

Applying to hold an event on Forestry Commission land

If you are thinking about holding any kind of organised group event, or activity on Forestry Commission Land you need to contact us, so we can ensure you have a safe and successful event.

Application process

We recommend that you contact us, before filling in the application form, especially if you have specific dates in mind, or you are unsure if you require formal permission. We can then decide if you need a permit and can discuss the feasibility of your event, the availability of the dates and may be able to suggest suitable locations.

The application form is available on our web pages, both in word and pdf formats, but we are happy to send out an application form on request. The application form will need to be completed and returned at least eight weeks before your event. At the same time you'll also need to send us a map, risk assessment, copy of your public liability insurance, copies of any relevant qualifications or affiliations and evidence of other landowner permission (if applicable). We will be unable to process your application until we receive all these documents.

Completing the application form

1. Organisers details

This section should be completed with the details of the person organising the event and the club / organisation they represent

2. Event details

This section should be completed with as much detail as possible about the event you wish to hold. The start location and areas of woodland to be used, along with the estimated number of participants.

You should include a clear outline of the event you are planning, for example:

We would like to hold a 25 mile charity bike ride using waymarked trails and tracks aimed at family / leisure cyclists. Entrants would pay an entry fee and then also try and raise sponsorship. At the start we would like to put up and gazebo and flags as an area for people for meet and sign on.

We are planning competitive cross-country MTB race using a 80%/20% mix of single-track / forest roads. This would be a BC Cycling regional level event and normally attracts around 300 riders. The event arena would comprise approximately 10 gazebos for teams, a burger van and

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stall selling spare parts. As well as participants we expect a large number of family / friends / spectators

Car Parking – Please state where you intend to park the participants of your event or activity, for small numbers this may be a Forestry Commission car park. But if your numbers are high, we may not be able to accommodate your participants alongside our normal day visitors. On these occasions please outline parking provision (park and ride, car sharing, alternative location) in your event details section.

Safety – During your permission you are responsible for the safety of the participants, but also to ensure the event or activity poses no safety issues for the general public. For example:

We will place signs in the visitor centre and main car park warning the public of our event and asking that they keep their dogs on a lead during the event. We will place marshals at all path/road junctions, so that we can ensure that the junction is safe to cross, or ask the public to wait till the husky sled has passed. We will have St. Johns Ambulance on site, based near the finish line and we have a qualified vet within the organising team. We will have watering pools and bowls at the finish line and will cancel the event if the weather forecast predicts very warm weather.

3. Promotion & marketing

If you would like us to display posters advertising your event around the visitor centre please indicate this. We would require you to provide approximately 6 laminated A3/A4 posters, which we will try and display in the run up to your event, but can't guarantee how, where or for how long. If you would like to display larger promotional materials, please contact us to discuss specification and requirements. Please indicate if you are happy for us to promote your event on our website and facebook pages.

4. Setup details

This section should be completed with as much detail as possible about how you plan to setup your event. It is important we know when and where you are setting up your event.

Infrastructure – Please give details of any infrastructure you will be bringing on to site (gazebos / portaloos / generators) or any of our existing infrastructure you are planning on using. You should include details of any retail

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or food concessions and other organisations that are involved with the event. We will include these within your event permission. For example:

We would like to put a gazebo near the start line for registration and would like to use a generator to power our equipment; additionally we would like to put gazebo for our sponsor near to the finish line, where the medal presentation will take place. The sponsors would be giving away free samples, but won't be selling anything. We would like our participants to use the visitor centre toilets near the start line, but would like permission for a portaloos near the finish line. We are liaising with the on-site café who are willing to open early for us and provide us with a number of pack lunches.

Type / colour of waymarking / signage used – A well waymarked route ensures participants get safely around the course and have an enjoyable day. Waymarking should not be sprayed, stapled, nailed or screwed to trees or site structures. We recommend using tape/ribbon, zip ties or saw dust. Please give details of the waymarking / signage you plan to use and what you will use to put this in place, e.g. blue laminated arrows zip tied to trees.

Approach Signage – For larger events we will ask that you install approach signage to ensure participants and spectators get to your event and to reduce congestion on approach roads.

Vehicle Use – Motorbikes and quad bikes are not allowed in the forest other than for very specific events. You should plan the management of your event around standard vehicles. Please give details of any vehicles you would like to use.

Takedown - Please ensure all signage and litter is removed after your event. If an event leaves signs and debris around it reflects badly on your sport or pursuit and may compromise future events. If you require further time to clear up after an event, please mention this in the event application as the permit can be extended to include this period. If litter and debris is not removed it will be cleared by the Forestry Commission and a charge will be made for the operation.

5. Payment / charges

We charge for issuing permissions to cover the administration costs associated with granting permission and to generate income to reinvest into our forests and facilities. A guide to our charges are on our website, or available on request.

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If you are a registered charity and directly delivering your event the most that we will charge you is our minimum administration fee, unless the event significantly impacts on our other visitors.

Admin and site fees are payable upfront while per participant fees are payable within 10 working days of your completed event. In the instance you cancel your event you will forfeit your admin fee.

Please indicate your preferred payment method and whether or not you require us to raise an invoice.

6. Documents required

This section outlines the maps and documents we require in order for your application to be processed. You should send us all these documents at the same time as your form.

Provisional route / course map – You will be required to provide us with a map of your route. We will provide you with constraints maps, which will contain data such as roads and railways, waymarked trails, public rights of way, ancient monuments, wildlife exclusion zones, proposed forestry operations. This will allow you to plan your route away from sensitive areas, busy visitor areas, waymarked trails and facilitate the consultation process. You should always be able to personally inspect any proposed route. You should clearly mark on your map different sections such as singletrack or forest road and significant features such as feed stations, transition points, marshal points or course features.

You are responsible for making sure the route(s) are safe and suitable for the event. Any advice given by the Forestry Commission, its representatives, employees or agents is without prejudice to this. Any advice or information given is only to help and does not affect or limit your responsibility to make sure the event is run safely.

Risk assessment / Method statement - You will be required to complete a risk assessment and / or method statement to show that you have considered the risks associated with running your event and how you will manage your event to reduce these risks (For risk assessment guidance visit www.hse.gov.uk/risk/risk-assessment). We will provide site risk assessments to outline any risks you wouldn't be expected to know about.

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Emergency plan - an emergency plan, in case something goes wrong. This should include contact details of key people, local hospital, details of the site and location and how you plan to deal with an emergency. Your emergency plan should also include contact details for your Forestry Commission contact on the day.

If any accidents occur, involving participants, spectators, or third party as a result of the event we need to be notified within 24 hours of the end of the event. This should include full details of injured parties along with a description of the circumstances surrounding the accident.

Public liability insurance - We require you to hold public liability insurance. The minimum insurance cover is £2 million for individuals/ low risk activities, while most events will require £5 million. Applicants should check with their insurers that the planned activity fits within the existing terms of their policy.

Relevant qualifications/affiliations - Please provide evidence of qualifications and affiliations, e.g. first aid, cycle leader training, Forest School Teacher training.

Evidence of other landowners permission - If your routes use land owned by other landowners you must seek the landowners permission and provide evidence of this for the permission.