

# **THE ODYSSEY SAFETY MANIFESTO**

This is the only place on the website where we will not fool around. Nothing could be more serious than your safety. It's so important that we are going to go into a bit of detail.

## **1. The Course:**

We spent many months and drove and ran many hours to lay out the AOR course. At one point, I sat in my car on leg two for 30 minutes and counted the number of cars that drove by. In laying out the course, I always asked three questions: Would I like to run here? Would I run here? Would I not, under any circumstances run here? The goal, which I believe we achieved, was to have 80% of our course fall into category one, 20% fall into category two and zero fall into category three.

It's easy to throw together a course that goes for many miles on a two-lane highway where the speed limit is 55 or more miles per hour. Easy, but not safe and certainly not fun. We didn't and will never do that. It's much more difficult to meet with local runners, figure out where they run and go from there. It's harder to find transition areas, harder to find good roads and harder to locate volunteers. But, it's safer and more scenic.

## **2. The Check in and Team Captain's Meeting:**

At the AOR you are required to check in the night before. You must demonstrate that you have the proper reflective and lighting equipment. Then, you are required to have at least one team member attend the team captain's meeting. At that time, we will tell you all about last minute construction, safety advice, etc. This is not a meeting that can be lightly blown off.

### **3. Permits, Police, EMT and Signs:**

We spend more time on permits than on marketing and PR combined. Not even close. In fact, every single mile of our course is permitted by appropriate authorities. It's more important that everyone finish safely than anything else. A permitted race is one that has been "vetted" by local authorities. We've changed the course in two small ways this year to accommodate the requests of permitting authorities. We don't consider that a hassle. We consider it a necessity. We work closely with the police and they man a number of key points for us. We pay them overtime. We're happy to do it. We put up variable message reader boards along the course in strategic locations to let drivers know that you are out there. We have lighting at all night time transition areas. We have an EMT company ready and waiting. They are in contact with a network of local public safety officials in the event an emergency should arise. Last year they answered zero calls. Let's keep it that way!

### **4. Sunrise to Sunset:**

From sunset to sunrise runners are required to wear a lighted vest or a reflective vest with a blinking light, and carry a lighted flashlight or wear a headlamp. As a precautionary matter, we encourage runners to wear reflective vests at all times. We strongly urge you to stay in your van between sunset and sunrise unless you are running or safely within the confines of a transition area. Should you determine it is absolutely necessary to be outside your van at night, you must be wearing a reflective vest and you must have a light attached to you or in your hand.

### **5. A Word About Headphones:**

Marianne, I hope you're listening. . . . headphones are great. We love them. But, you really need to think about not bringing them for the vast majority of the course. For the 1/3 or so that's on the C&O Canal, enjoy your music. During daylight hours on the roads, if we see you wearing

headphones, we will stop you and ask you to remove them. ***At night, if we see you wearing headphones, you will be required to stop running at that point, your team will be penalized an hour and the team will be required to drive to the next transition and go to the next runner in sequence. If two runners from the same team are found using headphones, the team will be disqualified at that point and not allowed to finish the race.*** This is not subject to discussion or negotiation. We are being totally selfish here. We don't want to have your injury on our consciences.

**6. Some final general thoughts:**

We request that each of you be mindful of overall safety. Please be careful while running and traveling the course. Because the roads and paths used for the relay course are NOT closed for the event, every runner and team vehicle driver needs to be alert and exercise caution. Every runner and team vehicle driver must comply with all traffic laws. Runners must follow the directions provided with each leg. Runners must cross certain roads at designated intersections, complying with the traffic signals, and other locations.

Please note that this is a long distance relay run that will take teams a full day give or take a few hours to complete. So it does not make sense to dash across a busy road and put yourself in a dangerous situation to save a minute or two on your total team time.

Team vehicles need to display in a conspicuous place a sign that warns about "Runners on Road." We will provide these signs. Team vehicles may not drive next to runners, as this may cause a traffic hazard. Team vehicles must park safely off of the roadways and not block access to other roads or driveways. Additionally, ***runners may not be accompanied by cyclists except on the C&O Canal portion of the course.***