Health and Safety Policy

Responsibilities

The AAC Committee has a collective responsibility to ensure that the activities of the club are undertaken with safety in mind.

Race Organisers have a responsibility to ensure that races are run in accordance with recommended best practice.

Runners are expected to take primary responsibility for their own safety in respect of equipment, navigation and physical capability. They are also expected to help ensure the safety of other fell users.

Adult training run leaders choose the route of a training run but they do not act as guides for all members of the group. See **Runners** above.

Junior coaches are expected to operate within England Athletics best practice to follow the club's safeguarding policy. This includes maintaining up to date risk assessments for junior activity.

Health and Safety guidance

Fell running is an extreme sport. It takes place in remote and unforgiving terrain where telephone communication is unreliable. Runners push themselves to their physical limits and subject themselves to extreme weather. It is essential, therefore, that individuals think carefully and take responsibility for his/her own health and safety. This requires thought and planning. Club members should consider the following points when enjoying our sport:

1. **When planning a fell run members should always consider:**
   - *The weather forecast*. Mountain weather forecasts are readily available and are reasonably accurate (but not infallible) for the immediate future. Remember that every 100m of ascent reduces the temperature by about 1ºC, and wind reduces the 'feels like' temperature further.
   - *What kit will be needed***.** On the fells it is expected that club members carry, as a minimum, full body cover (waterproof or windproof according to conditions), hat, gloves, map, compass, whistle and emergency food. In winter, in poor weather, and on evening runs in summer additional kit will be required. More detail can be found here: https://www.amblesideac.org.uk/members/faqs-for-new-members
   - *The route***.** Routes should be planned (distance and duration) with the weather and personal fitness levels in mind. During the run keep an eye on direction (with a compass if necessary) and terrain (is it what was expected?) to ensure adherence to the route. Always aim for a destination feature (both on-route and final) and know what to look out for if you overshoot.
   - *Personal circumstances***.** Always consider fitness level, what food has been eaten before setting off, health conditions and medication. Ensure someone knows your route and expected time of return.

2. **Training runs in the fells**. AAC organise training runs in the fells which are on the club calendar. They take place on Tuesday evenings, Tuesday and Friday mornings and, on occasion, at other times. Although there will usually be somebody who decides on the route and helps on navigation, individuals are responsible for carrying appropriate kit and are expected to know how to read a map, to know where they are and how to get back to where they started. This could be in the dark or in fog/cloud. These guidelines should also be followed when entering races the club organises for its own members.

3. **AAC organised public races.** Members of AAC are the designated Race Organisers (RO) for a number races on the UK fell running calendar. These events are open to fell runners from outside our club. The ROs for these events are expected to follow the current version of the FRA Guidelines for Race Organisers and are also expected to complete the FRA Race Organiser's Checklist. Both of these documents can be found at: https://www.fellrunner.org.uk/articles/documents#organisers
   In addition AAC expects its Race Organisers to adhere to the following points:
   a. Early cut-offs. Long and medium club races should have early cut-off times to protect marshals and runners at later checkpoints. These should be publicised in advance on the AAC race info page and in any pre-race communications. They can be relaxed on the day if the weather allows.
   b. Consecutive numbers. Starting runners should be wearing consecutive numbers starting at 1 (or a multiple of 100 if fewer than 100 racing). This avoids confusion and is essential for marshals to complete a thorough check of which runners are outstanding at a checkpoint.
   c. 'Initial number recording sheets' and 'outstanding runner checking sheets (number grids)'. All marshals should be given 'Initial number recording sheets' to write numbers as runners come through a checkpoint. In addition to these, 'outstanding runner checking sheets' (numbered consecutively in a grid pattern from 1-100, 1-200, 1-300 or 1-400) should be given to marshals at key checkpoints to help identify outstanding runners at their checkpoint if necessary. This is an essential aspect of a good race safety system.
   d. Communication between Race Control and checkpoints This is a challenge for some AAC races. The RO (at base) should have reliable verbal channels of communication with checkpoint marshals. This can be done via radio (preferably) or mobile phone (providing there is uninterrupted mobile signal to all checkpoints). If radio communication is unreliable, organisers should consider using RAYNET to manage this. Text communication (WhatsApp) requires Wi-Fi or 4/5G signal and is a good back up, particularly for dialogue between marshals on the hill but should not be the primary method of communications at the race
   e. Race organiser 'deputy'. It is increasingly seen as good practice to have a designated person to be available to assist the RO on the day. The RO role is multi-faceted, absorbing and can throw up unanticipated challenges. Having a deputy in place can help with decision making in the moment and free up the RO to focus on runner safety and race communication.
   f. Competitors previous experience. For longer AAC races (Langdale, Three Shires, Great Lakes) ROs should consider vetting entrants previous experience to minimise the potential for incidents. The SI entries system makes it easy to do this.

4. **In the event of an incident,** it is expected that club members lend assistance to fellow runners and to anyone they come across on the fells who is injured, lost, stuck, distressed or looking like they require help for any other reason. This includes during a fell race. If first aid is required the priorities are to preserve life; to prevent worsening and to promote recovery.
   If the incident is serious enough then Mountain Rescue (MR) should be called (Dial 999, ask for the Police, and then for Mountain Rescue). To get a better phone signal it is often better to go up rather than down, but only do this if conditions allow. When talking to the emergency services be clear about the nature of the incident and the exact location. (Fell runners should always have a phone app that provides a grid reference.) Remember that the MR Team could be up to two hours or more away, depending on the location. If in doubt about whether or not to call MR or not, then do. It is better to get them on their way and cancel them than to call them late. (See the AAC Race Emergency Management Plan for Race Organisers at https://www.amblesideac.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/AAC-Race-Emergency-Management-Plan.pdf)

5. **Juniors' coaching** is provided by qualified coaches, leaders and coaching assistants. These qualifications regulate the numbers that can be coached at any one time. All individuals involved in coaching are expected to have a current DBS certificate. Some coaches are also

expected to have a current outdoor first aid qualification. A safeguarding policy and a welfare officer must be in place. It is expected that risk assessments are in place for the junior activities.

6. The club is keen to support its members in gaining **skills and qualifications** which improve health and safety on the fells. This includes first aid, navigation and coaching. The club will run courses where appropriate and there are courses available through the FRA, EA and private providers. There are many club members who are qualified mountain leaders, mountain rescue team members and medical professionals who are happy to pass on knowledge to fellow runners.