

## The Race Director Checklist

Although this isn't an exhaustive list, this list should act as a foundation to putting together your own road race.

### 6 – 8 Months Prior to Race Day

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#### Select a day and time!

Take some time to google other races in your location, including major half marathons, marathons, and family fun weekend races. You don't want to compete with other big races in town. Note: It's okay to put on a race as another community race but avoid large races as they will take away runners from your race.

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#### Select a location!

Location, location, location. To aid in your search, look for established USA Track and Field certified courses. These courses have already been measured for the distance you are looking for. This makes it easy because you don't have to plan a course. Select a course that has a great area to start and end the race (open and away from traffic). Try to locate a large park or trail so you don't have to close any streets or must compete with vehicle traffic.

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#### Inquire about permits and police requirements!

Depending on where you are, you may be required to go down to the city or county and get an event or race permit. This is a MUST! After you have your location, date, and time planned out, go to your local governmental authority and inquire about permits you might need and/or police security they are required to have. Some governmental authorities may not need any permits or police requirements. Others may require you to talk to the parks and recreation department. There may be a fee, so make sure you budget this in your race budget.

If you're ready to set the time and date, go ahead and apply for the permit and pay for it. Secure it now and not have to worry about it later.

If you are required to have police presence, contact the local, county, or state police department to inquire about how to achieve this requirement. If you are closing streets, you may need multiple officers and the street department to block off the route (if this is an issue, go back to finding a new location with less of the course on street and more on trails/sidewalks). Give yourself ample time as you may need to hire off-duty officers.



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### **Contact a race timer and obtain quotes!**

Depending on how many runners you may have, it may be best to have a race timer time the race rather than you manually timing everyone. Our suggestion is that if your race is less than 50 people, it may be better to time the race yourself. At this point it becomes cost versus benefit.

For races above 50 people, you should look into hiring a race timer. There are multiple reasons including: (1) quicker results, (2) more professional operations, (3) overall organization, and (4) resources to help you with any questions you may have about operating a race.

Depending on location, number of runners, and/or timer the fee for a race timer can be as low as \$800 to well over thousands. Make sure to budget this in your fee. For 100 runners, it may cost \$700 - \$1,000 to time your race, which translates to \$10 a runner. It does get cheaper the more runners you have. If you can't swallow a \$10 per runner timing cost, look for sponsors who can sponsor the timer (many smaller races do this).

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### **Come up with your enrollment goals**

What is your enrollment target? What is your runner fee going to be and does it increase when you get closer to the event date? Although we don't cover budgets here, what is the enrollment needed to break even and what is the enrollment to make what you want from this event. Think about how sponsorships factor in the enrollment. More sponsors may mean less runners needed. Less sponsors means you must rely on your runner registration. This goal is what your team will need to achieve to have a successful race.

## **5 - 6 Months Prior to Race Day**

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### **Race Registration Website**

After you've secured a date, time, location, and permits, it is time to put together your race registration website. In today's world, you must have a race registration website to grab exposure unless you're in a small town with a very supportive community. We recommend Run Sign Up. Their fees are competitive, and they allow you to accept credit cards for race registration.

If you're going to have a paper registration too, make sure you have a limited liability statement on the form. Make sure to include the organization, your race timer, the city or local government, and any other companies/person involved in putting your race together in that limited liability statement. Contact your local attorney or lawyer for a limited liability statement for your registration forms.



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## Insurance

You may need insurance for your event. There are a couple of different insurances that you may want to look into. The first one is general liability insurance for the overall liability insurance of your event. There are some places that will sell you event day only general liability insurance. Check your local insurance company or look for one online that specializes in road races and 1-day event.

The other one is a new type of insurance and it is called RaceInsure by Strategic Risk Transfers. This is an event cancellation insurance. If you cancel a race due to a covered cause, the insurance company will pay for the loss revenues. For more information on this insurance go to [www.raceinsure.com](http://www.raceinsure.com).

## 4 - 5 Months Prior to Race Day

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### Market your race to the public

Now that you have the wheels turning and your website up, it is time to market the heck out of the race. Places to market include the group you are fundraising for either through social media or e-mail campaigns. If you have an address to your target market, you may want to send post cards or flyers directly to them.

Create a Facebook Event for the race and market that to the people who are your target market.

Contact local race shops that specialize in gear for runners. They can help you advertise to their customers or running groups.

Contact local running groups and see if they will market to their members on your behalf.

Contact businesses in the area and see if you can market to their employees. Some companies will even pay for some or all of the fees as a benefit to their employees to get them active and participating in a community event. Some races go as far as doing corporate challenges where the business that brings the most people (either by number or percentage of employees) takes home the corporate challenge trophy.

If you had prior races, then they are the ones you should contact again. E-mail them or send them a flyer.



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### Get sponsors for your event

If you are just starting out, you might not be able to cover your entire cost from just runner fees alone. Shoot, if a timer costs \$800 and you have 50 runners and they paid \$20 a piece that is \$1,000 in entry fees and \$800 now goes to your timer and you're left with \$200 for everything else.

Many races are able to afford timers and extra goodies by finding sponsors. If you're able to get 10 sponsors who pitch in \$500, now you've got \$5,000 plus your \$1,000 entry fee. That's \$6,000 and if you can put on the race for less than \$3,000 then you're giving your organization \$3,000 from the race. (That assumes you only have 50 runners, you can do much more than that).

Many small races do not make money from the entry fee alone, they make money from sponsors. If they didn't have the race, they wouldn't have the sponsors and if they didn't have the sponsors the race wouldn't make any money in the end. So, don't be shy, grab some sponsors. Some races have upwards of 25 sponsors all kicking in an amount between \$100 to \$1,000.

Remember, sponsors do not have to only give money. Contact your local beverage company to get waters for your race. Contact your local grocery store to get bananas for your racers. Contact a t-shirt printer to see if they can donate custom t-shirts if they put their logo on the back or maybe they can discount the printing price in exchange for the advertising.

Be creative, but make sure to get sponsors that will help your cause.

## 2 - 3 Months Prior to Race Day

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### Analyze your enrollment numbers

This is the time to figure out ways to increase your enrollment numbers if you're not where you want to be. Depending on your location, you might get more people on the day of the race and that is why enrollment numbers are low.

Many races we have done question whether it is a good idea to do a race when 30 people show up, but 90 people preregister. From an event standpoint, you want as many people to show up as possible, but from a business standpoint, you want as many people pre-registered as possible because once you have their money, it doesn't matter if they show up, they've already paid. This is why concert promoters are always promoting their concerts earlier and earlier because if they can get the customer's money now, they don't have to worry about empty seats and trying to discount closer to the event (or even on the day of the event).



This is the time to evaluate how you might be able to increase your enrollment to get your numbers up. Flyers on people's door, go to more businesses to put signs up on their windows, contact more runner groups, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Start to put together a plan for the logistical items**

Do you need cones, water, cups, trash cans, granola bars, bananas, T-shirts, finisher medals, goodie bags, raffle items, etc?

How are you going to get them? Are they being donated, or do you need to buy them? Who is going to be in charge of keeping them all together and getting them to race day? Do you have to pick them up from a vendor and when do you do that?

\_\_\_\_\_ **Do you have volunteers lined up?**

Who are your volunteers. A successful 5k or 10k race has too many volunteers. Here is a look of where you might need volunteers:

\_\_\_\_\_ - Registration (2 – 4)

\_\_\_\_\_ - Bike Volunteers

\_\_\_\_\_ - Leads the runner

\_\_\_\_\_ - Follows the lead male (to verify they have finished first and didn't cut the course)

\_\_\_\_\_ - Follows the lead female (same as above)

\_\_\_\_\_ - Brings up the rear (they should be the last one on the course)

\_\_\_\_\_ - Medical/First Aid

\_\_\_\_\_ - Finisher Medals (2 – 4)

\_\_\_\_\_ - Photography (1 – 2)

\_\_\_\_\_ - Finish Line Volunteer (2 – 4)

\_\_\_\_\_ - Water Station (2 – 3 per station)

\_\_\_\_\_ - Overall Operations (3 – 4)

\_\_\_\_\_ - Road Access Volunteers (1 per intersection)

\_\_\_\_\_ - Results and Awards (3 – 4)

Remember, you do not need all of these volunteers and this is not an exhaustive list. Your situation may warrant more or less, but this will give you a start of who you might need.



**2 Weeks Prior to Race Day**

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Verify Permits and Police Help**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Verify Enrollment Numbers and Work with your Timer**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Verify Vendor Goodie and Pick-Up**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Verify Volunteers**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Verify Route and Have Maps Available**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Verify Equipment Needed for the Event**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Verify Insurance Policies are Finalized**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Communicate to Runner on Final Instructions (Also Volunteers)**
  - \_\_\_\_\_ - What Time Event Starts
  - \_\_\_\_\_ - What Time Registration Starts
  - \_\_\_\_\_ - Where to Park
  - \_\_\_\_\_ - How are they picking up their bibs and goodies (do you have early bib pick-up)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ - Water Stations and Restrooms Available (Where)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ - Remind them where their entry fees are going to
  - \_\_\_\_\_ - Let them know it's not too late to register for the race if they have a friend
  - \_\_\_\_\_ - What happens in the case of weather and how is that going to be communicated to them (Via Facebook Post, Twitter Post, E-Mail, etc.)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ - Maybe a reminder that there are no refunds and all entry fees will be considered donations to the organization that this race benefits. (Note, unless it is known that there are refunds and/or you will reschedule the race)

**1 Day Prior to Race Day**

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Get Organized**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **If there are things you can do before hand, then do it on this day because you won't have time on the day of the event. (eg – Put out mile markers, put out tables, stuff goodie bags, organize and fold t-shirts, organize finisher medals, etc.)**

That's it.

Although this is not a complete list, this should give you a foundation of having a successful race. We hope you have a great race!



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athletic event management



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