

Cancellation Guidelines

Introduction

Providing a safe environment is critical for all cycling events. In the case of any major incident, event cancellation should be considered.

This document is designed to help empower those individuals working at a road cycling event (commissaires, motor marshals, race organisers, etc.) to make the decisions needed to contain an incident.

Readers should note that this document references road cycling to a greater degree due to the complexity and wide ranging nature of responses that may occur in the road environment.



Tools

Cycling rules and regulations already has tools built into its rules to provide a guide in the case of an incident. Those empowered to consider these options and what are sometimes difficult decisions.

Neutralize

Neutralizing a race can take many forms, from a stoppage to a stop and restart. At its core, neutralizing means that “competition” has officially stopped, even if racers are still moving in a non-competitive fashion. For example, a road race may be neutralized and pushed to one side of the road to allow emergency vehicles to pass, then restarted. All without ever stopping. However, neutralizing does not work for a time trial where participants are at different points of the competition.

Stop and Restart

Similar to neutralizing, a stop and restart may occur in road, mountain bike, track and gravel. In the case of time trials (road and MTB) it does not always work as well unless all riders can be stopped for the same length of time before restarting. When using this method, the intent is that a restart will take place once an accident has been tended to by medical personnel and the course has been cleared. Sometimes a plan to stop and restart will evolve into a cancellation once more information is learned.

Cancellation

The competition is halted for good and will not resume (for the day or for multiple days). Often this will extend to other races being held on that course later in the day, particular circumstances and input from other authorities (police or landowner).



A neutralization or stop and restart may turn into a cancellation if the situation is critical. Cancellations should be undertaken soberly as they have far reaching implications for all stakeholders.

While safety is the number one concern when deciding whether to cancel an event, other factors must be considered before taking this step. These can include (but are not limited to):

- **Participant transport to finish:** Is it safe for the participants to ride back or is transport needed?
- **Weather:** Is the weather appropriate for participants to be stuck on the roadside for an extended period?
- **Traffic support:** Will the race stoppage and subsequent cancellation impact traffic management plans?



Assess and Ask

When an incident occurs the following should be assessed and asked:

- What communication do I have with race management? Can I get a quick answer, or do I need to act on my own?
- How likely is it that this incident will lead to another?
- Can medical personnel access and treat without interfering with other racers?
- Can I implement this decision safely? Or do I need assistance and what assistance? For example, one individual may be able to step out onto a road and stop a time trial event as participants come along one at a time. However, to stop a group of racers may take assistance from others in your location or further up the road.



Next Steps

You have made the decision to intervene in a race. What do you do next?

- Secure the Scene – Do Not rush to aid a fallen rider until you or others in the area have seen to stopping traffic and stopping additional riders.
- Delegate – Take control of the scene and deputize anyone around to assist (spectator, volunteer, other racers, etc). Use these people to stop traffic, stop riders, and tend to crash victims. This leaves you free for the next step.
- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate – Obviously traditional methods are best; mobile phone or radio. But if all else fails, send a message with a vehicle or rider. Contact with first responders, commissaires, and race organizers is key to managing the situation.
- Stay Vigilant – Maintain control of the scene until additional resources and someone further up the chain of command arrives to relieve you.
- Document – While the incident is still fresh in your memory, take notes with as much detail as possible including names and times when possible.
- If it is simpler for staff and volunteers to remember, they may want to use the STAT system to help in this situation (Stop, Think, Assess, Tell). Stop the action before something worse happens. Think about the safety of those in the immediate area. Assess the situation and determine what is needed, more staff? medical? Tell, or communicate up the chain of command.
 - Remember, an incident worthy of neutralization or cancellation does not have to involve an injured rider. A vehicle vs vehicle incident that happens 20 minutes ahead of the race but is now blocking the course could be a hazard. A fallen tree or power line would also require race stoppage. Assess all types of incidents, not just rider injuries.



Plan for the Worst

While everyone hopes for the best in every race, the reality is that planning should be based on worst case scenarios. In respect to this document and empowering staff to make decisions, a few simple steps could help.

- Pre-event briefings: Every individual on a racecourse should be required to attend a pre-event briefing. This can be race morning or earlier and may be in person or online.
- Identify key (or problem) areas of the course and share this information with staff. These include major and minor access points or intersections, areas where communications may be compromised, and areas that may be hard for emergency services to reach.
- Let all staff know what resources (medical, law enforcement, etc.) are available.
- Review the tools in this document with staff prior to race.



Resources

AusCycling has an existing Critical Response Plan documents that works through an ideal response step by step. Please review here [Critical Incident & Fatality Response](#) and here [Incident & Fatality Framework](#)

These documents do work well in an ideal scenario with good communications and time for decision making. However, the real world can be a bit different, and communication may not always be good. Perhaps the commissaire or race director is unreachable or waiting for an answer up the chain of command will take too long and further risk participant safety.

This is where you the individual (staff member, race official, etc.) must feel empowered to respond quick, especially if lives are at risk.

While it is impossible to play out every scenario that could occur. The following page outlines basic responses which can act as a guide.



Incident Scenarios

For the safety of all participants, AusCycling wants to empower event organisers and Commissaires to make that may result in a safer environment for all participants.. That said, individuals should ensure they undertake a brief assessment before making a decision that impacts many stakeholders in an event.

SAMPLE SITUATIONS	TYPE OF EVENT	PREFERRED ACTION		
		NEUTRALIZE	STOP & RESTART	CANCELLATION
Rider crash that requires medical attention and ambulance brought on course.	Road Race, Gravel, MTB XCO: Point to Point (PTP)			Only if medical is critical
	Road Circuit Race, Gravel, MTB XCO	Best if only 1 race on circuit	If multiple groups/grades	Only if medical is critical
	Criterium, MTB XCC, XCO		Stop and hold at start/finish	Only if medical is critical
	Road Time Trial, MTB - DH & XCT	N/A	If course is blocked	If course is blocked or incident critical
Rider crash that involves a motor vehicle	Road: Point to Point		Best, allows officials/medical assist	Only if medical is critical
	Road Circuit Race		Best, allows officials/medical assist	Only if medical is critical
	Criterium		Stop and hold at start/finish	Only if medical is critical
	Road Time Trial			Immediate stoppage and cancel
Vehicle on closed course	Road Race Point to Point (PTP)	Nothing if vehicle is in front of field. If behind, send motor commissaire to handle or neutralize and pass.		
	Circuit Race: Road and Gravel	Nothing if vehicle is in front of field. If behind, send motor commissaire to handle or neutralize and pass.		
	Road: Criterium		Stop Until Vehicle is Removed	
	Time Trial (where vehicle is in a dangerous location)	Immediate stoppage if on and out and back type course		



Other Disciplines

The framework of this document is built around road racing and with its proximity to traffic and use of public roads has the most complex environments. However, other disciplines can apply some of these principles.

Examples include:

- **Downhill MTB:** with its speed, remoteness, and time trial type format is another place where stopping a race before further participants come along, and risk injury is critical. The above suggestions for a road Time Trial apply in this situation.
- **Cross Country (XC) MTB:** should follow the examples here for road races, both circuit and point to point.
- **Gravel or Grand Fondo:** Often the participants are less familiar with racing rules and are also vulnerable. The lack of structured packs or pelotons of riders adds to the danger here. Depending on the type of course, the above recommendations for Point to Point Road races and Circuit style road races apply equally here.

