Properly equipped for competing in the forest?

Sun cream if appropriate

NOTHING around the neck

Suitable clothes for the weather (including a cagoule if conditions or event organisers dictate this)

Watch (to know when courses close and ensure return before that time)

Dibber on finger (must be downloaded whether you finish or not so the organisers know you have returned safely)

Whistle in pocket (for summoning help in an emergency - 6 long blasts then a long silence. Repeat until rescuers arrive)

Suitable shoes for running in slippery areas (please clean these between events as we don't want to spread Ash Dieback disease)

Brain engaged! (has listened carefully to any information at the start and has thought through the 'safety bearing' information so they would know what to do even if their map blew away)

Control description holder on arm (or some juniors find it easier with control descriptions pinned upside down on their shirt)

Neatly folded map - make the first fold parallel to the north lines for ease of lining up the compass.
Map symbols known for 'compulsory crossing', 'out of bounds' and any hazards in the area such as crags, water, roads
Emergency contact number for the event organiser is always printed on the map.

Compass held on map at all times and used to keep map oriented

Full leg cover to avoid scratches and ticks
More information about ticks is here

Taped laces to avoid tripping

(as modelled for junior training by our British Champion, Ali)

Competitors are permitted to carry a mobile phone for use in an emergency and we encourage everyone (particularly children and vulnerable adults) to do so. There is an emergency contact number printed on the map (or on the bib at larger events).
For night events, there would also be a head torch and a small backup torch.
And don't forget any personal equipment such as asthma inhalers that might be needed.

Some other safety related FAQs

What if I have a medical condition?

Competitors are advised to carry with them any medication which may be required in an emergency and an information sheet with any essential medical details. Any competitor with a high risk medical condition is invited to download and complete the form available from the BOF website here, place this in a sealed envelope with your name on the outside, and leave it in the box at Registration. Envelopes will only be opened if required for a medical emergency, and unopened envelopes will be destroyed immediately after the event.

What if I need first aid?

Even at small local events, a first aid kit and details of the nearest hospital are always available at the download point.
At larger events there is a nominated first aider or first aid team present.

How would you know if I was missing?

The electronic timing system can be used to identify missing competitors (that is why it is so important you download even if you don't finish the event). If you are at the event with someone and you are concerned they have been out longer than expected, please come and see the team at download. If you travelled alone, and wish to leave your car keys as another cross check that someone is still out, there is a box provided at registration.

How do I make sure my child does a course they can cope with?

At our SOG events, it is ALWAYS OK to go round a course with your child or shadow from a distance until they are confident.
At our SOG events, it is ALWAYS OK to ask to see the map to decide whether a course would be within your child's capability.
At our SOG events, it is ALWAYS OK for a child to ask for help from another orienteer if they are in difficulties.

Insurance

All of our events are registered with British Orienteering and are covered by their public liability insurance; individuals are advised to consider their own private accident insurance.
Participants who are **not members of British Orienteering** are **not covered by British Orienteering's public liability insurance**.
By entering this event, you acknowledge that you are **taking part at your own risk**. For example, if you were to accidentally injure a member of the public or damage property during the event, you would not be covered.
Please note that the insurance only covers those registered as being part of the event so if you are taking part as a group, or are accompanying / shadowing a child please make sure you register the names of everyone taking part as you sign up.

Helping Others

You should give help to anyone in need of assistance for their own safety, abandoning your own course if necessary

Ticks

Ticks are common across many of the areas we run in and can carry infections such as Lyme Disease and Tick-Borne Encephalitis. Please wear full leg and abdomen cover in the forest and check for ticks afterwards and seek medical advice if you develop flu like symptoms or a spreading circular rash after being bitten. There is an excellent government leaflet here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1148613/Tick-awareness-A5-leaflet-April-2023.pdf

Some things to discuss with a child who is ready to run unaccompanied:

This is a set of suggestions from parents of our current juniors of topics it is helpful to discuss with your child (in addition to everything on page 1) before they run unaccompanied. It is by no means exhaustive but we hope you will find it helpful.

Yellow maps are always picked up in advance of the start and can be talked through. At a SOG competition, it is fine to ask to see any other map in advance if, for example, you need to talk it through with your child as they move up from yellow to orange or orange to green.

Where am I going?

Can your child use their compass to put the map the right way round?
Can they talk you through the course, telling you what they will see on the way?
Where will they meet you afterwards?

Potential hazards on the way?

Can your child point out to you:

- any specific hazards shown on the map? (check that they can recognise the appropriate symbols - roads, cliffs, water, etc)
- any areas marked out of bounds?
- any compulsory crossing points?
- any boundary where there might be a danger of ending up off-map?

Is your child aware of any specific safety information from the final details or from the details provided at the start?
Is your child aware of how to behave when they meet other forest users (stranger danger), dogs, horses, mountain bikes, etc?

If things go wrong?

Have you agreed how long it is reasonable to spend on the chosen course? At what point will they return regardless? Do they know the course closing time? Do they have a means of knowing the time?
Have you talked through the safety bearing so they would know what to do if they were completely lost? (or their map blew away, or whatever)
Is your child carrying a whistle and do they know how to use it to summon help?
Is it appropriate to run with a mobile phone - particularly whilst they are 'just moving up' (many children do - and for some events like the Brighton City Race we insist on it - though obviously not all forest areas have suitable reception).

Some useful items you might like to add to your mobile phones:

- Set up the ICE number and emergency details if your phone allows this.
- Add the club mobile number 07526-792817 (on at every event and located with the SI team at download)
- 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