



European Federation
of Radiooperated
Model Automobiles

Event Organisers Manual

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Jim Spencer, October 2009.

Index

		Page No
Guideline 1	About the Manual	3
Guideline 2	Basic Aims & Organisation	4
Guideline 3	Responsibilities of Officials	8
Guideline 4	Liaison with EFRA	12
Guideline 5	Legal	14
Guideline 6	Insurance	15
Guideline 7	Finance	17
Guideline 8	Race Timing & Results	19
Guideline 9	Promoting the Event	21
Guideline 10	The Social Function	25
Guideline 11	Sponsorship	26
Guideline 12	Racing, Track Safety & First Aid	29

Guideline 1

About the Manual

As we continue into the new millennium, model motor sport faces many challenges - environmental pressures; increasing costs of competition; difficulties in obtaining venues - to name but a few. Perhaps the greatest challenge, however, comes from other organised activities, which through good organisation and promotion offer people attractive and agreeable ways in which to spend their leisure time.

A result of all of this is the increased demands put upon all volunteer officials to make our sport more and more professional; people do not allow second chances, as organisers we are obliged to: -

Get it right first time.

It is hoped that this Manual will be of help in providing practical information to allow the organisers of EFRA GP's and European Championships (and even large National events) the opportunity to learn from the mistakes made by others before them! Plus provide a valuable resource to easily translate our increasingly complex rule-book into a more easy to follow 'organisers guide'.

These Guidelines have been prepared by experienced people in the various fields covered but we do not claim this to be definitive "know it all" manual; therefore, any suggestions or corrections which you may wish to make would be very welcome, as these can be incorporated in future Guidelines which may be prepared as this document evolves and periodic updates are made.

Where an item refers to a specific EFRA rule you will not see the rule quoted in full (That's for the rule-book!) you will see a note referring you to it – do make a point of reading it.

Jim Spencer

Guideline 2

Basic Aims & organisation

What are your aims?

If you are reading this you have obviously decided you want to run a large international model car race, but before we move on you need to ask yourself some fundamental questions: -

- Do you know what you want to do?
- Do you have the skills and knowledge to do it?
- Do you have the people to run it?
- Can you afford it?
- Can you offer an attractive enough event to get the allocation in the first place and, most importantly, ensure everybody enjoys it when it happens?

If you have got through those questions (and are still reading!) lets assume you still have the desire to run something therefore we will try and be as clear as possible, over the rest of this publication, in explaining what you have to do to ensure our 'Get it Right First Time' principle works.

- The strength of any event depends on the effectiveness of its organising committee. Ideally this should be large enough to break down the areas of organisational responsibility into easy to manage pieces but not so large as to be unwieldy.
- The effectiveness of the committee comes down to two areas; -
 - Does everybody understand the task to be done.
 - Do the people have the skills and knowledge necessary to carry out the task.

- Therefore decide who your key 3 or 4 officials are, they will need experience of previous events in the class of car you are aiming at, and the ability to deliver an event with the racing as its core function.
- In the real world no matter how big an organisation is there are always a really small number of people who actually make something happen.
- In our sport most events, even really big World Championships, will actually only have a few people as the main organisers – even if they have a large team carrying out the tasks at the event.
- So get your small core team together and decide what event you are going to aim at, and be realistic about your abilities.

Why Do It?

Why do you want to run it? Big events are hard work, they are generally difficult to finance and hard to get officials for (especially the second time!) they are, in short; -

- A large drain on the available resources you have.

But when they work you can take a huge amount of pride in delivering an event the competitors enjoyed coming too, you will have raised the experience level of your officials and hopefully you should have raised the profile of the sport in your country while you were at it: -

- Ensure the sport in your country benefits from running an International event

If the above two paragraphs make sense to you then read on, if the absence of ‘making money’ concerns you, then you are doing this for the wrong reasons, go back and have a re-think. Never run an event in an amateur sport as a money making exercise it does not work, and indeed, should not work.

Analysis

Before progressing into planning your event you need to analyse previous events in the class, and compare that to your current ability levels in the following areas: -

- **Pre event information**
- **Pre event publicity**
- **On event administration**
- **Officials' abilities and knowledge**
- **Image – are we portraying the right look?**
- **Event facilities for competitors and spectators**
- **The Racing itself**
- **The event social activities**
- **Local amenities for the visitors**
- **On event information**
- **Event financial performance**
- **Post event publicity**
- **Lessons learnt by previous organisers**

You will find fault.

You will find areas where others do a better job than you currently do.

Do a better job where you can and learn from the ones who do a better job than you do.

There is no excuse for the standard of any of the events run under the EFRA organisation to slip in standards. We all have the opportunity to learn from all those who went before us – though now we are writing it down that knowledge will be easier to find and the mistakes some of us have made in the past you can avoid.

Planning

The task that nobody likes but one, which makes or breaks an event.

If the event you are planning to do is less than twelve months away either it is too small to be covered by these guidelines or you have underestimated the task in front of you.

This should be your basic timeline.

You need to apply for the event at the EFRA AGM in year X, planning to run it in X plus 2. (rule 3.2.2) *(i.e. if you were applying in November 2009, the earliest event you could be aiming at would be 2011)*

This is because you, as a new organiser, will need to attend the event a season prior to your own; to ensure the detailed analysis and planning you have done is accurate.

Of course you will have needed to attend events before this, prior to putting an application in, to appreciate the basics of the task you are undertaking.

Therefore if you have never hosted a major international the process should take 3 years: -

- Visit an event, undertake a basic analysis – decide to apply for it.
- Appoint key organising team.
- Plan the event basics.
- Apply for the event - *2 seasons after the AGM you are applying at.*
- Commence detailed planning
- Visit and do a detailed analysis of the EC / GP a year prior to your own
- Deliver an updated detailed plan at the AGM prior to your event.
- Appoint the balance of your officials and commence a timeline plan culminating in the event taking place.

Hopefully this will then lead on to a successful event.

Responsibilities of officials

Organisation of Officials

By 'organisation' we mean the format of the event team, the group of people that turn the aims of your small core group into a working event.

The minimum (7.3.1) you require is: -

- Race Director
- Time Keeper & Assistant Timekeeper(s)
- Technical Inspector & Assistant timekeeper & Transmitter compound controller
- Administrator & Assistant administrator & Results Officer
- Clerk of the course/Start Line controller
- Chief Marshall

Plus in our experience: -

- The Event Organiser
- Press & PR Officer

And all these need to be different people, do not ask people to do more than one job.

The is especially important for the Event Organiser – this job doesn't finish when the event starts, and you often see this person trying to take on the event role of Race Director – this is not possible.

The Job Roles

Qualification criteria

Below is an explanation of the job roles for any major international race, however the job title and description is by far and away the least important point. The vital component that we cannot list below is experience, all the officials must be extremely knowledgeable and well used to the running of a large RC car race.

For example;- if you were the Chief Timekeeper, your experience should have been - Assistant timekeeper at an EC in the past or at a minimum the chief timekeeper at a National championship round.

The Event Organiser.

The person in charge of making it all happen, chairman, general manager – whatever you would like to call them.

This person is the individual who's responsibility it is to ensure the event happens, they ensure that the other key officials all know what is expected of them and have the skills, experience and assistance to deliver it – also probably the person that EFRA will liase with.

On the event this person must not take on any other task, as the above role doesn't suddenly stop once the meeting commences.

The Race Director

The role of the race director is to oversee race control during the event and to ensure the meeting is running smoothly, they are the liaison person between the event organisers and the international jury / team managers. Plus they are the point of contact for the team leaders in Timekeeping, Technical Inspection, Clerk of the Course etc In short the person who keeps the racing going.

Chief Timekeeper & Assistants

The chief timekeeper is responsible for the timing of the meeting (i.e. ensuring that the event is running to schedule) plus the race timing itself (i.e. delivery of accurate results).

Given the vital nature of this role and the complexity of the system used at an EC in particular this role must have adequate assistance. In my experience for an EC a team of 3 is the absolute minimum – as there must be 2 people available at all times.

Technical Inspection Team / Transmitter compound

This area probably gives more problems at major events than any other, certainly from the viewpoint of a competitor. It is essential that the Chief Technical Inspector is very experienced in the class of car being raced, preferably has been (or better still currently is) a regular competitor in the class at National level. This is necessary to give that person the level of experience and authority to ensure this area works smoothly.

Prior to the event this person will need to have the time to meet with the EFRA section chairman to discuss any new developments.

They will need a team of experienced assistants, always remember that technical inspection at an EC takes much longer than at a National event. It often encompasses both pre and post race scrutineering and hence it's quite possibly that you will need enough people to deal with 20 cars every 7 to 8 minutes.

The Transmitter compound will need to be controlled – think very carefully about where this is sighted so logistically you can keep control of it. I have included it under the Chief Technical Inspectors role as that's where it often physically needs to be – however this can be a good role for the less experienced, but enthusiastic, helper.

Administrator & assistant

An area where experience of previous EC's is hugely beneficial, as it's so often overlooked. We tend to concentrate on getting everybody informed prior to the event and then dealing with the racers once the event starts. We forget the management of their arrival - immediately prior to the event this person will be extremely busy!

Around a hundred drivers will arrive all requiring information packs on what's happening when, passes for access to the Pit's, rostrum etc. We have all seen people lining up, waiting for hours, to get this task done as the organisers have underestimated just how long it can take – don't fall into that trap yourself.

Use an experienced administration person for this task, and ensure they have enough help.

Once the event starts this individual can change into a role of results distribution – I have seen events where up to 40 sets of results need issuing for each race.

Clerk of the course / Start line Controller

This job title can vary from section to section, as the actual role can vary dramatically too. Essentially this person is responsible for the management of the track itself. From the control of the heat start procedure on the track (especially in IC racing) through to maintenance tasks (especially in indoor carpet racing).

The differences disappear slightly when we get round to the running of finals as at that point the arrangement of a starting grid would always fall into this persons responsibilities.

Chief Marshall

Most events will require a chief marshal who's responsibility it is to ensure that all the marshal posts are manned throughout the event and that the marshals conduct themselves in a safe manner. In some classes where the drivers don't marshal themselves – or where the organising club has decided to take this role on itself then the size of this task will be significantly larger.

Press and PR Officer

This is an important position, not always given the prominence it merits; - Responsible for the promotion of the event and to ensure it gets a good image in the eyes of the public.

Make contact with the media, local, national and specialist to our sport, ensure they have one point of contact to get any information they need.

Vitaly important that this person is available during the event; - as it's always at a critical moment when a local television station chooses to turn up and the other event officials are busy!

This is by no means an exhaustive list!

If you use this list as a minimum starting point and then examine your other event analysis you will probably add to the number of people included above.

A world championship organising crew can easily get to 30 people, an EC easily half that, and a GP at least the above list.

Guideline 4

Liaison with EFRA

EFRA is the controlling body for all radio controlled model motor sport International events within Europe.

World Championships are allocated by IFMAR, this group is made up of representatives from EFRA, ROAR (America), FEMCA, (Far East, Australia etc) FAMAR (Everybody else!)

EFRA is constructed in the following format: -

The Executive is made up of: -

President

Treasurer

Secretary

P R Officer

Section Chairman

Section vice Chairman

Plus: -

Honorary Positions

EFRA Associate Members – Trade Manufacturers

The member countries.

Your contact point, as an event organiser, will always be the Section Chairman for your class unless they delegate that authority to the vice chairman. It is very important that you have a good working relationship with this person, they will need to know what your progress is and they are all vastly experienced people who are more than willing to help you when needed – Talk to them.

Your Presentation to the EFRA Section Conference

See Rules 3.2.2 & 3.2.6

Initial Application

When you initially apply for the event (2 seasons prior to the race) you need to deliver a presentation to the meeting.

The full details of what the presentation should include are listed under Rule 3.2.2 (Though I cannot remember anybody ever managing to get them all in!) however do remember that it's probably going to be a competitive presentation (i.e. It's very likely you will be competing against other countries too)

So make it attractive, as well as the information included in rule 3.2.2 do remember that the drivers are tourists too – so include a general bit of tourist information!

The Section Conference immediately prior to your event.

While you will have been busy working towards your event, everybody else has been really busy looking after the racing in their countries and attending an EC and possibly a few GP's too.

So don't expect them to remember what you said last year and the details of your meeting – if you are lucky they have remembered what country they are going to next!

So you must do a reminder presentation and sell the event.

A good presentation at this point is vital to your events success as although you have already been allocated the event, you don't know how many drivers are coming until this meeting. The countries will now request places and the section chairman will add up their requests and that will determine your income from entry fees (see Finance)

A good presentation at this point will encourage the country reps to ask for more places, this generates you more income and helps to make the meeting even better!

Guideline 5

Legal

Legal? This is RC Car racing what's 'legal' got to do with it?

Unfortunately, in today's society, quite a lot.

**To host the event a 3 way contract is signed, between EFRA, the National Governing Body and the organisers (if separate from the National Governing Body)
(See Rule 3.2.5)**

The overall responsibility for the organisation, safe running and quality of the event lies with the National Governing Body – not the organiser (unless they are one and the same)

Both your National Governing Body and the EFRA section chairman will be in contact with you quite a lot on the build up to the event – they are not being difficult, they are doing their job.

Do ensure you have a very good working relationship between yourselves and your National Governing Body as you will need to work closely with them. Do not forget to have regular meetings and especially the one as detailed in Rule 3.2.9

Ensure you read and understand the contract, if in doubt get expert advice, as a breach of that contract would be unfortunate and, if serious, possibly very expensive.

The legal liability for the event rests with the organisers and the National Governing body, not EFRA, or it's officers acting in any capacity at an event (3.7.1 & 3.7.2)

Guideline 6

Insurance

As an event organiser you are required to have Public Liability Insurance, applicable to all competitors and officials, irrespective of their nationality or sporting status (Rule 5.3.9)

The below is an extract from an article recently done for the BRCA magazine: -

Insurance & the R.C. Racer

As treasurer of the BRCA I am responsible for the administration of our public liability insurance for our membership, I am quite regularly asked details about why it's necessary, what it covers, and why its becoming a really important area of today's society and how it effects the individual or organising club.

The most important point is what it is for: -

Public Liability insurance covers the individual or club against claims made against them for injuries, or other damage, caused to members of the public (i.e. any other racer, spectator, or other bystander) or property belonging to them.

It is a sad fact of modern living that an 'Accident' is no more, they just don't happen any more, we now have 'incidents' and 'incidents' are always somebody's fault, this is to allow solicitors to make a living and people to always think about that new buzz word 'compensation'. We see them nearly every day, adverts on the television for specialist legal firms offering a 'no win no fee' service for compensation claims for injuries received.

The level of cover you will need varies from country to country (to meet your local / national government guidelines) but as a minimum I would recommend 5 million Euros

The next bit to add is what it isn't: -

It isn't Personal Accident insurance – if people hurt themselves, or put themselves in a place of danger that is their affair, and not something we should wish to insure against (from an organisers point of view).

How it works and what it does.

Are probably best explained using an illustration; -

- A car leaves the confines of the track (more on that below) and ends up hitting a spectator, injuring and rendering them incapable of work for a period of time.
- The injured persons employers pay them sick pay.
- The employer claims this pay off their insurance company.
- The employers' Insurance Company sues the driver and the club for the money, claiming negligence on the driver for having the accident and the organiser for having a deficient safety fence.

If you have Public Liability insurance at this point your insurer steps in and deals with the last bit above, if you don't you deal with it.

EFRA as a responsible governing body are not prepared to let an organiser take that risk so insist on you having insurance cover.

How to get it.

Talk to your National Governing Body, if they haven't already got it they should be able to direct you to a provider or contact your national motorsport governing body. The insurers they use will understand what you are doing and should be able to provide you with what you need.

Your Responsibilities

Just because you have insurance in place does not absolve you from needing to be a responsible organiser, the policy provider will expect you to have taken all reasonable precautions in ensuring the safety of all the people at the event.

Do read the EFRA handbook, General Rules 5.3

For example

Rule 5.3.1 Safety of spectators is paramount..

Rule 5.3.2 Safety of competitors and officials..

Rule 5.3.3 There must be a barrier between the cars and people.

Rule 5.3.4 Track markings.

What the above all means is; - Look at your facility as if a child was sitting immediately behind the barrier adjacent to the track – are you happy that if a driver got it wrong the car would not hit them?

While this is an extreme sort of situation, it's one all organisers must do, analyse the level of risk and take reasonable steps to meet that risk – do that and your insurance provider will be happy, even when it still goes wrong and somebody gets hurt.

Guideline 7

Finance

Where does the money go?

Or more importantly to start off with – where does it come from?

As briefly mentioned in 'Liaison with EFRA' (guideline 4) the number of entrants for an EC is determined by the number of places requested at the section meeting the year before your event. The fees you receive are (at 2009 handbook figures): -

EC - 75 Euros per driver, less 10% EFRA administration fee = 67.5 Euros per driver.

GP - For a Grand Prix you are allowed to charge up to 40 Euros per driver.

For an EC; - this money will be paid to the organiser, by the EFRA treasurer, at least 1 month prior to the event.

For a GP; - you collect the entry fees yourself.

Costs

All EFRA events have a sanction fee, payable to EFRA in the January prior to your event.

In 2009 these are; -

EC – 460 Euros,

GP – 150 Euros.

In addition there is a deposit to pay, returnable when the event is run to the required standard – this is often paid by the National Governing Body, as theoretically it's their responsibility to ensure said quality.

(For a full breakdown see EFRA rule 3.5.7)

You will have to cover the expenses (other than travel) for the EFRA, non-national, referee (7.1.5) to a maximum of 92 Euro per day.

Summation (based on 100 competitors at an EC)

You pay out 460 Euros in January.

EFRA pays you 6750 Euros 1 month prior to the event

You are committed to paying around 300-400 Euros in referee's expenses.

So around 6000 Euros net payment to the organiser.

Budgeting for this.

It's vital that you have finance in place for the build up to the event.

You will not receive any payment from EFRA until a month or so prior to the event happening, but you will incur costs well before this point, in addition 6000 Euros is not a lot to finance this level of race meeting and you may well require sponsorship to make the event viable (see section 11)

So it's very important that you have an accurate event budget, with chronological record of expected payments included, so you can work out the level of pre-event finance you require, as the event gets nearer.

In addition it's really important that you conduct this budget research right at the beginning of your event planning process as you may be going down a route that is just not financially viable and the possibility of incurring a large loss may be a step that you might wish to re-think.

Budget Security

You have signed a contract with EFRA to provide the event, and in doing so EFRA have committed to pay you a set sum, to a set timeframe – this we all have in writing.

However all too often we hear about sponsorship deals going wrong, or venue arrangements not working, as that process hasn't taken place properly.

Ensure you issue purchase orders / contracts for all sponsorship agreements, if you have nothing in writing then it cannot be considered to be a firm budgetary income.

Ensure you have a contract / booking form / signed copy purchase order for any facility you are hiring with the prices clearly stated.

For any major items of hired equipment get a priced quote (not an estimate – estimates can quite legally vary) so you know where the vast majority of your costs are, and that the figures are firm.

As a rough rule work to the following '80/20 principle'

You must have 80% of your planned income, contractually accounted for.

The same 80% must be more than 100% of your planned costs.

You must have 80% of your planned costs, contractually accounted for.

Follow this process and the worst-case scenario should be a break even, or a very small loss – be prepared.

Guideline 8

Race Timing and Results

This is just a brief overview as it is covered in detail in the EFRA handbook, but seems to continually cause problems so some points to look out for are: -

- **Race Numbers (5.2.5) read this rule, if not sure contact the section chairman and clarify, this simple item causes more problems that you could believe possible.**
- **READ The Rule Book.**

Check and re-check the practice, heat and finals procedure for your class and especially the procedure for scoring in finals – write it all down as you understand it – send your notes to the Section Chairman so he can confirm that your understanding is correct.

Do Not under any circumstances assume that the procedure built into your race timing software is correct because a programmer has put an option of ‘EFRA results scoring’ on it – Check it to the extent of putting a ‘worst case scenario’ dummy meeting through it and prove it works.

This is especially important on events using multi leg finals, it is not an exaggeration to say the meetings that have got this right are outnumbered by the ones that have got this wrong.

If you don’t check this: -

You get right to the end of the meeting, the results come out, and you then see race control descend into chaos while furious writing takes place as the officials panic to sort out the results!

We have all seen ‘official’ results hand written onto pieces of paper when the above happens – don’t let it happen to you.

- **You must keep Race Control (5.2.6) private, so nobody can interrupt, to do so you will need a point of contact outside of race control so people know where to go to ask questions.**

- **Do not use any new and untested equipment.**

It is always very tempting to go for new equipment, you may have the budget to invest, you may just want to impress the people coming along – Do Not Fall Into This Trap.

Only use equipment that has been properly tested, if anybody ever tries to convince you 'It will work on the day' – It won't.

The fundamental aims are: - Dependability & Reliability.

- You need TWO timing systems at an EC – Two loops, Two decoders, Two sets of proper race timing software on Two computers (5.4.1 & 5.4.2) normally one system is run as a backup to the other. Both must time to 1/100 of a second.
- Do use a UPS on at least one of the timing systems – preferably a separate one on each, or a UPS on a desktop machine and a laptop running on a charged battery and plugged into a mains supply. If all the power goes off you may need to run the race timing for 30 minutes on battery power alone.
- At the end of each run, compare the two results, if OK and the same, sign off (literally) and post on the result board – keep the other set. Be consistent in which systems results get posted and which get filled.
- Make sure the race results are prominently displayed in an area easy to get too, better still is the method of giving each competitor a print out of their heat / race. (5.2.7)
- Do not dispose of any results until at least the end of the meeting and preferably the following EFRA AGM.
- A full set of the results, all heats, semi-finals, finals must go to the EFRA section chairman within 10 days of the race finishing – or better still print him a set as you go along and do it on the day!

Race Control is an area where really detailed planning needs to be done, and the event organiser needs to be totally confident in both the abilities of the people who are running it and the quality of the equipment they have at their disposal to make it all work.

Promoting the Event

Why Bother?

- This is the biggest event you are likely to get in your country, the publicity for it should be one of the major reasons for running it in the first place – make sure you benefit long term for the time and effort you are putting in to make this event the best!
- People are aware of golf, cricket, football and other sports because they see the premises as they drive around. This is rarely the case for our sport, unless an event promotes itself people may simply not be aware that it is happening
- Events should also make an effort to promote themselves because most are "competing" with countless other social and voluntary organisations in their area for media and public attention and, not least, sponsorship.
- Your sponsor will, quite rightly, want to see value for their investment – a huge media turnout and lots of local interest will go a long way in ensuring they help you again next time.
- The better relations an organiser has with the local community and the local media, the better chance it has of either limiting adverse publicity, perhaps following an incident on an event, or lobbying e.g. for facilities for an event.
- Promoting an event needn't be expensive effort and ideas are more important than money.

Doing the work

- If promotion is to be done properly one official should be put in specific charge of it - promotion should not just be something tagged on to other jobs.
- It helps if the person has some knowledge of public relations or marketing but this is NOT essential, enthusiasm ' and common sense are the most important qualities required.
- The person doing the promotion job should be a member of the organising committee so that they are fully aware of what is going on.

Style

The person in charge of promotion should, with the main committee, review the overall 'style' of the event publicity material and the image it presents to its members and to the general public. For example:

1. **Does the event logo reflect what's going on?**
2. **Does the event have a clear style for notepaper, invoices, business cards, in fact for all printed material?**
3. **Are the sponsor logo's clearly represented on all the above material too – if not they should be.**
4. **Are the event trophies good quality, are the major sponsors represented where required? This is one area where quality is better than quantity too.**
5. **It's nice to have event T shirts and giveaways for the competitors but only do it if you can make them work into the style of the event and make them at least reasonable quality.**

Community relations

- **Ensure you let the local community know what's going on in their town, by being pro-active in this area you will massively increase your publicity impact.**
- **Make sure the local emergency services know what's going on and where – they are part of the community too and will thank you for letting them know.**
- **Do invite any local dignitaries that you can along, if they want to be actively involved thoroughly brief them on what's going on – it can save a lot of embarrassment.**
- **Have a simple but informative display about the local racing scene, you will hopefully get some spectators; use the event to get new racers involved.**
- **Does the club need to advertise in any local publications? There are very few clubs who don't, at a minimum issue a press release to every media publication within a 30km radius.**
- **When all the above works, ensure you have an official who's sole role during the event is dealing with the media.**

Press releases

- Ideally you should have specially laid out Press Releases, you can set these up as Word templates for example.
- Type press releases in double spacing on one side of the paper only and leave wide margins at each side - all this will give a journalist space to edit a release.
- Keep releases brief and concise and use plain language. Keep sentences and paragraphs short. Avoid jargon - it will simply confuse.
- Spend time reading what is used by newspapers - try to aim to get exactly what you write into the paper without alteration. It is NOT impossible. No press release should really be more than 150 words.
- Put the most important news first - if a journalist shortens a release he is likely to do so from the end.
- Stress any local angle.
- Try to answer Who? What? Why? Where? When? in a press release.
- Give a name and contact numbers at the end for further information. Put the date too.
- Keep at least two copies of every release issued. One for your own file ~ the other for any sponsors. List the circulation list on each release filed. Try and make sure you get a cutting of everything. .

Photographs

- The promotions man should try to get someone in the club to liaise with him to produce a flow of suitable press pictures; these should be as professional as possible with no flowers growing out of people's heads and so on.
- If photographs are taken of prize winners, have the event logo in the background. If possible the photographer should have checked beforehand exactly where people should stand.
- Send high resolution digital images, possible send one or two shots and send different pictures to each paper if you have more than one in the area. Pictures **MUST** be properly captioned.
- Make it quite clear that a picture is copyright free - newspapers will be put off if there appears to be any doubt.

Television and Radio

Radio and TV need voices as well as news so be prepared for someone in the club ~ who should be properly briefed - to be interviewed. This needn't be the chairman if someone else proves better at it.

- Although there will be most opportunities with local newspapers, don't despair of getting a story on local TV - it happens more often than you'd think.
- Try to develop contacts at local stations and keep in touch with them.
- Pay attention, speak up, be definite and don't ramble.
- If you don't know the answer to something, say so, don't use jargon.
- Be prepared for an awkward question, perhaps on environmental issues.
- Keep calm, but don't get too relaxed and on no account lose your temper.
- Resist the temptation to try and be funny - it probably won't work.

Bad Publicity

- If, despite all your efforts, the event gets bad publicity, avoid over-reacting. Correct important errors but if you charge in with guns blazing about something tucked away in a newspaper on page 5, you may elevate it to even worse publicity on page 1!
- To avoid unnecessarily bad publicity it may be wise for event to hold "what if" crisis-planning meetings to discuss the consequences of, say, a serious incident. Be quite clear who can speak publicly on such occasions - off-the-cuff comments by all and sundry may simply mean legal and/or insurance problems later.

Archives

- Keep a record of the event, photographs, results, media articles, everything you can find.
When you come to future anniversaries you will be thankful that you took the time to keep records of your events over the years.

Guideline 10

The Social function

Why ?

- “It’s all social, why do we need to consider doing anything else? “
- Although all the competitors are there for the racing, there is, of course, a social element to the event – the official banquet on the Saturday evening and the various elements that make-up the other off track activities.
- Anybody who has ever been to an EC knows the massive variation that the ‘Banquet’ can be, anything from a very informal buffet and drink (once famously over a World Championship boxing match!) right through to a formal dinner – there is no particular requirement for it to be either.
- But what it must be is – good. Decide what style your event is going to be, if your event is aiming at a relaxed style of event management then the banquet / party should reflect this. If your race meetings are very formally structured so should be the banquet.
- Do what you can afford to do well – don’t overstretch yourselves financially or it invariably doesn’t come across well. If money is short do something simple well, rather than try to do something extravagant cheaply...
- Be wary of who you invite. The sheer nature of the RC community can make for difficult situations when the racers are looking to relax a little in the evenings and the organisers have invited the local town officials out for a formal dinner for example.
- You will end up doing a speech, there is one rule for speech’s; - *Un-offensive, factual and most importantly short!*
There is nothing worse than having a long speech at a function, and vitally never have speech’s after everybody has had a few drinks, do them first.
- All of the above may sound a little odd, but think back to events you have been to, people remember the social side of events for longer than the actual racing. Getting this right will leave your visitors with memories of a great event they will want to re-visit at some point in the future.

Guideline 11

Sponsorship

An organiser hoping to attract support for an event must recognise that sponsorship is, or should be, a two way business deal, not charity or patronage. Of course local organisations may support an event for other than full-blooded commercial reasons but nevertheless the organiser must aim to offer value for money.

- Organisers should also recognise that finding sponsorship may not (in fact almost certainly will not) be easy as there are countless other sports and activities out there seeking support. And sponsorship practices change; for example a few years ago TV programme sponsorship was rare, now it is commonplace and sucks up money, which would otherwise go elsewhere.
- Although, as with a lot of selling, there is no guarantee of success at the end of the day, your chances will be improved if you plan your approach carefully.
- First, consider what you have to offer and if it can be improved. If you seek sponsorship for an event would it be more if you get a local radio or newspaper interested? Can you confirm TV coverage prior to the event for example
- Next, list all the possible benefits to a potential sponsor; these could include: title to the event, company name on competing cars and official paperwork (such as a programme); advert in programme, banner advertising opportunities around the track, opportunity to organise displays and promotions around the event; hospitality opportunities; benefits from local TV and other media coverage.
- If an event attracted media coverage in previous years whether in local newspapers or television, mention this and keep copies of press material to show to potential sponsors.
- Next prepare a draft proposal including:
 - a. An introduction to the event and the organisers.
 - b. Specific details about the event where, when, how many entrants/ spectators etc.
 - c. Specific benefits as listed above.
 - d. Possible media coverage.
 - e. A final summary possibly mentioning how much money is sought and how it will be spent.

By completing this exercise you will have a clear picture of what you are offering to a sponsor and you should then be able to deal with any queries.

- **Once you have drafted the basic information, try to get a hard-nosed business friend to take an outsider's look and play devil's advocate and based on this, put it into a more formal presentation. This could range from a straight letter (well typed of course) to a brochure, to a presentation involving with a video - it all depends on how much sponsorship you are after, what you are offering and to some extent the size of company you are approaching.**
- **The next stage is to approach potential sponsors but before doing so first consider 'who you know' because personal contact is one of the most effective ways of raising sponsorship. The full organising committee and other influential members should be roped in to help in the search. Strings are meant to be pulled, so pull them.**
- **Contact the EFRA PR Officer he will be able to advise if any of the companies on your list are “no go” areas because somebody else has beaten you to it, or help you out with contact names in some case, it will certainly help you in avoiding treading on someone else's toes or having yours trod on!**
- **If this fails and you have to approach companies cold then cast your net widely and plan your approach in a businesslike way. And don't give up - if the first approach to a company results in a negative response, perhaps you can change the proposal slightly and go back later a second or third time, when the outcome may be more positive.**
- **The aim of a written approach should be to fix a meeting at which a club can present its proposals.**
- **Don't go to such meetings mob handed but do go with people who are articulate and can present a case well.**
- **Rehearse the presentation, preferably in front of someone used to such proposals.**
- **Don't waffle - if you have 30 minutes allocated for a meeting then don't make the presentation longer than 10 minutes so that there is time for discussion.**

- **Don't use R.C. jargon - not everyone will understand it.**
- **Don't promise what you can't deliver - that's a sure way of having a disappointed sponsor (and maybe even litigation).**
- **How much should you ask for? This obviously depends on the importance of the event which is why involving the local media will enhance the value. Remember you can negotiate downwards on price but rarely upwards.**
- **If you reach an agreement with a sponsor, put things in writing, either a simple letter of intent or a formal contract - this will help avoid "who said what" arguments later if things go wrong or a key person on the sponsor's side moves on.**
- **Look after your sponsor to ensure the partnership continues in years to come. It is much easier to keep a sponsor than to have to search for new ones. This does not generally mean taking your sponsor out for expensive meals, but simply involving them and helping them achieve their own objectives. If your sponsor is not actively involved in the event, it is in your club's interest to at least keep him or her informed.**
- **Think what extra you can offer sponsors. A simple plaque presented to them at the event may help make them feel welcome and that much more part of the club.**
- **Above all, don't take the money and then forget a sponsor.**

Guideline 12

Racing, Track Safety & First Aid

READ The EFRA Handbook – GENERAL REQUIREMENTS EFRA EVENTS

This part of the guide is concerned with all the bits that go on around the track, on a race day, but not actually the cars themselves.

First we must ask ourselves a question: -

What the difference between Monza and a RC Car Track as seen by an outsider to our sport?

Silly question that isn't it?

One is a really huge track, covering hundreds of hectares of land, used for racing F1 cars, dozens of competitors, loads of spectators, lots of financial investment, the other one is a model car track, a lot smaller, used for racing scale models, nothing in common.

Or is there?

We still get dozens of competitors, in relation to the track size we still get a fair few spectators, and some of the cars aren't much slower (anybody seen a 2CV race?)

In actual fact there is no technical difference between the two, in actual legal terms both are, in most countries in Europe, "motor sport facilities" this is a very important mental step to take, we must be aware how our sport is viewed by the outside world.

We must be seen to operate our "motor sport facilities" in the same manner as full size circuits operate theirs.

Now that somewhat shocking statement has settled in we can begin to look at what that actually means

- 1) We must operate in the same manner but not to the same degree.
- 2) We must keep up to date with changes in the methods of full size motorsport operation, and implement what's relevant.
- 3) We must continue to develop the awareness of our organisers and officials.

If you visited Silverstone or any another GP circuit you would, in the main, see the marshals standing in concrete or brick posts which would be behind an Armco barrier which in turn would have a gravel trap or other runoff area in front of it.

If you went to a small local race circuit the Marshal would be stood on a grass bank, still behind armco, but with only 2 metre's of grass between the Armco and the track.

The difference is down to degree of risk A GP circuit needs to contain an accident resulting from a car travelling at over 300 kph and cornering at up to 4g. The degree of risk at a regional circuit is considerably lower and hence the safety precautions required are lower, our activity works on exactly the same basis so we need to: -

- 1) Assess the Degree of Risk
- 2) Implement safety precautions as appropriate
- 3) Ensure our rules reflect this.
- 4) Stay aware of any changes in the way the full size sport assesses the degree of risk initially.

The Good News is we do this already, it's just most people aren't aware of it, some need reminding, and some need training.

Tracks

Most of the above comes down to the application of common sense, a massively undervalued commodity, fortunately most of our sections have over the years had enough people with enough of it to develop their own procedures. What we do actually mirrors full size theory close enough for us to pass inspection and allow us to get our public liability insurance, however here are the track guidelines a club chairman or steward should go through: -

- 1) All model car tracks must have a barrier between the cars and any one else, except marshals and officials, i.e. only Marshals and officials are allowed on a track when a race is in progress.
- 2) If the cars are a higher degree of risk then the marshals should have clearly defined posts and some degree of protection.

You're probably thinking "that's ok at my outdoor circuit there's a good strong fence all the way round" or "at my club we just lay the track in the middle of the sports hall floor the outside edge is just the edge of the carpet"

Which is ok? Probably neither, at best only one!

The “good strong fence” is probably ok, but you need to check it for gaps, can a car go through it, under it, is any of it broken? You have made the assessment that you need it, therefore it must be in good repair. To often I see excellent fences all round the track except the pits, why? Is it OK to hit people working on their cars? (Note: Not Pit Lanes these are part of the track)

The indoor circuit with no outside barrier is an all too common sight.

“it’s ok though isn’t it? Because the cars are only electric ones.”

The cars may only be electric but it’s a very misguided view, more accidents happen in this way than any other. However what we don’t necessarily need is “the Good Strong Fence” what we do need is an outside barrier that will contain accidents within the confines of the circuit to an acceptable degree of risk.

This degree varies with the cars being raced, from 75 mm plastic tubing for 1/12 circuit cars to something quite substantial for off road buggies especially if there are jumps. (Remember anything that causes a vehicle to leave the road surface might need a stronger or higher barrier if it’s near the track edge.)

As you can see it’s very much a decision for either the event organiser to make, but it actually isn’t that hard to do, it does just come down to common sense. Of course this can be very hard and occasionally expensive to implement, but think of it like this, what the potential problems if you don’t do it and something goes wrong?

Fortunately in our sport the track is most of the degree of risk, if you have done your assessment of that, and you’re happy that the barriers will contain the cars, you can move on to the other area’s of potential problems: -

Rostrums

Rostrums are a huge area of concern that could take up, an entire Guideline on their own, for the time being work on this theory.

- **Ensure that anything you use is being used for the purpose for which it was designed, or is safety inspected by a 3rd party.**
- **If it’s constructed for you, e.g. scaffolding, ensure the builder has their own insurance cover.**
- **Don’t build anything yourself that requires certification, in the UK that’s anything over 1.8m to the drivers feet – your country will probably vary – check and ensure you don’t break local laws.**

The Pits

Never has one word more accurately described reality!

Most pits are a health and safety nightmare waiting to happen, we've all seen quite nasty injuries in the pits, from people cutting the end off their thumb, to burns from soldering irons, to superglue in places it shouldn't be, most of this is down to people getting it wrong, this we can do nothing about.

What we can do is ensure we have the kit to hand when they do,

Do you know where your First Aid Kit is?

Do you know where your Fire Extinguisher is?

You have of course got both of these and an Accident book to record their use in?

After this it's just a bit more common sense to be applied, ask people to fasten down extension leads when they can, discourage lead-acid batteries if indoors, and ensure you have the kit when it goes wrong - because one day it will.

First Aid & Emergency Procedures

At EFRA EC events you will require a person on-site who is trained in First Aid, make sure you have a means on communicating with them at all times.

Don't forget that they will need to be there at all the times the competitors and other officials are present – not just during the racing time

Make sure the local emergency services know the event is happening.

Make sure that the emergency access route is clear.

Make sure, if the worst should happen, that the organising team know who is going to do what.

In Summary

A race track is a race track, irrespective of size, shape, cars used on it, look at what we do as though you are a Health and Safety inspector, think about the potential trouble spots, remove as many as you can until you're happy that what you have done is sufficient. Then equip yourself, so when you're proved wrong you can deal with the outcome.