MOURNE MOUNTAIN MARATHON

Health & Safety Plan 2026 v1

1. Overview

1.1. The Mourne Mountain Marathon is a two day mountain navigation race. Competitors work in teams of 2 and have to be completely self-sufficient for the two days in all aspects of hill walking including food, camping gear, navigation and safety. There is also a one day Score format event. Competitors are responsible for ensuring they are fit and experienced enough and properly equipped for an event of this nature and must take responsibility for their own safety and actions throughout. Only fresh water, toilets and rubbish disposal are provided at the overnight camp and teams are not allowed to leave the camp.

1.2. The event starts and finishes at the *Event Centre* which is chosen to safely accommodate the needs of the expected number of competitors and visitors. Start times are staggered on the morning of the first day so as to spread the teams out over the courses. Teams are given a set of O.S. Grid references for a series of controls which they must visit in order, except for the one day Score event. Each control is marked by an orange and white flag and has a SPORTident electronic timing box at which they register their visit using their SI Card. There are usually cut-off times at two of the controls along each course which are marshaled.

1.3. The last control on Day 1 is at overnight camp where teams pitch their tents, prepare their hot meals and get some rest. The location of the camp is chosen with safety in mind but often has limited vehicular access so visitors are discouraged. Portaloo toilets and fresh water (often from a stream) are provided and a medic is available to treat minor injuries and offer advice. Competitors who retire from the event at this stage will be taken back to the Event Centre if required. Competitors with minor injuries will often stay the night to see if they feel fit enough to start in the morning. However, it is always up to the competitors to decide whether they need further treatment and whether to continue the event.

1.4. On the second day teams are started between 8:00am and 8:45am and follow courses in a similar fashion to Day 1, back to the Event Centre. Day 2 is generally easier and shorter than Day 1 with teams finishing from 11am onwards. Competitors who retire on the Sunday morning may return to the Event Centre with the organisers once the camp has been cleared.

1.5. A one day Score Class event takes place on the Saturday. For this event there is no fixed course, however risks are similar to the 2 day event, therefore minimum safety equipment must be carried.

1.6. Coastal mountain areas can have very unpredictable and severe weather and the terrain can be very difficult. Competitors are responsible for ensuring they are fit and experienced enough for an event of this nature and to take responsibility for their own safety and actions throughout.

1.7. For more information see the website at www.mourne2day.com or email mmmadmin@mourne2day.com

Key Role /duties	Name
Race Director	Jim Brown
Safety Officer & Timing	Mark Pruzina
Course Planner	Terry McQueen
Course Controller	Gareth McKeown

2. The main safety features of the event are:

2.1. Rules of Competition

2.1.1. The event is organised in accordance with the Fell Runners Association Rules for Competition (mountain marathons) http://fellrunner.org.uk/organisers.php

2.1.2. Competitors are advised …as per the ***Fell Running Association*** safety philosophy ... mountains are dangerous places and that "*the COMPETITOR should take primary responsibility for his/her own safety".*

2.2. Organisation and Communication

2.2.1. An Event Organiser will coordinate the planning of the event and will run the event as per FRA guidelines.

2.2.2. An Event Centre will be established at the start/finish location for registration, kit inspection, start/finish duties.

2.2.3. An operational *Control Centre* will be established by the *Organiser* and during the event this will be located at the overnight campsite. Marshals will be located on the course and will communicate with the Control Centre using mobile telephones and /or radio. The MMM mobile contact number is printed on competitors' route cards.

2.3. Courses

2.3.1. Courses are planned by people with many years of experience in both competing in and organising mountain marathons and other mountain races. The *Course Planner* works with the *Course Controller* to provide a range of courses that not only match the stated distance and height specifications but that are also consistent and with those of previous years and in keeping with those of other mountain marathons.

2.3.2. Courses are designed to avoid leading teams into hazards and the difficulty and terrain is appropriate to class.

2.3.3. Severe weather course options are pre-planned that will reduce distance, height, exposure to high winds or rivers in spate.

2.4. Competitor/Team Fitness & Skills

2.4.1. The nature of mountain marathons is that they are a test of endurance, teamwork and mountain skills, including navigation. Once out on the mountains, competitors are under their own cognisance. Competitors are responsible for ensuring they are fit and experienced enough and properly equipped for an event of this nature and must take responsibility for their own safety and actions throughout. The information provided on the event website is comprehensive and clear and should provide competitors with all the information they need in order to make informed decisions on all aspects of the event.

2.5. Team Equipment

2.5.1. Teams are required to carry mandatory equipment (as detailed in the MMM Rules) which is checked at registration. Teams found to be lacking any mandatory items are not allowed to start. Our equipment sponsor will have a pop-up shop on site and can supply most necessary items so there is no excuse for a team not to start fully equipped.

2.5.2. Dumping of mandatory equipment is not permitted at any point throughout the event nor in the skip at the overnight camp which is watched to ensure that teams start the 2nd day with full kit. Spot checks may also performed at the finish and a team may be disqualified if found to be lacking.

2.6. Rule for Retirement

2.6.1. In the event of teams withdrawing from the event they must inform the organiser as soon as possible so that rescue services are not put at unnecessary risk.

2.7. Environment

2.7.1. The Mournes is a major source of drinking water; safeguards shall be put in place to help protect this.

2.7.2. Toilets will be available at the Event Centre (start /finish), and at the overnight camp. A waste skip will be available at the overnight camp.

2.7.3. The *'Leave No Trace'* principles shall be promoted to help protect the mountain environment.
2.7.4. Competitors will be encouraged to share transport.

2.8. Event Centre – Location TBC

2.8.1. The Event Centre is laid out so as to ensure the safe movement of competitors and visitors. Facilities are provided as follows:
2.8.2. Traffic and parking are managed on the first morning when it is busiest and people are in a hurry.
2.8.3. The Event Centre is accommodated indoors or under cover. This provides shelter for the competitors and organisers during registration.
2.8.4. Signage and tapes are used to help people find their way around the Centre and to the starts.
2.8.5. Marshalls and Officials are clearly identified by high visibility vests.
2.8.6. Toilets are provided on site.
2.8.7. Electricity is provided by site mains or, if not available, by a small portable generator with suitable protection devices.
2.8.8. Mains water will be provided at the Event Centre.

2.9. Weather

2.9.1. Competitors are reminded in the Final Instructions to check the weather forecast before the event and again on Sunday morning and prepare themselves accordingly. Teams may change courses at the last minute if they feel conditions may be too harsh for them. In the event of extreme weather, the courses may be shortened or rerouted on the day.
2.9.2. Severe weather course options are pre-planned that will reduce distance, height, exposure to high winds or rivers in spate.

3. Each Day

3.1. Starts - 2 Day Event, Day 1

3.1.1. On Day 1, teams start at intervals (1-4mins) between 08:30 and 10:30. There may be two start locations for the different courses which provides for better course options given the need to fit long and short courses between the Start/Finish and overnight camp. Routes to the starts are planned to avoid hazards and clearly marked with signs and tapes Road safety is considered where appropriate There is no shelter provided at the start(s) but the allocated start-times system ensures that teams should not have to loiter there for very long. Marshals located at the start are in contact with the Event Centre via radio or mobile phone.

3.2. Starts - Score Event

3.2.1. The Score race takes place alongside the other classes. Starts will be a "punching" rolling mass start with just a second or so between teams and all teams away within 10 minutes. This will minimise waiting time at the finish for the shuttle bus back to the Event Centre.

3.3. Team Work

3.3.1. The primary safety feature of the event is that the teams of 2 must stick together at all times and that they must carry all their equipment throughout. Any team discovered breaking either of these rules is disqualified – and may be barred from future events. The rules stipulate that teams *"must maintain contact with each other throughout the entire competition"*. Whilst there are only two advertised marshalled controls on each course, there are also mobile marshals who do spot checks at other controls through the day.

3.4. Course Marshaling

3.4.1. Two controls on each course on Day 1 are run by at least two experienced and suitably briefed marshals. Teams failing to reach these controls by the cut-off are instructed to retire for the day and make their way directly to the camp or return to the Event Centre.

3.4.2. The *marshals* are equipped with a radio or mobile phone, shelter tent, spare clothing and first aid kit. They are also issued with checklists of teams and are updated with actual start numbers and changes once all teams have started so that they don't waste time waiting for teams to come through who haven't started.

3.4.3. The marshalled control locations are chosen for ease of access/egress and relative shelter.

3.5. Overnight Camp

3.5.1. **The overnight camp** is located somewhere with easy access for the MMM organising team and a good clean water supply (mains or spring water). Competitors are advised to carry water purification tablets or equipment in the event if they are concerned about drinking mountain water. Teams must be totally self-sufficient for a mountain camp and the only facilities provided are portaloo toilets and rubbish bins.

3.5.2. Access to the site from the mountains is planned to ensure a safe and easy finish. The route is usually taped and stiles are erected over fences where required. When dusk falls the taped route may be marked with Glo-Sticks if required.

3.5.3. **Fire Safety -** Given the close confines of many tents and lots of tired people using a variety of cooking stoves, fire extinguishers are provided and placed around the campsite.

3.6. Team Tracking

3.6.1. **The *Organiser* and team are based in the operational *Control Centre***: a large tent or van near to the finish. Finishing teams are checked into the computer system by the *Timing Team* using their SI Cards and then directed to set up camp.

3.6.2. Throughout the day the *Timing Team,* and *Control Marshals* communicate to determine the numbers of teams still in each stage of the courses and any retirements. Live checkpoint data is also automatically fed from several controls via 3G datalink technology to enhance the picture. The Timing Team keeps the Organiser updated, and results (and retiree info) are online on our website.

4. Overdue teams & Emergency Services

4.1. At the end of day 1

4.1.1. Occasionally teams fail to make the overnight camp on the first day if conditions are bad or they lose time through navigational mistakes. Competitors are expected to be able to cope with these situations and to make the right decisions for their own safety. Overdue teams should report their status to the MMM - via mobile phone, another team or a Marshall - if it is possible and safe to do so. As night falls the Timing Team will attempt to make contact with overdue teams using the contact number they gave when entering.

4.2. At the end of day 2

4.2.1. If teams decide to not finish they MUST ensure that they inform the organiser as soon as possible (see Rule for Retirement).

4.2.2. **Emergency services are only called out in the event of an accident or emergency being reported.**

4.3. Medical help

4.3.1. A medic is on hand most of each day to treat minor injuries and offer advice at the Campsite on Saturday and back at the Event Centre on Sunday. However, it is up to individuals to decide for themselves whether they should seek further treatment and/or retire from the event.

4.3.2. Transport is available to take retiring competitors back to the *Event Centre* and to pick up retiring teams from around the mountains during the day.

5. Safeguarding Young Persons

The B, C D and Score classes of the event are open to younger people aged 16-17yrs when accompanied by a suitably experienced adult aged 21 or over. Additional measures are taken to ensure their safety including:

- A young person can only enter when accompanied by their parent, guardian, or responsible adult over 21 years of age.
- A parental consent form is required which has a clear briefing about the event.
- The accompanying adult is required to have significant level of mountain skills experience and to describe this on the consent form. All experience is carefully checked for suitability before the entry is accepted.
- These teams must carry a mobile phone for emergencies.

The above requirements are in line with FRA rules for competitions.

6. Insurance & Compliance

Insurance is provided through a specialist insurance broker (a copy of the certificate is available on request). The event complies with (but is not bounded by) **UK Athletics** and **Fell Runner Association** rules.

7. Important Contact Info

MMM Contact number	**07845 659503** (Saturday and Sunday only)
Mountain Rescue	999 or 192 and ask for Mountain Rescue

Mountain Rescue will not be called out by the organisers unless an accident or incident is reported.

Nearest A&E Hospitals	Daisy Hill Hospital, 5 Hospital Road, Newry, BT35 8DR

Email	mmmadmin@mourne2day.com
Web address	www.mourne2day.com