach is paid or unpaid is not relevant, the cover applies providing the Coach or Leader is acting within the terms of a current licence. Information about what insurance cover is provided to coaches and leaders, insurance FAQs and what to do if you ever need to make a claim can be found on the Insurance Zone [here](#). Any additional cover required will be your own responsibility.

Coach insurance responsibilities

1. Coaches should always ensure that they have insurance cover for activities that they undertake.
2. In the event of an accident occurring, coaches should ensure that all relevant details of the accident / incident are recorded and that all correspondence is conducted through the insurers.

ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTING

As part of UK Athletics' ongoing commitment to provide a safe sport, anyone who has witnessed or been involved in either an accident or incident is asked to complete a short online report.

Definitions for the purposes of reporting:

- **Accident:** An event that results in injury or ill health
- **Incident:** An event not causing harm, but has the potential to cause injury or ill health
- **Fatality:** An event that results in death

Compiling our accident/incident information in this way is useful for many reasons and most significantly helps us to identify any specific issues or trends with regards to accidents or injuries.

Note: If an accident has resulted in serious injury, or a hazard is so serious that it could result in an accident in the immediate future, it is important that these facts are reported immediately to the relevant Facility Operator, Race Director or Local Authority Health & safety Manager.

Accidents and Incidents reporting form can be accessed here [Accident and Incident Reporting Form](#)

In the event of a complaint being received as the result of an accident occurring, coaches should ensure that all relevant details of the accident / incident are recorded and that all correspondence is conducted through the appointed Case Management Group.

GLOSSARY

Coach: One who teaches, coaches, [leads](#), gives advice or assists.

Facility and Facility Operators: Those delegated responsible by the local authority or employed at the facility whose responsibility it is to ensure that the track, venue, equipment are compliant

with relevant standards, are serviced as determined by the standards and are in good working order.

Competence: Competence can be described as the combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person has and their ability to apply them to perform a task safely. Click [here](#) to view the H&S Executive definition of competence.

When competence is used in this document, it refers to a person who has the necessary skills, experience and/or qualifications that would, [in civil law](#), deem them competent to carry out/supervise the activity

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, please visit UKAs Health & Safety Pages or contact our Health and Safety advisor on this address: Safety@britishathletics.org.uk

Facility operators can get further advice from their respective home country athletics federation on adjustments to codes of practice