

Multisport

Multisport is a combination of activities. The most common activities used in multisport are kayaking, road cycling, off-road cycling, road running, mountain running and tramping, but there are many more. Each activity has its own guidelines, risk management practices, current accepted practices, coaching techniques and sources of information.



Photo by: Jeff McEwan

For multisport events involving young people, consider locating the activities off roads, e.g. within school or sports grounds next to swimming pools.

Multisport races that involve navigation are usually termed Adventure Races. There is some overlap with rogaining (see **Orienteering**) in that multisport groups will sometimes organise these events.

Triathlons are multisport races with a distinct character. They involve three specific sports: swimming, road cycling and road running. These vary only in the distances involved.

You should read the following information in conjunction with **Section A** of this resource.

Competencies of outdoor leaders

Typically, outdoor leaders in multisport events are event organisers.

Qualifications

The following qualifications are relevant:

- > Multisport Kayak. New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association (NZOIA). For trainers.
- > There are no specific overall qualifications for organising multisport events, but a qualification in recreation or event management may be relevant.

- > Each discipline's qualifications may be relevant.

Knowledge and skills

- > An affinity or experience with each discipline involved in the particular event, or the skill to involve and listen to a team of advisors.
- > The compliance issues that potentially affect the disciplines, e.g. road traffic management when events use public roads. See **Resources**.
- > Awareness of various certificates, e.g. kayaking certificates of competency and certificates for rope skills, and minimum entry requirements that should be set for the course and the alternate course.
- > Preparation of safety plans. This includes planning skills to:
 - Ensure that a suitable alternate route is available in adverse weather, e.g. low temperatures, unstable snow or flooded rivers.
 - Ensure that all competitors are accounted for, not only at the end of the event or activity but also during the event or activity.
 - Evacuate injured, exhausted or hypothermic competitors at any point during an activity.
- > Route marking.

Competencies of assistant leaders

These depend on the role they undertake. If they have responsibility for a section of the event, e.g. kayaking, cycling or running, they should have the skills required for that particular section. This includes awareness of the safety plan and environmental guidelines as they relate to that section.

Responsibilities of outdoor leaders

Before the activity

- > Complete the course, noting specific hazards, e.g. logs in the river, river braids that could take participants to hazardous areas, and steep descents on a mountain bike course. Alternatively, delegate or contract out this task to a skilled person.

Document these specific hazards and ensure that all participants receive this information.

- > Determine the level of certification you will require as an entry point for the event.
- > Decide where you will base first aid points – choose the areas where injuries are most likely to occur.
- > Determine where you will station marshals. This could be to:
 - Clarify directions for the competitors.
 - Account for all competitors.
- > Determine those sections that require 'tail end charlies' (safety officers following behind the last competitor or a support vehicle for competitors who withdraw).
- > Identify the areas that you need to explain at event briefings or in competitor notes, e.g:
 - Where support crews, transitions, first aid stations, toilets and withdrawal points will be.
 - Where you will enforce cut-off times.
- > Confirm where you need compliance plans and land access permission.
- > Confirm that there is no conflict with running the event at that location, date and time.
- > Contact any landowners, local authorities or government departments, e.g. conservation or police, that you need to notify or gain approval from.
- > Document the communication plan that will apply during the event. This includes all briefings and contact people: marshals, landowners, local authority contacts and government contacts.
- > Document what you require of the marshals and brief them, e.g. environment set-up and take-down, responsibilities, equipment needs and escalation processes. Provide the marshals with the safety plan, including traffic management plans, for their area of responsibility.
- > Determine the contingency plan for adverse weather.
- > Document the course, including all hazards that you need to manage and the management plan for each one. This includes documenting:
 - All intersections on public roads.
 - All areas where participants enter and exit a public road.



Photo by: Jeff McEwan

- What you will have available at the finish line, e.g. medical services.
- > Document instructions for the support crews. This includes:
 - Transition locations.
 - Routes to the transition locations (these are often different from the participants' route).
 - How the transitions are to be set up and managed.
 - Parking management.
 - Traffic management on public roads. See **Resources**.
 - Two-way traffic management in narrow areas (often transition areas have one-lane access, e.g. a farmer's gate).
- > Prepare a registration form and have each participant sign it as a means of confirming information disclosure and tracking who is on the course.
- > Brief the participants.
 - Disclose the nature of the risks and management strategies to the participants, and the participants' parents or caregivers when the participants are less than 18 years old. Also, discuss the hazards and mitigation measures (including minimum certificate requirements), and provide them with the option to withdraw if they wish.
 - Document the briefing to ensure that all points are covered and there is a record.
- > Obtain information on the participants':
 - Health and fitness (including swimming ability for water-based activities), and ensure that they carry any personal medication, e.g. asthma inhalers.
 - Emergency contact details.

During the activity

- > Ideally, the event organiser should not take a specific role during the activity, e.g. marshalling. You should be free to co-ordinate all the activities involved in the event.
- > Brief the participants, consistent with the competitor notes and the briefing notes. Other than changes due to the weather, there should not be any surprises on the day.
- > Update competitors on the weather conditions and how this might affect them. **Note:** a very hot day can be as hazardous as a very cold day.
- > Ensure that all marshals and hazard management measures, e.g. traffic management plans, are in place and communicated to all relevant people.
- > Contact all marshals and check-points throughout the event. Confirm times for leading and lagging participants and communicate this to marshals at later stages of the event.

After the activity

- > Ensure that all hazard management areas, e.g. cones and signs, are taken down.
- > Debrief the marshals to find what went right, what went wrong, what could be better, what unexpected events occurred and what you need to document for next time.
- > Document incident reports for all incidents, noting the causes, and assess what you need to change to avoid recurrence.
- > Ask for feedback from the participants:
 - Pre-event organisation, e.g. information sent, race briefing and event requirements.
 - The event itself, e.g. course marking, marshals, level of risk and toilet locations.
 - Post-event, e.g. finishing arrangements, post-race recovery services, and first aid.
- > Update the documentation based on the feedback from the marshals and the participants.
- > Thank the marshals, participants, local authority and any other organisations involved.
- > Report where appropriate, e.g. the National Incident Database.

Key risks or potential losses

Leaders must consider ways to eliminate, isolate or minimise:

- > Death or injury.
- > Hypothermia.
- > Hyperthermia.
- > Hypoglycaemia.
- > Soft tissue injury (sprains and strains).

See the key risks or potential losses listed under the specific activities.

Remember to identify and manage the hazards for the support crew as well as the participants.

Environmental management

See the environment management topic in each specific outdoor activity. Also, see **Orienteering**.

You need to ensure that you follow the New Zealand Water Care Code. See www.doc.govt.nz/Explore

Emergency plan

Your plan should include the points in **Before the activity** above.

How do I judge the quality of an outdoor provider?

Most multisport events are organised by volunteers who are judged by reputation.

Measures of quality for outdoor providers include:

- > A safety plan, externally audited and approved, and available on request.
- > Relevant outdoor leader qualifications, including first aid certificates, and appropriate driving licences if they are driving the group.
- > Logged, recent experience of the outdoor leaders.
- > OutdoorsMark or Qualmark accreditation.
- > Referees' contact details (and ensure that you contact them).

Organisations

There is no national multisport organisation, although there are clubs throughout New Zealand. See the organisations listed for each specific activity.

Department of Conservation (DOC) **www.doc.govt.nz**

Resources

See the resources listed under specific outdoor activities.

Griffin, C. (2002). *New Zealand outdoor first aid*. Wellington: New Zealand Mountain Safety Council.

Haddock, C. (2004). *Outdoor safety – risk management for outdoor leaders*. Wellington: New Zealand Mountain Safety Council.

National Incident Database **www.incidentreport.org.nz**

www.multisportcalendar.com

www.multisport.co.nz

www.transit.govt.nz Transit New Zealand's code of practice for temporary traffic management.

Thanks to Shane Ross, Hutt Multisports Club, for assisting with this information.