

# Irish Field Archery Federation

## Health & Safety in Field Archery



Field Archery, unlike most other sports, is unique from the point that on every occasion the organisers are presented with new hazards and dangers. Most other sports have an arena or building that enables standard precautions to be established and maintained, however by virtue of the sport, this is not possible in Field Archery.

As the name suggests, Field Archery is shot outdoors, mainly in wooded areas. In addition to the terrain, the weather can alter any course over a matter of hours, changing safe pathways into dangerous obstacles, gentle slopes into potential hazards. It is not possible to cater for all eventualities, but the organisers have a Duty of Care to ensure that all reasonable practical steps have been taken to safeguard the participants, and spectators regardless of changing circumstances.

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES.**

#### The Course

The area must be thoroughly inspected for natural hazards such as;

- Sloping banks.
- Rivers and streams.
- Loose footings and crumbling pathways.
- Overhanging banks and ridges.
- Fallen trees or broken branches suspended in trees.
- Low, cut or broken branches that could cause puncture injuries.
- Exposed roots and other trip hazards.
- Wasp, Bees and Rats nests.
- Rabbit, Fox and Badger burrows.
- Bog areas.
- Areas of vegetation such as Bluebells that become very slippery when wet.
- Excrement from farm animals and other sources.
- Hidden valleys.

Other hazards (man made).

- Barbed Wire Fencing.
- Hidden wires from fallen fencing.
- Manholes and underground silage and storage tanks.
- Electric fencing.
- Traps and Snares.

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- Stone Walls.
- Bridges.
- Broken glass and tin cans.
- Nearby buildings and property.
- Roadways and paths.
- Railways and canals.
- Refuge disposal pits.
- Layout of Course (see Course building Advice)

### **ACTION.**

It is not always possible to remove the hazard even with the landowner's permission; therefore it is the responsibility of the Course organisers under their Duty of Care to mark the area of risk with hazard tape and warning notices. In the case of dangerous slopes climbing aids such as ropes or steps may be provided, but these in turn MUST be safe, so as not to add to the hazard. Verbal warnings of all hazards should be given at the course briefing before shooting commences.

### **COURSE BUILDING.**

Building a Field Archery Course requires a lot of Skill in addition to great physical effort. The Bosses come in a variety of shapes and sizes, many of which are either heavy, bulky, or both, and have to be man handled into position over varying terrain.

Every person who has to carry one of these bosses should undertake a Manual Handling Course but this is not always possible. To help reduce the risk from injury, no boss should be carried by one person. Each time a boss requires moved, it should be carried no higher than waist level by at least two persons, physically strong enough to control the weight and movement. They should be relieved of all other equipment and assisted in negotiating obstacles such as slopes and river crossings. Where possible, bosses should be lowered down steep inclines by the use of ropes, guided by helpers.

All posts should be carried in a suitable manner so as not to cause undue strain to the carrier, or injury to any person.

Marking pegs should be contained in a suitable bag or box where, in a fall, cannot cause injury.

Sledge hammers, post erectors and saws should only be used by a competent person and safety hats, goggles, gloves and boots should be worn whilst installing the bosses. No metal supports for the bosses

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may be used, and where possible all stones must be removed from the base of the boss to prevent ricochets of arrows. (For more detail on Course laying see Course Layers Guide).

### **DIRECTIONAL ARROWS.**

Care must be taken in the placement of Direction Arrows. Although not mandatory in law, they are there for the guidance of Archers between targets in a safe and controlled manner. They MUST not direct Archers, or spectators into areas where there is a risk from flying arrows, or an area that may be considered a hazard due to the terrain.

If need be, extra direction arrows will be used, and an alternative route sought to guide those persons away from any hazard, but keeping them within the course boundaries. Where an alternative cannot be found, targets must be relocated accordingly.

### **LOST ARROWS.**

Every effort should be made to recover lost arrows on the course. If they cannot be found, the course organiser should be notified accordingly giving the target number where the arrow was lost, and the approximate area in which the arrow(s) may be. At the earliest opportunity, a concentrated search should be carried out to recover any arrows, so as to reduce the possibility of injury at a later date to either pedestrians or livestock.

### **DUTY OF CARE OF PARTICIPANTS.**

It is the responsibility of each Archer participating in any Field Archery event to ensure that the equipment they are using is in a safe condition and within the guidelines laid down by the equipments manufacturer, and is capable of withstanding the requirements of a Field Archery Course. It is further their responsibility to decline any shot that they consider too dangerous, and report to the course organiser any matter that they deem to be hazardous to the health and safety of any participant or spectator.

Participants can also be in breach of the Duty of Care regulations by not adhering to laid down rules and regulations which result in negligence caused by their own acts or omissions.

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### **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE CLOTHING.**

Archery can be a hazardous sport both from the equipment in use and the condition of the course. It is the responsibility of each Archer to take whatever steps they deem necessary to ensure their personal safety and protection against equipment failure, in addition to the elements of weather and terrain. In the case of a junior, the onus is on the parent or appointed guardians to ensure those in their care are protected.

### **FIRST AID.**

It is the duty of every course organiser to have a FIRST AID STATION, supervised by a competent person, established to cater for all situations likely to occur. In addition a means of communication MUST be present, to enable help to be summoned from emergency Services such as Fire, Police and Ambulance. This can be in the form of a Mobile Telephone or Two-way Radio Base Station, regardless of which, it must be tested by a competent person to ensure connection to the relevant Services before the event commences.