

Hazards, risk prevention and course of action in case of accidents at Vöhandu Marathon

During a paddling marathon on distance of 100 km different injuries and health disorders can occur, which can in extrem cases have even lethal outcome.

Some examples on hazards, which can cause injury, health disorder or death:

Hazards connected to movement in the terrain:

- Competitor can get lost.
- Competitor can be a victim of attack by wild or domestic animal (for example adder bite)
- Some insect can bite competitor. Some people can have dangerous allergic reaction on insect bite. Such a bite can cause some illness.

Hazards connected to trafficated roads:

- Traffic on public roads is neither closed nor regulated during the marathon. Competitors can clash with vehicles while crossing trafficated roads.

Hazards connected to water:

- Competitors can drown or suffer of hypothermia when the boat capsizes or gets full of water.
- Competitor's vessel can clash with other vessels, causing vessel capsizing or falling in pieces.
- Wind and waves can cause capsizing of vessel or fill it with water.
- Competitor can get injury or drown while crossing rapids or mill dykes.
- Competitor has to take into account, that water speed can be very different in some places and it can cause vessel capsizing.
- Fallen trees in the river are remarkable hazard, especially in places with rapid stream. Bumping into fallen tree can cause vessel falling in pieces or capsizing.
- Depending on water level there can be stones in the river, which cannot be seen and bumping into these stones can cause the vessel capsizing or falling into pieces.

Hazards connected to long duration of the marathon:

- Competitors' cardiovascular systems are under heavy load during the marathon, which can cause heart failures.
- Heavy physical load can cause injuries to muscles, joints, bones or skin.
- Competitor can suffer of dehydration (in case of insufficient drinking).
- Competitor can suffer of lack of carbohydrates (in case of insufficient eating).
- Competitor can suffer of hypothermia.
- The marathon (especially when lasting even night-time) is very exhausting.
- Competitor can drop asleep while driving home after the marathon and thus be a victim of traffic accident.

Other hazards:

- During such a long competition one can fall out with teammates or with other competitors.
- Accidents in connection to several hazards described hereover can happen simultaneously. For example – tiredness of competitor, bickering, dusk or darkness, bad weather conditions (wind, rain, snowfall, low temperature etc.).
- Every competitor has therefore to take into account, that coincidence of several factors can cause unforeseen and not described above danger.

Risk prevention and alleviation

- The competitor is obliged to assess all risks personally and evaluate his/her abilities to cope with these risks on the course
- Competitor has to quit the competition when he estimates, that he is not able to continue the race safely.
- Competitor has to choose his trajectory at obstructions on the river so, that he will be able to reach the riverbank in case of capsizing.
- Competitor has to take into account, that as stages between control points are long, bodies of water are big, speed and paddling trajectory can be chosen freely, it is not possible for organizers to arrange water rescue.
- Every competitor has obligatory to wear properly fastened life vest in the vessel.
- Competitors have to follow traffic rules.
- It is recommended, that competitors have a reserve of drinking water with them.
- It is recommended, that competitors have some energy rich food with them.
- It is recommended, that competitors wear wheather safe clothes and have some reserve clothes with them. It is also recommended that competitors have survival blanket with them.
- It is recommended, that competitors be vaccinated against tick-borne encephalitis.
- As the competition has very long duration, it is recommended, that competitors plan their overnight stay close to competition centre and rest properly before driving home.

Course of action in case of accidents. In case of accidents, health disorders or injuries which make the competitor unable to move and/or require immediate medical assistance; following has to be taken into account:

- Place of accident will most probably first be reached by other persons taking part into the competition.
- It is responsibility of all competitors to inform organizers about accidents.
- **Every team has to carry with them a mobile phone in watertight package with a saved contact number of organizers. (+372 52 10 800)**
- If competitor can not reach the organizers by mobile phone, for example due to bad coverage, then one team member goes to closest higher point in the terrain and tries to get mobile coverage in order to contact organizers. The other member of the team remains with the victim in order to help him.
- Depending on the situation organizers will arrange either arrival of ambulance and/or transport of the victim to the competition centre.
- Arrival of ambulance and/or organizers to a remote places on the river can take very long time!

Confirmation of the competitor:

- I have thoroughly acquainted with the current paper and realize that participation in Vöhandu marathon may result in injury, health disorder or death.
- I will take all necessary steps to avoid dangers, prevent and alleviate risks involved.
- In case of an accident involving my team partner or fellow competitors I will assist the injured person and inform the organizers about the accident.
- I confirm that I participate in the Vöhandu marathon organized Sports Assotiation Ekstreempark at my own risk.