

NAVIGATION

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In any team it is advisable to have two fully competent navigators - the second to act as navigation checker and to be ready to take over if the main navigator has to fall out. However, all your walkers need to be able to read a map and be able to navigate.

Get everyone involved by spreading the task around, have a navigation day in close country, question walkers while walking or check pointing, divide the group into pairs, put some micro-navigation into the route. The National Navigation Award Scheme (NNAS) Outdoor Navigation book has some useful teaching ideas. Your walkers need to know how to use three basic tools: a map (1:25,000 for its detail despite having to re-fold it from time to time), a decent sized compass (a minimum base plate of 100 mm) and a stop watch.

Electronic navigation aids are not permitted on the Ten Tors Event but it may be a useful safety back up for teams to carry one while training – switched off in an opaque container.

Maps. Use a laminated OL 28 Dartmoor map, marked up with the current Out Of Bounds (OOB) areas and road and river crossing as detailed in Annex A to the rules. Although the latter may not apply in training it is important for Teams to start to get to grips with them. Carry a copy of the military Dartmoor training area map for emergencies as these have the common land, live firing areas and dry training boundaries marked. All your trainees need to be able to identify features on the map; in Dartmoor's case, high points, valleys, rivers and bogs. Upland Dartmoor, despite being featureless, isn't difficult to navigate but in poor weather conditions with low visibility it challenges even good navigators. Orientating the map to the ground while walking, so that the navigator is looking along the direction of travel is much easier, especially when tired.

Route Planning. Routes must be planned carefully in advance paying attention to water features, rivers, leats and bogs. Think about road, river crossing and alternatives before the actual trip, then choose the appropriate route for conditions encountered. Consideration should be given to dividing the route between check points into legs and thinking through the best option of following tracks, contouring or walking on a bearing either using time or pacing. Your walkers should also understand how catching features, aiming off and boxing can help them especially when mist limits visibility. Escape routes must be planned with the same care as the intended route. If the weather turns nasty or an emergency occurs, your walkers need to be able to follow their Escape Route without having to work out the new route.

Use of the Compass. Confident use of a compass is vital. Key points are:

NEVER take a compass reading while moving. ALWAYS stand still and hold the compass square on in front of the body so that one is looking down on it.

NEVER hold the compass near metal objects or another compass. Beware of steel in reinforced concrete.

ALWAYS check before taking a second or subsequent reading that the compass has not accidentally been altered since it was set.

Trust your compass!