



EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Last Update: 3 March 2024

This document covers safety protocols and broad emergency responses for the **Sheetz-to-Sheetz Trail Run**, a 14-mile point-to-point run in King George from Sheetz #573 ([8206 Kings Highway](#), next to O'Reilly Auto Parts) to Sheetz #259 ([17188 Owens Drive](#)). The course runs west along Kings Highway, turns right on Comorn, then turns right again onto the Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail (DRHT) leading all the way to the finish line in Dahlgren. After 1.5 miles of roads, the course follows 12.5 miles of the DRHT (see Figure 1).



Figure 1 – Course Overview

There are several challenges and characteristics that must be considered to ensure a safe event, including:

- The majority of the course is fairly remote with unreliable cell reception and few access points
- It's a point-to-point race with little opportunity to communicate with runners and volunteers
- It's an untimed event so there is no automated tracking of runners' progression through the course
- Hundreds of runners must cross the busy Kings Highway/Dahlgren Road intersection at the start
- There is no ambulance or medical team on-site

The layered plan documented here takes these and other factors into account to ensure the safety of participants, volunteers and spectators. After detailing course characteristics, it will cover specific procedures for incident and weather response. Two concise guides are included as one-page attachments: an **Emergency Response Map**, and the **Emergency Response Procedures**.

This document is especially applicable to the **Traffic & Safety Coordinator**, **Traffic Control**, **Bike Support**, **First Aid**, **Emergency Communications**, **Course Sweep**, and **Runner Pickup** volunteer positions.

Race Director Info: Chris Chalkley, (540) 424-4849

Race Course Access

Attachment 1 details the course to include mile markers, access/extraction points, intersections, landmarks and aid stations. **This map must be carried by race staff and all volunteers listed above.** Given the remoteness of the 14-mile course, it is broken into 7 zones, each with a separate extraction point. Zone 1 spans the initial road segment of the race, so the extraction point is wherever the incident occurs. For the rest, it's the nearest major road intersection. Zone 4's extraction point has *indirect* access to the course. It's the Caledon Road (Route 218) overpass which features a switchback trail leading from the road to the trail. Each extraction point is accessible enough to support emergency response vehicles.

Communications

Regardless of service provider, cell phone coverage along the course can be inconsistent and unreliable. Likewise, non-licensed two-way radios have limited reach and suffer from interference at the start and finish line Sheetz stores. Realistically, race-owned radios at the start line can reach about one mile into the course. Reception at the finish line is reduced due to heavy tree cover. A directional antenna does allow race staff at the finish line to communicate with the traffic control team at the Owens Drive intersection.

To augment the spotty coverage, the race relies upon the services of the King George Amateur Radio Operators (KGARO). Licensed and trained KGARO volunteers with mobile equipment position along the course to provide continuous emergency communications. The group provides the service for several races along the trail, often as a training exercise. Since it's a point-to-point race, operators may re-position as the last runner passes them.

While they can provide end-to-end coverage, it's a closed system not accessible by unlicensed race staff. To address this, the group positions a command vehicle and operator near the race director to share important updates.

Bike Support and Course Sweep

Volunteers on bikes and trail-capable trucks serve an important role as they are on-course with the runners and can respond quickly. They can report incidents, respond to incidents, bring first aid to injured runners, and direct/escort runners to the nearest aid station or extraction point. Each member of the 2-3 person bike support team carries a small first aid kit (including glucose tablets), extra water, and a charged cell phone. If an incident occurs where there's no cell reception, they can quickly ride to a point where they can call 911, pass messages through KGARO personnel or call the Race Director. Another volunteer (Course Sweep) follows behind the last runner collecting signs and equipment. In doing so, they can report the location and condition of the last runner. In addition, they will have the ability to transport runners to the nearest extraction point.

Runner Pick-up

One to two volunteers are employed to transport fatigued or mildly injured runners from an extraction point to the finish line. They will pre-position at key extraction points in the second half of the course but will be able to re-locate to any extraction point as necessary. They stay in contact with race staff and bike support volunteers via cell phone and KGARO personnel.

First Aid

The race endeavors to attract up to two EMTs or paramedics to volunteer as on-site first aid providers. They will be positioned at the race mid-point (campsite aid station) and the finish line Sheetz and will be easily spotted with first aid flags and armbands. They'll be equipped with a medium-size first aid kit suitable for treating cuts and scrapes they're likely to see from falls as well as dehydration, low blood sugar, and insect bites. **Beyond basic first aid, all volunteers are instructed to immediately call 9-1-1, directing emergency responders to the nearest extraction point using the attached emergency response map.**

Traffic Management

A comprehensive traffic management plan has been established involving (1) a professional, certified traffic management company to close lanes and redirect traffic on the initial 1.5-mile road segment; (2) law enforcement officers who stop traffic and block intersections at the race start; and (3) three teams of 2 volunteers who use highway traffic signs and handheld flags to stop traffic at a handful of road intersections. Additionally, a Traffic & Safety Coordinator volunteer monitors this work and keeps the Race Director informed on race day. Details of the traffic management plan are not covered here. For details, see the separate Traffic Management Plan.

Runner Tracking

Because the race is not timed, we are unable to determine the last checkpoint any given runner has passed. To mitigate this lack of information, we do require check-in at the start line so we know exactly who enters the course. Our course sweep ensures no runner is left behind, and our bike support teams traverse the course to keep tabs on the field. KGARO volunteers are given a roster and attempt to mark off bib numbers as runners pass certain points in the race. If a volunteer witnesses a runner leaving the race, they are asked to inform the race director so the roster can be updated (see "Notify" below).

Incident Response

Incidents include any injury, illness or medical issue affecting a runner, volunteer or spectator. Common incidents include cuts and scrapes resulting from falls, sprained ankles, insect bites, and symptoms associated with dehydration and low blood sugar. Incidents range in severity from runners who are simply too fatigued to continue to those requiring emergency medical assistance. A simplified **Emergency Response Plan** is included as attachment 2 and **must be carried by race staff and all safety-related volunteers**. The plan takes the above factors into account in a three-point response:

Assess • Act • Notify

Weather Response

In just its first 5 years, the Sheetz-to-Sheetz Trail Run has witnessed many forms of extreme weather including high winds, torrential rains, snow and lightning. The following policies and procedures will guide appropriate responses to weather events.

- **Rain, flooding** – Rain alone (even heavy rain) will not cause delays or postponements. This is a rain or shine event.
- **Snow, ice** – Trail runners should be able to endure snow and ice, so the real issue is traffic safety – can participants and volunteers safely get where they need to be? Road conditions may also put the pre-race bus transportation at risk as the race cannot proceed without support from King

George County Schools. Based on forecast conditions, race staff will make and communicate the following decisions:

- **Delay** – Delay race start by at least 2 hours to allow road conditions to improve.
- **Postpone** – Postpone to a future date, realizing some race services may be unavailable.
- **Cancel** – In the unlikely event of a cancellation, we'd determine appropriate and fair compensation.
- **Wind** – Wind is a significant concern given race structures and trees along the course. Our response varies based upon forecast sustained wind speeds:
 - **0-10 mph** – Regardless of wind forecast or conditions, ALL race canopies and structures will be outfitted with sandbags or similar weights.
 - **10-20 mph** – Extra precautions will be taken to lower canopies, employ additional weights, and tie down equipment securely. The mile marker 1 sign along the highway will not be deployed. Extra precautions must be taken with the campsite fire to include leaving the ash screen down at all times, even if it precludes roasting marshmallows.
 - **20-30 mph** – In addition, mile marker signs, fencing, trash cans, and other loose items will be removed or reduced. The campfire will be canceled. All porta-johns will be anchored to the ground.
 - **30+ mph** – In addition, no overhead structures will be deployed to include canopies, banners, start/finish line structure, etc.
- **Lightning** – To start the race, there must be no lightning strikes within 5 miles of the start line within 20 minutes. This may lead to a race start delay and cancelation of some pre-race activities such as the KGHS Color Guard and announcer. In this case, runners will be asked to shelter in place – either in vehicles, buses, Sheetz or O'Reilly Auto Parts. If lightning occurs during the race, there's little we can do other than instruct people to shelter in place as best they can. Volunteers and those at aid stations may have access to personal vehicles or Little Ark Baptist Church.
- **Excessive heat** – Given the season of our race, excessive heat is of little concern. Under unseasonably hot conditions (expected temperatures of 80 or above), we will increase water and electrolyte drinks and strongly encourage runners to drink at every opportunity.
- **Excessive cold** – In conditions where the air temperature is 25 or below or the wind chill is 20 or below, we'll take extra steps to include deploying limited numbers of Hot Hands and thermal blankets to aid stations. We'll also try to borrow or rent portable outdoor heaters to have available at the start and finish lines.

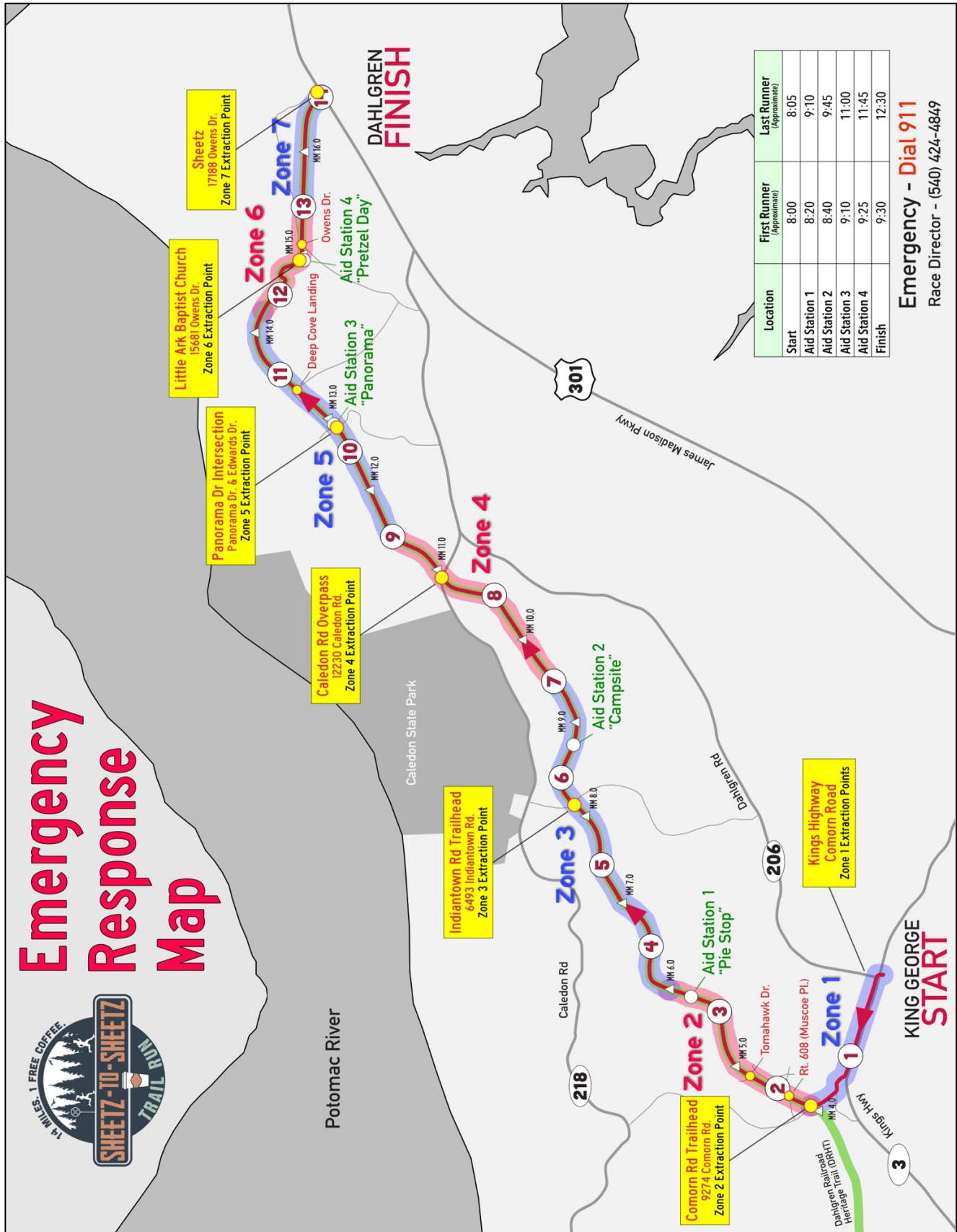
COVID-19 Mitigations

COVID-related restrictions and requirements such as masks have been rescinded by the CDC, commonwealth of Virginia, and local authorities. Nevertheless, event policies and procedures will reflect best practices, including:

- Areas where runners may congregate (e.g., start line, finish line festival, campsite aid station) have been specifically designed to incorporate distancing and avoid bottlenecks.
- Waves of runners will be released based on estimated finish time in order to quickly spread out the field and discourage passing.
- Volunteers serving any food or drink will wear disposable gloves.
- As much as possible, food will be individually wrapped.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be placed along the course.

Attachment 1

This map must be carried by race staff and volunteers in safety-related positions



Attachment 2

These procedures must be carried by race staff and volunteers in safety-related positions

Sheetz-to-Sheetz Trail Run Emergency Response Procedures

① ASSESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We treat only minor injuries and illnesses. For anything else where the subject is exhibiting distress, call 9-1-1 immediately.• Be prepared to provide the approximate trail mile marker, NOT the course mileage, as well as the nearest Extraction Point.• No signal to make the call? Enlist runners or bike support to go to the nearest aid station or Extraction Point (in either direction) as quickly as possible to make the call or find a radio operator.
② ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If 9-1-1 has been called, follow directions of emergency response personnel to render aid.• For minor injuries, treat using first aid kits available at all aid stations, on race support bikes, on the course sweep vehicle, and at the finish line tent.• If close to the campsite aid station or finish line, seek the identified first aid volunteer – look for the flag and armband.• If a subject desires to leave the race, consult the map to determine the closest Extraction Point (in either direction). Determine the extraction method:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Runner pick-up volunteer• Emergency contact• Local emergency response services• Assist the subject in proceeding to the Extraction Point.• If the subject cannot physically proceed to the Extraction Point, the course sweep vehicle can transport them. However, there may be a delay.• Enlist bike support personnel, other volunteers and runners to assist as needed.
③ NOTIFY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As soon as the situation stabilizes, inform race staff by calling the race director at 540-424-4849. Alternatively, have anyone else on-scene perform the notification as aid is rendered. Be prepared to report the location, bib number(s) of anyone involved, and situation specifics.• The race director will notify others as needed to include 9-1-1, first aid volunteers, emergency contacts, runner pick-up volunteers, course sweep, etc.