

Instructional Manual For Caution Flaggers



This manual is intended for motocross/supercross flagging instruction
www.mxsafty38.org

Introduction: About The Brett Downey Safety Foundation

The Brett Downey Safety Foundation was formed in the loving memory of 11-year-old Brett Downey. Brett lost his life on the morning of August 19th 2004, while participating in motocross, the sport he loved. The Downey family with heavy hearts wanted to do something to help others in the sport of motocross, by increasing the awareness of motocross safety. The Brett Downey Safety Foundation was formed.

The mission of the Brett Downey Safety Foundation is to supplement the motocross community by increasing safety awareness of riders, parents, track owners, and promoters to make the sport of motocross as safe as possible, minimizing injuries and helping to preserve all motocross tracks. Moreover, the Foundation is a non-profit organization lead by a volunteer staff. For more information about the Foundation visit our website www.mxsafty38.org

With that said, educating caution flaggers with a standardized outline is a very important part of the Brett Downey Safety Foundations' mission for motocross safety.

Responsibility of a Caution Flagger:

You're becoming a "Caution Flagger" because you are an enthusiast dedicated to the sport of motocross and/or supercross racing, want to be involved at the races and promote the integrity and professionalism of the sport. Even though you are the ultimate enthusiast, it is your responsibility to be aware that there are certain elements of risk involved and motorcycle racing is inherently dangerous. Before participating as a caution flagger at any event:

- Assess your own ability
- Assess the racing environment
- Exercise extreme caution

A caution flagger has one of the most important jobs at a motocross/supercross track. They must protect the riders on the track and prevent an accident from escalating. Flagging is a team effort. A successful flag crew must work together. An understanding of the flag system and basic guidelines of a caution flagger will serve as a valuable asset when considering the purpose and responsibility of the caution flagger.

Understanding the flag system:

- Checkered flag – Indicates the end of a race or practice session. Proceed around the course to the designated track exit.
- White flag - Indicates the final lap of a race.

- Yellow flag – Indicates serious hazards on or near the track. Proceed with caution. *Must slow down, no passing/jumping*
- White Flag with Red Cross: Indicates that ambulances, safety vehicles or emergency personnel are on the course. Exercise caution. *In Supercross only*, should this flag or a red light be displayed at the start of a multiple-jump or a series of jumps, riders must take each jump individually with no passing permitted, exercising caution, until they are past the area of concern.
- Green flag – Indicates the start of a race or clear track conditions.
- Black flag – Indicates a problem with your motorcycle or a disqualification. Proceed around the course to the designated track exit.
- Red flag – Indicates the race has been stopped. Reduce speed and proceed safely to the starting area.
- Light Blue Flag with Diagonal Yellow Stripe: Indicates you are about to be overtaken by faster riders. Hold your line and do not impede their progress.
- White and Green Flags Crossed: Indicates half of total race distance is completed.

Duties and Priorities of a Caution Flagger:

One of the major concerns of a caution flagger is to warn oncoming traffic of any situation that lies ahead. You **MUST** protect yourself before being able to perform effectively. Keep the following in mind at all times:

- Stay Alert – you're not a spectator, concentrate on your area of responsibility.
- Protect Yourself – don't put yourself in a position to be involved as part of the incident.
- Position – position yourself accordingly, if at all possible you should be visible to flaggers in either direction at all times.
- Eye Contact – watch the rider's eyes, know and feel confident you can be seen when waving a flag.

Your personal safety should be one of your primary concerns, as well as the safety of your fellow workers. This means that if you are flagging and a crashing bike is heading in your direction, getting yourself and your partner out of danger should be your first concern, flagging the oncoming riders should come later. Return to your positions and priorities when it is clear to do so. If at any time you feel uncomfortable in any location, inform the person in charge immediately.

The flaggers serve as the competitor's eyes, warning riders of hazardous situations by displaying the yellow flag. The flaggers' area of responsibility is from their flag position to the next station. Flaggers must remain at the flag station at all times when competitors are on the course.

Purpose and Positioning of a Caution Flagger:

- The purpose of flagging is to warn riders of a hazardous situation on or near the track surface and to protect other caution flaggers and downed riders from oncoming riders.
- Your flag covers everything from your position to the next downstream flag.
- The caution flagger should never leave their post while motorcycles are on the track.
- Position yourself in behind a barrier or far off the track facing oncoming traffic. NEVER SIT DOWN!
- Always carry the yellow flag ready for use. Keep it tucked under your arm, out of the rider's sight.

On-Track Responsibilities of the Caution Flagger:

- Arrive at the racetrack at least one hour before practice begins; be prepared to stay all day.
- Flagging crews should review procedures including flagging, hand signals and incident response before each and every event. (Flagger meeting)
- Never turn your back on a moving motorcycle.
- Identify the areas where incidents are most likely to occur.
- Stay in your assigned area unless you are instructed to leave.
- Constantly keep an eye out for debris on the track and/or any irregularities from competing motorcycles.
- Be aware of persons in your area. SPECTATORS SHOULD NEVER BE ON THE COURSE. Appropriate credentials should be displayed.

Personal Care:

Be prepared for a long day. You might be flagging for up to 10 hours and won't have the opportunity to move around a great deal. Your comfort and attention to your personal needs are important.

Clothing

- Shoes - should be durable and comfortable. Open toes are not acceptable. It is recommended that you wear shoes that will support the ankle and socks not only for comfort but to prevent insect bites.
- Hat - a wide brimmed hat is recommended. Something that will keep your face protected from the elements.
- Dress in layers; it will be easier to adjust to the temperature.

Elements

Consider the weather. You know how quickly it can change. In addition to a rain suit or poncho make sure you have a jacket or heavy sweatshirt. You might even want to consider a change of clothes in case you get drenched. Like any good girl or boy scout would tell you – “BE PREPARED”.

Suggested Accessories

- Sunscreen
- Pen and Paper
- Prescription glasses
- Sunglasses
- Hand towel
- Backpack
- Insect repellent
- Lip Balm

Food

Eat properly and drink plenty of liquids. It may not be permissible to have a cooler on site (SX events) but at events where they are permitted, it is suggested you pack a well-stocked cooler with plenty of high-energy producing food, juices and water.

Medical Procedure

The event promoter provides emergency medical teams and ambulance crews. Caution flaggers do not provide medical services to injured riders.

Examples of flagging techniques and situations:

When the yellow flag is waving riders cannot jump and/or pass. If a rider does jump and/or pass on the yellow flag, report that rider's number to a track official.

When a rider crashes it is your job to wave the yellow flag to warn other riders about the crash. Do not assist the rider in anyway. Even if the rider is injured. It is the EMT's job to assist down riders.

While flagging, point to direct the riders to a safe path to ride through and avoid the crash.

A flagger must have his/her flag in hand at all times. Do not play around with the flag as a rider may think there's a crash, when there isn't. Keep flags held down along side of you while there's no down rider.

When waving the flag be sure your flag is projected in a clear visible manor. Do not just wave a stick, while the flag is tangled up. The flagger and his/her flag should be clearly visible.

Be sure to be in the proper flagging position: wave the flag a good distance in front of the crash. This allows the riders adequate time to slow down. It's important to know the speed the riders are going and understand a lot of riders ride with their head down.

A flagger must always hold their position until the danger is cleared, even if parents or fans are screaming at you to do something else.

Never leave your post unless instructed to do so. Never assume someone else will flag your area.

Flagging is dangerous, serious injury and/or death can result. Always keep your eyes on the track and be aware of your surroundings. Dirtbikes weigh 250lbs and you do not want to get hit by one.

A flagger must be alert at all times. They must be constantly looking for crashes and troubled areas.

It's very important the flaggers communicate and help each other out. The flagging crew is a team and a successful team is everyone working together.

Be kind to the riders and their parents. They are paying customers and must be treated accordingly.

Conclusion:

We thank you for your efforts of becoming a caution flagger and we appreciate your passion for keeping riders safe.

Brett Downey Safety Foundation