

Steamtown Marathon Handcycle/Wheelchair Competition

Steamtown's 948-foot net drop is far beyond the World Para Athletics recommendation for record-standard road courses of no more than one meter per kilometer net decrease, so extra local safety rules are justified.

Safety Rules

1) **No passing or drafting the pace car/lead vehicle, ever.**

Any handcycle or wheelchair athlete who passes, overlaps, or drafts the pace car is subject to immediate disqualification. Competitors immediately behind the pace car/lead vehicle must stay in a position so that they can be seen in the rearview mirror at all times. The lead vehicle/pace car will not knowingly exceed the posted speed limit.

2) **Controlled start through mile 8.**

All handcycle and wheelchair competitors must remain single file or staggered, hold position, and obey the pace car's/lead vehicle's speed through the steep early downhill section. In addition, the pace car/lead vehicle can, for the safety of competitors, volunteers, and spectators, reduce its speed at any time due to rain, fog, traffic or any other conditions.

3) **Mandatory braking and steering compliance.**

Each chair/cycle must have a functional brake, safe steering, secure wheels/tires, no loose parts, and no motor/electric assist.

4) **Helmet required from staging to finish.**

No helmet, no start. WPA requires helmets meeting recognized safety standards.

5) **Visibility flag required for handcycles.**

Rear safety flags are mandatory. No exceptions.

6) **Runners always have right-of-way.**

If a handcycle or wheelchair athlete approaches runners, they must slow, announce "on your left/right," pass only with clear space, and yield if uncertain.

7) **No drafting vehicles, runners, or wheelchairs.**

Handcycles may not draft the pace car, police, bikes, media, runners, or wheelchair athletes.

8) Experience requirement.

Handcycle/wheelchair competitors must have completed at least one-half marathon or marathon in the same device prior to registering for Steamtown.

9) Safety Inspection

Competitors and their equipment shall be subject to inspection at any time by marathon officials.

Summary: Because The Steamtown Marathon is a steep net-downhill course, all wheelchair and handcycle athletes must remain behind the designated pace vehicle at all times, especially through the controlled downhill zone in the first eight miles. Athletes must control speed, maintain safe spacing, wear an approved helmet, use only inspected equipment, have a visible safety flag, yield to runners and officials, and obey all race vehicle and marshal instructions. Unsafe riding, passing the pace vehicle, drafting vehicles, or failure to maintain control may result in removal from the course and disqualification.