

CROSS COUNTRY CONTROL GUIDELINES

It is recognised that there are many different ways of successfully managing XC control and these guidelines are meant to relay the real importance of having a workable system and to give ideas on how to set up a control centre.

- The Controller is responsible for the safe running of the XC phase.
- A good Controller will be professional, a good planner, calm & have good communication skills and the necessary knowledge.
- The control box team would ideally consist of controller(s), commentator(s) & provisional scorers.
- The Controller will manage the dispatch of Athletes on the Cross Country Course & take appropriate emergency action if any accident occurs on, or to, the course.
- The Controller is also responsible for deploying emergency services in the event of an accident.
- During the Cross Country, an Ambulance with Advanced Medical Response Team must be available. In case an ambulance has to leave the competition site, another appropriately equipped ambulance must be readily available to cover the competition. Otherwise, the competition must be delayed until a replacement ambulance is on-site. (Annex D – Medical Services of the 2021 Eventing Rules).
- There must be a suitable designated Horse ambulance with a dedicated driver available immediately adjacent to the Field of Play at all times during Competition. If the Horse ambulance is a trailer then it must be attached to a towing vehicle. (Article 1007. 2021 Veterinary Regulations).
- The controller must be satisfied that he can provide help to any Horse or Athlete needing assistance.

Duties include:

1. Implementing a radio plan (with the TD), to enable getting help, as required, onto the course taking into account the number of available radio's and networks.
2. Ensure that every fence has provision for radio contact with control. This could mean, if not many radio's available, independent radio operators covering a number of fences (not necessarily in numerical order). NO fence should be isolated from this – however straight forward it might seem.
3. Liaising with all on-site emergency services & administration personnel.
4. Positioning of emergency services to cover the whole site.
5. Understanding how to access external emergency services (including air ambulance).
6. Establish suitable stopping points on the course.
7. Liaise with TD, PGJ, OC, fence repair & other Officials.
8. Ensure all emergency services are familiar with the whole site & how to access ALL parts of the Cross Country course.
9. Understand where all emergency personnel are located & to ensure they are all in radio contact as well as conducting regular radio checks.
10. Advising Fence Judges on use of radios.
11. Acting as intermediary between Fence Judges & any services they may require.
12. Maintain effective control over all networks.
13. Record all information from any incident in an incident log.

The minimum requirements:

A Controller who can, either visually or via radio, track every horse over every fence.
An assistant who helps with the tracking and keeps the incident log.

A commentator.

An advanced example of how a control box can work:

The Plotter.

1. The Plotter will prepare the information on the next Horse to start (on a small slip) & place it on the plot board, keeping the progress of the horse up to date by listening to the radio reports & moving the sheets along the board accordingly. Or marking in a pre-prepared spread sheet.
2. It takes a great deal of concentration to listen and react to reports that do not come in fence order and are relayed in a variety of different ways. For example '357 clear fence 12'; 'Joe Blogs clear at the water'; '357 clear at second attempt' without specifying where.

Provisional scorer

- This role is part scorer and part auditor. They help the Controller check that all horses that are going to run have done so before the course is closed. On each individual slip they provide the calculation of penalties for the Cross Country phase and maintain the leader board of provisional scores which the commentator can communicate. The ability to concentrate over long periods is a pre-requisite for this task.

The Commentator

1. The Commentator provides the running commentary on the progress of the competitor, their scores, their relative position in the class, relays public safety reminders and also, crucially, supplies information from various sponsorship briefs. The commentator is the controller's second set of eyes and ears and, if experienced, can assist the Controller if incidents occur.
2. A sense of humour is essential and can make all the difference to the enjoyment of spectators.
3. There is nothing more alarming than total silence so some form of commentary should be kept going (see #1) and as soon as some positive news can be given it should be, even if it is minimal (rider #..... is talking to the paramedics/sitting up/going to the medical centre for further observation).

The Controller

1. The Controller has responsibility for managing the team in the box, ensuring everyone understands their role.
2. They manage the Athlete's progress around the course and respond promptly and calmly to any issue that might arise.
3. The Controller generally monitors the XC, emergency and administration nets (which takes some practice).
4. When an incident occurs (injured Horse and/or Athlete, blocked course etc.) the Controller will acknowledge the Fence Judge's radio call for help, summon and direct the appropriate emergency services, stop any more horses starting, stop horses already on the course if necessary, keep Fence Judges informed on possible length of holds etc.
5. Throughout the day, the Controller also maintains a written log of incidents and issues.