Guidelines for Leading a Group Run

Group runs accomplish many goals for a club or training program; they bring people together, both seasoned and newer runners. They create a social atmosphere for the group that supports a runner's training needs, and more. Organizing and leading a group run is an important responsibility. To help ensure that the group runs are well organized and safe, the following guidelines have been set up for leading a group run.

- **Reflective clothing**
  Everyone in the group should wear reflective clothing if running in the dark or if it will get dark during the run.

- **No-one gets left behind**
  The group should follow the "ranger rules", which means leave no one behind for any reason (bathroom breaks, "need to walk", twisted ankle, etc).

- **Group health**
  The run leader should engage people in conversation—especially if they seem to be in distress. Watch for signs of tiredness and spontaneous stumbling, this could signify a problem. If necessary appoint a pace leader to take the rest of the group back to the Centre so that the run leader can run/walk separately with the unwell runner.

- **New members**
  The run leader should identify new members and take extra care that being new to the group they are fully incorporated into the group run.

- **Horsham Joggers Accident Book**
  Any incident where a member falls or becomes injured or has an altercation of any kind to be reported following the run. Blank copies of the Accident Report Form are on the website and paper copies are kept in the HJ Race Book which is stored behind the Reception Desk at BBH Leisure Centre. Once the form has been completed it should be emailed/sent to the Secretary (info@horshamjoggers.co.uk) as soon as possible after the accident.

- **Back marker**
  If the group has a lot of members in it the run leader should recruit a back of the pack runner or sweeper who makes sure that no-one gets left behind.

- **Mobiles**
  In the case of confrontations or emergencies mobiles can be useful on a run. You can call the police, take a picture of a scene, and make certain someone knows where you are at a moment's notice.

- **Obey traffic signs**
  Everyone in the group should obey all traffic signs. The group leader should NEVER run the group against a light or through a stop sign. When crossing roads use a designated crossing point wherever possible. Mid-sections of a group tend to ignore traffic signals while following the front of the pack. This has been the number one reason why people get hit by cars on group runs.

- **Distance**
  Clearly outline the distance for a run. If the group is doing a 20 miler the run leader should identify water stops on the route and recruit volunteers to deliver water or

man water stops if none is readily available on the route. Alternatively if water stops are not possible members should carry their own water with them on the run.

- **Identifying non members**
  The run leader should make sure that all runners in the group are paid up members of the club as non-members are not included in the insurance.

- **"Rules of the Run"**
  These rules should include, but are not limited to:-
  - Stick to the designated route
  - No headphones allowed
  - Do not run more than two abreast especially on busy roads, pavements, or multi-use trails. The goal is to share the roads/trails, not hog them.
  - Be mindful of your language and conversation content. Adult conversation does happen on group runs, but it should not go so far as to create an uncomfortable atmosphere for the group.

- **Point out hazards**
  Work with your runners to stress the importance of paying attention to their surroundings. If there are tree roots, pot holes in the path make runners aware of them

- **Face traffic (except on sharp bends)**
  Use pavements and trails for group runs as much as possible, if you need to lead your group run on a road, face traffic and run no more than two abreast. This will allow oncoming motorists to see the group as opposed to driving upon the back of the pack. If there is a confrontation with a driver, follow the path of least violence. It's better to lose an argument than to lose a life. Use a mobile phone to document a confrontational driver.

- **Post run**
  The run leader should be the last one to leave after the run. Most health related problems such as heat stroke or heart attacks tend to occur in the down time immediately following a long group run.