

Biathlon BC Electronic- Biathlon (E-Biathlon) Festival Hosting Manual



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Introduction

What is an Electronic Biathlon Festival?

Electronic Biathlon (E-Biathlon) Festivals are entry-level, participation-focused events that introduce individuals to the sport of biathlon using electronic biathlon units. While there are various brands of electronic biathlon units, the EcoAim brand electronic units are most common in British Columbia. The principles of an E-Biathlon festival can be applied to any brand of electronic biathlon unit. These events prioritize fun, learning, and accessibility over results in competition. They are a core part of Biathlon BC's "First Shots! Try – Learn – Compete" pathway and play a critical role in growing the sport in your community. Any club that is a Biathlon BC member can host these events. They aim to be a low cost, low-barrier, and inclusive festival for all ages (typically from ages of 8 and up), of all abilities and experience.

Goals of an E-Biathlon Festival

Biathlon festivals differ from biathlon races as those are competitions which pit participants against each other and recognize the top performers. Competitions follow strict rules that govern the sport and are less flexible in event format. A biathlon festival, on the other hand, prioritizes fun and participation over performance. It welcomes participants of all ages (the recommended minimum age is 8 years old), abilities, and experience. It creates a safe and positive experience for both first team participants and experienced biathletes. Festivals should maximize participation, activity, and learning over one-off competitions. They should build connections between the participants, your club members, and members of the community. Lastly, it should encourage ongoing involvement in Biathlon.



Inclusivity & Accessibility

E-Biathlon festivals are not exclusionary. E-Biathlon festivals should lower the barrier to trying the sport by making the event affordable and providing access to biathlon equipment. Make intentional choices to welcome both first-time participants and those with prior experience in biathlon. Encourage whole family participation and mixed age group activities. Provide adaptive options for participants who have a disability. The goal is to create an inclusive and respectful environment where anyone can experience the fun of biathlon!

In general:

- Offer flexible distances to ski/run. Allow participants to choose between distance options.
- Avoid formats that involve elimination. Encourage as much participation as possible rather than one and done events.
- Use encouraging language. Both skiing and shooting are skills that can be hard to acquire. Encourage the effort over the outcome.

- Provide adaptive options.

Step by Step Guide to Organizing an E-Biathlon Festival

Step 1 – Set a Timeline

A successful E-biathlon festival takes a little bit of planning. Here is a checklist to help you get organized.

- 6–8 Weeks Before
 - Secure your venue
 - Confirm access to EcoAim biathlon units, including the range mats, and rifle rests
 - Apply for Biathlon BC grants (if applicable)
 - Obtain event insurance from Biathlon Canada
 - Begin planning your safety protocols
 - Set date and draft the festival format
 - Recruit key leaders (Competition Lead, Range Lead)
 - Create an invitation for the festival. A sample invitation is included in the appendix
 - Create a registration for participants
 - Apply for any grants that may be applicable to your festival
 - Note: Some grants may have much earlier application deadlines
- 4-6 Weeks Before
 - Begin promoting your event to your community (e.g., schools, clubs, community partners), and share your registration
 - Confirm volunteers and coaches
 - Create a map of your event venue
- 2-4 Weeks Before
 - Finalize the event activities and schedule
 - Ensure there are sufficient leaders and volunteers to assist in the event
 - Confirm equipment and logistics of the festival
 - Prepare signage and materials (range signs, recruitment materials)
 - Finalize your safety protocols
- Week of the E-Biathlon Festival
 - Confirm registrations
 - Send the event information to registered participants (what to bring, event schedule, location)

- Reconfirm volunteers
- Contact your local law enforcement to inform them of the festival (if required)
- Purchase any refreshments required for your participants
- Confirm any necessary logistics with your venue (i.e., grooming requests)
- The day before the E-Biathlon Festival
 - Ensure your EcoAim units are fully charged
- Day of the E-Biathlon Festival
 - Arrive early to the venue
 - Build/Setup the EcoAim range
 - Build/Setup area of play or ski course

Step 2 – Fulfill the Safety Requirements

Biathlon is a safe and fun sport, however as a festival organizer, there are several requirements you must fulfill to ensure the safety of your participants and to adhere to Canadian Firearm Laws.

Safety Requirements for E-Biathlon Festival organizers

- Register your organization with Biathlon BC
 - It is a common misconception that Biathlon activities are recognized by Nordiq Canada. In fact, biathlon is considered a completely different sport from cross country skiing. Any biathlon specific events or competitions do not fall under the jurisdiction of Nordiq Canada. To hold event insurance for your E-Biathlon Festival, your club must be a Biathlon BC member.
- Request a certificate of insurance for the event.
 - Biathlon Canada offers free event insurance upon request to any club registered with Biathlon BC. Requests can be made to: info@biathloncanada.ca
- Create an Emergency Action Plan
 - An Emergency Action Plan is required to be prepared for any emergencies. A Sample plan is attached in the Appendix
- Ensure a first aid kit is available during the event
- Ensure you adhere to applicable laws.
 - Although EcoAim biathlon rifles are not considered firearms, there are still legal requirements for their usage.

- In British Columbia, EcoAims are considered “imitation firearms,” and their usage must adhere to the FIREARM VIOLENCE PROTECTION ACT, specifically:
 - Transportation of EcoAim Biathlon Units
 - EcoAim rifles must be transported in a locked, non-transparent case (i.e. a hard rifle case) or in the locked trunk of a vehicle.
 - Usage in Public Spaces
 - EcoAim biathlon units are permitted for use in public spaces such as schools, parks, sports fields, cross-country ski facilities, festivals, markets, town events, and other community spaces for the purposes of training sessions, competitions, demonstrations, and community activities.
 - Event organizers should
 - Provide clear signage explaining camera-based technology
 - Provide clear signage that participants are engaged in a recognized sport activity
 - Construct the biathlon range as non-threatening layout as possible
 - Adhere to Canadian Firearms Laws if live ammunition or .22LR Biathlon Rifles are on site for demonstration purposes.

Safety requirements for E-Biathlon Festival participants

All participants should be registered with Biathlon Canada to hold personal insurance while they participate in the festival. There are 2 options for participants to register with biathlon Canada:

- Option 1: Become a Biathlon Canada Member
 - Participants can purchase an annual “Athlete - Recreational” Biathlon Canada Membership which will provide them with insurance over the course of an entire season.
 - Registration can be found online on www.Zone4.ca
- Option 2: Register for a Biathlon Canada Try-out license
 - Participants can register for a Try-out license. This license is free and is only valid on the day of your event.
 - Registration can be found online on www.Zone4.ca

- A Printable Form and Waiver can be found on www.biathloncanada.ca

Safety on the day of the E-Biathlon Festival

- All participants must receive a safety briefing including the following:
 - Identification of who is the designated person in charge of the EcoAim range
 - How to approach and leave the range (direction of travel)
 - Safe handling of the EcoAim rifles
 - What to do if unsure or uncomfortable handling the EcoAim rifles
 - Clear instruction: “*If in doubt – stop and ask*”
- Rifles always remain in designated lanes
- Clear control of range access

Step 3 – Ensure you have the equipment for an E-Biathlon Festival

Here is a non-exclusive list of equipment you will need to run an E-Biathlon festival

Required Equipment:

- EcoAim Biathlon Units
 - EcoAim Biathlon Rifle and its matched Control Display
 - EcoAim Biathlon Target Boxes and stands (if required)
 - EcoAim cable to connect the Target Boxes and Control Display
 - Note: There are 3 different charging cables required to charge each of the 3 EcoAim components (Rifle, Display, Target Box). It is important to start the E-Biathlon Festival with fully charged units
- Shooting Mats for traction and insulation (especially in the winter)
- Rifle rests
- Cones, fencing, v-boards, or other markers to outline both the EcoAim range and the field of play for the festival
- Registration/check-in materials
- Signage for the event
- The festival Emergency Action Plan

Optional Equipment

- Timing equipment (i.e., stopwatch or timing chips)
- Bibs or identifiers
- Rental Ski Equipment
- Whiteboard for tracking scores

- Teaching aids
- Tent or shelter
- Speaker/PA system
- Prizes/snacks/refreshments

Step 4 – Recruiting Volunteers and Volunteer Roles

Ensure you have enough workforce to run your event. Depending on the size of your festival, you may need more people to help run your event. It may be possible for some individuals to cover one or more roles. Here is a list of required roles:

- Festival Leader (1)
 - The festival leader oversees organizing and delivering the festival
 - Sets an organization timeline
 - Ensures all safety requirements are met
 - Organizes the festival registration is developed
 - Sends a post-event report to Biathlon BC (if applicable)
 - Applies for event grants (if applicable)
 - Keeps the Festival schedule moving on the day of the event
 - Ensures post-Festival reporting is completed
- Range leader (1)
 - The range leader oversees the operation of the EcoAim range
 - Assigned to design and setup the EcoAim Range
 - Ensures the EcoAim equipment is calibrated
 - Troubleshoots EcoAim equipment issues
- Coaches/Activity Leaders (1-4)
 - Teach shooting basics, as required
 - Teach skiing basics, as required
 - Explain festival activities to the participants
 - Provide enthusiastic encouragement to participants
- Assistants (1-4)
 - Check in participants as they arrive at the festival
 - Help with on-site registration requirements
 - Manage flow between stations
 - Time activities
 - Prepare snacks/meals/refreshments

Step 5 - Promotion and Community Engagement

The success of your festival will depend on having participants attending your festival. To ensure that there will be good attendance at your festival, here are some suggestions to promote it.

Actions before the Festival

- Reach out to your target audience (i.e., schools, youth programs, run groups, Masters skiers, etc.)
- Partner with other local and regional clubs or organizations
- Use social media and community boards

Actions during the Festival

- Promote your club and your programs
- Talk to parents and participants about your club and your programs
- Share next steps to get involved further in the sport
- Collect names and contacts of individuals interested in more biathlon
- Consider having informational pamphlets, QR codes or other material that directs participants to your club and programs
- Share live social media posts during the event and tag Biathlon BC

Actions after the Festival

- Follow up with any individuals who wanted more information about your club or programs
- Share details about the event on social media and tag Biathlon BC
- Share details about future events
- Thank your volunteers

Step 6 - Post-Event Follow-Up

After your event is completed, there are often a few more tasks to complete to close off the festival.

- Always remember to thank your volunteers who helped make the festival happen
- Send a follow up to the participants that includes the following:
 - A Thank You for attending the festival
 - Some photos and highlights of the event
 - Any results from the event
 - Information on how to stay involved in biathlon

- A contact name for your club
- Any future events that may be of interest
- Provide summary to Biathlon BC using Biathlon BC's reporting document
- Complete any reporting requirements required for any grants received (if applicable)

Support from Biathlon BC

You might be able to access support from Biathlon BC to help you run your festival. Be sure to contact Biathlon BC in advance to find out if your organization is eligible for support.

Support could include:

- Equipment support (providing additional EcoAim units)
- Planning guidance
- Coach and volunteer development
- Promotion and communications
- Grants

Sample E-Biathlon Festival Schedule

Before the Festival

For your E-Biathlon festival to be a success, you will need to arrive early to set up the venue. This should be completed 15min before the start of the festival so you can focus on the participants, not on setup. When selecting a site to setup at your venue, you should choose a location which is:

- Visible and welcoming to the public (cross-country ski stadiums are great for this)
- A clear meeting location (usually at or near the EcoAim shooting range)
- Space to ski around the range in a safe flow for both participants and the public
- A backdrop for the range so no one is likely to ski in front of the EcoAims and behind the targets

Range Setup

The EcoAim range will be a focal point for the festival, both for participants and spectators. A sample diagram of a proper range layout is found in the appendix.

- The range must be set up on flat ground. Participants should be able to lie flat on the shooting mats and should not be shooting uphill or downhill
- Each EcoAim target is called a "lane." Each lane should have 1 shooting mat with a rest, an EcoAim rifle unit with its paired display connected to a target box stationed

8-10m away centered to the middle of the mat. Each lane should be 2.5-3m wide to allow for participants to lie down on the mat with their ski equipment on without bumping into their neighbor

- If you have 5 EcoAim units, your range area would measure approximately 10m deep by 15m long
- The perimeter of the range should be clearly defined to prevent anyone from skiing between the shooting mats and the target boxes. Cones, fencing, or V-boards work well.
- Flow of traffic should move from left to right through the lanes, when facing the targets. Avoid two-way traffic and skiing towards the targets “head on.” Consider posting Enter/Exit signage to help with flow
- It is advised to create a staggering/waiting area adjacent to the range.

Course Setup

It is important to also plan out your “ski course” or “field of play” for any activities you wish to include in your event. It will be important to keep your participants moving. This is especially important in the winter, where static shooting on the EcoAims could prove to be a cold experience for your participants. In general, you should plan your adjacent course to be:

- A loop that departs from the right side of the EcoAim range and returns to the left side of the EcoAim range
- Choose short distances. Biathlon is a lap-based sport where athletes shoot once and then ski a loop before they shoot again. Loops that are too long will prove to be fatiguing to newer participants and reduce the frequency they use the EcoAims
- Clearly mark the loop to prevent participants from going “off course” or getting lost
- Avoid bottlenecks for your participants and the public
- Ensure there is a safe spot for spectators to watch and take photos

Brief Your Coaches and Volunteers

It is important to have a quick meeting with your coaches and volunteers before you start the festival. That way everyone will know what role they are helping with but can also help answer questions from the public.

- Review the safety procedures
- Review the festival schedule
- Walk through the layout of the course
- Provide details about the participants as required

Arrival of Participants

Welcome and Check-in

As participants begin to arrive, it is good to start with the entire group together to ensure everyone knows who is participating and for everyone to receive the same introductory information.

- Greet the participants as they arrive and gather them in your staging area.
- Confirm registration and membership details. Complete waivers as required.
- Introduce the coaches and volunteers
- Provide a brief overview of biathlon and the schedule of the festival
- Provide a safety briefing to the group:
 - Explain that the EcoAims are perfectly safe but must be treated like a real firearm. This is done for the purposes of optics and to train individuals to eventually transition to .22LR biathlon.
 - Never point an EcoAim at another person
 - Never walk in the area between the EcoAim rifles and the target boxes
 - Explain the flow of traffic through the range to prevent collisions
 - Introduce the Range Leader.
 - Demonstrate how to pick up the EcoAim rifle and control the muzzle direction to point down range the entire time while in use.

Starting Festival Activities

Instruction on the Operation of the EcoAims Biathlon System

It is best practice to start the festival with an introduction to the equipment and the basic use of equipment. Be sure to refer to the EcoAim user manual to learn about all the features of the system.

- Explain the parts of the EcoAim and what function they serve.
 - Key parts (from front to back) include: the muzzle camera, the front sight and front aperture, the barrel, the stock, the bolt mechanism, the trigger mechanism, the rear sight and rear aperture, the pistol grip, the cheek piece, the butt plate
- Demonstrate how the EcoAims function
 - Explain they will only work with their paired display box.
 - Each EcoAim is wirelessly paired to a single display box, which in turn is wired to a target box. For example, an EcoAim paired with the

display and target on lane 1 will not register any hits on the target on lane 2.

- Explain the target box.
 - Each target box has 5 bulls. The bulls are labelled “alpha” to “echo” as read from left to right.
 - Bulls with red lights either mean “miss” or “do not shoot this target”
 - Bulls with green lights mean the shot was a hit
 - Bulls that are black (not lit) are the target you are mean to shoot at.
 - Only take 1 shot per target. After taking a shot, regardless of if it was a hit or a miss, the next shot must be taken on the next bull. Usually the shooting order is “alpha” to “echo” or left to right.
 - 1 bout of shooting is 5 shots.
- Explain how the EcoAim rifle functions.
 - To activate the rifle and prepare it to shoot, the bolt must be fully cycled; opened (pulled back) and closed (pushed forward) before the rifle is ready to shoot.
 - The trigger must be squeezed to take a “shot.” Cycling the bolt alone will not shoot the rifle.
 - After each shot, the bolt must be completed cycled (pulled back and then pushed forward) before the next shot can be taken.
- Explain how the Display box works
 - The screen on the display box provides useful information such as:
 - Aim trace – a line will appear and move across the target in real time as the participant is aiming at the target.
 - Shot location – small dots will appear on the target indicating where the participant shot the target.
 - Shooting score – Each shot will provide a score on a scale of 10. Shots closest to the very center of the target will register as 10 points. As the score decreases, the shot has impacted further away from the target.

Guided Practice

After reviewing how to operate the EcoAims, begin providing instruction to the participants. Depending on the size of your group and capacity at the range, you might need to split into several groups and take turns shooting. If you take this approach, make sure to have another activity to keep the group not shooting engaged while they wait for their turn to shoot. Be sure to cover the following:

- How to approach the shooting lanes (from the left)
- How to lie down on the mat (especially if the festival is on skis)
- Basic shooting technique including
 - Sight picture
 - Trigger Squeeze
 - Follow through
 - Breathing
- Avoid taking too much. Encourage the participants to try shooting immediately after instructions

Free Play

After receiving instructions and experiencing some success, allocate some time for the participants to rotate freely through the range, practicing at their own pace. Have them shoot 1 bout, then exit the range and ski a short loop before coming back to shoot again. Avoid having participants remain stationary on the mat for too long. They will get cold and it is not representative of the sport of biathlon. Coaches should be ready to provide tips and assist as required.

Introduce Mini Competitions

It is important to include 2-3 mini competitions or contests during the festival for the participants to be part of. Successful competitions will focus on fun and teamwork over results and will encourage participants to test themselves at a new skill. You should aim to keep each activity short (10-30 min), and it should be easy to understand, without complicated rules and minimize penalties. Make sure it is repeatable for multiple attempts. If participants are smiling and engaged—you are doing it right. Here are some examples of mini competitions:

- Precision shooting challenge
 - Each participant takes 10 shots on the EcoAims
 - Add up the scores from the two shooting bouts.
 - The goal is to have the highest total score. Higher scores indicate that the shots were closer to the very center of the target
- Speed shooting challenge
 - Have participants stand behind the shooting mat.
 - When ready, start everyone simultaneously

- The participants race to get into shooting position and then shoot 1 bout before standing up again.
- The goal is to be the fastest and sharpest shooter.
- Consider making the participants remain on the mat for 3-5 seconds for each missed shot before they can stand up and finish the competition. This is to incentivize hitting more targets.
- Short sprint + shoot
 - Create a start line a short distance from the range.
 - Participants sprint to the range to take a shooting bout
 - The goal is to experience shooting when out of breath and fatigued
- Agility course
 - Create an obstacle course for the participants to ski through that start by the right hand of the range and loops around to the left hand of the range
 - Participants can ski through the obstacle course and race to get to the range to shoot 1 bout
 - This can be done as a single lap event or a multiple lap event
 - Always start by skiing first, shooting and then skiing again to finish. This mimics a biathlon format.
- Relay race
 - Form teams of 2 or more. One participant will be the first leg of the relay, the other the second leg.
 - The teams will start en-masse.
 - The first participant skis a course and arrives at the range to shoot a bout. After the bout, they ski the course one more time. After the second lap, they tag their partner.
 - Penalties for missing shots could be having to wait 3-5 seconds per miss at the mat before proceeding back on course or skiing a short penalty loop before returning on course.
 - The second participant skis the course, shouts a bout, and then skis their second lap.
 - The relay could either finish at this point, or the second participant can tag back to their original partner who goes again and repeats the cycle.
 - The goal is to be the first team to complete the relay and arrive at the finish.
 - The goal is to be the first team to complete the relay and arrive at the finish.
- Mass Start race
 - The teams will start en-masse.
 - Participants race each other around a ski course to return to the range to shoot a bout.

- Penalties for missing shots could be having to wait 3-5 seconds per miss at the mat before proceeding back on course or skiing a short penalty loop before returning on course.
- The participants then head back out on course to ski for a second lap.
- The competition could be as few as 2 laps with 1 bout, or 5 laps with 4 bouts. Keep in mind that you will want to start with a skiing lap, then shoot, and then follow up with another skiing lap, either to get to the next shooting bout or to the finish line.
- The goal is to be the first person to complete the course and arrive at the finish line.
- Individual start race
 - You will need a timing system to complete this event.
 - The participants will start one at a time at regular intervals (i.e., every 10 seconds).
 - Participants race each around a ski course to return to the range to shoot a bout.
 - Penalties for missing shots could be having to wait 3-5 seconds per miss at the mat before proceeding back on course or skiing a short penalty loop before returning on course.
 - The participants then head back out on course to ski a second lap.
 - Participants then return to the range for their second bout of shooting.
 - The participants then head back out on course to ski a third and final lap.
 - This competition will always include 3 laps and 2 shooting bouts.
 - The goal is to be the first person with the fastest overall time after the shot penalties are added, and the start time differential is subtracted.

Wrap-Up

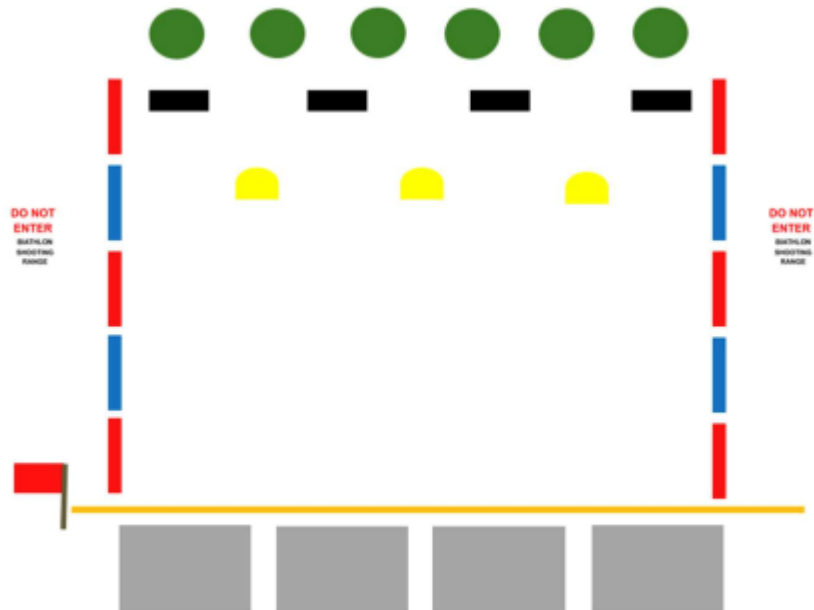
Always conclude your festival with some sort of formal conclusion. This provides closure to the event and provides participants an opportunity to connect with you one final time before going home. Your wrap up should include:

- A celebration of participation
- Recognition of effort and spirit
- Promotion local programs
- Recognition of your volunteers and sponsors (if applicable)

Appendices

Appendix A- Example of Range Set up

Green Dots indicate backdrop- nobody should be behind the targets



Black Rectangles are targets and the distance between them is 2.75m to 3m apart (example from left leg to left leg of another target)

Grey Rectangles are the shooting mats and should be 8-10 m from the target and 0.5m apart

The range is to be marked out with V-boards or Pylons (red and blue lines)

Yellow figures indicate lights if hosting at night or low light conditions

Clear range signage on both sides

APPENDIX B- SIGNAGE



SAFE PRACTICE

**Electronic Rifles in used. They
are non-projectile camera-
based.**



**To Watch please stand in
spectator designated areas.**

NOTICE

There is an interactive biathlon session in the area using optical biathlon rifles. While the equipment being used look like real rifles, they do not shoot projectiles. Instead, they use a camera to take a picture of the target.

Local law enforcement has been notified of the event.

Appendix C – Sample Festival Invitation

[Your Club Name] Biathlon Festival

[Your Club Name] is hosting a Biathlon festival and would like to invite you to join the fun! Biathlon is an exciting winter Olympic sport that combines cross country skiing and shooting. Our Biathlon festival is open to everyone, regardless of experience. To facilitate access to the sport, our festival will be using special **camera-based** biathlon systems called EcoAim. EcoAim Biathlon units are completely safe as they do not shoot any projectiles; they use light and cameras to register hits and misses. Our objectives for the event are to **TRY YOUR BEST, BE FAIR, PLAY IT SAFE, HAVE FUN, and SHARE IN THE JOY OF BIATHLON!**

Date: [Date of your festival here]

Location: [Location of your festival here]

Eligibility: Anyone 8 years and older. No prior experience is required.

Schedule of Events:

- 9:00 - 10:00 am: last minute registrations and bib pick-up.
- 10:00-10:30 am: Introduction and instruction led by volunteer coaches.
- 10:30-11:00 am: Open range to try the EcoAim (electronic rifles) and practice, warm-up.
- 11:00-12:00 pm: Biathlon Mini competitions
- 12:00 or 12:30 pm: Wrap up and BBQ

Registration Fees: [Set your registration fee, if applicable]

Registration: [Insert registration link here]

Insurance Requirement: All participants will require a Biathlon Canada Try-out Licence [Insert link here] or Recreational Membership [Insert link here]

Questions? Please reach out to [Name] at [Insert email or phone number here]

Appendix D – Sample Emergency Action Plan

Activity/Event:

Name of Facility:

Facility Name:
Directions to location from nearest hospital

Name of Event Leader:

Part A. Emergency Contacts & Information:

Emergency Phone Number, 911 OR (specify)	
Emergency Services Response Time to location:	
Other Emergency Services (non-emergency): le: Conservation officer, fire department, Police etc.	
Hospital Services Location and Contact:	
Other contact (i.e., Club General Manager)	

First Aid Kit and Supplies

Location of First Aid Kit(s):

Location of AED(s):