

British Association of Road Races

Technical News Briefings

www.barr-online.org.uk
Email: Roland.gibbard@barr-online.org.uk

Text – John Joyner
Editor – Roland Gibbard
Chairman – Technical Group

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BARR RACE GRADING SCHEME

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So, what do you know about “TMO’s” and “Chapter 8”?

This may sound like a question from an old question paper in an English Literature examination – where you are asked, in three sentences, to explain what happened in Chapter 8 of the set text..... but you can't actually remember the detail. That comparison is reasonably apt in that whilst a growing number of race organisers are beginning to hear of this term, as my recent experience shows, finding those who fully understand the concept is hard and those actually qualified even harder!

So here's a brief, initial, primer offered with help from three members of the BARR Committee who are so qualified together with some personal observations from Terry Back relating to the attempt by one local group to apply it to the recent Woodbridge 10K in Suffolk.

Would you allow this in your race?



A significant number of road races now take place mid-morning on a Sunday – a time when many wish to indulge in either leisure pursuits or shopping and thereby create raised volumes of road traffic.

If there are two things that do not mix – like oil and water, they are road races and Sunday traffic!

In the last two decades many events have been able to maintain traffic control via the voluntary involvement of their local police but as this option

has been increasingly withdrawn then DIY situations such as shown (above) arise and are not just dangerous but actually illegal in terms of current legislation. We have got to learn to do this ourselves, legally.

What is "Chapter 8"?

The first key point to recall in this discussion is that Road Closure Traffic Orders can only be implemented by local councils or local authorities – only they can issue the notice to allow a closure to be implemented on a pre-described section(s) of road for a pre-determined period of time.

The actual implementation has traditionally been conducted by the police but, with an ever growing number of areas where the police have refused to voluntarily carry out this action there has been an ever growing number of references to **TMO's** or trained and qualified **Traffic Management Operatives**. TMO's have no power to issue a road closure – just the authority to implement an official order for a temporary closure which can include the construction of coned lanes and operating temporary traffic lights and of "Stop/Go" boards.

Initially some of the events affected feared that the only solution would be to hire-in trained, professional crews – at a not inconsiderable expense. In an attempt to improve their region's chances of maintaining a road race programme, a number of clubs in the Manchester, North Yorks and East Regions -often with the help of their Local Athletics Network, decided to train and obtain a number of volunteers trained and qualified as TMO's.

At that time UKA were active in promoting such training using an outside agency called TESS (Training Event Safety Solutions – some of whose instructors were ex-police officers.) A one day course of about 6 hrs duration (half theory and half practical) was aimed at giving the trainees sufficient knowledge and practical skill to become an effective TMO for their own event – plus others in their area.

Subsequently UKA withdrew its financial subsidising of these courses leaving events to resolve their issues themselves – potentially at great expense if an outside agency had to be employed.

As can often happen when new rules of directives emerge people begin to refer to it colloquially by another term and this has occurred here with most referring to "Chapter 8" rather than TMO's – so why "Chapter 8"?

This refers to that section of the "Traffic Signs Manual" – published in 2009, which deals with an individual's responsibilities in terms of how to plan and implement temporary traffic management systems - using both manpower and signs, so that there is a safe and practical environment for both workers and users.

Many marshals will be drivers themselves and whilst they may be reasonably proficient in terms of the Highway Code - like 99.9% of us, they will be unaware of both the range of laws now affecting traffic movement e.g.

** Highways Act *Road Traffic Act * Road Traffic Regulations Act *CDM Regulations
*Traffic signs Regulations and General Directions *Health and Safety at Work Act
* EC Directives, Regulations, Guidance and ACoP's... as well as good old Risk Assessment*

Because your local police may not now be willing to do any of this, one cannot assume that any Tom, Dick or Harry can do it for themselves. To simply hire signs and implement what you think you want would be illegal and in the event of a traffic incident any insurance cover you thought you had would be rendered null and void unless those who took that action were appropriately qualified to do so.

Putting a bright tabard onto a volunteer and calling him or her a "Race Marshal" neither gives them authority to direct traffic nor pedestrians – even if a formal road closure has been obtained. They marshal only by consent.

Thus the term "Chapter 8" is simply a euphemism for the Implementation of temporary traffic management measures that will;
..... facilitate temporary closures
.... thereby optimising safety, use of road space and work efficiency
..... whilst minimising congestion, delay and inconvenience
..... using personnel that have been trained and qualified to do so.

As one person expressed it "We can continue to have what we want but now instead of getting the police to do it looks as if we must pay to qualify some of our own team members to do it."

Some questions currently being asked.

Is it part of the new Licence requirements?

No, it is not one of the items being checked as currently.

So, who is going to insist upon TMO's being present – and how many you will need?

This will arise when you seek approval from the local authority to hold the event, use a particular route and possibly seek one or more temporary partial or full road closures.

It is likely that the approval will only be granted if you have **at least one qualified TMO at each of the strategic points where traffic is affected.** Each would then be assisted by untrained race marshals though at some key points it might be deemed appropriate to have more than one TMO present.

It is worth appreciating that motorists do not show race marshals the same respect as they would to a full time police officer.

One race organiser has commented to me that he would rather pay for one uniformed police officer and their vehicle rather than pay to train volunteers – simply due to the differential levels of respect that drivers will have.

Would an event insurance be compromised if they did not comply?

Our understanding of the current law is that if you place any sign/poster, etc on the highway then you can be prosecuted and, should a driver become distracted by them then you would become liable for any injury or damage caused by those signs.

Whilst currently many councils/police turn a 'blind eye' to that practice it does not change the law.

What does it qualify them to do that they could not do before?

Qualification allows such marshals to implement a TTRO (Temp Traffic Regulation Order and road closure), the use of stop/go boards, the placing of cones to divert traffic, legally putting up signs, etc.

Remember that no untrained race official has the right to interfere with the existing flow of traffic.

Are many race organisers well briefed upon Chapter 8 regulations/ training?

Realistically, very few. Some events may try to bury their heads in the sand but many police forces are rapidly tightening up on this especially in both the South West and Kent where events on the highway are causing more and more traffic problems for the police. Local authorities are appreciating this fact and now many more are insisting that permission to do this, or that, will be conditional upon the event organiser manning traffic situations with TMO qualified marshals.

How much does it cost to become qualified - per person or per event?

Several companies now run training schemes for the general public and for a basic 6 hour/ 1 day course charge between £230 and £400 per person.

England Athletics did begin to organise a number of heavily subsidised courses to train TMO's using a preferred third party (TESS)* thereby allowing all attendees to secure the NCFO accreditation to prove that they had been well trained about "Chapter 8" – and had a certificate to prove it.

Unfortunately financial support for these courses was then withdrawn and that training avenue was closed down.

* Training Event Safety Solutions.

Where now?

Evidence suggests that many of our race organisers are going to have to come to terms with the demand from Highways that key areas of the course are supervised by qualified TMO's.

BARR has spoken with TESS and agreed that specialist one day courses (09.00 – 17.00) could be organised regionally, on a Saturday, with the morning being allocated to theory and the afternoon to practical. The course fee would be approximately £125 per person plus a buffet lunch.

All participants would also then have access to complimentary advice from TESS leading up to their first application of this system. In addition the services of TESS could be hired for a half day or day to visit your course BEFORE your event to have your plans reviewed by a professional trainer.

Covering the cost of qualification.

At the Woodbridge 10K recently held in Suffolk a number of recently qualified TMO's were present to help implement the event's traffic plan. Essentially these were being drawn from other regional events on a mutual self-help basis.

One suggestion might be that if the event sending its trainee to a course were to pay the initial £125 fee then it might agree that, say 50% of that fee was a self-interest investment and each time their TMO worked on another event a small "hire" fee (say £20) was paid so that after three "assists" the balance of the training fee was recouped.

The net result would be a growing number of TMO's available not just to help other events but, far more importantly, to help staff your own!

For how long does the initial qualification remain valid?

2 Years

What happens after that time expires?

You can attend a half day refresher/ update course that will focus on both feedback and issues that have arisen in events and/or from highways agencies.

The cost of this refresher course is £60 + VAT and a further £10 for a new ID card.

What's it like being a TMO? Terry Back offers some views after his first experience

So is there any merits in taking the trouble to go on the TMO course - if you can find one!

Along with several members of those trained with me I assisted yesterday with the organisation of the traffic management programme at a local 10K.



It was the first time that many of us had our put our training into practice. Among other things, we found that...

- *although warning signs about road closures had been placed a week before the event, this seemed to have little effect in reducing the traffic flow,*
- *while the road closures were in place almost 30% of the drivers wound down their car windows asking for advice on the best way to find their way round the town,*
- *a number also seemed unable to read the word STOP from a big red sign,*
- *and if they did follow the directions given they tried to cut the corners as they turned almost running into cars coming from the other direction.*

It was clear that the start time of an event (12.00) may also have created additional problems. This time had been chosen so as to help the local town centre churches with their Sunday services. By this time traffic is at its Sunday peak with people eating out at local pubs and restaurants, visiting local shops and garden centres. The local football team also had a match and, you guessed it, the pitch was on part of the race route!

These factors all added extra burdens on traffic issues. The worse offenders for causing traffic problems had to be the older drivers who got flustered with the break in their routine and were very reluctant to take advice.

As TMO's we found this a bit of an eye opener into drivers' behaviour and their lack of patience with the small delays and alterations to their route.

We felt that in the days leading up to the race, local business - although aware of this annual event, had not made any effort to pre-warn their customers. Maybe next year the event organiser should look to produce a small leaflet that these establishments could pass out in the week prior to the race.

There is no doubt that the role of TMO will grow in its importance for all road events because traffic issues are growing year on year, and the safety of all runners is of the utmost importance.

Conclusion

Growing volumes of Sunday traffic and events held on the highways are bound to cause ever increasing areas of conflict.

It is evident that as a consequence of growing budgetary restraints, the amount of assistance that race organisers can expect from the police will continue to diminish – though they retain the right to influence local highways on what they deem “safe”. If we want events on the roads then we will have to pay a greater price one way or another.

Training one TMO per year is hardly a significant cost out of the annual race budget – even less if those personnel can then be “hired out” to other races or activities.

Briefing Course for BARR Race Organisers and their senior crew.

**Saturday 30th June.
Times 10am to 4 pm
Campanile Hotel
Swindon**

As it is becoming increasingly hard for volunteer race teams to keep abreast of current changes in both internal and external regulations, BARR is organising a special one day conference to assist all BARR members stay abreast of changes and, where necessary, “stay legal”.

Aspects to be covered include;

- * UKs Athletic Structure 2012
- * Race Licencing procedure
- * Safety Advisory Groups (SAG's)
- * Chapter 8 Requirements
- * Risk Assessments
- * Your questions (Topics can be submitted before the seminar.)

A charge of £35.00 (BARR members) or £40.00 (non-members) will be levied to cover room hire, lunch etc. Please make cheques payable to BARR and send to BARR Seminar, 36 Richardson Way, Rugeley, Staffs WS15 2TD. **Please reserve places by no later than June 16th.**