

# American Radio Relay League



## DOC 2: ARDF EVENT PLANNING

Version 25-Mar-2021

### ARDF Sanctioning Subcommittee

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## ARDF Event Planning

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## I. Purpose

The aim of this document is to familiarize Event Directors and other organizers with what is involved in hosting an ARDF event while providing assurance that help is available to manage many of the details.

This document describes some of the assistance that the ARRL ARDF Committee can provide to sanctioned-event organizers. Communication is one key to success, so necessary communications are covered. Important planning considerations are described, and major components of an ARDF event are listed and briefly described.

## II. Help & Consultation

### A. Loaner Equipment

Many groups interested in hosting a sanctioned ARDF event do not have all the necessary ARDF equipment. The ARRL ARDF Committee can help identify loaner equipment sources, including transmitters, antennas, flags, and time registration devices. Most of the technical equipment can usually be provided for sanctioned events planned far enough in advance.

### B. Event Consultant

Some Event Directors have a lot of experience with organizing ARDF events. Others may have experience with orienteering, or Field Day organization but are not familiar with all that goes into an ARDF competition. Regardless of their background, an Event Director's job can be made easier with an Event Consultant's help.

The ARRL ARDF Committee is responsible for assigning an Event Consultant to assist the Event Coordinator. Event Consultants have had experience with ARDF event organization and are familiar with ARRL ARDF administration.

The Event Consultant's responsibilities can be tailored to the needs of the Event Coordinator. The Event Director is ultimately responsible for a successful ARDF event, so it is up to the Event Director to decide how best to utilize an Event Consultant's services. Some of the Event Consultant's possible responsibilities might include:

- Review the pre-event planning of the organizers to see that they have adopted a reasonable schedule.
- Review the entry form for the event prior to its general release.

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- Assure that an organizer is working with a Course Consultant if assigned.
- Review the organizer's plans for making the map, and monitor its progress.
- Review the general event organization and monitor its progress.
- Review event publicity.
- Act as an advisor to the Event Director.
- Keep appropriate persons informed of problems and progress.

### C. Course Consultant

There is no substitute for experience when it comes to selecting an appropriate venue for a particular ARDF competition, or designing a high-quality ARDF course. Having an experienced hand to help with those tasks can be a valuable asset.

A Course Consultant may be assigned by the ARRL ARDF Committee to assist the Course Designer in producing courses that meet ARRL course-setting rules and guidelines. (In some cases, the Event Consultant and the Course Consultant might be the same person who serves in both roles.) The Course Consultant's responsibilities can be tailored to the needs of the Course Designer.

The Course Designer is ultimately responsible for providing the best possible courses, so it is up to the Course Designer to decide how best to utilize the services of a Course Consultant. Some of the Course Consultant's possible responsibilities might include:

- Analyzing the maps to determine suitability for holding a particular competition.
- Reviewing preliminary routes and calculating effective lengths.
- Examining trade-offs between courses for different age/gender categories.
- Reviewing final course designs.
- Keeping the Event Director informed of progress or problems.

## III. Communications

The *ARDF USA* Google Group is available for disseminating information related to USA ARDF events: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/ardf-usa>. Email posted to that group will be distributed to the majority of active ARDF enthusiasts in the USA. All bulletins and announcements should be posted to that group.

The [ARRL](#) and OUSA host web sites devoted to ARDF that can be updated with the latest information on your event. Notify the ARRL ARDF Committee ([ardf@arrl.org](mailto:ardf@arrl.org)) of all information that needs to be posted to those websites.

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Organizers should consider establishing a website specifically for the planned event. That website can be used to provide the latest event information, including any updates to the event Bulletins. Changes or updates from already-disseminated information should be dated and flagged for easy identification. Be sure to use a push notification (e.g., email, telephone, tweet, etc.) to inform those who might be affected by any changes.

Consider having regular synchronization meetings among all the organizers and volunteers to help keep everyone abreast of the latest developments. Video conferencing technology (Zoom, Skype, GoToMeeting, etc.) can help improve attendance. Inviting an ARRL ARDF Committee member to be in attendance can have your synchronization meetings serve as Committee Updates.

### A. Committee Updates

It is important that the ARRL ARDF Committee be apprised of the progress and any significant developments related to your event plans. Touching base with a brief email, video conference, or phone call at least monthly, if only to confirm that all plans are on track and significant milestones have been reached, will allow the Committee to support your event better. Reports to the Committee can be readily handled by an Event Consultant if one has been appointed, provided that the Event Director and Event Consultant are working closely together.

### B. Bulletins

Two bulletins are required to be published in the weeks leading up to the event. Then, a final information posting needs to be made at least one day prior to each competition. All bulletins should be posted to a website or similar publicly-available internet location. If possible, the same internet location should be utilized for distributing all event information before, during, and after the event.

**Bulletin 1:** One week after sanctioning is approved, the following information should be posted:

1. Name of the Event Director and Registrar.
2. Organizer's postal mail and e-mail addresses.
3. General location for the event (near-by city, or county).
4. Dates and types of competitions.
5. The age/gender categories for the competitions.
6. Location (e.g., website) where information and updates will be posted.

**Bulletin 2:** As soon as possible, but not less than four weeks before the event, the following information should be posted:

1. Entry fee for competitors.
2. Location (e.g., web address) for registration.
3. Designated event center or hotel.
4. Address of the closest hospital or Urgent Care center and the phone number to call in an emergency.
5. Details for payments and latest date for funds to be received to avoid late payment fees.
6. Latest date for acceptance of entries.
7. Description and type of any transport offered.
8. Event schedule.
9. Any deviations from the rules. (The ARRL ARDF Committee must approve these.)
10. Information about obtaining visas and official invitations from the organizer for foreign competitors.
11. Description of terrain, climate, and any hazards specific to the venues.
12. Opportunities for training.
13. Type of control registering devices to be used (e.g., SI, pin punch, RFID card).
14. The frequencies and radiated power of transmitters to be used for each competition.
15. Any requirements or restrictions for competition clothing (e.g. long sleeves or pants, no metal cleats).
16. Current map(s) of the competition areas that have been made public or used in a previous event.
17. Number of entries in each category or names & category of each competitor and date the data was updated.
18. Times and locations of official meetings.
19. An explanation and diagram of the Sprint start, spectator, and finish areas.

**Competition Bulletins:** At least one day prior to each competition, the following information should be published under separate headings for each competition:

1. Time limit.
2. The time of the first start, and any deadline for equipment to be impounded.
3. List of transmitter and band assignments for each age/gender category.

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4. Size of the map paper and the size of the area used in each competition. Indicate the minimum paper size when extraneous areas are folded or cut away to permit using a smaller map board. Provide the scale and vertical contour intervals of each competition map.
5. The parking or staging location of the start and finish for each competition.
6. Restricted areas.
7. The radio frequencies and radiated power of transmitters to be used for each competition.
8. Start list with the anticipated start time, name, and bib number of each competitor.
9. Any additional pertinent information about the event or venue.

## C. Event Report

Within fourteen days following the event, the Event Director is responsible for submitting a report to the ARRL ARDF Committee containing the following:

1. All registration information for each competitor, including:
  - a. First and last names, call signs, etc.
  - b. Assigned bib numbers.
  - c. The ARRL or OUSA club, or state for non-ARRL non-OUSA competitors.
  - d. The country of each foreign competitor.
  - e. Eligibility for national or regional titles.
2. Each day's competition results separately.
3. Sporting Withdrawals (SPW), Did Not Finish (DNF), and Overtime (OVT) results on each day. These should be distinguished from Did Not Start (DNS) by listing "DNS" for any competitor that did not start on any day.
4. Names of volunteers and their positions. Please note if any were prevented from competing due to their volunteer duties.
5. Total attendance each day (a best estimate) including visitors, organizers, helpers and observers.
6. Results of each competition in electronic format. Times provided in hours/minutes/seconds, or just minutes/ seconds.
7. Competition "master" maps identical to what each competitor received, but showing the precise transmitter locations.
8. Course information for each age/gender category for each competition:
  - a. Transmitter assignments
  - b. Straight-line course lengths (must go around uncrossable areas like lakes, and not cross uncrossable rivers or prohibited areas).

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- c. Effective course lengths
- d. Course total climb
9. Members of the Jury if one was assembled, and the decision(s) of the organizer or Jury regarding all protests.
10. Any deviations from the USA ARDF rules that occurred during the event that were not included in the bulletins.
11. Any conditions that might have adversely impacted competitor times, such as extreme weather, high elevation, flooding, or other conditions that caused the competition area to be less runnable than the maps indicated.
12. As part of the report, please provide feedback on ARRL support: where it was of help and areas it could have helped more. A list of lessons learned compiled from the feedback of volunteers and competitors is strongly encouraged. The ARRL ARDF Committee will use the feedback for improving support for future events.

## D. Publicity

### Pre-Event Publicity

Pre-event publicity can help generate additional entries and attract local sponsorship. Some types of pre-event publicity include:

- Promotional flyers distributed at local events, at other sanctioned events, as well as at running stores, outdoor clubs, public libraries, etc.
- Press releases to local news media (don't forget the "Calendar of Events" listings in newspapers and other publications).
- Post announcements on social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and orienteering and ARDF online groups.
- Conducting clinics in area parks, or in an outdoors store.
- Articles for orienteering publications.
- Advertisements in QST, OUSA, or other publications.
- Postings to international email lists.
- Invitations to international ARDF societies.

The ARRL ARDF Committee can help with getting announcements in ARRL and OUSA publications and web sites.

### Post-Event Publicity

Don't let your promotional efforts end with the event itself. Send the event results and a brief write-up to the local newspapers. Give your event award winners a generic press



release they can fill in and submit to their local newspapers. Remember to capitalize on any public interest created by pre-event promotion: try to have a series of well-publicized local events (or clinics) planned after your event, for the curious.

## IV. Planning

Each Event Director needs a set of plans that take into account the specifics of what their event will offer and the circumstances under which they will be operating. Consideration should be given to how the personnel will be organized and to how costs will be covered.

### A. Organization

For the most part, how an event is organized is up to the Event Director. The Director should make some written plans to give to the Event Consultant and key personnel. Written plans tend to get done as they remind everyone of their jobs and permit all to gauge their progress. Many jobs must be coordinated with others, so everyone in the event organization should know who is doing what job.

An organizational chart can help key personnel see if there are holes in the plans. The chart with the jobs, the workers' names, and phone numbers will promote communication within the organization. All communications won't have to go through the Event Director. The job of recruiting volunteers will be eased if you publish the chart periodically with an appeal to the membership to volunteer and fill vacancies. Remind them that they can compete if enough workers are available to work in rotation.

### B. Financial Considerations

Paying all the costs associated with putting on an ARDF event is the responsibility of the organizer. To defray those costs, the organizer may charge an entry fee to the competitors. The organizer may set deadlines for entries and may adjust the entry fee charged based on the date that a competitor completes registration or submits payment. The organizer may exclude competitors from the event if their entry fee is not paid and no agreement has been reached about payment.

Organizers, at their discretion, may solicit donations from individuals and companies who agree to be event sponsors. In exchange for goods, services, or monetary donations, organizers may acknowledge the donors on event advertising, bibs, maps, t-shirts, or other event paraphernalia. Such sponsorship acknowledgments must never interfere with the primary function of the items on which they appear (e.g., bibs, or

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maps). Any appearance of a conflict of interest must be avoided, and copies of receipts for donations must be made available upon request.

The event participants are responsible for paying their entry fees, the cost of traveling to and from the event, and transportation to various competition venues during the event. Participants are also responsible for the costs of their accommodation and board during the event. At their discretion, organizers can help arrange for group rates and discounts for those who are participating in or volunteering for the event. Recommending a particular hotel or motel that has offered attractive group rates can also help encourage socializing and communication among participants.

A carefully-prepared budget will identify what expenses to expect as well as how much revenue might be generated, and can eliminate a financial crisis and hard feelings later. Some items to consider include:

### **Potential Expenses**

- Maps: Aerial photos, lidar data, base map, fieldwork, drafting, printing
- Obtaining a Use Permit for the park
- Facility rental or other fees
- Liability insurance, if not provided through the organizing club or organization. This is usually required by landowners, and protects the volunteers, and may cover some emergency medical services.
- Publicity
- Printing: entry forms, posters, flyers, signage
- Advertising in newspapers and local publications
- Awards
- Event Equipment: control flags, backup manual punches, etc.
- Event Supplies: Map bags, rental SI-cards, event packets, water stops
- Clocks, results stands, start and finish corridor flagging, etc.
- Shipping expenses for equipment
- Fees for each “start” may be required by the Sponsoring Organization. It is currently \$1.50 if the Sponsoring Organization is an OUSA member club.

### **Potential Revenue Sources**

- Entry fees
- Event sponsorship money
- Souvenirs
- Banquet

If the income/expense ratio looks overwhelming, don't despair. Loaner equipment and other assistance may be available. Please contact the ARRL ARDF Committee for assistance.

## V. Components of an Event

Certain operations are essential for conducting the event. Others are not directly involved with the event itself but necessary for a safe and successful event. The following are brief descriptions of major event constituents. Sample documents are provided as aids in organizing each area.

### A. Registration

Registration information is important to ensure that all competitors' needs are provided, fees are collected, and competition results and awards are assigned correctly. Event registration should be opened as soon as practical after an event has been sanctioned.

Registration information that should be obtained from each registrant includes:

- Competitor Information: Name, callsign (if any), address, phone, Email, age/gender category, competitions that will be entered in.
- Affiliations: Club, ARRL Membership Status, OUSA Membership Status.
- Accounting of fees and other payments.
- Signed Waiver of Liability.
- Eligibility for awards: USA Champion, Region II Champion.

If the Sponsoring Organization is an OUSA member club, then it is recommended (but not required) to utilize the OUSA online registration system (EventReg). To collect entry fees on EventReg a PayPal account is required. Support for online registration, including secure collection of entry fees, is highly recommended. If possible, registrants should be able to view the names and categories of all those who have registered, starting from the first day that registration is open.

### B. Check-in

Everyone who has registered for the event should be given a packet containing essential items, including a numbered bib, and instructions on locating the latest event information. Printed paper documents should be avoided if possible, with a hardcopy option available as a backup. Instead, information such as the event schedule, locations of staging and meeting areas, start times, course information, etc., may be provided on

a web site or similar electronic platform accessible to all participants. Participants and volunteers must be notified promptly of any changes made to the online information.

### C. Competitor Meeting

Before the competitions start, it is a good idea to hold at least one informal competitor meeting. An online briefing can be held if packets and bibs are distributed outside the meeting. The briefing aims to ensure that everyone is aware of all the essential information related to the event, particularly any last-minute changes. Time should be allowed for everyone in attendance to have their questions addressed.

### D. Equipment Check

An Equipment Check is held one or more days prior to each competition (see ARDF Rules Section 16). The Equipment Check allows competitors to become familiar with the transmitters, antennas, flags, and registering devices used in the competitions. If practical, the Equipment Check location should be of similar terrain type and map quality to the competitions.

### E. Deployment

The radio equipment needs to be deployed in the field along with any flags and time registration devices. Depending on the equipment's delayed turn-on or remote-control features, deployment can be accomplished hours, or even days ahead of the first start. Each of the transmitters needs to be verified for correct operation as well as accurate timing synchronization. Verification needs to be accomplished with enough time to resolve any problems before the event starts. Having a spare transmitter and antenna readily available to replace any failed equipment is a wise idea.

### F. Start

Start procedures should be planned and practiced in advance. A start corridor should be constructed to ensure competitors move quickly to a location out of sight from those waiting to start. It is essential that competitors understand the start procedure, be started at the correct time, and be given the proper map and list of required transmitters. Times recorded at the start must be synchronized with the finish.

### G. Finish

Procedures at the finish should be planned and practiced well in advance. A finish corridor should be constructed to guide the competitors from the beacon to a clearly-marked finish line. A competitor's finish time should be recorded and associated

with the competitor. A system for resolving any disputes should be planned. Directions to the download station should be provided to each finisher.

### H. Jury

It is very unusual for there to be protests raised during the course of an event. But if it should happen, organizers should be prepared to assemble a Jury to adjudicate a suitable resolution. See ARDF Rules Section 10.

### I. Results

The number of transmitters found and elapsed times for the qualified competitors should be calculated, or reasons for their disqualification documented. All competitors' results should be posted as quickly as possible electronically or at a clearly-marked area, and official results prepared for submission to the ARRL ARDF Committee for rankings and publication.

### J. Pick-up

Following each competition, equipment in the field needs to be dismantled and retrieved. The equipment will then need to be taken to an appropriate staging area where batteries can be charged, and settings configured for the next Equipment Check and for the next day's competition. Sharing equipment pick-up responsibility among several assistants familiar with radio and time registration equipment can help spread the effort.

### K. Awards

Awards are expected to be given at Championship events. At other sanctioned events, awards are optional. The type and number of awards for Championship competitions are described in Section 31 of the USA ARDF Rules document. Traditionally, an informal ceremony or banquet is used for a brief awards presentation.

### L. First Aid

A qualified first aider with adequate supplies should be stationed at a well-marked area near the finish. Encouraging volunteers to get American Red Cross or American Heart Association CPR/AED or first-aid certification can help ensure adequate first-aid knowledge and coverage throughout the competition area. Some Event Directors obtain the services of military or civilian paramedic teams. The first-aid crew should know the quickest means to convey the injured to medical treatment.

## M. Search and Rescue

Have a viable Search-and-Rescue procedure and make sure all appropriate event personnel are familiar with it. Some venues may require a plan before issuing a permit.

## N. Loose Ends

Don't forget to file your Event Report within fourteen days following the event. Borrowed equipment may need to be boxed and shipped back to its owners. Letters of thanks to volunteers, sponsors, and landowners are a nice touch and will help encourage their support for future events. Post pictures taken during the event to a website or sharing service where everyone can access them.