

6. Missing Competitors

In the case of a missing competitor, i.e. not back by course close time (also see the Risk Assessment):

- a. Don't panic. Try to find out as much information as possible.
- b. Check to see if they are definitely still out there, i.e. ask if anyone has seen them, or check if their car / transport is still present.
- c. Determine if they came alone or if someone is waiting for them.
- d. Your response will then depend on a number of factors:
 - Age, experience and competence of the missing competitor.
 - Their approximate start time.
 - Weather conditions and terrain.
 - Number of club members available to help in any search.
- e. Depending on the above, call in Mountain Rescue as soon as possible (999 using the mobile or landline identified in the Risk Assessment), especially if the weather conditions are poor, if the missing person is young and inexperienced, or if you suspect an injury.
- f. Only initiate a search if you are confident you are not going to put any more people at risk.
- g. Consider how many people are there to help – NEVER start a search on your own.
- h. If you are on your own, phone Mountain Rescue IMMEDIATELY, provide a sensible Grid Reference to meet them (identified in Risk Assessment). Wait for them to arrive and then pass on as much information as you can.
- i. People should only go out and search IF PROPERLY EQUIPPED TO DO SO, i.e. they have suitable clothing / footwear for the terrain, weather and underfoot conditions, sufficient battery power in head torches, etc.
- j. Bear in mind that after their runs, many people may not be in a position to help in any search, i.e. already wet / tired / low head torch batteries, inappropriate clothing / footwear, etc.
- k. If enough people are available, start the search whilst waiting for the Mountain Rescue to arrive. Any search should start out along the appropriate course.
- l. If Mountain Rescue are called, clear instructions as to the event location and meeting point should be given (the Grid Reference), and someone should be at this location awaiting their arrival.
- m. Mountain Rescue should be called NO LATER THAN 1 HOUR after courses close time if the missing competitor has not been found or re-appeared.
- n. For more information regarding a missing competitor situation, see the BOF event safety guidelines:
http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/downloads/documents/events_appendix_e.pdf