

COCODONA

SWEEPER GUIDE



1. Thank YOU!

Thank you so much for helping us put on the Cocodona as a course sweep! We are so excited to share the beauty of Central Arizona with the runners, crews, pacers, and volunteers.

2. The SWEEP role

Your role is pretty simple if you boil it down. Pick up ALL (meaning 101%) of the course markings **and runner micro-trash** in your section. I guess we could stop there...but it actually isn't that simple. You are also a safety sweep. Once you come through the aid station, our aid station volunteers will know every runner is accounted for and have already passed through the aid station. Motivational speaker is another role. There will be runners on the struggle bus and they may be moving slow (less than 1 mile per hour) and you may be walking with them. Keep them going. Never give up. One step at a time. If they want you to back off, please do so.

We have timed that start of your sweep shift to start around 30 minutes before the "cut off time". It is always hard to perfectly gauge cut off times but we did our best.

Last Runners BEHIND Cut Off – If runners don't make it to an aid station before the cut off time, their race is over. They will not be able to continue along the course. Therefore, once the clock has reached cut off time at an aid station, you can start your sweep, even if there are runners behind you. Any runners behind you will be cut from the race. Your goal in this scenario would be to sweep the course quickly and catch up with the "new" last runner (as long as you don't go so fast as to miss course markings and runner micro-trash). Then, if you catch the last runner, stay WITH OR BEHIND them as you continue sweeping.

Last Runners AHEAD of Cut Off – If ALL runners have already come through your aid station early (before cut off time), the aid station can be taken down and you can start your sweep of the course EARLY. Your goal in this scenario would be to sweep the course quickly and catch up with the last runner (as long as you don't go so fast as to miss course markings and runner micro-trash). Then, if you catch the last runner, stay WITH OR BEHIND them as you continue sweeping. You can keep tabs on the location of the last runner on the Cocodona website (see SPOT Tracker Section below). If the last runners are WAY ahead of schedule, the aid station may have already been taken down and all of the volunteers gone home. In this case, you can start on your sweep section, doing an efficient job cleaning course markings (primary priority) and moving quickly to hopefully catch up with the last runners (secondary priority)

We will reuse the course markings for the next Aravaipa race. Yes, really we will. Please don't damage the signs and don't bend the pin flags. Drop all of the course markers and runner-micro trash at the next aid station. For long sections, or sections with lots of big cones/signs, the Course Manager may work with you to define PREDETERMINED drop locations where you can leave course markings. Please do not come up with your own drop locations...even when the load gets heavy.

Car Shuttles – You will be paired with a sweeper buddy. Aravaipa will soon be providing the contact info for your sweeper buddy. It is your responsibility to contact your sweeper buddy and figure out how you are going

to make your car shuttle work. Contact the [Race Director](#) if your sweeper buddy drops out at the last minute or if there are other issues that make it impossible for you to shuttle yourselves.

Gates – It is simple, close all gates behind you unless the gate specifically says “leave gate open”.

Some sweeper PRO-TIPS:

- Stay with your sweeper buddy. We put two people together to sweep for safety and logistical reasons.
- We reuse course markings race after race after race. Please don't throw away the course marking when you are done. DON'T bend the pin flags, DON'T take signs off of wood stakes, and DON'T rip the flagging tape if you can help it.
- Wrong way markers are the most common to be missed by sweepers. Look down EVERY trail, wash, and sideroad.
- Gloves. Yeah, it is the desert and everything has spines.
- BIG Backpack. You'll end up with a LOT of course markings in your pack. A couple of reusable grocery bags are also nice for the job. Always nice to have a ziplock or small trash liner for any micro-trash as well.
- Be 100% certain you are always behind the last runner. DO NOT start the sweep if there is any question. Be careful not to pass a runner taking a trail nap (seriously). And DO NOT pass the last runner even if they tell you to do so.
- Clearing all course marking and runner micro-trash is VERY important to us. 1-It is the right thing to do and 2-our future permits rely on leaving the race course better than we found it. Thank you!

3. Race Communications

Hopefully your shift goes smoothly but, in the off chance something goes wrong, we need you to be able to contact a staff member. Wild animal encounter? Last runner will no longer move forward on the course? Twisted your ankle? General race question? See below for info on how to contact a staff member. In case of a major emergency, please call 911.

Much of the Cocodona course has strong cell service. Therefore, our operations communication during the race will be run primarily through cell phones and a texting platform. HAMs will not be used. If you have an inReach device, please bring it along with you. Send a text through your inReach to Race Command telling them who you are at the start of your sweeper shift so that we have your inReach number.

All race communications will be run through our “Race Command” (imagine a fancy 911 operator but dressed up as an Aravaipa staff member). Race Command will be able to see all of the 250 and 125 distance runner's locations via SPOT tracking, communicate with staff and volunteers along the course, and send/receive text messages through our text-based communication system. They will also be able to see YOUR location on the course because you will be carrying a SPOT tracker as well. If you have an issue **DURING** the race, please send a **text to (602-830-4526)** (text only - phone calls don't work). Please include your name, sweep location, and issue in the text. Program this number into your phone...DO IT. Race Command should be your **FIRST** point of contact during the race should any need arise. In case of a major emergency, please call 911.

The course has been divided into 7 sections of around 30-40 miles. Each of these sections has a “Course Manager” who is responsible for their section. This responsibility encompasses marking the course before the

race, responding to any course issues on their section, and responding to any lost/injured runners on their section. Course Managers will also be helping shuttle DNFed runners, coordinating takedown of aid stations, and working with the sweeps to clean the course. A Course Manager may contact you in the days leading up to your sweep shift to coordinate drop course marking drop locations.

4. Highly Recommended SWEEPER Gear

We assume you are an experienced ultra-runner and you know how to take care of yourself. PLEASE think about how long you will be out there in the elements, think about the huge temperature variations, and consider that if you come across an injured runner, you will be expected to stop and help us with extraction (IE – not moving = cold). No, we aren't going to check you for gear...but please don't make us come rescue you out on the course.

- **Big Heavy Duty Backpack** – You'll end up with a LOT of course markings in your pack. A couple of reusable grocery bags are also nice for the job and a ziplock or small trash liner for any micro-trash as well.
- **Gloves** – It's the desert. Everything is trying to hurt you. We may have to tie course markings to a cactus.
- **Cell Phone** – Please also carry a charging cord and extra battery bank. Keep your phone in airplane mode but check for messages from Race Command EVERY hour on the hour (set an alarm).
- **GPS Enabled Device** with the course file loaded (smartphone in airplane mode is recommended – but check for messages from Race Command)
- **Headlamp**
- **Collapsible Cup** (we're cupless yo!)
- **Space Blanket**
- **Extra Food** – What you need for the segment at hand +400 calories
- **Electrolytes**
- **Hydration**
- **Cold Weather Gear** – Depending on your section, time of day, and weather; gloves & warm hat, long sleeve, insulatory upper layer, and a waterproof jacket w/ hood.
- Please also consider: Toilet Paper in a zip lock, Sun hat, Long sleeve sun layer, Sunglasses, Sunscreen, and Gaiters

5. GPS Enabled Device

It is MANDATORY for you as a SWEEPER to carry a gps enabled device with the course file downloaded. This device can be a handheld GPS unit, watch, or smartphone. The smartphone is the easiest and least expensive option. To use a smartphone, install a mapping App such as Gaia, GuruMapsPro, TrailForks, or AllTrails to your phone. Then download the course GPX file from the email sent to you and open the file in the mapping App. The course will appear, as well as your location (blue dot). Be sure to place your phone in airplane mode to maximize battery life. The course is ever changing as permitting and other conditions develop. We will email you the final course file a few days before the event.

6. Cupless

In an effort to cut down on the waste produced by this event, Cocodona will be a cupless event for cold drinks. What does that mean? There will be no paper cups for cold drink hydration at the aid stations. SWEEPs will be responsible for carrying their own container, cup, flask, or bottle to refill along the way. Please consider a bottle or hydration pack for water and a reusable, easy-to-carry cup for electrolyte refills and soda. We will provide hot cups for coffee, broth, and soup.

13. Time Zone

Ok, this maybe more confusing than it should be. Arizona does not observe Daylight Savings Time and is therefore ALWAYS on Mountain STANDARD Time (BUT KEEP READING). In May, for the race, the time in Arizona will be the same time as in California (Pacific Time).

Bottomline, for race week...you will be on Pacific Time. IE – Same time as San Diego, CA.

14. Course Marking

The course will be adequately marked, not overly marked. Intersections will be well marked but straightaways will only receive a course marking every ½-ish mile. This is a graduate level race and navigation is part of the expectation.

The course will be marked with:

- Orange with black polka dot tape w/ reflectors
- Orange pin flags w/ reflectors
- Wrong Way – Blue & white checkerboard tape. **These are the most commonly missed signs by sweepers. Please look at all intersections, especially making the effort to walk past turns to look for wrong way signs. These are mainly used when the course turns right or left and the wrong ways are placed straight ahead for runners that miss a turn.**
- Some sections in towns will be marked with signs and/or pavement stickers
- Turn Signs – Critical turns will have arrow signs on wood stakes.

Different distances = Different Signage

- All of the general course markings will be the same on all of the different distances of the race. IE – Orange with black polka dot tape w/reflectors will be used for ALL distances in all sections.
- Turn Signs will be distance specific – Anytime one of the shorter distances are SEPERATED from the 250 distance, they will have their own specific turn signs. Anytime the shorter distances are on the SAME course at the 250 distance, the turn signs will be generic.
 - o Example2 – Flagstaff Crest distance and Cocodona250 course are together – Right turns have generic right turn sign.
 - o Example2 – Flagstaff Crest distance and Cocodona250 course are on separate courses – Right turns will have Flagstaff Crest specific right turn.

15. Volunteer Thank you gift

A race of this magnitude takes hundreds of volunteers to pull off. Thank you! Volunteers will receive Aravaipa race credits (\$10/hr) that can be used for registration costs at future Aravaipa races. Volunteers will also receive either a race shirt or an additional Aravaipa race credit. Shirts can be picked up at the aid station where you END your sweep shift. Extra credits will also go to volunteers who take more than one shift per race.

16. Aid Station Food & Drink

You are welcome to eat and drink all that you want from the aid stations. Please note that you'll be at the VERY end of the race as sweeps, so it is likely we will be out of some food items. The aid station volunteers know you are coming and will do their best to leave food/drink for you, even if the aid station closes before you reach it.

17. Restrooms

There will be portable toilets at every aid station. Please do your best to time your bowels. If you can't, we get it, it happens. Carry toilet paper with you. Step 30' off the trail and dig a 6" (or deeper) hole. Please pack the used toilet paper out in a zip-lock and throw them away in the trash. And when you are out in the desert, remember it is a fragile ecosystem, so please DO NOT walk on vegetation or [Cryptobiotic soil](#).

18. SPOT Tracker

We will provide sweeps with real-time GPS tracking (SPOT Trackers). This is so that we can watch your progress with the last runners and respond should an emergency arise. You will not need cell service for this device to work, it will work everywhere on the course.

The SPOT Trackers will be issued at the aid station where you start your sweep shift. They are lightweight and small, about the size of a matchbook. They are stored inside of a Velcro sleeve that can be easily attached to your person, ideally the shoulder strap of a hydration pack so that they face the air (transmit) and not down in the bottom of your pack (doesn't transmit). Do not alter, adjust, or turn off the device.

Please give your SPOT tracker to the next sweeper at the end of your section.

19. Weather

The desert is known for dramatic daytime to nighttime temperature swings and the midday sun can be intense. Expect some parts of the course to be very hot during the day, others to be very cold at night, and yes, there could be snow.

Two parts of the course specifically could be quite hot during midday; the Sonoran Desert (mile 0-30) and the Verde Valley (130-140), each seeing average daytime highs in the mid-80s°F. Not coincidentally, these two sections are the lowest elevation points on the course and don't have much shade.

Conversely, the highest elevation points on the course will probably be quite cold at night. The Bradshaw Mountains (mile 30-75), Mingus Mountain (mile 114), the Coconino Plateau (mile 195-245), and Mount Elden (mile 248) see average nighttime lows between 40-25°F.

