

## CARA BEST PRACTICES GUIDELINES

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The following Best Practices Guidelines have been prepared by the Chicago Area Runners Association (CARA) for Race Directors and race committees to ensure quality, safe and successful races. All CARA Certified Races must agree to adhere to these Guidelines.

### General Guidelines

**Permits / Contracts:** Secure all necessary permits from local municipalities and contracts for event venue.

**Insurance:** Hold liability insurance for the event with a minimum coverage of \$1,000,000.

**Competition Rules:** Use USATF and RRCA competition rules to settle any race competition related protests or disputes.

**Community Notification:** Notify residents and businesses along the course of the race at least seven days prior to the event with one or more of the following: flyers, yard signs, e-mails, phone calls or drop-ins, or similar. If race held in a park, notify regular park users with signs or similar placed in park at least seven days prior to the event.

**Participant Information:** Participants must be able to easily and clearly find on the race web site, at minimum:

- Date of race
- Start time(s)
- Distance(s)
- Street address of race location with map link
- Course map and associated USATF course certification number
- Parking information
- Contact for participant questions (phone, email and/or online submission form)
- Registration form and waiver
- Registration fees and deadlines
- Refund and / or deferral policy
- Inclement weather communication policy
- Packet pick-up details
- Awards categories offered
- Awards, timing and results rules and procedures
- Timing method ("chip-timed" or "manual timing")
- Direct link to online race results (by race day)
- Clear statement on prohibited participant items including pets, bicycles, in-line skates, other wheeled vehicles and clear statement of race's position on use of baby joggers and strollers.
- Finish line cut-off time or course closure time (Must be published publicly prior to the opening of registration).

**Communication:** Race must have a system in place to communicate emergency announcements (weather status, etc..) and participation information. This method (e-mail, web site,

social media accounts, etc...) should be pre-determined and noted on race web site.

**Safety:** Safety must be the primary priority of the race organizer. The race may not start if adequate event staff, volunteer support and or medical support is not present to allow for a safe event, or if supplies, equipment and product needed for a safe event has not arrived, or if conditions on the course are not safe (weather, civil unrest, etc...), or if an unrelated crisis has overstressed local public safety and / or hospitals preventing emergency support for the race if it was needed.

**Prohibited Items:** Race must prohibit participation in race with pets, bicycles, in-line skates, roller skates, scooters, and any other wheeled item. A statement of these prohibited items must be included on race web site and registration forms. Race's may allow participation with service animals, wheelchairs or hand cranks by disabled participants. Races that wish to allow any of the above prohibited items must organize a separate start from runners.

CARA encourages race to prohibit participation with strollers and baby joggers due to safety concerns. If strollers or baby joggers are permitted, they must be required to start in the rear of the start corral.

**Medical Staff:** A minimum of two certified and insured medical personnel (may NOT include any race participants) must be present at the race site at least 60 minutes prior to the start time and remain until either 30 minutes after the course close, or at least 15 minutes after the last finisher. These persons may be volunteers or paid staff. Medical staff should be placed near the finish line. If the start and finish are not in close proximity, additional staff should be placed at the start line area. Placement of additional medical personnel at each aid station and as on-course bicycle medics is recommended. Medical personnel must have on-site access to at least basic first aid and lifesaving supplies. Races should make note that mass participation races and those 10 miles and longer should expect a greater probability of medical issues on course and should have additional medical staff.

**Ambulance Support:** It is highly recommended that a dedicated ALS ambulance/s be contracted for the event. Best practices are for ambulance support to be present at the start, at each aid station, and at the finish line anytime participants are present or passing at those areas during the race. Ambulance staff may count towards minimum medical staff requirements.

If race does not have dedicated ambulance support, the race must notify local EMS of the event, its start time, its end time, course route, and how to quickly access the event in case of emergency. Keep in mind that the course route may block or hinder emergency response.

**Security:** Race must meet all security requirements required by local municipalities and venue owner / operators to insure the safety of the participants, spectators and community.

**Event Staff Communication:** Races must have a communication system (example: two-way radios or cell phones with a phone contact lists) in place for all event staff, key volunteers, volunteer group leaders, and volunteers working away from a group leader.

**Emergency Action Plan:** An Emergency Action Plan should be devised that includes event staff and volunteer responses medical emergencies, hazardous weather conditions, conditions and procedures for delay and cancellation, an evacuation plan, and how to manage participants who are not able to complete the race.

Races must agree not to proceed if lightning has been present within six miles of any part of the race site or course within 30 minutes or if it is highly probable that lightning will strike within this range during the course of the event.

**Event Alert System:** Use of the nationally standardized Event Alert System (EAS) is recommended. When in use EAS colored flags or signs should be located at the start, at each aid station, and at the finish area. When in use the EAS level must be announced and explained at the start and any possibility for a change to another EAS level should be announced as well. Learn more about EAS with an internet search of "RRCA Event Alert System".

**Timing:** Race results must be produced accurately through a results management system that can produce printed and online results within a timely manner. Races of all sizes are highly encouraged to time using a chip/rfid timing system managed by an experienced professional. Races with 500 or more expected finishers must time using a chip/rfid system. Races with fewer than 500 expected finishers may use a manual system (i.e. chute, pull tags, key pad, barcode scanners, etc...). Races must advertise their timing method prior to registration (i.e. "chip-timed" or "manual timing") and if chip/rfid timing make clear whether a start line mat/read will allow for "chip times" or only "gun times". Note, a chip timing system without a start line mat/read does not produce what runners refer to as "chip-time". It is highly recommended that when chip/rfid timing is in use races implement a start line mat/read to allow for chip times, not only gun times.

**Back-Up Timing System:** Races must have a back-up timing system in place such as a manual method and or a time stamped video recording of the finish line that allows for review and re-creation of finish results if the primary system should fail or there is a results protest. Races must have a generator or back-up battery power for timing equipment and results production.

**Awards Categories:** At minimum awards must be provided for at least three deep, male and female, for overall finish, and age groups in the following 10-year age groups: 19 & Under, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70 & Over. It is highly recommended that races use 5-year age groups as follows: 14 & Under, 15-19,

20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, 75-79, 80-84 and 85 & Over. Additional age groups or blends of five- and 10-year groups may be implemented at the race's discretion.

**Place Determination:** The overall winner (for each gender) must be the first official runner to cross the finish line, regardless of chip-times. Race's should inform their timer of this requirement pre-race.

**Results:** Races must display at the race full printed results or provide access to digitally displayed race results at the race site (i.e. video screens, computer look-up stations, print outs, or live mobile results) within a timely manner of the race finish. Races must post full results or a direct link to full race results on the race's web site on the day of the race. Results must include at minimum each finisher's full name, overall place, age group place, and official finish time.

**Ceremony:** An awards ceremony with amplified sound capabilities must be held for overall awards. All other awards may be distributed either through ceremony or by on-site pick-up at the discretion of the race. If awards are not able to be provided on-site in a timely manner, the race must offer to mail awards to recipients at no cost to the participants.

**Toilets:** An appropriate number of toilets must be provided within close proximity of the start line with at least one toilet available per 50 runners registered. When counted toilets are located within gender restricted restrooms, these toilets may only be counted as 0.75 each towards the required total. Any on-course toilets, and those not within close proximity to the start may NOT be included in minimums. When the finish line or post-race area is not within close proximity of start line toilets, additional toilets must be available within close proximity of the finish line in a minimum amount equal to one-quarter the required minimums for the start line area. All events must abide by ADA requirements, including insuring that at least 5% of toilets are ADA accessible.

**Gear Check:** Gear check (at no additional cost to the participant) is required for all events located within the City of Chicago and at all events where reasonable parking accommodation is not available for all participants within 0.5 miles of the start/finish, or where it is reasonable to expect many participants will use public transportation or may bike to the event. Gear check should be available at least 60 minutes prior to the start and until at least 30 minutes after the course close or 15 minutes after the last official finisher. This area must be secure and supervised at all times, and a method to organize and identifying participant's gear must be in place.

**Headphones:** It is recommended that races prohibit or strongly recommended not participating with headphones or personal speakers.

### Start Area Considerations

**Start Area Management:** Event staff or volunteers must be assigned to keep the start area clear of non-participants, participants with prohibited items (i.e. pets, bikes, etc...) and of potential bandits (i.e. unregistered runners attempting to participate). Staff must direct participants with strollers and baby joggers (if allowed) to line up in the rear of the start corral.

**Hydration:** At minimum water must be available pre-race within close proximity of the start line.

**Pace / Corral Signs:** Signage and direction must be in place to line up participants by expected pace at the start line to ensure that runner flow at the start is fluid and safe. Signs may be used for pace per mile or finish time through the start area. Or, if start corrals/waves are being implemented, signs for each wave or corral must be posted, and participants are either pre-assigned to a wave/corral or an explanation of how to choose the correct wave/corral must be provided.

**Start Line Announcements:** A system of amplified sound (PA system preferred, bull horn, or similar for smaller events is acceptable) is required to allow for communicating with participants at the start line. Brief and concise instructions should be provided after runners have gathered at the start, but prior to the start time, regarding starting procedures, Event Alert System levels (if system is in use), course instructions and any other critical information participants need to safely and successfully complete the race. The race must inform participants of any roadways where traffic may be present during pre-race announcements.

The Nation Anthem, dignitary speeches, and / or sponsor recognition should be completed prior to the scheduled start time and start of final instructions.

No announcements should be made within 30 seconds of the start. The start should be signaled with either the firing of a starting pistol, the sounding of a horn or other non-verbal audible signal. The additional use of a visual start command (i.e. USATF arm signals) is recommended to assist the hearing impaired or those out of range audible signals.

**Start Time:** The race must begin on-time even if participants are still arriving, unless there are safety concerns (weather, traffic, etc...) that require a delayed start. Dignitary or sponsor speeches, National Anthem and performances should be complete well before the scheduled start time.

### Course Considerations

**Course Measurement:** Course must be accurately communicated and course must have an active USATF certification for measurement.

**Initial Stretch:** The first 200-meters or 220-yards of the course after the start line should remain at least the same width as the start line, so runners are not funneled together too abruptly. The course design should avoid turns prior to 200 meters or 220-yards into the race course.

**Course Marshals:** A course marshal must be placed to direct participants at every turn and change of direction, and preferably at every intersection. Course marshals must be easily distinguishable using any of the following: specific clothing/uniform, wearing of a Hi-Viz vest, holding a flag, a visible sign, and / or similar item.

**Police / Traffic Management:** Race must provide police and / or traffic management services as required by permits and local municipalities to control the safety of the course. Police and traffic management persons may not be used as course marshals. They should only be assigned to manage traffic and safety on course, and dedicated course marshals should be in place at any

turn or change of direction even if police or traffic management services are in place.

**Race Leader:** A lead cyclist or lead vehicle must be in place that is visible to the overall race leader throughout the race from at least the start and until leader is through the final turn before the finish.

**Race Trail:** A vehicle must patrol or trail the last participant of the race with capabilities to pick up and transport participants who are unable to finish. If the course closes prior to the last finisher completing the race, the trail vehicle must direct all remaining participants to move to sidewalks and off roadways if applicable.

**Distance Markers:** At minimum each mile must be clearly marked with a highly visible sign that may reasonably be seen from a distance. Use of only ground markings is not sufficient. Use of display clocks or split time readers is recommended, but not required.

**Directional Markers:** Each turn or major intersection must be clearly marked with a highly visible arrow that may reasonably be seen from a distance. Use of only ground markings is not sufficient.

**Road Closures:** At minimum all roadways greater than two lanes (i.e. one lane each direction), any roadways with speed limits above 25 MPH, any roadways that have stop lights, any roadways with center painted lines, and any roadways that may experience consistent traffic flow must be closed and staff with police and / or traffic management. If only partial lane closures are occurring, or the race runs in the curb lane, the lane/s being used by the course must be separated from traffic flow by cones or similar. The course design should avoid routes that cross active railways where the race could be stopped for passing trains.

**Aid Stations:** On-course aid stations must be present for all races of 5K distance or longer. For a 5K race an aid station must be present at a location at or between the 1.5 and 2 mile mark. For races longer than 5K an aid station must be present at a location approximately every 2.5 miles. Aid stations may be provided more often. Races held in hot weather conditions should be prepared for higher need and greater frequency of aid stations. Races in cool weather conditions must not discount the need for fluids and aid stations.

On-course aid stations must provide at minimum water. It is highly recommended to provide both water and sports drink. At minimum enough water should be available to provide each participant at least one 3-4 ounce serving at each station. When sports drink is also provided an additional amount at least equal to two-thirds to three-fourths of the required water amount must be available.

Aid Stations must serve fluids in pre-poured paper cups. Races must not use plastic or Styrofoam cups due to safety reasons, as these are a trip/slip hazard as participants drop cups on the ground. When both water and sports drink are provided each should be provided in a paper cup of a different color or design in order to distinguish to participants what is being served. Aid Station volunteers should call out what is in each cup when passing out fluids, and each volunteers should only be distributing one type of fluid to avoid participant confusion as to what they are receiving.

When water and sports drink are being provided tables providing sports drink must precede those providing water. When energy gels or solid food are provided at an aid station these items should be placed prior to fluid tables. Each volunteer should be assigned to distribute only one type of fluid or food.

Volunteers at each aid station should be assigned to manage garbage, and to rake up cups throughout the race to avoid trip/slip hazards.

**Toilets:** It is recommended, but not required, that toilets be available at each aid station for races 10K and longer at a ratio of at least 1 per 1,000 runners.

**Medical:** It is recommended, but not required, that medical staff be present at each aid station in addition to medical staff at the finish line. If medical staff are not available to place on course, the events finish area medical staff or ambulance should be ready and able to respond to on-course medical needs.

### **Finish Area Considerations**

**Finish Stretch:** The course design should avoid turns within the final 200 meters or 220-yards of the race course. For a reasonable distance prior to the final line, fencing or flagging should be erected to secure the area to only finishers and event staff / volunteers.

**Finish Corral:** The finish line corral must be bordered with fencing or flagging to secure the area to only finishers and event staff / volunteers.

**Finish Area Management:** Event staff or volunteers must be assigned to keep the finish area clear of non-participants, participants with prohibited items (i.e. pets, bikes, etc...) and of potential bandits (i.e. unregistered runners attempting to participate). Event staff or volunteers must be assigned to keep timing and results production areas clear of non-event staff/volunteers to allow for unobstructed work by event staff to produce results.

### ***Finish Line Hydration / Food:***

Required: Within the rear of the finish line corral, or in a nearby post-race area, race must provide at minimum water, and preferably water and sports drink. Recommended: It is recommended that other basic post-race foods be provided such as bagels, fruit, bars, etc...