

## **MCRRC's Position Regarding Running Aware**

The Board's primary concern is for the safety of runners in the club races and training events. While we recognize that it is up to the individuals running in non-club events or races to determine the extent to which they will "run aware," the MCRRC Board has agreed upon the following policies that govern runners at club events or races:

### **Headphones, Dogs and Strollers during Club-Sponsored Running Events**

- **Races:** The official club position is that headphones, strollers or dogs are prohibited in any club race. Using/running with any of these while participating in a club race constitutes a potential hazard and compromises the safe conduct of the race. The Board also notes that RRCA discourages all of these at RRCA-sanctioned races. Race directors will ensure that warnings are given in all race literature, information on the club website and pre-race announcements regarding the use of headphones, strollers or dogs. Whenever feasible, race directors may disqualify runners for violating this policy.
- **Club Training Programs:** The club discourages the use of headphones or running with dogs while runners are engaged in a club training program. An exception is made for strollers, as long as they are appropriate for the training activity setting and do not pose a safety threat, as judged by the program director or head coach. The program director or head coach has discretion in identifying potential safety hazards and taking appropriate action, although the Board suggests consulting with its Training Program Liaison before any sanctions are imposed.
- **Club Workouts:** The club discourages the use of headphones or running with dogs while runners are engaged in any club workout, such as the weekly track workouts or the weekend long runs. An exception is made for strollers, as long as they are appropriate for the workout setting and do not pose a safety threat, as judged by the workout coordinator. The workout coordinator has discretion in identifying potential safety hazards and taking appropriate action, although the Board suggests consulting with its Workout Liaison before any sanctions are imposed.

## **Position Statement of MCRRC Regarding the Run Aware Campaign**

Run Aware is a public education campaign that is distinct from (but complementary to) the above club policies and is aimed at increasing the awareness of runners and the general public about safety issues while running. Clearly, runners must take responsibility for their own safety, but the Board believes that it is the club's responsibility to educate and promote safety while running. The Run Aware campaign is aimed at promoting preventive, proactive strategies to encourage runners to stay safe. These include wearing night-visible vests, running with a buddy, telling someone of their route, varying their routes, etc. Additionally, the Run Aware campaign is aimed at promoting the concept that runners should be responsible for the safety of each other. Familiarity with the "regulars" on your routes, recognizing individuals that seem out-of-place, varying your routes and times of the day when you run, and suggesting safe running habits to other runners whose paths you cross are important elements of Run Aware. Ultimately, Run Aware is about every individual runner's (and in particular club members') responsibility to affirmatively make the community in which they run a safer place.

The above suggestions describe positive and proactive ways that runners can be safer and can help to create a safer community. Run Aware also suggests actions runners should avoid, such as running abreast when conditions do not allow, being inconsiderate of others when running on narrow paths and sidewalks with dogs or when using a stroller, and, in particular, running while listening to music. The club recognizes the burgeoning use and general acceptance among many runners of this popular technology, such as Ipods and other music players, but the Board has decided that our Club has a responsibility to communicate that, in most environments, running with headphones is an unsafe practice.

We take safety very seriously and strongly believe that the use of headphones while running constitutes a safety hazard to runners because it reduces their awareness of their surroundings, such as traffic, potential criminal activity, etc. Some runners believe that listening at low volumes does not impair their hearing and characterize themselves as responsible wearers (as distinct from irresponsible wearers that crank up the volume). We believe that there is no method for running with headphones that does not impair a runner's awareness to some degree and any loss of awareness creates an unacceptable risk that should be avoided.

The Run Aware campaign will engage in a variety of strategies to spread its broad message of running safe, including updating the page on the club website, communicating with other running clubs and using banners, flyers and t-shirts as appropriate. The Board hopes this campaign expands in scope based on word of mouth and collective action. We encourage all club members to voice their opinions with the Board and to become involved in the campaign.