Event First Aid Guidance

Guidance for competition providers across all disciplines

No event is the same. Year on year there may be similarities between events but there is always likely to be something that is slightly different. Add into the mix track and field athletics where different events take place, different implements are thrown, and different age groups are included and often creation of a risk assessment or first aid framework can feel quite daunting. The information below provides some general principles for consideration when approaching your athletics event.

Purpose of First Aid

The purpose of a First Aider at an event is to react to ill health or an injury that has occurred. This reduces further injury, and promotes faster recovery. It is to make sure that those injured can access the required definitive care fairly quickly.

Good Practice – this is part of an industry wide agreement (Purple Guide) on sporting events.

Event organisers should be appointing a minimum of 2 first aiders, with an additional 2 first aiders or first responders per extra 1000 attendees.

- Why two first aiders?
  If only one first aider is appointed, and an incident occurs, the rest of the event is left without a first aider. Therefore, the event should be stopped until that incident is fully dealt with.

- Who can be a first aider?
  First aid can be provided by professional organisations, venues or potentially people within your event who may have a first aid qualification, such as an official or other member of the event.

- What constitutes an attendee?
  Anyone who is under the direct control of the event. This could be athlete, official, spectator, parent etc.

- Where do I find more information?
  The purple guide provides guidance for all event organisers at https://www.thepurpleguide.co.uk/

First Aider vs First Responder

- First Aider – trained in bumps and grazes and management of soft tissue injuries.
- First Responder – normally trained in more advanced skills such as oxygen and airway usage. They typically deal with more serious injuries.

Competent first aiders should be identified by the event organiser. This can be a professional body or other suitably qualified first aider. For example, emergency first aid at work qualification does include wound packing and trauma. In theory someone with this qualification could deal with first aid at an event. However, that individual may not feel competent to handle all incidents which may occur and so the discussion must take place before appointment is confirmed for the event.
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If you are using an external first aid provider, make sure that they have their own liability insurance.

A first aider who is providing incidental first aid is covered by UKA insurance. You may have an official or volunteer who is already an emergency first aider – they could operate as a first aider at the event if they felt competent and able to do so, by complementing a wider first aid provision. Trained volunteers attending the event in another role may be able to assist in an emergency, but you should still have dedicated first aid provision for the event.

First Aid Risk Assessment

It wouldn’t be expected for the event organiser to complete a first aid risk assessment. However, the event manager should include within the risk assessment what the provision for first aid is, who will carry out first aid, and that the first aider will carry out their own risk assessment of the event. It would be difficult to complete a first aid risk assessment without being the person in control of first aid. The organiser must ensure that within communication with your first aiders that they are happy to complete the first aid risk assessment.

- An England Athletics webinar on Risk Assessments and First Aid provision can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nw_nrRe3R74&t=28s
  Section 45.31 minutes into the video is related to First Aid.
- Further information on event risk assessments can also be found in this online video or on the UK Athletics website: https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/health-safety/

What if things go wrong?

Ensure that you confirm your first aid provision prior to the day of the event. Should your first aid provider let you down close to or on the day of the event, the following steps could be followed to ensure that the event can still go ahead:

- Liaise with the Meeting Manager or Referee and, if necessary, temporarily delay the competition.
- Contact any previously-identified medically qualified volunteers.
- In the event that there is insufficient first aid cover from within the volunteers, make an announcement advising that your first aid provider has not arrived and appeal for any medically qualified volunteers to identify themselves.
- Consult with volunteers to ascertain their medical qualifications and willingness to assist to allow the event to proceed.
- Take note of names, qualifications and mobile phone contact numbers of volunteers.
- If any of the medically-qualified volunteers are already involved as an event volunteer (eg. course marshal, field judge, etc.), ask them to stand down from their allocated role and identify replacements.
- Identify who has first aid equipment and make it available to the identified volunteer first aid team. This may be provided by the venue, club or first aider, for example.
- Consult with the identified volunteer first aid team to agree their respective location(s) and the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.
- Allocate event radio(s) to the volunteer first aid team, if used during the event.
- Complete a dynamic risk assessment of the situation and document it.
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