

FUNDRAISER 5K WALK/RUN EVENTS

The 5K is quickly becoming one of the most popular distances for running or walking to raise money for charity. A fundraising walk or run is not only a healthy way for participants to raise money for a good cause, but also a very visible way of publicizing your charitable cause to the community.

Organizing a 5K event is straightforward if you have enough staff and trained volunteers to follow the appropriate guidelines. Always make your number one rule “Safety First”. Here are some tips to think about while planning your 5K:

PLANNING

- Allow 6 – 12 months to plan your event.
- Set up an organizing group with a Race Director and people to plan and manage the course, permits, sponsors, medical support, budget, and entries.
- Designate a Volunteer Coordinator to handle all volunteers, associated duties they will be performing, volunteer training, and appropriate waivers.
- Select a Medical Director to coordinate a medical team. Even in a small race, there should be one person assigned as the “go to” person in the event of an injury.
- Verify insurance coverage for your event.

COURSE DESIGN

- Find a venue that is safe and accessible.
 - Avoid crossing railroad tracks, major intersections, interstates, and uneven off-road trails.
- The venue must have adequate parking for competitors, spectators, and volunteers.
- Toilets and water stations must be available.
- Route must be safe for runners, walkers, volunteers, and spectators.
- Ensure your course is not too narrow at the start and is without sharp turns in the beginning.
- Course marking should be visible and each mile should be marked so runners/walkers can visually see where they are at.

VOLUNTEERS

- Recruiting, coordinating, and educating volunteers in a race is essential in maximizing the safety of race participants.
- Ensure all volunteers and the parents/guardians of any minors that are volunteering for the event have signed appropriate waivers.
- Meet with volunteers and/or volunteer coordinator consistently throughout the planning process to discuss adherence with timelines, training, appropriate waivers, and overall progress.

RACE INFORMATION & FORMS

- Check a race calendar to choose a date that does not interfere with other local races. The website *Running in the USA* (www.runningintheusa.com) publishes a list of events across the country.
- Participant packets should include:
 - Online or paper entry forms
 - Name, date and time of event
 - Participation entry form, including:
 - Name
 - Age
 - Address
 - Email
 - Emergency Contact
 - Shirt Size (if applicable)
 - *Adult Hold Harmless/Indemnity Agreement* for adults
 - *Parental/Guardian Consent Form and Liability Waiver for Athletic and Sporting Events* for any participating minors
 - Course description, with start and finish location clearly identified
 - Entry fee or information related to fundraiser.
 - Location of packet pick-up
 - Prizes awarded for different groups and schedule of events
 - Type of time devices being used
 - Warnings against baby strollers, roller blades, head sets, and pets
 - Parking information
 - Course map showing:
 - How many water stations will be available and location
 - How many restrooms/portables will be available and location
 - Medical assistance that will be available and location
 - Location for post-race activities

- Packet pick-up locations should have ample parking and enough volunteers to keep the lines moving.
- Remind all participants to carry or wear some form of picture identification during the race.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Consider hand-held radios for volunteers to communicate with each other.
- A megaphone should be used to amplify the starter's voice and/or give messages before or after the race.

READY, SET, GO...

- Get participants to the starting line a few minutes prior to the start. Ask runners and walkers to line up according to their ability, with the fastest in front or stagger start times between runners and walkers.
- Provide water stations throughout the course and ensure they are well marked so all participants, volunteers, and spectators know their location.
 - Do not place stations on a hill.
 - Have enough staff and water cups filled before participants arrive.
 - Plan to have one cup per participant at each water station unless it is a hot and humid day, then have at least two.
 - Consider "Water Ahead" signs to give participants early notification.
- Ensure appropriate sanitation stations, restrooms, portables, etc. are available to all participants, volunteers, and spectators.

PARTICIPANT (Runner) CONTROL

- Ensure that the course lanes are wide enough to accommodate the number of runners in the event.
- Place cones along the course for runners to follow and have volunteer course marshals to direct runners at pivotal turns on the course, or who may need additional assistance.

TRAFFIC & SPECTATOR CONTROL

- Contact law enforcement agencies while you are planning your 5K. Police officers may help with your event depending on the size, or supply traffic barriers to control vehicle entry during the race.
- Fencing may be needed to keep spectators off the race course and out of the flow of runners/walkers. If barriers are used, make sure they are solid and cannot be inadvertently moved by person(s) leaning up against it.

MEDICAL

- Ensure medical personnel are appropriate for the event and that there are a sufficient amount of medical staff to attend to the needs of the participants.
- Provide a convenient area for the medical team and ambulance if deemed necessary to set up at the finish line.
 - An ambulance should be able to leave the race area quickly and not cross the path of any participants
- Provide appropriate supplies to the medical team and ensure that the medical tent and team are marked in an obvious way.
- Have a plan for HIPAA Privacy and Confidentiality requirements.

WEATHER

- Plan ahead for various weather conditions:
 - Extreme Heat—more water stations and ice.
 - Extreme Cold—make sure water at stations is not frozen, provide blankets, areas of shelter, and hot liquids. Icy conditions may pose a safety threat to the event.
 - Lightning—strikes within 1 hour of start time should be considered dangerous and race may need to be cancelled or delayed.

FINISH LINE

- Prepare for larger crowds at the finish line and allocate sufficient barricades, flags, and possibly police presence in this area.
- Make sure only persons essential to the finish line operations and associated with the finish line medical team are in the actual finish line area. All others should be kept back behind barricades.
- Have water available!

The information above is meant to be used as a guide and is not all-inclusive. Those utilizing these guidelines must understand that they are responsible for organizing a safe event. There is also advice and support available from organizations like the Road Runners Club of America and USA Track & Field. Submit all contracts and planned fundraisers for review prior to these events.