

Approved by: OI Executive Committee
Date Created: 21-Aug-2023
Last Updated: n/a

1. GUIDELINES BRIEF & PURPOSE

To provide event organisers and landowners with guidance on how we are responsible for respecting our natural environment.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all OI approved activities across Ireland and will be included as an appendix to the OI Rules of Orienteering.

3. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

OI encourages our members to refer to the following documents which provided the basis for this policy:

- a. **International Orienteering Federation (IOF)** – Orienteering & the Environment
- b. **Sport Ireland** – Policy on Sport & Physical Activity in the Outdoors
- c. **Leave No Trace Ireland** – Online Educational Resources

4. OUR COMMITMENT

As orienteers, we appreciate that a healthy environment is critical to the success of our sport. We recognise that we have a duty to ensure that our activities do not have an adverse effect on the terrain in which they are held. OI expects that our clubs and event organisers acknowledge the individual nature of each area to be used.

5. EVENT PARTICIPATION MANAGEMENT

Our events attract numbers from 50 to over 300 depending on the event type. Competitors at all events are divided into categories, start at different time intervals, and on different courses (apart from a mass start event). This ensures that our events have a negligible impact on the countryside. Our European partners conduct events with over 10,000 participants in the same manner and have proven that this method is consistent with having a minimal impact to the environment.

6. ENGAGEMENT WITH LANDOWNERS & LOCAL PARTIES

OI encourages all members to engage with landowners and local groups to gain a further understanding of any particular environmental consideration in an area being considered for an event. By maintaining a good and understanding relationship with these parties, our sport will continue to thrive, while having a minimal impact on the local environment. This engagement should also take into consideration any sensitive times in the area, such as nesting season. Courses should be routed around such sensitive areas to eliminate the risk of damage to the environment or ecology of the area, while ruling these areas out of bounds is encouraged. Competitors who enter areas that are deemed out of bounds are disqualified from the event as per the Rules of Orienteering. Should any damage occur, the organiser should inform the landowner after the event.

7. LEAVE NO TRACE PRINCIPLES

As members of Leave No Trace Ireland, OI and our clubs support their principles in relation to the environment and how we impact it. The “7 Principles” of Leave No Trace Ireland provide easily understood practices that can be adapted to any environment we operate in.

7 Principles of Leave No Trace

- **Plan Ahead & Prepare**
- **Be Considerate of Others**
- **Respect Farm Animals & Wildlife**
- **Travel & Camp on Durable Ground**
- **Leave What You Find**
- **Dispose of Waste Properly**
- **Minimise the Effects of Fire**

Further information on these principles can be found at leavenotraceireland.org

8. RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

a. **Sustainable Practices**

Consider whether the use of plastic bags for event maps is appropriate, and whether a waterproof map is a more suitable and sustainable option. Should plastic bags be used, competitors should be encouraged to provide their own, or they should be recycled for other events.

b. **Travelling to Events & Parking**

Events are typically held in remote areas where the use of public transport is not an option. Orienteers are encouraged to carpool when attending events. Organising clubs should consider appointing a transport lead to coordinate carpooling.

c. **Event Location**

Organisers should consider the event location and its proximity to where the competitors will come from to reduce travel requirements. If public transport is available, details should be provided in the event information.

d. **Event Parking**

Parking areas should be located as close as possible to the event. Should a field be used for parking, every effort must be made to ensure the disturbance to the land is minimal.

e. **Toilets at Events**

For major events, Organisers should ensure that adequate toilet facilities are available. For other events, organisers should consider the provision of toilets where possible.

- f. **Rubbish**
Competitors should be encouraged to bring their own cups/utensils etc if refreshments are provided onsite, and to bring their rubbish away with them afterwards. Event rubbish should be sorted to ensure proper disposal and/or recycling. No rubbish should be left on the event area.
- g. **Event Promotion & Signage**
Event promotion should be achieved using electronic means rather than paper flyers etc. Event signage should be robust and reusable for multiple events.
- h. **Dogs**
Any requests from landowners that dogs should be excluded from the competition area, or otherwise restricted, must be respected.
- i. **Water**
Attendees should be encouraged to bring their own water. If water is to be provided, reusable containers are encouraged.
- j. **Fire**
In no instance should a fire be lit at an orienteering event. Smoking in the competition area is prohibited.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERS

OI engages with and is a subscriber to Leave No Trace Ireland. This allows us to remain up to date on the current impact of events on our environment. OI also interacts with other environmental agencies from time to time, further ensuring that our knowledge on the current environmental situation is up to date.

10. POLICY REDUNDANCY

This policy may be updated from time to time by the Executive Committee.