



# 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation

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30 year involvement with the “First Half”  
Half Marathon (inc. 2017 cancellation)



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation



To avoid claims of liability, Event Organizers have a legal Duty of Care to minimize the risk of harm to:

- Participants
- Officials
- Volunteers
- Spectators
- The Public



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation



Occasionally Risk Assessment and Mitigation Actions make it necessary for an event to be:

- Modified;
- Delayed / Postponed; or
- Canceled.

May occur:

- Before the start of the event; or
- During the event.



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation



Causes include:

- Extreme weather
- Threats to public safety
- Hazardous conditions
- Circumstances beyond control of the event

You might make the call yourself.

Or it may be made for you by the permitting authorities.



2019 Race Director Summit  
Event Cancellation  
First Half Cancellation Timeline



Timeline for cancellation of the  
“First Half” Half Marathon  
Scheduled for Sunday, February 5, 2017



2019 Race Director Summit  
Event Cancellation  
First Half Cancellation Timeline



10 – 14 days prior to event

Long range forecast showing possible winter storm

Tuesday, 5 days prior to event

1<sup>st</sup> Public Message – monitoring the forecast closely

Murder between 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> beach, VPD investigating

Thursday, 3 days prior to event

2<sup>nd</sup> Public Message – weather alert



2019 Race Director Summit  
Event Cancellation  
First Half Cancellation Timeline



Friday, 9am, 2 days prior to event

VPD unlikely to wrap up investigation in time.

Parks Board concerned about snow and ice.

What is Plan B?

Friday, 11am

Plan B rejected

Friday, 2:30pm

Plan C offered, 30 minutes to accept, additional \$4,000

3<sup>rd</sup> Public Message, outlining new plan and possibility of cancellation.



# 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation First Half Cancellation Timeline



Saturday, 6am

On-site inspection







2019 Race Director Summit  
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Saturday, 7am

Executive conference call, decision made to cancel

Saturday, 7:30am

Committee conference call, implement cancellation plan

Saturday, 8:30am

4<sup>th</sup> Public Message, announcing cancellation

Parks Board inform permit being pulled



# 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation First Half Cancellation Timeline





2019 Race Director Summit  
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First Half Cancellation Timeline



## Saturday, 2pm

On-site meeting, review implementation of cancellation plan.

5<sup>th</sup> Public Message, status update.

## Sunday, race day

One person showed up not having heard of the cancellation.

6<sup>th</sup> Public Message, explaining options being considered.



2019 Race Director Summit  
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First Half Cancellation Timeline



## Monday

Ongoing assessment of financial impact

7<sup>th</sup> Public Message, answering FAQs

## 2 weeks post event

8<sup>th</sup> Public Message, summarizing outcome

## 3 weeks post event

Meeting with City, Parks, VPD, etc.

Meeting of Race committee



2019 Race Director Summit  
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4 weeks post event

1<sup>st</sup> Notification of Chargeback

6 weeks post event

2<sup>nd</sup> Notification of Chargeback



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation Lessons Learned



- Include cancellation planning as part of your Risk Assessment and Mitigation Planning
- It's too late to start planning in the heat of having to make decisions.
- Document The Plan.
- Review The Plan annually.
- Identify who the key personnel will be to assess the situation and make go / no go decisions.



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation Lessons Learned



Cancellation while an event is in progress may additionally require:

- evacuation plans
- shelter plans
- transportation / reunification plans



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation Lessons Learned



- Plan for how information will be communicated.
- Ensure messaging is consistent.
- Share the responsibility of communicating that message.
- Be as informative as possible – people will have lots of questions.





## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation Lessons Learned



### Communicate:

- what decisions have been made
- why the decision was made
- what the next course of action is
- when further communication can be expected

Find the positives!



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation Lessons Learned



- Plan for what the financial impact might be. Not just on this years event, but potentially on future years too.
- Review the terms and conditions of cancellation with all suppliers.
- Avoid committing to specific \$ discounts or refunds until a through assessment has been made.



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation Lessons Learned



- If you think you might need a Plan B, be sure to get approval for it in advance. Don't assume you can change at short notice.
- Don't cancel your general liability insurance just because the race is cancelled.
- Don't endorse "unofficial" replacement events.
- Previously issued permits can be revoked.



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation Lessons Learned



### Biggest surprises:

- Chargebacks
- Return rate the following year
- Finishers medal still expected
- Water not returnable



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation Refunds and Chargebacks



### Refund Policy

Without a clear policy you may be faced with chargebacks.

Stating no refunds in the event of *force majeure* does not cover many cases.

Snow in Vancouver in February is not a force majeure.



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation Refunds and Chargebacks



Explicitly state the refund policy during registration and on the website.

Have registrants explicitly acknowledge the policy, separate from the waiver. E.g.

The *<race name>* is scheduled to take place on *<date>* at *<time>*. The organisers will endeavour to proceed with the race under all circumstances, but if for any reason beyond their control, including extreme weather conditions making the course unsafe, or on direction from the permitting authorities, they reserve the right to delay the start, to modify the course, to postpone or to cancel the race. In the event of cancellation, the organisers regret that entry fees will not be refunded, but race souvenirs will be made available.

Acknowledge:



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation Refunds and Chargebacks



Chargeback time limits and fees vary by card type. E.g.

Cardholder has 120 days from the date the event was cancelled to challenge a payment on the grounds that they didn't receive the merchandise or service paid for.

The merchant (online registration company) then has 30 days to dispute the chargeback, otherwise reverse payment + chargeback fee.

If you want to appeal a chargeback you need to provide proof of acknowledged refund policy and/or services delivered.



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation Cancellation Insurance



### Cancellation Insurance

- Do you need it?
- What does it cover?
- How much does it cost?

Policy terms vary.

Talk to your insurance provider.





2019 Race Director Summit  
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Cancellation Insurance



Typically compensates for financial losses, **if the peril is covered.**

Policy either:

- Covers all perils not specifically excluded by the policy; or
- A specific list of perils

Check the terms of the policy to know what is excluded.



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation Cancellation Insurance



Perils typically include:

- Adverse weather
- Natural disasters
- Medical emergencies
- Unusable venues
- Government imposed cancellations

But not cancellation due to lack of entries or other financial difficulties.



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation Cancellation Insurance



Financial loss calculation method set when the policy is taken out. One of:

- **Additional Expenses (Costs and Expenses)**

Compensates for expenses made solely and directly as a consequence of the cancellation, less any savings that can be made.

- **Lost Revenues (Gross Revenues)**

Compensates for gross income lost directly as a consequence of the cancellation, less any savings that can be made.

Keep detailed financial records (actual and budgeted) to demonstrate income and expenses.



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation Cancellation Insurance



### Premiums?

Expect to pay at least as much as you would for your general liability insurance, if it were a standalone, one-off event.

Premiums likely increase if the event has had to cancel previously.



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Cancellation Insurance



Optional, personal cancellation insurance during registration.



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation



### Additional resources:

- National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security, (<https://www.ncs4.com>), University of Southern Mississippi Marathon and Running Events Safety and Security, Best Practices Guide
- Athlinks Services (<https://services.athlinks.com/>)  
The 10 Commandments of Crisis Communications



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation



Thank you.

# Questions?

Maurice Wilson, [mdwilson@telus.net](mailto:mdwilson@telus.net)



2019 Race Director Summit  
Event Cancellation  
First Half, Public Message #1



**Public Question** Is the event still on if it snows?

**First Half** At this point, yes. They are calling for rain or snow flurries but temperatures above zero. Close to the water it will more than likely be rain. Since there is no talk of accumulations we will be going on as planned. Actually, we would prefer flurries to rain.





## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation First Half, Public Message #2



### WEATHER ALERT ANNOUNCEMENT!

Who has had enough of this winter?? We are monitoring the weather reports as most of you are. It seems to change by the hour and even the meteorologists are having tough time deciding what will happen this weekend. As it stands, they are calling for accumulations on Friday and overnight into Saturday, and then it could turn to rain. Fingers crossed, we will have rain closer to the water.

It is going to be a tough call as to whether we cancel the race or not and that will depend on snow accumulations and ice conditions. The last thing we want to do is cancel this year's run. It will come down to a matter of safety.

We will continue to monitor the storm and make an assessment late Saturday afternoon. If it looks good we will wait until Sunday morning and make another assessment in the early hours. We hope to give you advance warning before heading out the door. We will notify you by email, Facebook and our webpage if the race is cancelled.

Please note that, as per our waiver, we will not be refunding entry fee's in the event the race is cancelled. We will still have bib pick-up so you can pick up your race shirt.

We will make a further announcement if the race is cancelled

In our 28 years of hosting the First Half we have never had to cancel a race.

Stay tuned.....



# 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation First Half, Public Message #3



## RACE DIRECTOR UPDATE AS OF 6PM FRIDAY

The seawall will be closed between 2nd Beach and the Lions Gate Bridge the entire weekend and possibly into next week. I have been working all day with the City of Vancouver, the Parks Board and the Vancouver Police Department to find an alternate plan that works for everyone.

For only the second time in our 28-year-history, we looked at implementing our contingency course (plan B). Unfortunately, we found out that this won't give enough notice for stakeholders in the park. Instead, the Parks Board and the VPD worked with us today to create a new course that won't significantly impact vehicle traffic in the park. This re-route would cost an additional \$4,000 for policing and safeguards and, unfortunately, is also 2 miles short. Regardless, we are determined to put on a race!

Late in the day the Parks Board informed me that they are struggling to keep up with road and path maintenance and we should consider cancelling the race. If we do decide to continue, they will make a safety assessment tomorrow afternoon at 3pm. At that point they will decide if they will allow us to run through the park or not. I've agreed to continue with the race plans, hoping desperately that things improve between now and tomorrow afternoon!

I've seen a few Facebook posts saying that a little snow that shouldn't stop us. The problem is, I'm not sure our insurance company would agree. We must proceed cautiously and wisely. We do not want anyone to be at risk, including our club, the City of Vancouver and the Parks Board.

At this point, we may have an improvised run on a new course on Sunday or the Parks Board may decide that it is unsafe to continue. I will make an announcement at 3pm Saturday afternoon. The only advice I can give is: plan accordingly. It is really unfortunate the weather hasn't been on our side this winter.

A map of the proposed course can be found here ..... <http://www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=7017908>

Please help spread the word!! If the race is cancelled, our committee will determine how to best deal with all the logistics and we will update you as soon as we can. Please don't ask us prior to that as we don't have all the answers yet. Please be assured that we are committed to doing the best we can for everyone.

Thanking you in advance for understanding. And thanks to the City of Vancouver, the Parks Board and the VPD for their tremendous support today.



# 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation First Half, Public Message #4



## CANCELLATION NOTICE

IT IS WITH DEEP DISAPPOINTMENT THAT PACIFIC ROAD RUNNERS HAS MADE THE DECISION TO CANCEL THIS YEAR'S RACE DUE TO THE WEATHER

Yesterday I said we would make a decision on the race later today after hearing from the Parks Board. However, two of our committee members inspected the seawall early this morning and reported back. It was obvious that it makes no sense to continue with the race.

We want to give everyone as much notice as possible, especially anyone coming from out of town.

We will continue with our Race Bib Pick-up at Forerunners today from 10 am to 4 pm. You can pick up your race shirt, medal and finishing jacket.

We will also have Race Bib Pick-up tomorrow morning at the Roundhouse Community Centre at a revised time of 8am to 10am. Again, you can pick up your race shirt, medal and finishing jacket.

We will not be mailing out shirts and medals. Forerunners has kindly agreed to make them available for pickup through to the end of the month.

We will make an announcement later this week on how we can compensate our runners. It will take us a few days to assess the fallout of cancelling our race. Since we are cancelling the race with less than a day's notice, we have already paid most of the expenses. Be assured that we will do something but we ask for your patience. We also want to honour our commitment to Variety the Children's Charity as much as we can. As you can imagine, we have a lot of 'unorganzing' to do!

Thank you all for understanding. Be safe out there!



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation First Half, Public Message #5



So we are working frantically to salvage as much as we can. Some food is already on the way to local charities who can best hand it out and we are working with all are amazing suppliers and partners to sort out the rest. We are in the process of organizing a virtual race. The details are vague at the minute but we will be posting more as we go. The concept will be that using Strava, Garmin etc or just plain old pen and paper, we will record results that you give us for the Month of February and we will announce our Virtual Race Results after it closes. We are speaking with some run groups to set up some organized (ish) events but equally your solo run will count just as much. Thanks for all your support and to all the volunteers still hard at work today doing what they can to help. More to follow soon.



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation First Half, Public Message #6



THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

.... to all our amazing runners! The outpouring of love and support for our decision has been overwhelming.

We are proud to say, we will still be giving Variety - the Childrens Charity a cheque for \$50,000. We will be offering all our registered runners a discount for our 2018 race as well as priority registration. Stay tuned, we will be sending out an email in the next week or so as we work out the details.

Thank you to our sponsors for their generous donations. 2000 cups of [Olympic Dairy](#) yoghurt have been donated to the food bank!



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation First Half, Public Message #7



Today, we donated 2000 bottles of Kiju Organic Juice to the food bank (we just needed permission from Kiju as we didn't want to take that for granted). <http://www.kijuorganic.com/en/>

People have been asking about left over shirts. Shirt pick up will be available at Forerunners until the end of February. At that time, all left over race shirts will be donated to several charities such as my favorite, CLICK (Contributing to Lives of Inner City Kids) and Covenant House. All left over Volunteer Shirts will be donated to local Vancouver shelters.



## 2019 Race Director Summit Event Cancellation First Half, Public Message #8



This is one winter we want to put behind us! Not everyone appreciates what goes into putting on a run. Your entry fee covers many services and supplies, much of which is paid for well in advance and non-refundable. Even though our event was cancelled, our race committee still put hundreds of volunteer hours into organizing thus it was very disheartening that it did not go ahead. We received overwhelming support from our runners to continue to support the Variety Club the Children's Charity, as we have for the past 26 years. So, when we presented Variety with a cheque for \$50,000.00 on February 12th, it made all our efforts worthwhile. This brings our total to almost \$780,000.00, pretty impressive for a small event. Thank you again for supporting us! We look forward to seeing you all next year!