

Basic Instructions

All you need to know to get started in orienteering!

Most orienteering events are one of two types:

Point-to-point - In standard 'point-to-point' orienteering events the winner is the fastest person between the start and finish points to visit all the controls on course. Controls **must** be found in the order shown - control circles are connected by lines.

Score - In score events you have a set amount of time to find as many controls (each worth a number of points) as you can and make it back to the finish. You lose points if you are late and gain bonus points if you collect all the controls and are back early. Controls can be visited in any order - control circles are not connected.

The basics

- You need to check in at each control with the timing system provided by the organizers. If, for some reason, the control doesn't register you should use the back up pin-punch to mark your map to prove you visited that control.
- Once you have punched the finish you may not go back on course to visit controls you have missed. (This rule is sometimes relaxed at less competitive events.)
- If you miss any required controls your result will be list as 'mis-punched' or mp. This is equivalent to not completing the course. Tip: Make sure to check that the control code on the control matches the code on your control descriptions or map so you know you are at the right one.
- The only navigational tools you are allowed to use are a magnetic compass and the official course map. With the exception of GPS sport watches, GPS devices are explicitly banned.

Getting Started

- You may rent a timing chip from the organizers or bring your own. Either way, data from previous races must be erased from the chip before you start. A system to do so is always provided.
- In point-to-point events, you may not start at the same time as another competitor on the same course as you (in score events typically everyone starts at the same time). If start times have not been pre-assigned you may start when you wish within the specified time-frame. If start times have been pre-assigned you must start at your assigned time.
- At championship competitions you are not allowed to look at the map or the course before your start time. At most events you are allowed to study the course and ask for help if needed when you arrive to register.

Safety

- All orienteers must carry a whistle with them while on course. If you are injured or completely lost blow three long blasts on your whistle every few minutes and don't move. Someone will come find you. Blowing your whistle as a joke or in order to distract a competitor so you can gain an advantage on course could result in disqualification.
- Your map should provide a safety bearing (direction) which you can use to get back to a major road or other feature which you can then follow back to the start or finish if you are lost. If this isn't mentioned on the map, ask an organizer.
- If you hear three long blasts while out on course you are obliged to quit your course in order to help the injured or lost party. Ignoring the call for help could result in disqualification.
- **You must ALWAYS report in to the results crew** at the finish line even if you do not complete your course.
- If there is a course cut-off time, you must make it back to the finish line and report to the results crew by that time. Even if it means quitting the course. If you are not back in time, race officials will initiate search and rescue procedures. Organizers have the right to ban repeat offenders from competing.

Fair Play

- **Certain features / map symbols are forbidden to cross. Pay particular attention to private property and out of bounds areas marked in olive green, or black or pink stripes.** If you are caught crossing these symbols you will be disqualified. See o-store.ca's legend sheets for which symbols are forbidden to cross.
- It is frowned upon to follow another competitor without doing your own navigation. Please respect the spirit of the sport and enjoy the challenge of finding your own way.
- In competitive events, it is also frowned upon to ask another competitor where you are unless you are very lost and are willing to give up your race result. This is considered ok for young children or in training scenarios.
- It is considered unsportsmanlike to purposefully engage in behaviour that is distracting to other competitors on course. Please be respectful of competitors that want to focus while racing.
- The environment is a critical part of orienteering. Please carry out everything you bring into the woods unless the organizers have explicitly stated that it is ok to leave something where they will clean it up at the end of the event.

And most important - enjoy the experience.

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This document is not to be taken as official. For official rules see your national federation's website or the international rules at orienteering.org.

The Orienteering Course

Annotated map and course with key terminology

Standard orienteering maps will always tell you what the scale and contour interval are (not shown in this example). Evenly spaced black or blue lines point to **magnetic north**.

