

Color run safety planning checklist

Not an approval. This checklist helps organizers prepare a safety plan for review. It is not an approval and not a safety certification. The principal or venue operator, facilities staff and, where they have authority, the local fire department, health department and stormwater or parks office must review and approve the actual safety arrangements. Where their rules are stricter than this checklist, their rules apply.

Event details

Event name	
Date and time	
Rain date	
Venue and surface (grass, blacktop, track, turf)	
Expected participants / spectators	
Organizing group	
Event chair (name, phone)	
Safety lead (name, phone)	
Powder supplier and product	

1. Approvals and permits

Done	Item	Owner	Notes or evidence
☐	Written approval from the principal or venue owner for colored powder, naming the surfaces it may be used on		
☐	Facilities has agreed the cleanup standard in writing: which surfaces, by when, and who checks		
☐	District or organization policy on powder events checked		
☐	Local fire department told the date and plan, and any conditions recorded		
☐	City or park permit obtained, if the event is on public land; deposit or cleanup conditions recorded		
☐	Stormwater or parks office consulted, if the event is on public land near drains or water		
☐	Insurance coverage for a powder event confirmed (school, PTA, organization or event rider)		
☐	Waiver or permission form required by the school, district, venue or insurer chosen; organizers did not write their own		

2. Powder and Safety Data Sheets

Done	Item	Owner	Notes or evidence
☐	Full 16-section Safety Data Sheet (SDS) on file for every color ordered		
☐	Base starch confirmed (cornstarch, wheat starch, rice flour or talc); gluten status recorded		
☐	Dye list for each color recorded and shared with families		
☐	Flammability or dust-explosibility test results requested from the supplier; answer recorded		
☐	Non-combustible additive (for example sodium bicarbonate) and amount recorded, if any		
☐	Heavy-metal testing asked about; answer recorded		
☐	Storage location: sealed, dry, away from heat and ignition sources; quantity on site recorded		
☐	Printed SDS placed at the first aid table on event day		

3. Fire and ignition sources

Done	Item	Owner	Notes or evidence
☐	Powder used outdoors only: never in tents, gyms, empty pools or enclosed stadiums		
☐	No smoking, open flames, grills, sparklers, fireworks or gas-powered equipment near powder		
☐	No cannons, blowers, gas canisters or other powered devices to spread powder; applied by hand or squeeze bottle		
☐	Stage lights, generators, electrical equipment and food vendors kept away from powder areas		
☐	Fire extinguisher on site (water or dry chemical; not CO2 for outdoor dust fires), and who will use it		
☐	Leaf blowers excluded for dusting off participants and for cleanup		

4. Health, first aid and emergency plan

Done	Item	Owner	Notes or evidence
☐	School nurse or health lead has reviewed the plan		
☐	First aid table upwind of all stations, staffed by an adult with first aid training		
☐	Eyewash: clean water to flush eyes for at least 15 minutes; contact-lens advice in family notice		
☐	Students' medications (inhalers, epinephrine auto-injectors) with the people who need them, as the nurse directs		
☐	AED on site (or the nearest one confirmed reachable within minutes) and a trained user named		
☐	Heat plan set: water at start, finish and along the course; shade; a heat-index cutoff agreed with the safety lead		

Done	Item	Owner	Notes or evidence
☐	Emergency plan: who calls 911, where an ambulance enters, who meets responders; poison help number listed		
☐	Participants with asthma, allergies or eye conditions identified privately with families		

5. Participants and inclusion

Done	Item	Owner	Notes or evidence
☐	Family notice sent about four weeks before: what the powder is, base and dyes, what to wear, how to request the powder-free route		
☐	Powder-free bypass at every station, coned off on the upwind side, with a guide		
☐	Eye protection requested for all participants; spares at check-in		
☐	Age adjustments set for the youngest participants (lighter dusting, color at the finish only, no finale)		
☐	Sensory-friendly and mobility options planned (quieter wave, smooth route)		

6. Stations, volunteers and course

Done	Item	Owner	Notes or evidence
☐	Stations spaced so color clouds don't merge (about 40 m apart is a common rule of thumb) and placed so wind carries powder away from buildings, parking and spectators		
☐	Every station has a lead, a refill runner and named applicators; a visible stop signal agreed		
☐	Ten-minute safety briefing scheduled for every volunteer, including teachers who apply color		
☐	Station rules on every card: below the shoulders, never at faces; stop for anyone who says stop; no color on the powder-free route		
☐	Volunteer eye protection and dust masks issued		
☐	Course marshals at turns and crossings; spectators kept upwind		

7. Weather

Done	Item	Owner	Notes or evidence
☐	Rain date set; time of the go, delay or rain-date call set three days out; who decides named		
☐	Lightning policy of the school, district or venue followed; at minimum, everyone indoors at thunder and a 30-minute wait after the last thunder (National Weather Service)		
☐	Wind rule: pause any station when powder blows toward people, buildings or cars		
☐	How families will hear about a delay or cancellation		

8. Environment and cleanup

Done	Item	Owner	Notes or evidence
☐	Storm drains near the course mapped; covered or protected; no station near a drain		
☐	Color kept well away from streams, ponds, ditches, swales and rain gardens (Washington State's color-event rule, BMP S436, uses 100 feet)		
☐	Dry cleanup: sweep powder onto tarps and bag it as trash; no hoses or pressure washers on paving unless all the water is collected for the sanitary sewer, with approval		
☐	Cleanup finished the same day, before any forecast rain		
☐	Walk-through with facilities after cleanup; any follow-up recorded		
☐	Unopened powder returned or stored sealed within the supplier's shelf life		

Review and sign-off

Each reviewer marks Approved or Changes required. The event goes ahead only when every required reviewer has approved.

Reviewer	Name	Decision	Date	Signature
Principal or venue operator		☐ Approved ☐ Changes required		
Facilities		☐ Approved ☐ Changes required		
School nurse or health lead		☐ Approved ☐ Changes required		
Fire department (if consulted)		☐ Approved ☐ Changes required		
City, parks or stormwater office (if required)		☐ Approved ☐ Changes required		

Changes required by reviewers, and who will make them:

Based on

- Massachusetts State Fire Marshal, colored powder memo to fire chiefs, April 4, 2016
- U.S. OSHA, Hazard Communication Standard (Safety Data Sheets) and combustible dust guidance
- Washington State Department of Ecology, Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington (2024 edition, publication 24-10-013), BMP S436 Color Events
- National Capital Poison Center (eye first aid); National Weather Service (heat illness and lightning); American Academy of Pediatrics (heat)
- Full sources and plain-language explanations: walk-a-thon.com/color-run/color-powder-safety