



Street-O organiser's manual

This document is intended to be a brief(ish) manual to help organisers of Street-O events. Any comments or suggestions for changes welcome – please email [streeto \[at\] slow.org.uk](mailto:streeto@slow.org.uk)

Venue

Usually a pub is best, although sometimes events are hosted from sports centres/clubs etc. It needs to be somewhere that will let us reserve a reasonably good-sized area, somewhere that serves food, and ideally fairly close to a train/tube station.

Map

Course maps are put together using Ollie O'Brien's *Open Orienteering Map* (OOM) website – <http://oomap.co.uk>, which enables you to quickly get a street-O style map of any area of London (or indeed, almost the whole world). You should select the "Street-O map" option with a "Plain" background, zoom into the required level, and then use the "Create a Map" option. There is a save and edit facility, and also a facility to type in clues and have them stored with the map, and with a printable sheet.

It's well worth getting familiar with OOM sooner rather than later. At least work out the area that you can use for your course, as it might need some fine tuning to get sensible boundaries. There are links on the website to help files which should answer any queries related to the software; for any specific problems, you can ask Ollie directly (email [web \[at\] slow.org.uk](mailto:web@slow.org.uk)).

Whilst OOM provides a very good starting point, the maps produced are not always perfect – small footpaths may be missed off, roads may have changed, etc – and you should always try to check that the map is correct throughout the area (and particularly at or near control sites). In more central London areas with lots of small paths/courtyards/alleyways, OOM is sometimes less good at providing clear mapping, and you should be particularly careful with control sites around these areas if the map is not clear.

Map corrections can be made fairly simply by directly editing the Open Streetmap website (see <http://www.openstreetmap.org/>).

We usually use a 1:10,000 (A4 size) map, and I would certainly recommend this scale for any of the more central London built-up areas. Sometimes 1:12,500 may be ok for less detailed (more outer-London) areas, enabling you to cover a larger area, but be careful with pinpointing exact control locations when using the larger scale maps.

You should use the red "X" option in OOM to indicate any areas that people should not run along or across – e.g. dark unlit footpaths or parks, busy major roads, or to indicate closed gates/paths etc.

Please make sure that control numbers are all legible (e.g. not on top of relevant other map detail).



Course planning

There are no strict rules, but usually around 30-40 controls in total is best. Ideally there should be enough controls, scattered across a wide enough area, so that the fastest runners cannot possibly visit every control within 60 minutes and still need to carefully plan their routes to optimise their score. (The fastest Street-O runners might typically cover up to 15km in one hour.)

You should aim to have the controls reasonably scattered across the area with no obvious optimal route – there should be lots of different route options and it should be tricky to spot the best route to optimise score for any given running speed.

Make sure that there is no temptation for competitors to run off the map by placing two controls near the edge of the map where the best route is (or looks like it might be) going off the map.

We use a scoring system where controls 1-19 are worth 10 points, 20-29 worth 20 points, 30-39 worth 30 points, 40-49 worth 40 points. Please stick to this system as it makes it easier for people to know how many points each control is worth just by looking at the control numbers on the map, which helps with route planning.

Time penalties should be 1 point for every 3 seconds late back (equivalent to 20 points per minute) – the same for all events (note this is a change for the 2015/16 series – previously just 20 per minute).

Control clues

The main criteria for street-O clues is that the questions should be unambiguous, and the answers should be very obvious to see when you have reached the correct location (it's not supposed to be a treasure hunt!) but very difficult to guess unless you have been there (some people may have local knowledge). People shouldn't have to spend any time searching for the clue answer once they have reached the correct location, or read long signs to find the answer buried away somewhere, and there shouldn't be any doubt about what the correct answer is when a runner has reached the correct location. All answers should be clearly visible at night under street lights – please check this!

It can be helpful to include prompts that make it easy to spot, e.g. if a sign says "CAUTION 500 VOLTS", a clue could be "CAUTION ____ VOLTS". Check that the clues aren't visible from a long way off in one direction only (which may be unfair to runners who approach from the opposite direction), or that the answer to the clue can't be found somewhere else nearby (e.g. signs pointing towards the clue answer).

Postboxes are really good unambiguous control sites. There's a useful map-based database of them here: <http://www.dracos.co.uk/play/locating-postboxes/>. Blue plaques are listed by borough on English Heritage's website: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/discover/blue-plaques/search/>. The problem with some of these is that they can be located quite a bit back from the main road, which can be difficult at night.

There is also now a function in OOM to add postboxes and blue plaques automatically to a street-O map – although you should check them all if using this!



Other good sites include detail on signposts (which should be obvious/large), names/details of shops/pubs etc, house names/door colours, lamppost numbers, etc. Number of items in a location (e.g. “how many garages are here?”) is ok as long as there are not too many count!

Please do double-check the location of all control points before finalising the map – it’s surprising how often controls can be incorrectly marked on a wrong junction, or on the wrong side of a road, and you will know from experience how frustrating this can be for competitors!

If possible, it is recommended to get someone else to independently check the map and all of the control sites/clues before the event, to minimise the risk of checkpoints being marked in the wrong place or clues being too ambiguous or hard to find – a second pair of eyes can be invaluable in doing this, and reduce the risk of any unwanted complaints on the night!

Clue sheet

Although the format is standard across all events, the clue sheet itself should clearly state the points for each control, the 60-minute time limit and penalty points system (of 1 point per 3 seconds late back).

Make sure you include space to record the runner’s name, and it’s probably best to include somewhere to finish time/total penalty points. You may want to include some scoring boxes etc to make it easier for markers on the night. It may be worth including an emergency contact mobile number and a note requesting that everyone reports back to the finish after running.

Pre-running information

On the night you should display a few copies of the map without the controls on (but ideally with the Start/Finish on) for competitors to look at before they start. This is very helpful for newcomers in particular.

Please also ensure that any important pre-race information is prominently displayed, and if any information is vital for all competitors to know (e.g. about a particularly busy road junction) then the start official should tell each competitor individually before they set off.

If you are using controls on sites such as postboxes, fire hydrants or blue plaques, it might be helpful to display pictures of these at registration – particularly for overseas competitors who may not be familiar with these. Example pictures of these to display are at the end of this manual.

Event publicity

We aim to get the details for each event published on the SLOW website around 3-4 weeks before the event (the earlier the better for publicity purposes!). Please send details of your event to [editors\[at\]slow.org.uk](mailto:editors@slow.org.uk) for inclusion on the SLOW website – all that is needed to get information on the website is the event centre location (e.g. pub name/address), any tips on transport links, and any other non-standard information (e.g. if the map scale is not 1:10,000).



If you are a Facebook member, please also create the event on Facebook (it's best if the organiser creates the event as you then get updates about who is attending etc). There are instructions to do this here (see part 2): <http://slow.org.uk/club/posting-guidelines/posting-forthcoming-events/>. The most important part is to make this a PUBLIC event in SLOW MEMBERS - this can't be changed after you've created the event! Once done, please can you let me know the Facebook event ID, so that we can link this to the SLOWeb results system. (If you are not a Facebook member please let me know so we can arrange for this to be done separately.)

When the details have been published, please also send an email with the details to the SLOW members email group [slowmail \[at\] yahoogroups.com](mailto:slowmail[at]yahoogroups.com) to raise awareness of the event.

Feel free to do some of your own local publicity as well!

Risk assessment

Every event organised by SLOW must have a formal risk assessment form completed. There is a standard template which is used for all Street-O's, although it will need to be tailored for each individual event to reflect details of the location and area and any particular hazards that might have been identified (e.g. busy roads/junctions or dark footpaths). I will send you a template to complete prior to your event, which must be returned to me beforehand with a printed copy available on the night (although hopefully it's very unlikely that it would need to be referred to!).

Map printing

Maps are usually printed by SLOW's Don McKerrow – to arrange this please send an email to [chair \[at\] slow.org.uk](mailto:chair[at]slow.org.uk). You will need to send Don a copy of the final map file and Q&A sheet, ideally by a couple of weeks before the event to allow sufficient time for printing and map collection.

Timing

Timing of competitors on the night is done using SLOW's SportIdent (SI) electronic timing system. Before the event you need to get hold of the SLOW box of hired SI "dibbers" (we usually suggest 2 cases which is about 70 dibbers), the start/finish/clear units, and the "Henry" download printer, often from whoever hosted the previous event. If needed, instructions on synchronising the SI equipment is available on the 'Documents' page on the SLOW website.

Henry is very easy to use, and is simply a printer which records out finish times when people download. The downloaded times are not recorded or saved anywhere on a computer, so you will need to record the printed finish times. Please note that Henry should be charged prior to the event – please check if this has been done when you get hold of it!

When starting runners off on the night, there is no need to leave a fixed gap (e.g. 1 minute) between competitors – much better to avoid queues of people waiting to start, and just let everyone start whenever they are ready (unlike 'normal' orienteering, there is much less risk of people following each other in a street-O, given the score event format).



Scoresheet marking

It's worth having a friend or two lined up to help mark scoresheets on the night if possible, as competitors like to get their marked score sheets back before leaving for the evening. However you should always be able to find a few willing SLOW members on the night to help with this.

Make sure you record a copy of each runner's score, penalty points, and total time taken (this is used to separate people with tied scores), before handing back their score sheet!

There is a table on the final page of this manual to show time penalties tabulated for times between 60 to 70 minutes – suggest this is printed and brought along on the night to help scorers quickly note the correct time penalty. (The results spreadsheet template will calculate penalties automatically.)

If you have followed the recommendations in the Control Clues section above, hopefully there will be no disputes about the marking! However there usually are a few queries about wrongly marked answers. Generally it should be the competitor's responsibility to record the correct answer for each question – we certainly don't want to be giving marks for wrongly guessed answers.

The important thing is that the runner visited the correct control location – so if they can convince you that they did this, but for whatever reason recorded a different answer, then the organiser will need to exercise an element of judgement on whether to allow the score or not. However please try to be consistent with everyone competing at the same event, which is more difficult when someone appeals later on after other similarly wrongly-marked answers have already been returned.

Results

After the event, please send a spreadsheet with the final results to [streeto \[at\] slow.org.uk](mailto:streeto@slow.org.uk). (No need to record the series league points, just the results from the night are fine.)

Before the event I will send you a template Excel spreadsheet prior to the event which shows all the format and details of the information which needs to be recorded – this is: name, male/female (not always obvious from the names!), total points (excluding penalties), time taken, penalty points (automatic formula), final score (after penalties). People who finish level on points are sorted according to time taken. There is no need to record league series points or update the overall results, I will do that.

Any further questions – please ask for help!

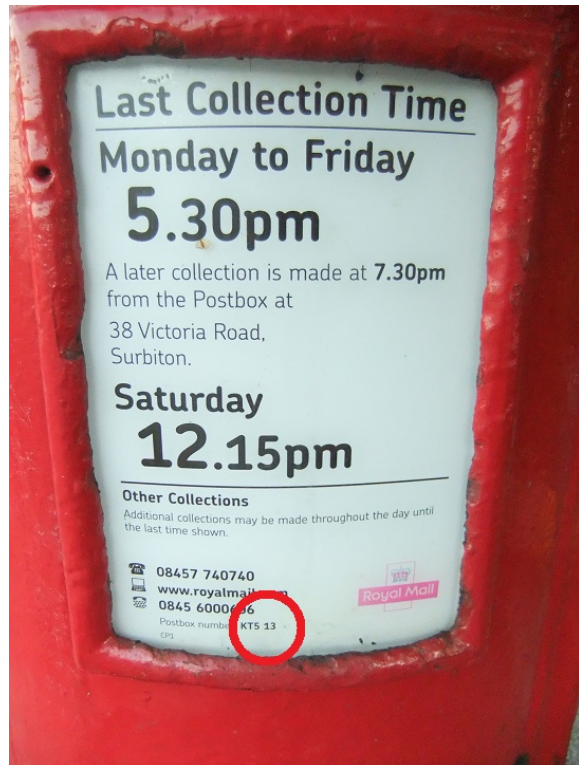
Paul Nixon

v4.0 – June 2015



EXAMPLE PICTURES OF COMMON CONTROL SITES
TO DISPLAY ON THE NIGHT FOR THOSE WHO ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH THESE

POSTBOX NUMBERS



FIRE HYDRANT



BLUE PLAQUE





TIME PENALTY CALCULATOR

TO PRINT OUT / BRING ALONG ON THE NIGHT FOR HELPING RECORD SCORES

Time penalties are 1 point for every 3 seconds late back, equivalent to 20 points per minute.

The table below shows the penalty point for every time between 60-70 minutes –
 e.g. 60:01 scores 1 penalty point, 61:36 scores 32 penalty points, 63:00 scores 60 penalty points.

SECONDS	MINUTES									
	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69
1-3	1	21	41	61	81	101	121	141	161	181
4-6	2	22	42	62	82	102	122	142	162	182
7-9	3	23	43	63	83	103	123	143	163	183
10-12	4	24	44	64	84	104	124	144	164	184
13-15	5	25	45	65	85	105	125	145	165	185
16-18	6	26	46	66	86	106	126	146	166	186
19-21	7	27	47	67	87	107	127	147	167	187
22-24	8	28	48	68	88	108	128	148	168	188
25-27	9	29	49	69	89	109	129	149	169	189
28-30	10	30	50	70	90	110	130	150	170	190
31-33	11	31	51	71	91	111	131	151	171	191
34-36	12	32	52	72	92	112	132	152	172	192
37-39	13	33	53	73	93	113	133	153	173	193
40-42	14	34	54	74	94	114	134	154	174	194
43-45	15	35	55	75	95	115	135	155	175	195
46-48	16	36	56	76	96	116	136	156	176	196
49-51	17	37	57	77	97	117	137	157	177	197
52-54	18	38	58	78	98	118	138	158	178	198
55-57	19	39	59	79	99	119	139	159	179	199
58-60	20	40	60	80	100	120	140	160	180	200