

**Darlington Public Event Safety Advisory Group**  
**A8 - Fatalities at an Event**



Although it is extremely unlikely, there is always the possibility, that a person attending or taking part in an event may die unexpectedly. Initially the response to a report of a person who has collapsed will be to send first aid. In the event that a person has died further action will become necessary. The Police must be informed. A Police officer must attend the scene and tag the body before it can be removed.

The following procedure has been written for a walking or running event but it could be adapted for other events.

1. Time of death confirmed by Medical Lead Officer and patient documentation authorised/signed. Documentation to be retained by xxxxx (first aid organisation).
2. Medical Lead Officer to contact Event Manager, via secure communications to come to the main medical facility.
3. Event Manager or his nominated representative to check to see if anyone accompanied walker into the main medical facility (partner or fellow competitor who assisted with collapse) – name and contact details to be recorded. If accompanied the walker/partner should be taken to a quiet area at the site with the welfare officers nominated by the medical team.
4. Event Manager to notify Police attending the event directly without delay. If there are no Police on site the incident should be reported to the Durham Constabulary control room on 0845 60 60 365 immediately.

### ***Police Role***

4. An officer will attend the scene to be satisfied that there are no suspicious circumstances.
5. A fatality at any event will be treated by the Police as a 'sudden death' unless there is evidence to make it a suspicious death. If there are any suspicious circumstances the initial officer will call in further Police resources. The assistance of stewards is likely to be sought in managing all persons at the event.
6. For a non suspicious sudden death Police procedure will be A 'qualified' person will have to 'pronounce life extinct'. Only specially trained paramedics and doctors are qualified to do this. The Police officer

attending the scene will arrange this if a qualified person has not left the necessary paperwork. The officer must attach an identification 'tag' to the deceased (this is a different procedure to the formal identification by a relative of the body at the hospital). The officer then has a duty, on behalf of the Coroner, to secure evidence and investigate the circumstances surrounding the death. This will involve obtaining any relevant accounts of the circumstances immediately before the death, and taking witness details.

7. Arrangements will be made for the body to be taken to Darlington Memorial Hospital. (Where paramedics have already attended and have the deceased's body in an ambulance they may take them to the hospital. However where no ambulance has attended the Police will arrange for the removal of the body to the hospital mortuary via their 24hour duty call out arrangement with local undertakers.) Formal notification of the body by the next of kin will take place at the hospital and not on site.
8. The walk/running number worn by the deceased person can provide key information as it can be linked to their application form. The reverse filled in by competitors has details regarding: name and telephone number of contact who is to be sought on the day and/or verification of whether anyone else is attending with the deceased on race day (if different)
9. Numerical database to be referenced to in order to confirm age and sex of walker on database and cross refer/assess age of the deceased (this can be used as an early indication as to whether the walk number has been swapped).
10. Event Manager to confirm event number of the deceased and if it matches details filled in on reverse (if present/legible).
11. Event Manager, lead medical officer and xxxxx to meet with next of kin at designated quiet area (location x). Next of kin to be informed accordingly. xxxxx to stay with next of kin.  
Suitable arrangements to be made with next of kin and family to facilitate any practical arrangements with regards to baggage retrieval transport to hospital, hotel arrangements, etc.
12. If details are not available from the back of the walk number the Event Manager should notify the information point where the Walkers database will be held.
13. Event control to be aware that if and when the named person appears they have the dedicated communications to contact the Event Manager to attend.

14. XXXXXX representative in Event Control to keep in regular contact with Event Manager to check progress on whether any contact has been made with the next of kin or fellow competing partner.
15. If no details are available from the reverse of the walk number, XXXX representative in Event Control will notify the Police in area command who will in turn contact the next of kin via their resources in the relevant area.
  - a. Police will need to initially verify with the next of kin to confirm that the participant was walking in their designated walk number.
  - b. XXXXXX representative in Event Control to ensure that he is notified via Police channels when the next of kin have been informed.
  - c. XXXXXX representative to record time when Police confirm that the next of kin have been informed.

Event Manager to inform the event sponsor(s), or their representative at the event, of the situation as soon as details are confirmed. Information is then to be provided on an ongoing basis

### ***Liaising with the Press***

Under no circumstances should anyone associated with the event release details of the name or walk number etc of the deceased. Event Manager will not comment on the situation until such time as the next of kin or Police or HM Coroner have released the relevant confirmation. It may well be that the next of kin do not wish for the details of the deceased to be released to the press for a period of time, so that all relatives can be informed via direct family. The organisers will respect this wish at all times. As a general rule information and details are to be delayed for as long as possible. Depending on the exact circumstances one of the following statements may will be released to the media and also sent to Sponsors and Council press officer.

#### ***Statement 1***

Organisation            Contact Name            Tel Number

'The organisers are not able to confirm a fatality at this stage but are in consultation with event control, the medical agencies and emergency services to clarify the situation. In the event of a fatality our first priority is to inform the next of kin.

Statement 2 follows on the evening after the event if unable to provide name etc

#### ***Statement 2***

XXXXX deeply regret the tragic loss of life at the XXXXXXXX Walk/run today and offer our deepest sympathy and condolences to the family and friends of those concerned.

### ***Night of the event***

1. Designated team as decided by the Event Manager to meet at an agreed location to establish the facts of the incident.
2. Medical officer to be available to substantiate if necessary the facts of the case if appropriate
3. Obtain a copy of the entry form/online entry form and double check all questions and data fields on record.

IMPORTANT - Ensure the deceased's name is not included in any post event mail shots eg promotion offers etc. and is not included in post event listing of participants names. Notify the official photography company (if there is one) and request that pictures of the deceased are not published or made available on the website.