

Orienteering Association of Hong Kong  
Code of Practice – Conservation of The Environment

Orienteering is a sport in which the competitors navigate through the terrain, visiting a number of control points marked on the ground aided only by map and compass. Orienteering is at its best when run in natural terrain with intricate features.

The development of orienteering cannot be possible without a sustainable natural environment. We must undertake to ensure that any impact caused as a result of our event on the environment is kept to a minimum; and practices must be implemented to avoid causing any adverse impacts on the environment.

The International Orienteering Federation had adopted an environmental policy at its general assembly in July 1998. The Orienteering Association of Hong Kong has adopted the following principles. They are:

- To continue to be aware of the need to preserve a healthy environment and to integrate this principle into the fundamental conduct of orienteering;
- To ensure that the rules of competition and best practice in the organization of events are consistent with the principle of respect for the environment and the protection of flora and fauna;
- To co-operate with landowners, government authorities and environmental organizations so that best practice may be defined;
- To take particular care to observe local regulations for environmental protection, to maintain the litter-free nature of orienteering and to take proper measures to avoid pollution;
- To include environmental good practice in the education and training of orienteers and officials;
- To heighten the awareness of worldwide environmental problems so that we may adopt, apply and popularize principles to safeguard orienteering's sensitive use of the countryside.

## CODE OF PRACTICE

This code of practice is intended to serve as a guide to organizers and competitors to ensure that our activities have minimal impact on both natural and competition features of our competitions; and to prevent the generation of any adverse impacts.

### Environmental Standard for Orienteering events

Orienteering shall operate within local environmental standard and within the framework agreed between the organizer, local authority and landowner.

No long-term or significant damage to local flora and fauna, terrain or archaeological features shall result from an orienteering event.

Any expected environmental impact should only have a temporary effect. In any case, should no longer be discernable after 12 months.

No litter, equipment or extraneous material shall remain after the conclusion of the event.

### The Terrain

Any rights of nature conservation, forestry, etc. in the area shall be respected.

The environment is sensitive: wildlife may be disturbed and the ground as well as the vegetation may suffer from overuse. The environment also includes people living in the competition area, walls, fences, cultivated land, buildings and other constructions, etc. There may also be other person who has right to be present in the area and their presence must be respected too.

It is usually possible to find ways to avoid interference with these sensitive areas without damage. Experience and research have shown that even large events can be organized in sensitive areas without permanent damage if correct precautions are taken and the courses are well planned.

It is very important that the course planner ensures that there is access to the chosen terrain and that any sensitive areas in the terrain are discovered in advance.

The organizer must consider whether an area is capable of sustaining the scale of the event without excessive impacts on the physical environment or conflict with other users. Seasonal variation of vegetation-plant propagation, wildlife-breeding period should also be considered.

Orienteering is at its best when run in natural terrain with intricate features. However, suitable orienteering terrain in Hong Kong is limited and opportunity of developing new terrain is restricted. Fixture rotation and competition scale management will be implemented to ensure sustainable development of orienteering.

Night orienteering events may be organized to enhance development of orienteering skill of runners and may be considered an event to develop independence and self-confidence of the participants. In consideration of the organizational responsibility, risk and the adverse environmental impact on wildlife, night orienteering event shall be held sparingly; and in any case, held in the evening rather than overnight.

### Event management

Signage, control markers and other event equipment must not cause any permanent damage to trees and properties.

Any event equipment must be removed after the event.

All litters must be removed from the terrain by the organizer after the event. Competitors shall be responsible for their personal litters.

The lighting of fire at the event should not be allowed and smoking is prohibited at the event.

Respect the rights of other users of the area when an orienteering event is in progress. The organizer should avoid putting controls in areas where large number of public would gather or pass through.

When a public announcement system is being used, minimize the spread of noise outside the assembly area.

The Event Organizer is responsible for environmental impact assessment of the event according to this code of practice and considers actions necessary. He should report his assessment and actions to the controller.

The Event Organizer is responsible for the management and disposal of waste produced at the event. The responsibility may be delegate to an event official.

### The Course

When controls are being sited in sensitive areas, the course setter must consider controlling the number of competitors passing through, to minimize any environmental impact.

Areas of environmental importance should be marked as out-of-bound area to avoid causing adverse impact.

Avoid placing controls on or near sites of cultural, environmental importance to avoid causing disturbance in the area.

When there are animals which flee rather than hide when disturbed resides in the competition area, the course setter should consider to reduce any disturbance to these animal by limiting the number of competitors running through and the direction of the flow.

The use of spike shoes is prohibited in Hong Kong. The use of stud running shoes by competitors may be managed to avoid damaging sensitive terrain surface.

### The Competitor

All persons taking part in an orienteering event shall respect the environment; protect wildlife, flora and fauna.

All persons taking part in an orienteering event shall observe local regulations, competition instructions, respect the rights of local residents and other people in the competition area.

Competitors shall not start any fire and smoking is prohibited in the event center and the competition area.

They shall not litter nor pollute water.

Avoid causing damage to sensitive areas such as plantations, field, wetland, marshes and soft earth embankments. Mossy rock surface should be avoided to prevent damage, they may be slippery and dangerous too.

Avoid disturbing plants and wildlife during the competition.

The use of spike running shoes is prohibited.

Competitors shall be responsible for their personal litters. Remove your own rubbish. Do not leave it to the organizers to deal with.

Abide by countryside code.