

Orienteering Events Manual

Compiled February 2020 from old Policy Manual

The purpose of this manual is to collect existing policies and processes regarding orienteering events in Alberta which are sanctioned by AOA.

Training Required

AOA Coaches are required to have NCCP training or equivalent coaching experience.

AOA Officials are required to be O100-O300 certified as applicable for each event.

AOA Mappers are required to follow the AOA Mappers Risk Management Policy.

AOA Board of Directors are encouraged to attend the Alberta Sport Connection- Sport Leadership Conference or similar events to keep up to date with sport industry trends.

AOA staff are required to take the [Canadian Centre for Child Protection's](#) online [Commit to Kids](#) training. This training assists administrator, employees, volunteers and coaches in understanding grooming, sexual abuse, roles in prevention, and the role that policy and procedure play in creating safe environments for children.

Additional training courses are encouraged for staff and volunteers as they become available and communicated by industry leaders:

<https://sportforlife.ca/>

<https://albertasport.ca/>

<https://www.sportcalgary.ca/>

<https://www.edmontonsport.com/>

Certification of Event Officials

In order to provide technically sound, fair and safe orienteering events and to minimize risks to the organization, the key officials (event director, course planner, and controller) associated with any AOA-accredited event, must be certified OC officials. OC certification guidelines will be followed. Refer to OC's Officials certification program at <http://www.orienteering.ca/resources/officials/>.

After the requisite course, exam and practicum, as defined by OC, the following defines the level of event ("Types of Competitions" under "Competitions" below, defining C, B, Canada Cup and WRE events) that can be handled by an official certified at the given level:

A level 100 official can act as an event director or course planner for a C event.



A level 200 official can act as event director or course planner for a forest B event, or as controller for either B or C events.

The level 300 certification consists of 3 modules: event director, course planner and controller. A level 300 official can act as an event director or course planner for all Canada Cup events, COC and NAOC, depending on the module they have passed. An official who qualifies in all three modules can act as controller at Canada Cup events, COCs and NAOCs.

A level 400 official can act as a world ranking event advisor after completing the IOF requirements for this role.

An official who makes a site visit solo is encouraged to carry a Tracking unit such as Spot, for communication in the event of need.

Certification of Coaches

OC works with the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) to create orienteering-specific courses that align with Canada's National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP). Details are on OC's website here: <http://www.orienteering.ca/resources/coaches/>

The **Community Sport Coach** program is for parents, teachers, group leaders and O-Club members who are not necessarily experienced orienteers, but wish to contribute towards the development of new athletes of all ages in orienteering.

The **Competition-Introduction** course is for experienced orienteers who wish to further develop their coaching skills. This curriculum is aligned with the Train to Train stages of the Long Term Athlete Development model.

OC's **Long Term Athlete Development** model and guide (LTAD) was released in 2012 and integrates into athlete programs, coaching certification, race guidelines and just about every other aspect of orienteering in Canada. http://www.orienteering.ca/pdfs/LTAD_Orienteering.pdf OC has been working on the Orienteering Canada's Skills and Development Database (SDD). A Skills matrix has been developed for Technical/Tactical Skills. Work will continue on Physical & Running Skills, and then Mental/Psychological Skills and Life Skills. Link is here: <https://skills.orienteering.ca/>

Competitions

Types of Competitions

C event:

A C event is a local, low-key city-park event usually held weekly during the orienteering season by a local club.



B event:

A B event is a low-key, usually one-day forest event.

Canada Cup event (formerly "A event"):

A Canada Cup event is a major competition such as provincial or national championships, often multi-day, with a full-suite of courses for age-categories. Canada Cup events must obtain sanction from the Technical Committee of OC, using OC's sanctioning request form. Canada Cup event organizers may obtain advice and assistance from the Major Events Committee of OC for COC, NAOC or international events.

World Ranking Event (WRE):

A WRE event awards ranking points to competitors in the elite M and F categories, which contribute to the World Ranking Lists. A WRE must have a WRE Advisor, who is appointed by the IOF, to control the M21E and F21E courses. WRE-aspiring events are approved by Orienteering Canada as Canada Cup events. Orienteering Canada will determine which events will use the WRE slots available to Canada and submit these to IOF. IOF requires six months advance notice from Orienteering Canada. This means that this sanction application must be submitted prior to **September 1 of the previous year** (or even earlier if the event is held early in the year, e.g. a spring event). IOF has a "Guidelines for World Ranking Events" document <http://orienteering.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Guidelines-for-World-Ranking-Events-2016.pdf>

Competition Rules and Guidelines

Rules:

OC's competition rules and IOF rules are found on OC's website <http://www.orienteering.ca/resources/officials/>

Course and Category Guidelines for Championship Events:

There are 2 sets of guidelines: one for championship events, and another for smaller Canada Cup events. Both are found on OC's website <http://www.orienteering.ca/resources/officials/>

International Specifications for Control Descriptions:

A new version comes into effect Jan 1, 2018, which is available in OCAD (as of OCAD 12.3.0).

http://orienteering.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/control-description-a5-pages_copy.pdf

Competitor Eligibility

AOA regular, honorary, or group members may compete at any level (provincial, national, international) in sanctioned orienteering events and be eligible for championship awards.

People affiliated with OC and the IOF through their membership fees may compete at Alberta events. Some awards will be based on residency.

Alberta Orienteering Championships (AOC)

Hosting

The AOC is held annually.

The host club is determined on a rotation basis. Clubs currently in the rotation may opt out if they feel



they are unable to meet their commitment for a given year. New clubs may be added to the rotation once they have established a proven ability to host larger events as approved by the executive.

Controller

The AOA Technical Director or the AOA board will appoint a controller. The AOA may pay travel costs of one site visit by the controller. All other travel and accommodation costs of the controller are the responsibility of the host club.

Trophies and Awards

Only Alberta residents who are AOA regular, honorary, or group members in good standing, are eligible to win competitive age-class category awards.

The AOA will provide awards/medals for the AOC. Prizes or awards for open categories are at the club's discretion.

Western Canadian Orienteering Championships (WCOC)

Hosting

The AOA, and/or an affiliated club, will host the WCOC on a rotational basis, or as agreed by the other western Canadian provincial/territorial associations (BC, Manitoba and Yukon).

Events for physically challenged

The AOA will encourage (where volunteer resources permit) the organization of events, such as Trail-O, that are accessible by people who are physically challenged.

String Courses

Clubs are encouraged to offer string courses and babysitting services for young children at events.

Permanent Control Courses

AOA encourages clubs to develop and maintain permanent control courses.

Clinics and Training Camps

Training Camps

The AOA, under the direction of the VP skills development, ensures that there is at least one training camp each year. The camp may be organized collaboratively with a club (ideally alternately between EIOC and FWOC), or by the ED, VP skills development or an AOA volunteer. The AOA generally ensures there is an advanced program included. Camp organizers may choose to include juniors and beginners.

Clinics for Officials, Coaches and Mappers

To keep orienteering thriving as a sport, three main skill sets are needed: orienteering officials who organize the events and set the courses, coaches who help improve the skills of their fellow orienteers, and mappers who produce or update orienteering maps. The AOA will hold or help affiliated clubs hold clinics to teach interested volunteers the skills for these three areas.

Maps and Mappers

The mapping portfolio of the AOA and its affiliated clubs is one of the key assets of Alberta orienteering – without maps, there would be no events. It is advantageous for the VP Mapping to work with a committee that includes at least one EOOO member and one FWOC member.

The AOA will:

- Maintain the existing portfolio of digital maps where the copyright is owned by the AOA, and the maps are deemed to be of value to the AOA. Keep hard copies of old AOA maps that were not digitized.
- Keep a backup of all digital map files (at a different location)
- Create new orienteering maps within the province of Alberta
- Promote access to its portfolio of maps through events and training
- Provide guidance on mapping to the affiliated clubs

Standards

All mapping contracted by the AOA, voluntarily or professionally, will be to IOF mapping standards. For foot orienteering, there are two applicable mapping standards: ISOM and ISSOM. Details are on OC's website <http://www.orienteering.ca/resources/mapping/> There is a new "final draft" of ISSOM in Feb 2018 (incorporated into the 2018 version of ocad).

Copyright /Ownership

All maps produced for the AOA will be copyrighted to the AOA. Canadian copyright law states that: as soon as an original work has been written down, recorded or entered on a computer file, it is immediately copyright protected. If the work is created by a person hired for the purpose of creating the work, the copyright may be owned by the employer. Since copyright can be owned individually or jointly, a clear statement re: copyright ownership of the produced map, must be included in the mapping contract with any hired mapper. This being said, the AOA must be sensitive to the mapper's reputation which is based on the standard and the consistency of the interpretation of the mapping.

Map ownership equates to whoever has the copyright on the map (agreed by Don Riddle, Geraint Edmunds and Don Bayly and reported at AOA Board meeting April 5, 2016). Any map funded by the AOA or through a grant given to the AOA becomes property of the AOA. Club maps are those produced by the clubs and may include those produced using AOA mapping grants given to clubs. The original drawings, or ocad file, will be kept by the club if the map is a club map, or by the AOA if the map is an AOA or a shared map.

To promote more mapping within the province of Alberta the AOA may enter into agreements to share costs of mapping with affiliated clubs for specific mapping projects. The ownership of these maps is shared according to the agreement reached between the AOA and the club. E.g. Mt Laurie map is shared 50/50 with FWOC.



Updating Maps/Version Control

All AOA maps will have a version number assigned to them. The AOA Mapping Director will supply affiliated clubs with the current OCAD version of the map file. The event officials may amend the OCAD file to suit discrepancies between the map and what it is supposed to represent, but they must be approved by the controller, if there is one or the AOA Mapping Director. If approved changes have been made, the Mapping Director receives the updated OCAD file, assigns the version number and maintains this file in the portfolio as the 'current' map. Older versions are kept for historic retrieval.

Map Identification

All AOA maps will be identified with the AOA logo, a copyright statement and the AOA office contact information. The mapper's name/company and date of creation may also be included. Any updates to the map undertaken on behalf of the AOA can also be cited, including the mapper's name/company and dates of updates.

Use of Maps

Event course planners should always check with the AOA mapping director for the latest version of a forest map. In the planning and running of orienteering events, event directors, course planners, and controllers may use digital versions of AOA maps, but may not forward any map to a third party without permission of the AOA mapping director, unless it is directly related to the running of the event.

Map Cost Recovery Levy to be paid by clubs

As the AOA provides the funding for forest mapping in the province, a mapping cost recovery levy is charged annually to the member clubs.

In December of each year the AOA will invoice FWOC and EOC an amount calculated as follows: 10% of the 3-year rolling average of AOA's mapping expenses (not including mapping clinics). There is a cap of \$3,000, to be reviewed annually.

Volunteer Mapper Contract

A volunteer mapper will create a copyright map for the AOA without financial compensation for his/her time spent on the physical field work and the computer manipulation of the data. All other expenses incurred in the creation of the map will be paid by the AOA (i.e. mileage and out of pocket expenses). A mapper in a remote location must carry a Tracking device such as Spot for communication.

Professional Mapper Contract

A professional mapper who is mapping for AOA must sign a contract with AOA. The mapper will create a copyright map for the AOA with financial compensation for his/her time spent on the physical fieldwork and the computer manipulation of the data. All expenses associated with the cost of creating the map will be stated in the employment contract. This can include airfare, travel expenses while mapping, and



a per diem amount for food and accommodation. A mapper in a remote location must carry a Tracking device such as Spot for communication.

Any contract must be signed by an Officer of the AOA Board (president, secretary or treasurer).

Guidelines for Foreign Mapping contract

- Included in Dec 9, 2014 AOA Board meeting minutes
- AOA will only hire mappers who are fluent in English, unless the Alberta contact person is fluent in the mapper's language so that there is no language barrier;
- The mapper's accommodation, food allowance and transportation costs will be stipulated in the contact. If a club is involved, all of these costs will be agreed to in advance between the AOA and the club;
- AOA and club responsibilities will be defined in advance- this includes supervision of the mapper's work, authorizing work hours/overtime/vacation days etc.;
- AOA and the club will agree in advance on the expectations for supervision, at a minimum being a weekly progress assessment;
- If AOA does the administration for a club's mapping project, there must be a local person supervising. This must be agreed in advance between the club and the AOA;
- The contract should include AOA's ability to terminate the contract if the mapper proves unsuitable.

Mappers Risk Management Policy

General:

AOA and affiliated clubs often contract mappers to conduct mapping field work.

A very common requirement of working in Alberta is to complete a task hazard assessment of the work being performed. The requirement for this comes from the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code. Various aspects of the work are reviewed by people familiar with the tasks that are involved. The intent is that where practicable the risks associated with the individual tasks can be mitigated to an acceptable level.

Mappers Risk Management Policy:

- 1. All contracted mappers must be familiar with the risk management recommendations by reading the documents provided by AOA, and comply with the following policies:**
 - Safety rules and recommendations for orienteering
 - Bear spray policy
 - WildSmart policy
 - Mappers risk management policy
- 2. Mappers must carry bear spray and are advised to also carry an air horn where applicable**
- 3. Mappers are required to familiarize themselves with the WildSmart material. Brochure and/or online reference materials will be provided by AOA.**



4. **Mappers working alone in remote areas must have an emergency plan and carry a first aid kit and are required to use the SPOT emergency device or equivalent.**
5. **Mappers under age 18 are not allowed to work alone in remote areas.**
6. **Mappers under age 18 must work in a group of 2 at out-of-city-limit locations or have a supervising adult on site.**
7. **Mappers under age 16 must always work in a group of 2 or have adult supervision in the area.**

Safety tips and recommendations for all mappers

All mappers need to be familiar with the general [Safety Rules and Recommendation](#) for Orienteering.

Additional information specific to mappers:

- **Uneven terrain/tripping hazards**

Mappers will be reminded of uneven terrain and would draw from previous expertise walking in similar environment.

- **Skin and eye injuries** – including abrasions, cuts from pointed branches/sharp objects as a result of being in a natural environment.

The nature of the mapping process is that it involves relatively slow movement and careful observation of the local terrain. This greatly reduces the possibility of coming in contact in a manner to generate cuts or punctures. Mappers will be informed by general AOA safety recommendations for orienteering activities and how to reduce risk associated skin and eye injuries.

- **Contact with thorns, insect bites and sunburn**

Contact with short thorns can be mitigated by wearing long sleeves and pants. Very long thorns are rare (Cypress Hills is one area) and a site-specific mitigation will be developed for any mapping in that type of terrain. Wearing gaiters, bringing bug repellent or proper bug resistant clothing and applying sunscreen are recommended.

- **Extreme weather: hypothermia, heat stroke, dehydration**

Adjust to weather conditions by dressing according to the temperature; bring layers and hats. Drink plenty of water before, during and after to reduce the risk of dehydration. In case of overheating find shade and stop to rest, cool your body with wet clothes. Being in these conditions for a long period could result in excessive build-up effects.

- **Animal Encounters**

There are a large number of animals that could be encountered in Alberta.

Unlike the competitive element of orienteering wherein the noise of the passing orienteer typically scares away the wildlife, mapping is done at a slow speed which increases the possibility and risk of an animal encounter. There are also increased risks associated with encounters with certain animals at specific times of the year – rut and calving seasons are examples.



Mappers must carry bear spray and are advised to also carry an airhorn at the -out of city limit-areas. Mappers must familiarize themselves with the WildSmart material. Brochures and/or on-line reference materials will be provided by AOA.

- **Hunting Season**

The risks are obvious. The primary way to reduce the risk is to require mappers to wear some brightly-coloured clothing – especially in the autumn during the main hunting seasons.

- **Working Alone**

Mapping is typically done by individuals working alone. The risks are multiple. In simple terms the mapper could be wounded or otherwise incapacitated and need assistance in a location far from where people who could provide assistance would be expected to be.

There are many possible situations for mapping projects. There is a similarity amongst them in that for the mitigation of the risks an acceptable means of having routine contact with the mapper must be established. A general comment is that technology for working alone in remote areas is evolving rapidly so specific recommendations on the communication can change from year to year. At a high level though, the situations can be split into two categories:

- (a) Mapper is working in or close to a city. One or more person(s) will be the designated contact. Routine communication with the mapper is to be done – and it needs to be tested from various parts of the map – to ensure that “dead” areas can be handled.
- (b) Mapper is working remote from a city or where orienteers would be available to provide assistance. For mappers working remotely it is strongly encouraged to use two mappers so that the two can act as primary communication for one another. In this situation it will still be necessary to have a designated non-mapping contact person. This is not only for working alone but for any other need that they might have. If the mappers do not have adequate communication between themselves – such as cell phones (potential dead zones) then a means will be provided to them so that they can maintain contact.
- (c) **AOA will require mappers who work in remote areas alone to carry the SPOT emergency device (or equivalent) for safety. AOA will provide the device and train the mappers how to use it.**

- **Natural disasters: lightning, floods and wildfires**

- (a) Danger of electrocution. In the forest the approach of a strong storm with the potential for lightning may not be obvious so it may be necessary for a mapper to stay in the forest during such a storm. Caution must be practiced to avoid high places and avoid large open spaces. In particular, if lightning is observed to be close by it is best to find a low place and “sit it out”.
- (b) In case of heavy rain stay above river beds, dry rock beds and steep hills to stay safe from floods or mudslides.

In a wildfire situation: try to leave the area in a direction away from the fire. Choose a downhill route (but stay out of canyons) to avoid smoke and be aware of wind direction which blows the fire and smoke



towards you. If fire is closing in it's best to find a wet marsh or lake if possible and stay in the water. If there's no water around, go to an area clear of vegetation (or already burnt down), a ditch or depression on level ground if possible. Lie face down and cover up.

Safety Plan and tools

The following tools are recommended ("must have tools") for all orienteering events:

1. Site Safety Checklist
2. Safety Plan
3. First Aid Kit or First Aid Station
4. Participants (& emergency) contact
5. Accident reports
6. Waivers

Templates and tools can be found on the AOA website here:

https://www.orienteeringalberta.ca/uploads/1/0/2/2/102233682/aoa_safety_plan_and_tools.pdf

If you would like to receive a Word format please email the AOA office: info@orienteeringalberta.ca

Waivers and Liability

All participants must sign an AOA approved waiver when signing up for the clubs membership in Alberta or to participate in an AOA sanctioned event. Event directors are advised to have all participants sign a special event waiver, as recommended by OC's insurer. A summary of OC insurance is here:

<http://www.orienteering.ca/pdfs/policy/insurance.pdf>

Waivers and liability information can be found here:

https://www.orienteeringalberta.ca/uploads/1/0/2/2/102233682/waivers_-_aoa_updated_1.pdf

Insurance (Bylaws, Article 6.8)

The AOA and its affiliated clubs shall have third party liability insurance coverage.

OC buys third party liability insurance, which covers bodily injury and property damage for all AOA members, volunteers and employees. The premium is based on annual participation statistics. OC invoices AOA annually for its share of the insurance premium. AOA may share this cost with its affiliated clubs. Information about OC's insurance is here: <http://www.orienteering.ca/resources/insurance/>

The cost of extra insurance for junior training programs (where the total participant days for the year is over 500) is split evenly between OC and the provincial body (AOA passes this cost on to the relevant club unless OC invoices the club directly).

The annual insurance certificate for Alberta is sent to AOA. The clubs are not named specifically on this document because the certificate states that it applies to all orienteering activities in Alberta, and nothing more needs to be justified.



In the event of a claim, an incident report must be sent to AOA's ED and OC's ED. Then OC's ED would notify the insurer, and an adjuster would be assigned to the claim right away.

Participants Risk Management Policies and Recommendations

Safety Rules and Recommendations for Orienteering Activities

AOA and all affiliated clubs must encourage their members and participants to review the [Safety Rules and Recommendations](#) information yearly and have it available on their website and events where applicable.

Organizers must be familiar with and apply the Orienteering event management best practices as outlined in the Orienteering Canada [Officials courses](#) manuals. Organizers are recommended to use a [Safety & Emergency Action Plan template and waivers](#) (which can be obtained from AOA).

General

1. Orienteering is an outdoor activity that carries a risk of personal injury due to natural and man-made hazards, animal encounters and environmental conditions. While the participants acknowledge these risks, the organizers of orienteering events must have rules and recommendations that cover how to reasonably minimize these risks and what to do in case of injury or if a competitor is overdue.
2. There are general safety rules and recommendations which apply to all orienteering events and there are event-specific plans which should provide sufficient details for specific actions and responsibilities to deal with any situation. The key to this plan is to be able to rapidly contact emergency services in the area. Recommended to use the event AOA Safety & Emergency Action Plan template which can be obtained from AOA.
3. In the event of an incident where legal action is taken, our best defense is to demonstrate that we exercised "due diligence"

AOA Bear Spray Policy

General

Orienteering carries a risk of encounters with large wild animals. Historically most encounters have been by organizers prior to the event, rather than at the event itself. One of the most effective strategies at avoiding a negative encounter is carrying bear spray while in the forest. Although this accepted practice has become commonplace among recreationalists in the Bow Valley, there has been some reluctance among race participants to carry bear spray while out on course despite the fact that every year, there are multiple encounters with bears and other wildlife by the general public in bear country.

The AOA wants to ensure that:



- All orienteering event participants are safe.
- All events held in Canmore Nordic Centre Provincial Park are compliant with the CNCPP bear spray policy.

AOA Bear Spray Policy:

For all AOA sanctioned events and all AOA affiliated clubs' events which are held in bear country (designated by map location) and/or an area that has a bear warning in effect:

- Organizers must inform the participants about the risks associated with wildlife and/or bears in the area and implement the recommendations below:
- Participants 18 years and older are recommended to carry bear spray at all times when participating in any orienteering activities alone.
- Youth between the ages of 12-18y are either recommended to carry bear spray or recommended to be accompanied by someone else who is carrying bear spray with them.
- Children under 12 years of age are recommended to be shadowed by an adult who is carrying bear spray with them.
- All participants who carry bear spray must acknowledge that they know how to use it.

Recommendations regarding bear encounters and how to use bear spray:

<http://www.albertaparks.ca/kananaskis-country/advisories-public-safety/wildlife/be-bear-smart/>

AOA Wild Smart Policy

General

Many orienteering events happen in wilderness areas where there are animals such as bears, cougars, wolves, elk and moose. Every year numerous interactions between people and wildlife occur. Although most interactions are harmless to both people and wildlife, some can become a serious public safety threat resulting in injury, property damage and/or dead or relocated wildlife.

The AOA wants to ensure that all orienteering participants are safe by knowing how to:

- reduce the risk of animal encounters;
- react in case of animal encounters.

AOA Wild Smart Policy:

- **AOA and all affiliated clubs must encourage their members to review the WildSmart information yearly and have it available on their website where applicable.**
- **Organizers must inform the participants about the risks associated with wildlife in the area and provide safety recommendations.**



Recommended educational information about living with wildlife:

http://www.albertaparks.ca/media/2777016/web_living_wildlife_pamphlet.pdf

<http://www.wildsmart.ca/learn.htm>

About bear encounters and how to use bear spray:

<http://www.albertaparks.ca/kananaskis-country/advisories-public-safety/wildlife/be-bear-smart/>