SAFETY FOR MAPPERS AND PLANNERS

SOUTHDOWNS ORIENTEERS

Mapping and planning often involves working alone in forest areas. Here are some suggestions for things you can do to minimise risks and maximise the chance of being able to summon help in an emergency.

Things to do NOW in readiness for future visits to the forest

- Register your mobile phone with the UK 999 text service (it is often possible to get a text message through even when reception is too poor to support a voice call). Text 'register' to 999. You will get a reply with instructions to follow. More information is here https://www.emergencysms.net/
- Download the What3Words app to your phone so that you could tell the emergency services your position to within a 3m square. More information is here https://what3words.com/about-us/
- Download the ordnance survey OS Maps app (there is a free version which includes a 'locate me' function that gives your current position as a grid reference or latitude/longitude in order to tell the emergency services.
- Set up the ICE number and emergency details on your phone.

Have you checked in advance of your visit?

- Permission from the land owner (where relevant)?
- No clash with other activities such as shooting or forestry work?
- Likely weather conditions?
- Sunset time?
- Known hazards in the area?
- Are the planned activities well within your physical capability?
- Can hazardous activities be avoided whilst you are working alone?

Would someone know if you were missing?

- Does someone know where you are?
- Do they know how long you are expected to be?
- Do they have a means to communicate with you and you with them?
- Could you give them your exact location in an emergency?
    - Do they also have the What3Words app / OS Maps App?
    - Do they have a copy of the map marked up with exactly where you are working?
    - Could you enable location tracking on your phone so they can trace you more precisely?
- Do they have contact numbers for people who could be called in to help? (e.g. event officials or other experienced orienteers)
- If working for a prolonged period, could you set up a failsafe system where you call in regularly to report you are safe?

Could you get help in an emergency?

- Are you carrying a mobile phone with contact numbers?
- Have you exchanged mobile numbers with any others working at the same time?
- Are you carrying a whistle to use to summon help?

Are you adequately equipped?

- Suitably clothed for conditions? (including footwear, full body cover against ticks...)
- High vis clothing if working in an area where shooting ever happens (we've had several cases where landowner communication has been less than ideal)
- Compass, waterproof copy of map?
- Small first aid kit?
- Watch?
- Are you carrying some form of ID together with emergency contact details and any medical details such as allergies etc. that you would like someone to be aware of if they found you unconscious?