

FRA Requirements for Runners 2026 (the “Runners’ Rules”)

The following Runners’ Rules apply to runners in FRA-registered races and events and you will be expected to have read them, and to agree to comply with the requirements, as a condition of entry.

These rules should be read in conjunction with the FRA Rules for Competition.

1. Know what you are in for - you must be confident you are capable of completing any race you enter.

Races are categorised as A (hardest) to C (milder) on the basis of the amount of climb, and long (L), medium (M) or short (S) on the basis of distance. Races may also be designated ‘experience required’ (ER), ‘navigational skills required’ (NS) or ‘local knowledge an advantage’ (LK). Mountain navigation races are categorised as MO (mountain orienteering) or MM (mountain marathon).

All FRA races strictly prohibit the use of electronic devices with GPS capability for the purposes of navigation. You may not use any such device to delineate or follow a route (including the use of arrows or audio signals to warn of being “off track”), to display current position on a map, to display or follow a compass bearing or to reposition yourself or otherwise navigate in any way. The use of such a device to display distance travelled, time, speed or altitude is allowed, as is recording of an actual route for post-race analysis. You may also carry such a device for use in an emergency situation, but if used – even momentarily for repositioning – then you must retire from the race and declare yourself non-competitive to the race organiser. Full details are given in the FRA Rules for Competition, which apply to all FRA races.

Most serious incidents (and almost all fatalities) in races have occurred when runners have left the route, so having good navigation skills is essential. Fell runners are expected to be able to find their way round the course, whatever the weather. Most race routes are not flagged except at critical points such as the start and finish and part of the challenge of fell racing is to find the optimum route between the compulsory checkpoints. If you have any questions about a race route you should consult the Race Organiser for further information. The best way to be confident and safe is to learn good navigation skills, to recce the course and to pre-plan escape routes.

2. Comply with the Race Rules.

Enter the race by completing the race entry form. Do not run without having done this. Race Organisers may introduce special requirements to suit their particular race (for example additional or prohibited equipment, time cut-offs, previous experience criteria) and these must be obeyed.

3. Use appropriate kit for the course and conditions.

‘FRA Mandatory Minimum Kit’ is the mandatory minimum kit for all AL, AM and BL races, and Race Organisers may require it to be carried at other categories of event. They can also require you to carry more kit than this. In any case, you may decide it is prudent to carry more kit than the mandatory minimum. ‘FRA Mandatory Minimum Kit’ comprises:

**waterproof whole body cover (with taped seams and integrated attached hood),
hat, gloves, map of the route, compass (see Note 3), whistle and emergency food.**

Table 1 shows kit requirements for different categories of races. See also Note 2 regarding GPS.

The Race Organiser may check your kit at any time and will disqualify you if you fail to comply with the requirements. Runners often question whether this level of kit is necessary – it may not be needed when you are running strongly or in good weather, but it could be a life-saver if you have

to slow down or stop because of injury or tiredness, or if you need to help another runner in difficulty.

4. Race Numbers: wear your race number on your chest and show it to marshals.

The race number is essential, to check that runners don't skip a checkpoint and to keep track of runners who are lagging behind or have dropped out of the event. Make sure you clearly show your number to marshals at checkpoints, even if it's covered up by a jacket. Wear your number on your chest and don't fold or cut it down as this makes it more difficult for marshals to read and also conceals the sponsor's name. Only shout out your number if you are asked to do so.

5. Retirement: when you have registered for a race, you must inform the Race Organiser if you don't start or don't complete the race, for any reason.

After you have registered with the race organisation (normally this means completing an entry form and collecting your number before the start) you are officially 'in the race'. If you don't start, miss a time cut-off or if you drop out for any reason at any time, you **must** report to the Race Organiser **at the finish**. It is not sufficient to announce your retirement to a marshal on the course or to another runner. In the case of runners who miss a time cut-off, they **must** return to Race Control by the fastest & safest route possible, without continuing on the course, and **report in at the finish**. Keeping track of every runner is one of the primary responsibilities of the Race Organiser and you in turn have a responsibility to help with this. Look out at the start for any specific retirement procedures introduced by the Race Organiser.

6. Juniors: a parent or legal guardian must consent to junior runners' race entries and agree to the conditions of entry.

Juniors are those aged under 18 on the day of the race. Consent by parent or legal guardian can be given by a signature on the event entry form, or by bringing a completed and signed parental consent form to the event.

The distances for Junior fell races are limited according to the age of the runner (as given in the FRA Requirements and Rules for Race Organisers). Race Organisers will endeavour to match the difficulty of the course with what can reasonably be expected from fell runners of the relevant age. However, runners and their parents/guardians must accept the risks inherent in fell running and be responsible for determining whether the junior has the skills, fitness and equipment to participate.

Junior runners should bring a waterproof top and leggings to all races and should remember that when participating in a Senior race they may have to carry the full kit, as for the Senior runners.

7. Personal conduct: behave respectfully to other competitors, race officials and members of the public sharing the same area of countryside.

Fell runners should adhere to the Countryside Code, for example by shutting gates and not climbing walls or fences, which can damage them and may be grounds for disqualification. Respect private property and other users of the fells. If you see another runner in difficulty, you should, of course, offer assistance.

8. Disciplinary action: the Race Organiser can exclude you and the FRA can ban you if you do not observe race requirements and these "Runners' Rules".

The FRA may take disciplinary action such as disqualification and/or banning a competitor from future races, and your club may also impose sanctions if your actions reflect badly on them.

"Absolute no-nos" are retiring from a race without reporting to the Race Organiser at the finish (the

“golden rule”), running in someone else’s number or no number, using someone’s else’s FRA membership card or number, cheating on the kit requirements or using GPS (or equivalent) for navigation or fixing position. Please ‘do your bit’ to make our sport safe and enjoyable for all.

9. Hypothermia: you must be aware of the dangers of hypothermia, its symptoms, its treatment and how to avoid it.

Hypothermia is dangerous and has been the cause of several deaths in fell running. If injury or exhaustion causes you to stop or slow down, body heat will be lost quickly. Of course, cold, wet or windy weather make this worse. The onset of hypothermia can be very rapid unless sufficient clothing is worn. You should learn how to recognise hypothermia in yourself and in others and know what to do, both for yourself and for someone else.

You should read the [hypothermia section on the FRA website](#) (or one of the many other sources of information) to become familiar with the dangers, symptoms and treatment of hypothermia.

Table 1: Kit requirements for FRA fell races

Race category	Kit requirements	Notes
Long A, Medium A, Long B	FRA Mandatory Minimum Kit plus any additional kit specified by Race Organiser	FRA Mandatory Minimum Kit is listed below. Additional Race Organiser requirements may include, for example, a thermal layer, a bivvy bag, a torch, water etc.
Short A, Medium B, Short B, all category C races	As Race Organiser specifies	Best practice is to carry FRA Mandatory Minimum Kit, but specific requirements are at the Race Organiser’s discretion.
Relays	As above, depending on length of longest leg.	For relays, use the category of the longest leg for all legs.
Orienteering events and mountain marathons	As above, depending on length of the shortest possible course.	For orienteering events and mountain marathons, use the shortest possible course which would complete the event.

Note 1: FRA Mandatory Minimum Kit (for Long A, Medium A and Long B races) comprises:

waterproof whole body cover (with taped seams and integrated attached hood), hat, gloves, map of the route and compass (see Note 3), whistle and emergency food

Note 2: The use of any GPS watch or device (or equivalent) for navigation is strictly forbidden in all FRA races.

Note 3: Maps must be physical (not electronic) and compasses must be traditional (non-electronic) type. The use of electronic compasses is not permitted.