

Mourne Mountain Adventure (MMA)

The Rules

Open Uplands

1. **General.** The MMA is a demanding event. Some preparation and training are essential in order to complete the event safely and without assistance. In addition to physical fitness, the event demands leadership qualities, team work, basic navigational skills, knowledge of first aid, resilience and, above all, a determination to succeed.

Access

2. **Private Land.** Enclosed land is not to be used without the permission of the land occupier/owner.
3. **Public and Permissive Rights of Way.** Footpaths, bridleways and highways may be used.
4. **Countryside and Right of Way (CROW) Public Access Land.** Public Access land, coloured yellow on Ordnance Survey maps, may be used for walking.

Hazards

5. **Terrain.** The Mourne Mountains can be hazardous. The terrain can be treacherous, the weather inclement and swift to change, water courses unsafe, assistance remote and mobile phone coverage patchy. Group leaders are advised to consider these and other hazards when preparing for the MMA.
6. **Weather.** Group leaders are advised to obtain a weather forecast before venturing into the mountains so that they can make adequate preparations. The regional weather forecast is available on The Meteorological Office website and can provide warnings of severe weather.

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/uk/>

7. **Rivers.** River levels can also pose a potential serious hazard to training and the Challenge.

Care of the Countryside

8. **Care for the countryside and its communities.** The Countryside Code, which provides the basic rules for access, conservation and safety, has been adapted and amplified as the MMA Code. It is to be followed during training and the event itself:

Leave gates and property as you find them.

Stay within commons, access land and public rights of way as indicated on the map unless you have the owner's permission to cross land.

Do not climb over walls, use gates, stiles or gaps – don't damage field boundaries.

Leave gates as you find them; if in doubt, closed.

Keep off crops and hay.

Respect all ancient monuments and relics such as stone rows, circles and crosses, cairns, walls, huts, ruins and tumuli; make sure that you do not damage them.

Do not remove any stones from dry stone walls or old buildings.

Do not move stones found on the Mournes.

Keep clear of houses, gardens and farmsteads.

Leave vehicles, implements and machinery alone.

Protect plants and animals.

Leave young animals alone.

Avoid disturbing animals, birds, nests, eggs, agricultural operations, local residents or the public.

Do not cut, remove or damage trees or foliage.

Leave no litter; take all tins, bottles and paper home.

Consider other people.

Respect the needs of local people.

Take special care when walking on country roads. Walk on the right in single file close to the verge, the front and rear person must use reflective materials.

Keep out of the way when animals are being gathered or moved and follow the farmer's directions

Support the local economy.

Make no unnecessary noise.

Help to keep all water clean. Do not foul streams, lakes or reservoirs. Each is somebody's water supply.

Do not divert or obstruct water courses or damage their banks.

Do not ask to use private telephones except in serious medical emergency.

8. **Aide Memoire.** To assist Group Leaders and teams a map has been prepared for participants, which includes a basic Mountain Code, together with an indication of the action to be taken if casualties are sustained and other safety advice. It also contains maps and contact numbers. It may be reproduced by Group Leaders.

Vehicles

9. **Parking.** Public house and church car parks, farmyards, tracks and gateways are not to be used for vehicle parking without the permission of the owners. Vehicle drivers are to be considerate of other uses. At least half of the space should be left for public parking. Do not obstruct roads, gates or tracks. Tollymore Forest Park and Ballykinler have ample car parking facilities for the event.

10. **Off Road.** Drivers must obey the Road Traffic Act 1972 Section 34, which prohibits vehicles moving more than 13.75 metres off a metalled road.

11. **Consideration.** When riding a bike or driving a vehicle, slow down for horses, walkers and give them plenty of room. Give way to tractors and vehicles towing trailers.

12. **Roads and Lanes.** The roads and lanes around the Mourne are often narrow. Many are used by agricultural machinery and horses. Passing is frequently difficult and reversing slow. Great care should be exercised moving vehicles.

13. **Parking.** There are public car parks in lots of places in the Mourne and surrounding areas from which to watch and support teams.

14. **Tracks.** All non metalled roads on the Mourne are out of bounds to all MMA vehicles except those allocated for emergency response.

Actions in the Event of an Emergency

15. **Mobile Phones.** Teams are to carry at least one mobile phone, sealed in a waterproof bag. Phones are only to be used for communications associated with the MMA (such a co-ordination with Group Leaders) and the management of an emergency.

16. **International Distress Signals.** All participants must understand the following International Distress Signals :

Help Required Call. Six short blasts on a whistle or six short flashes on a torch, followed by a one minute pause, then repeat the process.

Help Coming Call. Three blasts on a whistle or three flashes on a torch followed by a one minute pause, then repeat the process.

Eligibility

17. **Age.** All those taking part in the Challenge must be between the ages of 15 and 18 on the date of which the MMA takes place.

18. **Composition of Teams.** Each team of 6 entrants may include any mix of male and females.

Participating Teams

19. **Registration.** Group leaders are to register their provisional team names on line with the National Trust by 28/03/2012. This is to ensure that sufficient personnel, maps, certificates, prizes and equipment are procured.

Event Management

20. **Arrival.** Teams or advance parties are not to arrive at Tollymore Forest Park before 1400 hours on the Friday preceding the Event.

21. **Camping.** All teams are required to establish their own base at Tollymore Forest Park in the designated youth camping site. Staff at the park will be more than happy to point teams in the right direction; water and lavatories are available, but otherwise each team must be completely self-contained during the MMA.

22. **Registration.** Group Leaders are to report to the Registration Staff in the Admin Tent between 1600 and 2000 on the Friday preceding the start of the MMA to confirm and, if necessary, adjust their team membership. Also to collect their teams start time for the following morning and associated paperwork.

23. **Start.** Group Leaders are to ensure teams report to the Admin Tent 10 mins before their team is due to start to ensure that there is no delay.

24. **Routes.** The route allocated to a team must be followed and walked in the order set. There will be manned and unmanned checkpoints at several locations throughout the mountain phase which the teams must pass through to successfully complete the adventure. Each team will be checked and will not be allowed to proceed until every member is accounted for.

25. **Bounds.** The route may only cross common and public access land or use public rights of way.

26. **Self Sufficiency.** Teams must complete the MMA without outside assistance. Each team must carry all its requirements for the event and must be completely self-contained. Outside assistance includes entering shops and places of refreshment, and receiving advice and assistance from Group Leaders or support parties. Group Leaders are encouraged to check kit and route cards before the start.

27. **Kit.** Teams and Group leaders, should download the MMA Kit List from the National Trust website, this details all the required items for the adventure. If teams want to bring additional kit they may do so.

28. **Water.** Teams must be self sufficient and carry enough water for the mountain phase. Mourne mountain stream water is only safe for drinking if correctly and thoroughly purified, so teams must carry enough water to ensure that this process is not necessary.

29. **Toilets and Rubbish Collection.** Toilets and rubbish bins are available at Tollymore Forest Park prior to departure. Rubbish on the mountains must be kept with the team and disposed of in the receptacle at Newcastle Harbour.

30. **Mobile Telephone.** The teams are to carry at least one fully charged mobile telephone, switched off. Each phone must be sealed in a waterproof bag and labelled with the emergency number to be used. It is only to be used to call for assistance in case of emergency.
31. **Radio and GPS.** The aim of the MMA mountain phase is to allow the groups to move across the landscape unsupported. Therefore the use of 2 way radios, GPS or any other artificial aid is contrary to the spirit of the event and they are not to be used.
32. **Dogs.** Pets are not allowed to accompany teams.
33. **The Start.** The first start will be at 0730 hours on Saturday and teams will be set off in 5 minute intervals from then onwards. Teams should have collected their start time at registration the previous evening. Only Group Leaders are to accompany the teams to the start and teams must be at the start at least 10 minutes before the allocated time slot.
34. **Action at Checkpoints.** On arrival at the check points, teams are to pause and ensure that everyone is there before the Team Leader makes themselves known to a member of MMA staff, so they can be marked as passed through. Only when all team members are present will the team be allowed to continue (unless a team member has fallen out due to injury or other).
35. **Medical Support.** The safety of participants in the MMA is critical. The route through the forest and mountains is safe, but slips and falls could cause minor injuries. Each team should have a basic first aid kit and members should be instructed as how to deal with blisters and what to do with a more serious injury. Emergency instructions and contacts are printed on the Route Card.
36. **Mountain Kit.** At the end of the mountain phase, teams will meet up with their Group Leaders at Newcastle Harbour and hand over all their mountain equipment so that they move onto the next phase in light scales. There will be a short safety and event briefing at the Harbour. From this stage, participants can expect to become wet and muddy!
37. **Shower and Change.** Upon completion of the task, teams will collect their dry change of clothes from their Group Leaders and be directed to male and female ablutions and changing facilities where they can get cleaned up.
38. **Evening Meal.** A hot buffet will be served in the Rotunda Restaurant and teams will be encouraged to have their meal once they have showered and changed. Supporters may book a meal in advance and eat alongside their teams.
39. **Presentations.** The MMA must be completed by 1900 hours on Saturday. All teams that finish the MMA will be awarded a prize and there will be individual completion certificates.
40. **Social.** Non-alcoholic drinks will be available in the Rotunda Restaurant during the meals and in the evening. Group Leaders and supporters may join their teams there to provide support.

Dealing with Problems and Injuries

41. **Fall Outs.** Participants who cannot continue because of illness, fatigue etc may fall out at a checkpoint or a manned location. They will be transported to the nearest vehicle access point where they will be taken off the mountain. Their Group Leader will then collect them at a pre-arranged rendezvous. Teams of fewer than 4 persons will not be allowed to continue and will be transported to Newcastle Harbour to meet with their Group Leader.
42. **Casualties.** Group Leaders are responsible for the safety of each member of their team. Should a member of a team become a casualty between checkpoints and be unable to continue, mobile phones can be used to request a casualty evacuation following the instructions on the route card. If telephone communication is impossible, 2 other members are to remain with the casualty while the other 3 seek assistance from the nearest manned location. (If a team has already suffered one or more fall-outs, a minimum of 1 is to remain with the casualty.) The team's equipment must be divided between the 2 parties. Depending on the weather and the state of the casualty, evacuation will either be by helicopter, by foot or by stretcher and then by road to the appropriate medical treatment centre.

43. **Crash-Out.** If a team is so far behind schedule that it has no chance of finishing by 1900 hours they can phone to arrange collection by the Group Leader. If a team gets to Newcastle Harbour and cannot continue, the Group Leader will be there to transport them to Ballykinler. If teams reach the Ballykinler phase and cannot continue, they can be collected and taken to the finish by vehicle.

Group Leaders

44. **Responsibilities.** Group Leaders are responsible for the well being of every member of their team from arrival at Tollymore Forest Park, to the start of the MMA right through to the finish at Ballykinler.

45. **Camp Safety.** In particular, Group Leaders are to ensure that teams and supporters understand the Tollymore Forest Park safety, health and environment protection instructions, including fire prevention and action on the outbreak of fire. Standing orders are displayed in the camp site.

46. **Preparations.** In the build up to the MMA Group Leaders are responsible for:

- a. **Notice to Parents / Guardians.** Ensuring that parents / guardians complete the form.
- b. **Registration.** Certifying the team's fitness to participate and team composition the previous evening.
- c. **Checking Personal and Team Equipment.** Checking that the teams have the required kit.
- d. **Route Cards.** Checking that the route has been understood correctly by the teams.
- e. **Confirmation.** Confirming team composition on the morning of the MMA 10 minutes before their team's scheduled departure time.

47. **Group Leader Availability.** The Group Leader must remain at the MMA and be available throughout the event as the focal point for any communication regarding their teams. Family members or supporters are to be informed that any problems or comments should be addressed to the organisers through the Group Leader.

48. **Outside Assistance.** Group Leaders must check that teams are properly organised and equipped and then leave the team to carry out the MMA unaided. If team officials or supporters go onto the Mourne during the Challenge, they must do nothing that might be construed as giving assistance to any team.

49. **Vehicles.** Tollymore Forest Park is likely to become congested during the MMA. To assist, the number of vehicles is to be kept to a minimum. Having unloaded, vehicles are to be moved to the public car park. One free car pass will be issued per team.

50. **Fall Outs.** When requested, the Group Leader is to collect fall-outs from the appropriate collection point and then look after them until they can be reunited with the rest of the team at the end of the event.

51. **Clearance Certificate.** If teams fall out or finish incomplete, Team Managers are required to sign the Clearance Certificate at the Finish to confirm that all members of a team have returned.