

Restricted Areas and Routes

There are many reasons why orienteering maps and courses have restricted areas and routes. There may be a need to protect sensitive environmental areas, to meet requests by landowners, or to protect the orienteer from dangerous areas. Marked routes, or crossing points over otherwise impassable or dangerous objects, may also be marked on a map.

Hence orienteers should strictly observe their obligations in respect to restricted areas/routes and not take an unfair advantage by taking any short-cuts over an out of bounds area. If an orienteer ignores restricted areas/routes, then he or she not only runs the risk of being disqualified, but may also attract criticism of the sport of orienteering by landowners and others if their requests are ignored. The controller, organiser and course planner have a duty of care to protect competitors from potentially hazardous areas and should ensure that courses avoid them. Hazardous areas should be clearly marked on the map by using the appropriate symbols outlined below. In addition some hazardous areas may need to be marked on the ground.

There are two types of restricted areas/routes that can be shown on a map. These are

(1) Mapped Symbols

Out of Bounds – not to be entered (olive colour) : This symbol is used for houses and gardens and other built up areas. Roads, buildings and other significant features within settlement areas are shown. If all buildings can not be shown, an alternative symbol, thin black vertical lines, is used. Orienteers should not cross areas to which access is obviously not intended.

Permanently Out of Bounds (thick black vertical lines) : These areas are permanently out of bounds. A bounding line may be drawn if there is no natural boundary. Restricted areas are used if requested by landowners for various reasons eg privacy, or to protect the orienteer from dangerous high cliffs, deep vertical mine shafts etc. This symbol is not part of the current mapping specification, but will be seen on some maps.

(2) Overprinting Symbols (purple)

Marked Route (a dashed purple line) : A marked route within a course shall be obligatory for a competitor on that course. Marked routes are often used from the pre-start to the start triangle and for the last part of the route to the finish line. A marked route may also be used to show passages through or around an out of bounds area. The route will clearly be shown on the map and on the ground if necessary by taping.

Marked routes are also used on Easy and Very Easy courses to assist in navigation.

Uncrossable Boundary (purple line, often along a linear feature) : This is a boundary that is not permitted to be crossed eg fence. A crossing point can be shown by two purple lines curving outwards (may be used to indicate where boundary can be crossed).

Out of Bounds (purple cross hatching) : This is a temporary or new out of bounds area. A boundary line may be drawn if there is no natural boundary to indicate : -
Continuous line – the boundary is marked by tapes
Dashed line – intermittent markings on the ground
No line – No markings on the ground

Dangerous Area (purple cross hatching of lines) : This is an area presenting danger to the orienteer such as rifle shooting, an archery range, paddocks with lambing ewes, or cropped fields.

Forbidden Route (purple crosses e.g. along a road, railway line) : This is a route which is out of bounds. A private landowner may not wish orienteers to use a particular track, or that track or road is being used for other purposes potentially dangerous to the orienteer. These routes can be crossed but not followed

Details on restricted areas and routes should be provided to the orienteer before he or she commences their course. This is generally stated in event information booklet for major events, or on the course information board at minor events. In particular, restricted areas and routes will be shown on the competitors map and course master maps.

For more details on all symbols refer to the ISOM 2017 and ISprOM map legend symbols

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