



Risk Management Considerations for Longboarding

An 18 year old longboarding enthusiast died despite the fact that he was wearing safety gear, including a helmet and having a medical team on hand at the event. The man died when he overshot a corner, flipped mid-air and landed on his head.

Longboarder's can get up to speeds of 100km/h so no matter what protection they have on there is no guarantee against freak accidents. This accident occurred at a sanctioned event with a specific road chosen and closed for the race.

Approving the Road Closure

As a municipality, it is your responsibility to make sure that the road chosen for the longboarding event is safe for participants. Have a qualified inspector scope out several locations that would be appropriate for the event. Present these locations to the organizer and allow them to select from your sanctioned choices only. If the organizer does not like your choices, allow them to pick their own location with the stipulation that the municipality is allowed to inspect and approve it before use.

The length of the proposed road closure should be adequate for the boarders to gain enough momentum to complete the race but not so long that the boards gain too much speed because this increases the risk of crashing and sustaining injuries.

Permits

Once you have agreed on a safe course, ask the organization to apply for a Special Events Permit from your municipality. This gives you an overview of the event and ensures the organizers are fully prepared and have taken necessary risk management measures.

A strong contract also needs to be in place between the municipality and the organizer. This contract should include:

- Insurance Requirements
- Municipality added as an Additional Insured
- Indemnification/Hold harmless clause in favour of your municipality.

The contract should be very specific about who is responsible for the inspection and maintenance of the course.

Inspecting the Course

Once you have determined a suitable course, it is imperative to participant safety that you inspect the course before the event takes place. All debris such as rocks, twigs and stones should be removed from the surface. Check for rough and uneven surfaces. This is to protect and prevent the longboarder from falling. Keep records of all inspections and the time they were complete, what was found and what changes were made or what precautions were taken.

An inspection of the course should be done after the race is finished. The difference in the course before and after the race should be documented.

Road Closures

One or more of the roads in your municipality will need to be closed the day of the race. Ensure adequate barricades are placed around the closed road. Detour signs should be posted so that drivers know where to go and can find their way. Be sure to post announcements leading up to the race so people are aware that roads will be closed and can plan accordingly. If the closed-off area has a high traffic volume, consider having local police direct and monitor traffic to ensure the safety of all involved.

Checklists

1. Has the organization applied for and obtained the necessary permits?
2. Has a contract been signed between the two parties?
3. Does the organization have insurance?
4. Does the contract include the following: Additional Insured, Indemnification Clauses, Waivers need to be signed by all participants, responsibility for the inspection and maintenance of the road, Board inspections?
5. Have you helped the organization by warning the public of the street closure?
6. Have you inspected the roads before and after to make sure the streets are safe (free of rough and uneven surfaces, rocks, twigs and stones)?

7. Have you reviewed the safety protocol the organizers have in place for these riders?
8. Is there an age restriction?
9. What type of protective gear is required?
10. No one should board in wet weather. The contract should have a clause regarding cancelling the event due to weather or road conditions.
11. How many Emergency Stations will you have throughout the route? Rules should be available at the Stations on what to do in the event of an accident. There should be Ambulances on hand.
12. No homemade boards should be allowed.
13. Protective equipment should be worn: helmets, wrist guards, elbow and knee pads and appropriate shoes. Some events are even going as far as requiring the use of motor bike leathers.