



Road & Trail Race Sanction Criteria

(updated November 2025)

Athletics Ontario Sanction Application

As stated by Athletics Canada, your receipt of an Athletics Ontario Sanction formalizes the agreement that your race will adhere to these stipulated racing regulations and other relevant safety guidelines put forth by the governing body. This sanction criteria is applicable to Road, Trail, and snowshoe running races in Ontario.

Once approved, you will receive your Athletics Ontario Sanction logo from Athletics REG. Your logo is required on your website and registration page to illustrate to your participants that your race follows the quality and safety guidelines set forth by the governing body.

Your sanction logo is valid for the application year *only* and must be applied for each year. Do not place old sanction logos on following year races.



- *All sanctioned races are subject to a random safety audit*
- *Any race failing to follow the required sanctioned safety criteria may not be eligible for a sanction in the following year.*
 - *Clear modes of resolution will be required, in order to obtain a future sanction.*
- *Any race failing to follow the required sanction criteria on a repeated basis:*
 - *May be exempt from receiving a Sanction if race remains under the same race management*
 - *May be required to work with external safety officer*
- *If Sanction Criteria is not adhered to, insurance coverage may be null and void*

Safety

Required



Recommended

Medical and Aid

- An Emergency Action Plan must be in place, involving a basic plan in case of:
 - medical emergency
 - adverse weather conditions, or any other natural disaster
 - active aggression
- A qualified, dedicated, and identified, first aid attendant must be present for the duration of the race
- The Emergency Action Plan should also include:
 - **Communication** - notification, mode of communication between all parties (head aid station captains, course captains, medical, and volunteers) throughout the race course via walkie-talkie or cellular telephones
 - **Response** - expected *Plan of Action* in the moment
 - **Access** - Geographical access points
- **Signage and Wayfinding**
 - There must be a clear signage plan that is easy to follow and clearly visible, particular attention should be given to
 - Turnarounds
 - Distance markers
 - Flow of traffic

Medical and Aid

- A comprehensive medical response program be created under the direction of a qualified medical professional.
- **Aid Stations**
 - Your hydrations stations show a balance of fluid and electrolyte, and high caloric snacks
 - All aid stations must be easily accessible
 - Aid station volunteers must be clearly communicated via aid station captain aid station operations
- **Hygiene Guidelines**
 - Aid station volunteers instructed to hold the water at the bottom of the cup (not the rim), to mitigate any viral/bacterial spread and to make it easier for participants to grab and reduce spilling
 - Aid station volunteers provided with hand sanitizer/soap & water readily and gloves
- **Notes**
 - *Baby strollers are permitted however participants must use care and common sense not to disrupt participants*
 - *Dogs, on or off leash are not permitted in running races*

Safety

Required



- **Aid Station(s)**

- Aid stations placed minimally every 3km (including electrolyte fluid options for races over 10km and over, and at least every 5km for races over 20km)
 - If this is not possible, i.e. trail race with limited access to water, ensure clear communication to participants about self-hydration options such as hand-held hydration or hydration packs

- **Hydration Plan**

- Responsible hydration plan that considers the following:
 - Distance
 - Time of year
 - Course design
 - Participant profile

- **Course Management**

- If the race course is an out and back configuration, ensure clear and concise communication to participants about flow of running (clockwise/counterclockwise)
- Course must be measured by bicycle, GPS or Jones Wheel Counter, marked and clearly communicated prior to race day

Recommended

- **Aid Station Design**

- For races that occupy the entire road, aid stations placed on both sides of the road
- One sign ~100m before indicating upcoming aid station indicating aid station in order for participants to safely reroute across the course

- **Course Management**

- A lead vehicle (bike, motorcycle, vehicle)
- Confidence Markers (you are going the right way)
- Courses wishing to apply for Athletics Canada Course certification to confirm course measurement accuracy can do so **HERE**

- **Race Administration**

- Ensure race cancellation terms (with regards to potential race cancellation due to safety concerns) are communicated to participants during registration, noting that Arbitration process with regards to course timing and distance discrepancies
- Race organizers have a clear Crisis Communication Plan in place prior to the race to send to participants, in the case of significant injury, race disruption, or race cancellation

Safety

Required



Course Management

- Race day Communication: Clear communication in a scripted plan prior to race day about the race in order for participant preparation
 - Include potential environmental or course hazards that may exist (such as high heat or humidity, cold temperatures, potholes, railway tracks, black ice, poison ivy, sunrise/sunset times) in order for participant preparation

- **Traffic Management Plan**

- A clear traffic plan must exist that aims to reduce vehicle (bikes and cars) and pedestrian interaction, Intersections, and highly populated areas
- Traffic controlled at all intersections and parking lots in use that have access to the course
- Traffic cones (or other clear markings such as flags, if cones deemed improbable because of a narrow trail) along the entire route, except where the entire roadway is closed to traffic
- Ontario road races must have a Traffic Management plan that is Ontario Transportation Book 7 compliant

- **Participant Feedback Survey**

- Please ensure your participants have access to the AO Sanctioned Race Participant Feedback Survey

Required

- **Traffic Management Plan Continued**

- **Non-signalized intersections** - This must be a hard closure with barricades or orange/black barrels (TC-54) with a Road Closed sign (RB-92). It can be monitored by a Volunteer Course Marshal.
- **Soft Closures** - This applies to intersections where vehicles can pass safely through large gaps between runners. Volunteer Course Marshals are not permitted to direct traffic. If they do, the liability falls on the race director. Traffic directing must be carried out by a paid duty police officer or a traffic control flagger. In some municipalities, this may include traffic wardens, special constables, and police auxiliaries. If the situation is appropriate, Volunteer Course Marshals may approach drivers and advise them of the closure, designated detour alternatives, and to proceed when safe.

Read and understand the [Athletics Canada Race Director Guide](#)

Thank you for continuing to provide a safe and welcoming environment for your participants to enjoy, year after year. Please submit any inquiries to: sherylpreston@athleticsontario.ca

Apply for your race Sanction [HERE](#)