

EDINBURGH TRIATHLETES HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Edinburgh Triathletes is a club run by volunteers with no employees and as such there is no health & safety legislation which applies to the club's activities. Furthermore, the club membership acknowledges that no activity can be risk free and that part of the enjoyment of sport derives from an appropriate degree of challenge. However, the club membership wish to take reasonable steps to safeguard the health and wellbeing of club members and will do so in the following ways:

1. Members shall take reasonable responsibility for their own health & safety and for that of other members.
2. The club committee shall ensure that club training sessions are led by coaches who have appropriate qualifications.
3. Coaches who run club training sessions will maintain their knowledge and understanding of the health & safety guidelines published by British Triathlon and will endeavour to apply those guidelines whenever possible.
4. The club committee and/or coaches will ensure any facilities or venues used for club activities meet minimum standards with regards to the health & safety of those using the facility or venue.
5. The club committee and membership will fully support any coach who decides not to go ahead with a planned training session due to concerns about the welfare of participants.
6. The club committee and membership will fully support any coach who decides that a member cannot participate in a session where such participation would result in undue risk to the member or other participants.
7. The club committee will ensure that those members responsible for the organisation of club events (including club hosted races) have received appropriate training on health & safety considerations and that the running of such events complies with relevant legislation and best practice guidelines.
8. The club committee will appoint a Welfare Officer to be responsible for (amongst other things) specific policy and practice regarding the safeguarding of vulnerable club members.
9. The club committee will ensure that any coach working with members under the age of 18 on a regular basis holds a valid Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
10. The club committee will enable complaints and whistleblowing procedures to be operated.
11. The club committee will ensure that all existing and new club members are aware of this policy.

Some of these points are expanded upon in the sections below.

Responsibilities of Individual Members

General

It is important to be medically fit enough to participate in training or races. Edinburgh Triathletes recommends that members seek confirmation of their fitness from their doctor prior to participation.

Any member who has a medical condition, injury or impairment must ensure that the coach(es) taking the sessions they attend are aware.

When participating in club training sessions members must arrive on time and respect and adhere to instructions given by the coach(es).

Members must bring adequate and appropriate food, drink, clothing and equipment to club training sessions, considering the environment and expected conditions. Coaches can provide general advice on this if required.

Members attending club training sessions must take reasonable steps to ensure they have the skills and abilities required to safely participate in the session. They must also notify the coach(es) of their level of ability, particularly if they are a beginner and/or are not already known to the coach(es).

Members must advise the club of emergency contact details (this is currently facilitated via the membership application process each year). Note: the club will maintain a list of emergency contact details and ensure that it can be easily access by coaches.

Where a training session is taking part in a facility run by a 3rd party, members must abide by the rules and codes of conduct of that facility.

Participants under the age of 18 must provide the coach with a Parental Coaching Consent Form. Any participant failing to submit a form signed by a parent or guardian will not be allowed to participate in the session.

Pool Swimming

For pool swimming, members are advised that the minimum standard for participation is to be able to swim 100m without stopping and able to exit the water independently unless by prior discussion (e.g. in the case of a para swimmer) with the lead swim coach or appropriate club official.

Open Water Swimming

For open water swimming, members are advised that the minimum standard for participation is to be able to be able to swim 100m unaided, float on your back and put one arm in the air and tread water for a minimum of two minutes.

A bright swimming hat and a wetsuit are recommended. The need for a wetsuit varies with water temperature, as follows:

- at less than 14°C wetsuits are strongly recommended and the coach may refuse participation without one unless they are satisfied that the member has trained specifically for non-wetsuit cold water swimming
- between 14°C and 22°C wetsuits are considered optional
- above 22°C wetsuits are not recommended

The water must not be entered until all safety arrangements are in place and the coach(es) has indicated that it is safe to do so.

The following recommended practices can mitigate the risk of infection from waterborne pathogens: cover all cuts and abrasions with plasters; consider not swimming with deep cuts; minimise the amount of water ingested; wash hands in fresh water after swimming and before eating; take a full shower at the earliest opportunity; wash out any kit used; report any illness experienced after swimming to a doctor as soon as possible.

Cycling

A well-fitting helmet meeting standard BS EN 1078:1997 is mandatory, unless wearing such a helmet is not compatible with religious beliefs, faith or medical constraints. In such circumstances, the rider may participate in the session at their own risk, considering any advice offered by the coach(es).

Bikes must be well maintained, road-worthy and free of obvious dangers such as poorly positioned computers, lights or other equipment. Time trial bikes or bikes with aero bars fitted are not permitted on group rides.

Earphones must not be worn on group rides.

Group rides are suitable for members who can ride a minimum of 15-20 miles at an average minimum speed of 11-13mph, and who have the confidence to cycle on open-roads within a group.

Members must abide by the highway code and adjust their style of riding according to weather and road conditions. High visibility clothing is recommended.

No person under the age of 18 may participate in a club organised ride. Riders aged 16 or 17 may join club rides if accompanied by an adult and with prior agreement by the ride leader.

For static bike sessions, helmets are not required. Members should check that bikes are securely fastened and that there is adequate space between bikes to allow riders to safely get on/off bikes.

Running

For running sessions, high visibility clothing is recommended.

Responsibilities of Coaches

Coaches must maintain their knowledge and understanding of the health & safety guidelines published by British Triathlon and endeavour to apply those guidelines whenever possible. That said, the club membership acknowledges that the nature of coaching and coaching environments is such that often judgement is required to achieve a considered balanced between best practice and common sense.

Coaches must always hold the safety and welfare of participants and others who may be affected by club training sessions in the forefront of their minds when making decisions about session provision.

Coaches must be aware of their own level of training and of the qualification they have obtained in conjunction with their level of experience in each environment. A coach should ensure that each session has adequate supervision and should only coach the number of participants they feel comfortable with, depending on the level of age, competency, environment and weather conditions.

A risk assessment must be carried out (and documented) for every venue used during coached sessions. Coaches must make themselves aware of the details of those assessments so they can control or eliminate any risks identified. Coaches should dynamically assess risk during a session and make any adjustments they deem sensible.

Coaches must take a register of participants before a session. Each participant under 18 years old must be signed out on the register by a parent/guardian in the presence of the coach. For open water swimming, all swimmers must be counted in and out of the water.

Coaches must ensure that they and attendees of sessions have access to appropriate first aid provision. If a first aider is required at a session or event, it is not recommended that the coach is the first aider. It is not the responsibility of the coach(es) to diagnose or treat a participant with illness or injury.

Coaches must ensure that they and attendees of sessions have access to a telephone to call for emergency assistance if required.

Coaches must provide a briefing before each session, highlighting any potential hazards and providing instruction on what to do in the case of minor or major injuries or ill-health, missing persons, adverse weather, structural failures or other emergencies.

When operating in a managed facility, coaches must make themselves aware of, and adhere to, the operating procedures and policies of that facility.

Coaches must not operate in a dual role of lifeguard and coach.

It is not the responsibility of the coach(es) to repair equipment.

Coaches must record any accidents or injuries that occur during a session and provide a copy of the record to the Welfare Officer.

Requirements of Facilities & Venues

Before selecting a managed facility for use by the club, the club committee will satisfy itself that the facility's normal operating procedures, health & safety policies, emergency action plans and operational track record indicate no undue risk to the welfare of users.

For swimming pools, facilities will be selected which have water temperature between 25 °C and 28°C and with no history of water quality issues. Where a pool is in shared use and clearly divided between coached and recreational swimming activities, only facilities which provide sufficient lifeguard cover for the whole pool will be selected.

For open water swimming, ideally a managed facility would be selected but as this is not always possible, venues which offer the following criteria will be used:

- Suitable access for emergency vehicles (essential)
- Water quality is known to be above the minimum safe levels (ideally)
- Easy access and exit by participants (essential)
- No undue risk to participants due to water temperature, currents, waves, tides, depth, and above ground or under water hazards (essential)
- No undue risk to participants due to other water users (essential)
- No undue risk to participants due to wildlife present in water (essential)
- Access to suitable facilities to deal with injuries, accidents or illness (ideally)
- Availability of rescue craft (ideally)
- Availability of safety line / floatation devices (ideally)
- Availability of resuscitation equipment (ideally)
- Availability of lifeguards (ideally)
- Permission to use the venue (ideally in writing) from the water owner or operator

For open road cycling, routes will be chosen to avoid or limit risks arising from:

- Poor road surface quality
- Sheer drops
- Glass, litter or other debris
- Flooding or ice
- Heavy traffic

Off road cycling, by definition, often results in proximity to hazards arising from the surface or topography of the area being used. Indeed, often these hazards provide the challenge being sought by participants. Therefore, the key consideration in the selection of route will be the suitability in relation to the ability of participants.

For running, routes will be chosen to avoid or limit risks arising from:

- Uneven or unstable surfaces
- Sheer drops
- Other users including pedestrians, cyclists, field event participants, dog walkers
- Debris and stray equipment
- Flooding or ice

Coaches and club members are encouraged to report any issues or concerns about facilities and venues to the club committee.

Non-Coached Sessions

On occasion a group session with club members participating may be arranged (such as a group bike ride, open water swim or a run) where no coach is present. These sessions may or may not be endorsed by the club.

For these sessions, it is recommended that a session leader/navigator is appointed by the group to take responsibility for organisation. However, it is important to note that this person will not have any responsibility for the health & safety of the participants.

The club recommends the following approach to non-coached sessions:

- The date/time of meeting, an outline of the route, and the expected speed/pace are all advertised in advance
- The expectations of participants in terms of experience, ability, equipment & clothing, and etiquette are made known in advance, so that any unsuitable participants can self-select themselves out of joining
- The group agrees at the start what will happen if someone cannot keep up with the group and what happens in an emergency
- Participants share mobile phone numbers and emergency contact details
- Any qualified coaches who are present clearly state that they are not acting in a coaching role
- Advice may be given to others by qualified individuals but only when stationary and in a safe location to do so
- Any person under the age of 18 is supervised by an adult who is taking responsibility for their health & safety
- Wherever possible the general principles set out in this policy are followed by all participants

The club committee will encourage session leaders to participate in relevant training courses and will cover the costs involved.