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## BUSINESS STRUCTURES

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You have several options in deciding on your corporate structure. There are advantages and disadvantages to each one and you should pick what works best for your situation. Make sure to get legal and financial advice before making your final decision. Different people will expound the virtues and advantages of one form of business and the pitfalls of another. Opinions are personal, but "facts" are "facts". You need to seek out coaches who have done it one way and those who have done it the other. Get all of the case history you can, not in a deck-side conversation, but in detail. Here is a quick overview followed by more detailed descriptions.

Type of Business	501.c.3	Sub-s or LLC	Sole-proprietorship or partnership
Who owns & directs	Board owned – cannot be individually owned. All equity is controlled by BOD.	Can be coach owned.	Single ownership
Coaches' Role	Hired by BOD – paid by BOD. Contract very important.	Coach/owner hires all staff and sets business philosophy.	One man show for a small club or 2 coaches form a partnership. All profits (and losses!) are claimed on coach's individual tax return.
Parents' Role	Usually make up the BOD as officers – annual voting according to by-laws Business officer collects all fees and pays all salaries & bills. Coach may be on BOD with vote or ad-hoc with voice only.	Usually a booster club or a working committee structure lead by coach. Parents can form a separate non-profit 501c3 with coach on BOD as officer. The booster club can raise funds	Volunteer committees – no voice, no governance
Advantages	Fundraising may be tax-deductible for donors. Coach is employee. Finances are run through Board. Coach may have employee benefits	Corporation is liable Finances run through corp. not through coach's personal finances	Simplest form of a business. No IRS initial cost to form on www Coach is personally liable Finances tied directly to personal income tax, etc.
Disadvantages	Must have a BOD. Coach is paid employee of Board Harder for coach to set philosophy and mission	Fundraising may not be tax deductible to donor Legal requirements and paperwork to establish Coach is responsible for all aspects of business	Harder to get parent volunteers to support coach's personal business No employees - need to be independent contractors No tax-deductible fundraising opportunities – business strictly for profit.

**501.c.3** The head coach can be CEO of the club and president of the 501.C.3 Not for Profit Corporation. The coach cannot personally totally control or own this type of club. It is required by law to be board governed although the board does not have to be composed of parents. Family, friends and supporters can be the board members. However, the coach is still an employee of the board. Parents are also needed in voluntary positions even if they are not on the board. In some states the swim club as a 501c3 corporation does not automatically exempt them from real estate taxes. An attorney can guide you. While not for profits have their advantages, please keep in mind no one can personally own a not-for-profit 501.c.3 corporation.

**Sub-s or LLC (Limited Liability Corporation).** The coach is the CEO of the corporation. A separate 501c3 not for profit that acts as a booster board can be formed although it must have a stated purpose other than just to support the coach's for profit corporation! The for profit corporation contracts pool rental or owns the facility. The corporation can also hold a retail sellers license for swim shop related business, selling to the swimmers on the team.

**Sole proprietorship or partnership.** This is the simplest form of business to establish. There is no initial set-up cost; the business can be established online. However, all finances including profits and losses are tied to the coach's personal income and taxes. All risk and liability is assumed by the coach. This is not an advisable form of business for a coach who plans to grow into a large organization with multiple employees. In fact, in a sole proprietorship or partnership, employees must be independent contractors and meet the requirements associated with independent contractor status. Check with an attorney. It is also more difficult to entice parent volunteers since profits from their effort go to the coach's personal business rather than to the team general fund.

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## ***What is USA Swimming?***

USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for competitive swimming in the United States. USA Swimming was conceived in 1978 with the passage of the Amateur Sports Act, which specified that all Olympic sports would be administered independently. Prior to this act, USA Swimming was the Competitive Swimming Committee of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) located in Indianapolis, Indiana. USA Swimming Headquarters office was established in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 1981 and is located at the Olympic Training Center.

As the National Governing Body for the sport, USA Swimming is responsible for the conduct and administration of swimming in the United States. In this capacity, USA Swimming formulates the rules, implements the policies and procedures, conducts the national championships, disseminates safety and sports medicine information and selects athletes to represent the United States in international competition.

## ***How is USA Swimming Organized?***

**International** — The international federation for the aquatic sports is the Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA). USA Swimming is affiliated with FINA through United States Aquatic Sports (USAS), made up of the four aquatic sports – swimming, synchronized swimming, diving and water polo.

**National** — USA Swimming is a Group A member of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and has voting representation in the USOC House of Delegates.

**Zone** — We are divided into four separate zones – Central, Eastern, Southern and Western. Each zone elects two representatives to the national Board of Directors.

**Local** — Within the United States, there are fifty-nine (59) Local Swimming Committees (LSCs). Each LSC is responsible for administering USA Swimming activities in a defined geographical area and has its own set of bylaws under which it operates. A House of Delegates with representation of athletes, coaches, members of the Board of Directors and clubs is responsible for managing the business affairs of the LSC.

## ***How USA Swimming Operates***

USA Swimming is a non-profit organization made up of very dedicated volunteers. Interested individuals donate their time, energy and expertise at every level from the national Board of Directors to the local swimming clubs. There are 50 standing committees. Staff liaisons, along with these committees, create, implement and evaluate USA Swimming programs. The House of Delegates meets annually to determine the rules and regulations for the following year. Between yearly meetings of the House of Delegates, an elected USA Swimming Board of Directors is charged with the responsibility of making decisions for USA Swimming.

## ***USA Swimming Headquarters***

USA Swimming Headquarters provides a variety of services and programs for its membership. Among the many services are publications, educational programs, fund-raising activities, sports science programs, resources and general information about swimming related activities. The USA Swimming staff is available to assist you in answering questions or providing additional information about USA Swimming.

**USA Swimming**  
**1 Olympic Plaza**  
**Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5707**  
**Main: 719/866-4578**  
**Fax: 719/866-4669**  
**Website: <http://www.usaswimming.org>**



### Resources By Type

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### Knowledge Center

#### Q&As

#### How do we form a nonprofit organization?

#### Forming a Nonprofit Organization: A Checklist

Every nonprofit organization must have a carefully developed structure and operating procedures in order to be effective at fulfilling its purpose. Good governance starts with helping the organization begin on a sound legal and financial footing in compliance with the numerous federal, state, and local requirements affecting nonprofits.

- **Determine the purpose of the organization.** Every organization should have a written statement that expresses its reason for being. Resources: Board members, potential clients and constituents.
- **Form a board of directors.** The initial board will help translate the ideas behind the organization into reality through planning and fund-raising. As the organization matures, the nature and composition of its board will also change.
- **File articles of incorporation.** Not all nonprofits are incorporated. For those that do wish to incorporate, the requirements for forming and operating a nonprofit corporation are governed by state law. Resources: Your secretary of state or state attorney general's office.
- **Draft bylaws.** Bylaws — the operating rules for the board — should be drafted and approved by the board early in the organization's development. Resources: An attorney experienced in nonprofit law.
- **Develop a strategic plan.** The strategic planning process helps you express a vision of the organization's potential. Outline the steps necessary to work toward that potential, and determine the staffing needed to implement the plan. Establish program and operational priorities for at least one year. Resources: Board members; planning and management consultant.
- **Develop a budget and resource development plan.** Financial oversight and resource development (e.g., fundraising, earned income, and membership) are critical board responsibilities. The resources needed to carry out the strategic plan must be described in a budget and financial plan. Resources: financial consultant.
- **Establish a record keeping system for the organization's official records.** Corporate documents, board meeting minutes, financial reports, and other official records must be preserved for the life of the organization. Resources: Your secretary of state or state attorney general's office.
- **Establish an accounting system.** Responsible stewardship of the organization's finances requires the establishment of an accounting system that meets both current and anticipated needs. Resources: Certified public accountant experienced in nonprofit accounting.
- **File for an Internal Revenue Service determination of federal tax exempt status.** Nonprofit corporations with charitable, educational, scientific, religious, or cultural purposes have tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) — or sometimes section 501(c)(4) — of the Internal Revenue Code. To apply for recognition of tax-exempt status, obtain form 1023 (application) and publication 557 (detailed instructions) from the local Internal Revenue Service office

### Resources

- » [Tool Time](#)
- » [Women have the Edge](#)

### Products

- » [Fearless Filing: Conquering Form 990's Governance Questions - E-toolkit](#)
- » [Step-by-Step: New Board Member](#)

### Services

- » [Enjoy the Benefits of BoardSource Membership](#)
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office or from the IRS Web site [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). The application is an important legal document, so it is advisable to seek the assistance of an experienced attorney when preparing it. Resources: Your local IRS office, an attorney.

- **File for state and local tax exemptions.** In accordance with state, county, and municipal law, apply for exemption from income, sales, and property taxes. Resources: State, county, or municipal department of revenue.
- **Meet the requirements of state, county, and municipal charitable solicitation laws.** Many states and local jurisdictions regulate organizations that solicit funds within that state, county, or city. Usually compliance involves obtaining a permit or license and then filing an annual report and financial statement. Resources: state attorney general's office, state department of commerce, state or local department of revenue, or county or municipal clerk's office.

#### Other steps:

- Obtain an employer identification number(EIN) from the IRS
- Register with the state unemployment insurance bureau
- Apply for a nonprofit mailing permit from the US Postal Service
- Obtain directors' and officers' liability insurance

#### References

- BoardSource, *Starting a Nonprofit* (BoardSource 1999).



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**TABLE OF REMINDERS FOR REGISTERING YOUR NEW NONPROFIT**  
 (From Carter MacNamara, “Free Complete Toolkit for Boards”  
<http://www.mapnp.org/library/boards/boards.htm> )

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description of Activity</b>	<b>Done?</b>
Draft mission statement	Draft a brief mission statement that describes the charitable purpose of your new organization; your board should soon review it during strategic planning and authorize the statement	
Recruit board members	(If you plan to incorporate in your state) recruit at least enough board members to meet state requirements for a corporate board (contact state attorney's office); if you don't plan to incorporate, consider an informal advisory board to help guide you	
Get a lawyer	To help you file articles of incorporation (if you plan to incorporate), application to IRS for tax-exemption (if you plan to seek exemption from federal taxes); you can do most of the work yourself, but at least have a lawyer review the materials before submission; will eventually need special expertise to review personnel policies	
Get banker and bank account	Get a bank account; seek bank that understands needs of new, small nonprofit	
Get accountant	Get an accountant or other finance expert to help you set up basic bookkeeping system; when you get a board treasurer, then he/she can be very helpful in this regard	
Get insurance agent	You may need liability insurance, property insurance, and when you hire staff: worker's compensation, health and life insurance benefits, etc.	
Draft articles of incorporation and get board approval	These specify legal description of your organization and power to the board; you'll need to draft these only if you plan to file for incorporation with your state; the Board should approve the Articles before submission	
Draft bylaws and get board approval	These specify how the board will operate and configure the staff; some states require these; some of this information will be in the Articles if you file Articles; the board should approve the bylaws	
File for incorporation with state	Register for incorporation including submitting your drafted and approved Articles (if you plan to incorporate); may need to submit bylaws, too; also find out what various reports the state wants from nonprofits	
File for federal tax-exempt with IRS	Apply for tax-exempt status (to be exempt from paying federal taxes); board should approve this filing before submission;	
Get state tax exemption from state	Once you get IRS exemption, file for any state tax exemptions	
Get property tax exemption from city	Once you get IRS exemption, file for any state tax exemptions	
Get solicitation license	If you plan to solicit funds, your city may require a solicitation license	
Get mail permit	This permit gives you a discount on bulk mailings	
Get federal employer number	(Do this once you start to hire employees) get federal employer number to withhold income and FICA (once you hire employees)	
Get unemployment insurance	Do this once you start to hire employees	

Taken from the “Club Leadership Development Notebook” a publication from *BoardSource*. For more information about *BoardSource* write to 1828 L Street NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20036-5114. Telephone (202) 452-6262. Fax: (202) 452-6299, email: [mail@boardsource.org](mailto:mail@boardsource.org), website: <http://www.boardsource.org>. Copyright 2000. Used with permission.



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## CHECKLIST FOR STARTING A NEW CLUB

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1. Contact your Local Swimming Committee (LSC).
2. Download the Prospective Club Membership Booklet and the demographic questionnaire.
3. Pick a name for your club.
4. Secure pool time.
  1. Address important legal issues in pool contracts.
  2. Complete Facility Use Confirmation Form
5. Determine the structure of your club.
6. Secure necessary coach documentation including safety, education, background screening and athlete protection training.
7. Hire an attorney and accountant to guide you in the set-up of your legal and financial operations. (Secure a [Federal Tax ID number](#), set up a nonprofit or for profit business, sample bylaws, articles of incorporation, etc)
8. Meet with primary supporters and lay out your plans. Formally establish governing body.
9. Establish fees and budget.
10. Establish a safety action plan for each facility that is being used (including pools used for meets only). Familiarize yourself with risk management and insurance issues. (Safety/Loss Control Manual, Insurance Coverage FAQ.)
11. Establish training schedules, group requirements, team policies (Sample Club Handbook).
12. Hire, train, and be sure that all staff meet the requirements for coach membership in USA Swimming (coach safety, educational, and background screen requirements). Be sure to follow hiring practice guidelines established by USA Swimming.
13. Complete all paperwork required (listed below) for new club membership for the LSC and the USA Swimming National Office, submit paperwork with appropriate registration fee, and wait for approval.
  1. LSC application form
  2. Coach safety requirements
  3. Background screen requirements
  4. Coach education and Athlete Protection requirements
  5. Team Mission Statement
  6. Safety Action Plan
  7. First Year Budget or Business Plan
  8. Facility Use Confirmation Form
  9. Demographic Questions for New Clubs
  10. New Club Requirement Checklist
14. Schedule a USA Swimming [Club Leadership & Business Management School](#). This course must be taken before the club can renew their yearly membership.
15. Advertise, publicize and conduct tryouts.
16. Register all athletes with USA Swimming and conduct [Racing Start Certification](#) for all swimmers.
17. Dive in!

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**LIABILITY RELEASE AND INDEMNIFICATION FORM**

I, the undersigned participant and parent, request voluntary participation for minor to participate in all events, which are hereinafter referred to as the "activities." sponsored by \_\_\_\_\_ Club, USA Swimming and its local swimming committees. This agreement is valid while the participant is a member of USA Swimming.

I consent to my/minor's participation in the activities and acknowledge that the minor and I fully understand my/minor's participation may involve risk of serious injury or death, including losses which may result not only from my/minor's own actions, inactions or negligence, but also from the actions, inactions, or negligence of others, the condition of the facilities, equipment, or areas where the event or activity is being conducted, and/or the rules of play of this type of event or activity. I understand that if I have any risk concerns, I should discuss the risks associated with my participation with the activity coordinators and event staff, before I sign this document and before any activities begins.

**Release – Minor's Rights:**

In consideration of allowing Minor Participant to participate in the activities, I hereby release and hold harmless \_\_\_\_\_ Club, USA Swimming and its local swimming committee and their members of its board of directors, officers, employees, volunteers, other participants, and agents (collectively, the "Released Parties"), of and from, and do discharge and waive, any and all claims, demands, losses, damages, and liabilities that Minor Participant may have or sustain with respect to any and all damage and/or injury, of any type, arising out of his or her participating in the activities. I also agree that if any portion of this agreement is held to be invalid the balance, notwithstanding, shall continue in full force and effect.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name of minor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of minor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

**Release – Parents'/Guardians' Rights:**

In consideration of allowing Minor Participant to participate in this USA Swimming event, I hereby release and hold harmless the Released Parties, of and from, and do discharge and waive, any and all claims, demands, losses, damages, and liabilities that I may have or sustain with respect to any and all damage and/or injury, of any type, arising from Minor Participant's participation in the activities. I also agree that if any portion of this agreement is held to be invalid the balance, notwithstanding, shall continue in full force and effect.

I certify that my/minor is in good health and have no physical condition that would prevent participation in this activity. Furthermore, I agree to use my/minor's personal medical insurance as a primary medical coverage payment if accident or injury occurs. I consent to emergency medical treatment in the event such care is required.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name of Parent/Guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of parent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

**Indemnification by Parent/Guardian:**

The undersigned parent/guardian further agrees to indemnify, save and hold harmless the Released Parties from any and all claims, demands, losses, damages and liabilities for indemnities, contribution or otherwise with respect to any damage and/or injury, of any type, arising from Minor Participant's participation in the activities. The undersigned also agrees that this Release and Waiver of Liability, Assumption of Risk and Indemnity Agreement extends to all acts of negligence by the Releasee and is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by the laws of the State in which the Event(s) is/are conducted and that if any portion thereof is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name of Parent/Guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of parent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)





**LIABILITY RELEASE AND INDEMNIFICATION FORM FOR MINOR TRAVEL**

I, the undersigned participant and parent, request voluntary participation for minor to travel to and from USA Swimming events for the dates from \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

I consent to my/minor’s participation in traveling to and from USA Swimming events and acknowledge that the I fully understand my/minor’s participation in travel may involve risk of serious injury or death, including losses which may result not only from my/minor’s own actions, inactions or negligence, but also from the actions, inactions, or negligence of others. This includes all travel to and from the event arranged by USA Swimming, including but not limited to all transportation being plane, boat, train, van, car, airline and/or chartered plane paid either by the participant or travel paid or reimbursed by USA Swimming. I understand that if I have any risk concerns regarding travel, I should discuss the risks associated with my/minor’s participation with the activity coordinators and event staff, before I sign this document and before travel begins.

**Release – Minor’s Rights:**

In consideration of allowing Minor Participant to travel to and from USA Swimming events, I hereby release and hold harmless USA Swimming, members of its board of directors, and its officers, employees, members, volunteers, other participants, and agents (collectively, the “Released Parties”), of and from, and do discharge and waive, any and all claims, demands, losses, damages, and liabilities that Minor Participant may have or sustain with respect to any and all damage and/or injury, of any type, arising out of his or her travel to USA Swimming events. I also agree that if any portion of this agreement is held to be invalid the balance, notwithstanding, shall continue in full force and effect.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name of minor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of minor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

**Release – Parents’/Guardians’ Rights:**

In consideration of allowing Minor Participant to travel to and from USA Swimming events, I hereby release and hold harmless the Released Parties, of and from, and do discharge and waive, any and all claims, demands, losses, damages, and liabilities that I may have or sustain with respect to any and all damage and/or injury, of any type, arising from Minor Participant’s travel to and from USA Swimming events. I also agree that if any portion of this agreement is held to be invalid the balance, notwithstanding, shall continue in full force and effect.

I certify that my/minor is in good health and have no physical condition that would prevent traveling to and from any USA Swimming events. Furthermore, I agree to use my/minor’s personal medical insurance as a primary medical coverage payment if accident or injury occurs. I consent to emergency medical treatment in the event such care is required.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name of Parent/Guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of parent/guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

**Indemnification by Parent/Guardian:**

The undersigned parent/guardian further agrees to indemnify, save and hold harmless the Released Parties from any and all claims, demands, losses, damages and liabilities for indemnities, contribution or otherwise with respect to any damage and/or injury, of any type, arising from Minor Participant’s travel to and from USA Swimming events.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name of Parent/Guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of parent/guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)



**LIABILITY RELEASE AND INDEMNIFICATION FORM FOR TRAVEL**

THIS FORM IS APPLICABLE TO ALL ATHLETES OVER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN AND ALL ATHLETES OVER THE AGE OF NINETEEN THAT ARE RESIDENTS OF NEBRASKA AND ALABAMA.

I, the undersigned participant, request voluntary participation to travel to and from USA Swimming events for the dates from \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

I consent to my participation in traveling to and from USA Swimming events and acknowledge that the I fully understand my participation in travel may involve risk of serious injury or death, including losses which may result not only from my own actions, inactions or negligence, but also from the actions, inactions, or negligence of others. This includes all travel to and from the event arranged by USA Swimming, including but not limited to all transportation being plane, boat, train, van, car, airline and/or chartered plane paid either by the participant or travel paid or reimbursed by USA Swimming. I understand that if I have any risk concerns regarding travel, I should discuss the risks associated with my participation with the activity coordinators and event staff, before I sign this document and before travel begins.

**Release – Participant’s Rights:**

In consideration of allowing Participant to travel to and from USA Swimming events, I hereby release and hold harmless USA Swimming, members of its board of directors, and its officers, employees, members, volunteers, other participants, and agents (collectively, the “Released Parties”), of and from, and do discharge and waive, any and all claims, demands, losses, damages, and liabilities that Participant may have or sustain with respect to any and all damage and/or injury, of any type, arising out of his or her travel to USA Swimming events. I also agree that if any portion of this agreement is held to be invalid the balance, notwithstanding, shall continue in full force and effect.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name of Participant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Participant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)



**LIABILITY RELEASE AND INDEMNIFICATION FORM OF NON-MEMBER**

I, the undersigned participant and parent, request voluntary participation for minor to participate in the \_\_\_\_\_ activity on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) which begins at \_\_\_\_\_(time) and ends at \_\_\_\_\_(time) sponsored by \_\_\_\_\_ all of which are hereinafter referred to as the "activity."

I consent to my/minor's participation in the activity and acknowledge that the minor and I fully understand my/minor's participation may involve risk of serious injury or death, including losses which may result not only from my/minor's own actions, inactions or negligence, but also from the actions, inactions, or negligence of others, the condition of the facilities, equipment, or areas where the event or activity is being conducted, and/or the rules of play of this type of event or activity. I understand that if I have any risk concerns, I should discuss the risks associated with my participation with the activity coordinators and event staff, before I sign this document and before the activity begins.

**Release – Minor's Rights:**

In consideration of allowing Minor Participant to participate in this event, I hereby release and hold harmless \_\_\_\_\_ Club, USA Swimming, its local swimming committees and their members of its board of directors, officers, employees, volunteers, other participants, and agents (collectively, the "Released Parties"), of and from, and do discharge and waive, any and all claims, demands, losses, damages, and liabilities that Minor Participant may have or sustain with respect to any and all damage and/or injury, of any type, arising out of his or her participating in this USA Swimming event. I also agree that if any portion of this agreement is held to be invalid the balance, notwithstanding, shall continue in full force and effect.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name of minor) (Signature of minor) (Date)

**Release – Parents'/Guardians' Rights:**

In consideration of allowing Minor Participant to participate in this event, I hereby release and hold harmless the Released Parties, of and from, and do discharge and waive, any and all claims, demands, losses, damages, and liabilities that I may have or sustain with respect to any and all damage and/or injury, of any type, arising from Minor Participant's participation in this USA Swimming event. I also agree that if any portion of this agreement is held to be invalid the balance, notwithstanding, shall continue in full force and effect.

I certify that my/minor is in good health and have no physical condition that would prevent participation in this activity. Furthermore, I agree to use my/minor's personal medical insurance as a primary medical coverage payment if accident or injury occurs. I consent to emergency medical treatment in the event such care is required.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name of Parent/Guardian) (Signature of parent) (Date)

**Indemnification by Parent/Guardian:**

The undersigned parent/guardian further agrees to indemnify, save and hold harmless the Released Parties from any and all claims, demands, losses, damages and liabilities for indemnities, contribution or otherwise with respect to any damage and/or injury, of any type, arising from Minor Participant's participation in this event. The undersigned also agrees that this Release and Waiver of Liability, Assumption of Risk and Indemnity Agreement extends to all acts of negligence by the Releasee and is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by the laws of the State in which the Event(s) is/are conducted and that if any portion thereof is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name of Parent/Guardian) (Signature of parent) (Date)

Send completed Liability Medical Release form to:  
Risk Management Services, Inc.  
P.O. Box 32712  
Phoenix, AZ 85064-2712 or Fax to: (602) 274-9138



## VOLUNTEER LIABILITY RELEASE AND INDEMNIFICATION FORM

I, the undersigned volunteer, request to participate in the \_\_\_\_\_ activity on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) which begins at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) and ends at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) sponsored by \_\_\_\_\_ all of which are hereinafter referred to as the "activity."

In consideration of the opportunity afforded the volunteer to assist on a voluntary basis, the volunteer waives any right or cause of action arising as a result of participation in said event from which any liability may or could accrue against United States Swimming, Inc. dba USA Swimming, USA Swimming Local Swimming Committees, USA Swimming Member Clubs and USA Swimming Members (collectively, the "Released Parties"), including their respective officers, directors and employees.

The intent of this form is to be sure the volunteer(s) understand they are *not* covered by USA Swimming's accident insurance or workman's compensation insurance. If they are injured, they are responsible for their own medical expenses. They are also assuming the risk, and waiving claims arising from and agreeing not to sue Released Parties, as a result of any injury or damages they may suffer as a volunteer. The volunteer also agree that if any portion of this agreement is held to be invalid the balance, notwithstanding, shall continue in full force and effect.

### RELEASE

I consent to my participation in the activity and acknowledge that I fully understand my participation may involve risk of serious injury or death, including losses which may result not only from my own actions, inactions or negligence, but also from the actions, inactions, or negligence of others, the condition of the facilities, equipment, or areas where the event or activity is being conducted, and/or the rules of play of this type of event or activity. I understand that if I have any risk concerns, I should discuss the risks associated with my participation with the activity coordinators and event staff, before I sign this document and before the activity begins.

I certify that I am in good health and have no physical condition that would prevent participation in this activity. Furthermore, I agree to use my personal medical insurance as a primary medical coverage payment if accident or injury occurs. I consent to emergency medical treatment in the event such care is required.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name of Volunteer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Volunteer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)



## USA Swimming

### Safety Notice to All Member Clubs and Coaches

In its experience, United States Sports Insurance Company (“USSIC”) has observed that the greatest risk of serious head injury in swimming occurs in connection with teaching racing starts. In response, USSIC engaged Indiana University to conduct a racing start study. Several important observations from that study are:

- A swimmer who is told to dive straight down with arms at the side may well have sufficient head velocity at a six-foot depth to cause serious injury.
- Racing starts from the side of the pool are typically no more shallow than racing starts off the starting blocks.
- Experienced swimmers can always control the depth of their racing starts (unless they are trying a new technique). Most, but not all inexperienced swimmers can control the depth of their racing starts.

USA Swimming has taken the following steps in response to these observations:

- The American Red Cross Safety Training for Swim Coaches Manual and training course have been modified to emphasize the importance of appropriate safety measures in teaching racing starts, including the use of a proper progression for novice swimmers and the elimination of any technique that involves diving with arms at the side, over sticks, or through hoops, unless that technique is performed in a diving well. The revised version of the [Safety Training for Swim Coaches Manual](#) is now available. It can be found at [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org). (See Chapter 2: Head-first Entries and Racing Start Safety.)
- Effective May 1, 2009, USA Swimming’s Board of Directors has modified the racing start rule, 103.2.2 (which already provides that racing starts should only be taught in at least six feet of water) to further clarify that racing starts should only be taught under the direct supervision of a USA Swimming member coach, and to expand the definition of teaching racing starts to make clear that no swimmer who has not been certified as proficient by his or her coach should be performing racing starts into less than six feet of water (revised Rule 103.2.2 is attached).
- The certification process is described on the Racing Start Certification Checklist which was also approved by the Board. That document requires that for swimmers age 10 years and under or swimmers with less than one year of experience, the coach must certify that the swimmer has been trained according to the progression set forth on the form. (That progression is based on the revised Safety Training Manual). For older or more experienced swimmers, the checklist requires the coach to certify appropriate skill level based on the coach’s observation. The required certification is based on the coach’s professional judgment and must be recorded in writing for each swimmer. The Racing Start Certification Checklist and a FAQ document regarding that checklist are attached.



## **USA Swimming Safety Notice to Parents**

To avoid risk of serious injury, no swimmer who has not been properly trained should attempt to perform a racing start, from either a starting block or the side of the pool, into less than six feet of water.

USA Swimming has implemented a racing start certification program where a swimmer's coach documents his or her professional judgment that a swimmer has demonstrated sufficient skill to safely perform a racing start into four feet of water.

Although somewhat unusual, swimmers do not always participate in swimming competitions under the supervision of a certified coach. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure the swimmer does not attempt to perform a racing start in less than six feet of water if the swimmer has not been properly certified by the swimmer's coach to do so.



## Racing Start Certification Checklist

### Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why did the USA Swimming Board of Directors implement the Racing Start Certification Checklist?

Answer: The experience of the United States Sports Insurance Company (“USSIC”) and a recent racing start study commissioned by USSIC observe that teaching racing starts can potentially result in serious injury if not performed correctly. In response to these observations, the USA Swimming Board made changes to the existing six-foot depth rule for teaching racing starts. Those changes included making clear that the definition of teaching racing starts includes all racing start training until the swimmer’s coach certifies that the swimmer has the skill to perform a shallow racing start on demand into four feet of water. The Racing Start Certification Checklist establishes criteria for that certification.

2. What are the criteria for racing start certification?

Answer: In order for swimmers age 10 years and under and/or swimmers with less than one year of experience to be certified, the swimmer must have satisfactorily completed the racing start learning progression set forth in the [American Red Cross Safety Training for Swim Coaches Manual](#) also found on the Racing Start Certification Checklist. For swimmers age 11 and older with more than one year experience, certification is based on the coach’s observation that the swimmer is capable of safely controlling the depth of his or her racing starts. In all cases, the certification is based on the coach’s professional judgment—it is not and cannot be a guarantee.

3. What if a swimmer is certified at one club and then transfers to another?

Answer: The swimmer must be recertified at the new club.

4. Who is responsible for keeping copies of certification forms?

Answer: Each club is responsible for retaining, for three years, a certification form for each of its swimmers. There is no requirement that these forms be sent to an LSC or to officials responsible for any competition.

5. Does the certification process impose more liability on coaches?

Answer: No. A coach’s liability is already based on the coach’s exercise of good professional judgment in deciding whether a swimmer has the skills necessary to safely perform a racing start into less than six feet of water (including racing starts into the USA Swimming minimum starting depth of four feet). Certification simply documents that for each swimmer, such professional judgment was exercised. Similarly, coaches are also already responsible for following the progression set forth in the [American Red Cross Safety Training Manual](#) to teach racing starts to young or novice swimmers. Certification documents that the steps in the American Red Cross Safety Training Manual have been followed.



6. If a certified swimmer is injured while performing a racing start, will the coach be covered by USSIC insurance?

Answer: Yes, if the injury occurs in practice, at a sanctioned or approved competition, or at a closed competition. Competitions that are not an approved, sanctioned, or closed competition under the provisions of USA Swimming's Rules and Regulations have never been covered by USSIC. A coach who fails to follow the certification process will not be insured by USSIC in the event of injury.

7. Does the certification make a coach liable when a swimmer is injured performing a racing start at times other than under the coach's supervision?

Answer: No. To address the fact that swimmers may practice or compete outside the supervision of their coach, USA Swimming has prepared a Safety Notice to Parents, for posting at all member clubs. That Notice makes clear that it is the parents' responsibility to make sure that no child who has not been certified attempts to perform a racing start into less than six feet of water.

8. Are LSCs or meet officials responsible for checking that each swimmer participating in a competition has been safety certified?

Answer: No. It is the responsibility of the coach who is supervising his or her swimmers at a competition to use reasonable care to make sure that only swimmers who have been certified perform racing starts into less than six feet of water. It is the responsibility of the parents in circumstances where the coach is not supervising the swimmers.

9. Can swimmers who have not been certified still participate in swim meets?

Answer: Yes. However, they may not start from either a starting block or from the side of the pool and may start only from within the pool.

10. Where can I find information about teaching head first entry progressions and racing start safety?

Answer: The progressions are described with accompanying photos in the [American Red Cross Safety Training for Swim Coaches Manual](#). Access the Manual on the coach's tab at [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org). (See Chapter 2: Head-first Entries and Racing Start Safety.) The Red Cross Swimming and Diving Skills DVD includes a video of the progression.





### Racing Start Certification Checklist

Check the appropriate box as each step is satisfactorily demonstrated. Steps 1 through 5 are described with accompanying photos in the American Red Cross Safety Training for Swim Coaches Manual. Access the manual on the coaches' tab at [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org). (See Chapter 2: Head-first Entries and Racing Start Safety.)

**Step 1-5 must be observed by the undersigned coach for all swimmers with less than one year of competitive experience or who are 10 years of age or younger.**

Progression: The swimmer satisfactorily demonstrated the ability to safely enter the water using:

- Step 1: The sitting position
- Step 2: The kneeling position
- Step 3: The compact position
- Step 4: The stride position
- Step 5: A shallow head-first entry

**Step 6 must be completed by the coach for all swimmers, regardless of age or experience. Check either one of the boxes below depending on the age and experience of the swimmer:**

- For swimmers age 10 years and under and/or swimmers with less than one year of experience: The swimmer has satisfactorily completed the racing start learning progression and demonstrated the ability to safely execute a shallow racing start from a starting block.

**OR**

- For swimmers age 11 years and older with more than one year experience: Based on prior competitive experience, the swimmer is capable of safely controlling the depth of his or her racing starts.

Based on personal observation, it is the professional judgment of the undersigned coach that the swimmer identified below is capable of performing a shallow racing start on demand and can safely perform a racing start in four feet of water.






\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the Swimmer                      Age

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the Coach    (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Club Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Coach                      Date

- Record keeping options:
  - An individual form signed by the coach for each USA Swimming member athlete
  - An attached roster signed by the coach documenting each USA Swimming member athlete (sample attached).
- This document must be maintained on file with the club listed above for three years.
- Prior to teaching racing starts check and understand the local and state laws regarding water depth.
- Keep up to date on all USA Swimming rules and information in teaching racing starts.

<b>USA Swimming Racing Start Certification</b>						<b>Date Completed</b>
	<b>Step 1: Sitting Position</b>	<b>Step 2: Kneeling Position</b>	<b>Step 3: Compact Position</b>	<b>Step 4: Stride Position</b>	<b>Step 5: Shallow Dive</b>	

<u>Swimmer's Name and Age</u>	<u>Sitting Position</u>	<u>Kneeling Position</u>	<u>Compact Position</u>	<u>Stride Position</u>	<u>Shallow Dive</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
13	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
14	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
16	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
18	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Coach's Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Certifying Coach: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: This form must be attached to the signed Racing Start Certification Checklist (previous page).**



**SAFETY/LOSS CONTROL  
MANUAL**

**T**he information in this handbook comprises many different aspects of Risk Management. All information and guidelines may be adopted to meet the needs of your LSC or Club.

*Revised August 2009*

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## **CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW**

### **SECTION 1a. INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE**

---

This Guideline is a compilation of articles, ideas, and checklists. It is not, and cannot be, a cookbook for safety. By its nature safety is a goal. To achieve that goal requires work, knowledge and planning. This guideline is designed to help you by giving you ideas, helping you with concepts and describing tasks.

The objective of any athletic competition is to determine the winner. The goal of the athlete is to be that winner. The goal of safety is to have no injuries while you are competing towards that goal. By doing nothing, the athletes would compete without regard for the safety concerns that this guideline and the safety program seek to attain. We need to achieve the goal of winning without substantial risk to the athlete. That is the goal.

The program must be comprehensive. Safety covers all aspects of our sport. From the trip to the pool, to drying off in the locker room, to avoiding the human predators who prey on children. All of these are safety issues and sound risk management practices must be in place. Obviously, the safety person (coordinator or marshal) cannot be in all places at all times. A major part of safety is raising the safety awareness of the people in our sport. If everyone looks out for safety, we will be close to achieving our personal goal, allowing our athletes to perform without substantial risk of harm.

Most of our athletes are young. They are not of legal age to consent to risk, nor are they aware of all of the consequences of risky behavior. As adults we have a high goal of protecting the athlete from risks that are known and unknown and from dangers that are seen and unseen. These athletes are our charges. Success is more simply defined. As we leave the swimming venue we will be rewarded by the sight of joyful reunions of the athletes and their parents. If we see that every time, then we know our goal has been achieved.

### **SECTION 1b. WHAT IS USA SWIMMING AND THE SAFETY EDUCATION COMMITTEE?**

---

The Safety Education Committee is the volunteer arm of USA Swimming that reviews policies and procedures of USA Swimming for safety considerations. This committee reviews accident statistics and makes recommendations on training and activities for safety purposes.

#### **ACCIDENT STATISTICS**

At the national level, USA Swimming compiles statistics on accidents occurring throughout the organization. Through a national reporting network, USA Swimming is able to examine where accidents are happening, who is being injured and what are the causes. By analyzing this information, specific programs and recommendations may be developed to address real rather than perceived needs. Accurate and complete data are required for an effective risk management and safety/loss control program.

## WARM-UP PROCEDURES

As a result of targeted data, the organization is able to establish national standards and guidelines for safety. The first such program pivoted around consistent warm-up procedures. It became evident in 1985 that the warm-up period at USA Swimming sanctioned meets should be addressed. Warm-ups often took place in an unorganized, unsupervised manner. USA Swimming issued Warm-up Procedure Guidelines for adoption by local swimming committees. LSCs were asked to customize the guidelines into formalized procedures for use at local meets.

The success of the warm-up procedure program has been a positive step forward in ensuring the safety of all athletes at USA Swimming meets. Warm-ups are now supervised by marshals, athletes enter the water "feet first" to prevent diving accidents in unfamiliar water, racing starts are performed under regulated circumstances. USA Swimming is seeing fewer accidents in this period than before the procedures were initiated.

---

### SECTION 1c. SAFETY/LOSS CONTROL AND RISK MANAGEMENT DEFINED

---

**Risk** is the exposure to possible loss or injury. **Management** is the judicious use of means to achieve or accomplish an objective. The objective of risk management is to minimize loss and injury by all appropriate means. **Safety** is defined as freedom from danger, risk or injury. **Loss Control** is the methodology of creating a safe environment.

All of us in USA Swimming must be dedicated to the goal of athlete fitness and safety. A few conscientious coaches and volunteers will not alleviate risks if others shirk their duty. No other goal can be above safety. Concerns over times, meet profit, personal loyalty and team success cannot supersede safety.

It is unwise to continue any program or activity that cannot be operated safely. Past failure to have an accident does not provide a reason to continue with that which is known to pose a risk.



## CHAPTER 2: LSC SAFETY CHAIR

### SECTION 2a. THE ROLE OF THE LSC SAFETY CHAIR

---

It is the LSC Safety Chair's responsibility to promote safety throughout the LSC's swimming community and to promote safety as a part of the LSC philosophy. The LSC Safety Chair is the "point man" in the communication network between the national organization and the grassroots efforts. This individual contacts the National Headquarters with safety questions and concerns, relays policy decision to the LSC and directs the LSC's safety program. A strong leader in this position spells success for the LSC's overall safety program. Their various duties may include the following:

- Chair a committee that develops safety education programs for the LSC and makes recommendations to the LSC Board of Directors.
- Liaison between USA Swimming/LSC and club safety chairs.
- Responsible for providing reports of injuries within the LSC at each LSC Board and House of Delegates meeting as requested.
- Provides input and periodically reviews LSC warm-up guidelines.
- Responsible for arranging and/or conducting water safety training opportunities as needed in the LSC.
- Communicates regularly with Club Safety Chairmen.
- Contact USA Swimming, with knowledge of the General Chairman unless otherwise agreed to, with safety questions and concerns.
- Disseminates safety information and required forms to all member clubs, coaches and officials of the LSC.
- Provides information for compliance with USA Swimming National rules and LSC rules.
- Is committed to safety by periodically refining and reviewing the LSC safety programs and club level programs.
- Reviews completed Report of Occurrence forms, making suggestion on how to prevent re-occurrence.
- Promotes safety as a topic to be discussed at coaches and official's pre-meet meetings.
- Prepares and distributes facility checklists, safety checklists and emergency action plans to be used by clubs.

## CHAPTER 3: CLUB SAFETY

### SECTION 3a. THE ROLE OF THE CLUB SAFETY COORDINATOR

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Each USA Swimming club must designate a Registered Member of USA Swimming to be the Club Safety Coordinator. The Club Safety Coordinator, who could be the club's head coach or assistant coach, may be responsible for disseminating safety education information received from USA Swimming and the LSC to the club's athletes, coaches and other members and shall make recommendations to the club concerning safety policy and its implementation. The Club Safety Coordinator should make contact with the LSC Safety Chair and make any reports requested by the LSC Safety Chair.

A safety plan specific for each facility and phase of the program should be developed. In addition to reviewing the club's safety plan, the Club Safety Coordinator may be involved in pool inspections, help to identify dangerous conditions and implement processes to correct situations. The Safety Coordinator may also educate parents for the role of swim meet Safety Officer or Marshal.

The Club Safety Coordinator should be involved or aware of every accident involving any of the club's facilities or members. This person shall work with the coaches, parents, board, and meet management staff to promote the importance of the Report of Occurrence and ensure its timely completion.

### SECTION 3b. LEGAL ISSUES FOR USA SWIMMING CLUBS

---

Clubs have certain legal obligations and duties when joining USA Swimming to protect themselves, their members and USA Swimming from financial losses. Below are a number of items the club must be aware of. LSC Safety Chairs can disseminate and reinforce this information at all levels.

**Facility Contracts.** All member clubs that enter into contracts for the use of facilities owned by others must be careful with regard to the indemnity and hold harmless language that is used. In the insurance packet, there is a section on facility's contracts. The highlighted language is the important language to review.

**Club Organization.** Each club is an autonomous body organized and operated under the laws of its state. The officers should be sure that they are in total compliance with the laws of their state for their operation. This review would be valuable for protection of the officers and board members as well as the employees of the club.

**Compliance with USA Swimming Rules.** Each club has a legal obligation that, if it desires to remain in good standing within USA Swimming, it must comply with the rules and regulations of USA Swimming. These rules relate to sanction of meets, proper registration of coaches, implementation of safety programs, compliance with membership requirements and other obligations as set forth in the rules and regulations of USA Swimming. In particular, note that all athletes and all coaches must be USA Swimming members.

**SECTION 3c. LIABILITY PROVISIONS IN CLUB CONTRACTS**

---

Almost every USA Swimming member club is a party to a contract with an owner of a swimming pool, public or private. Almost all USA Swimming members, including LSCs and the national organization itself, will, at one time or another, enter into contracts for the use of a swimming venue for a meet or other authorized aquatic activity.

Such contracts will also contain language with regard to the liability of both parties during the use of the facility. The owner will usually include indemnification and hold-harmless clauses on liability for bodily injury and property damage resulting from the negligence of the USA Swimming member, its officers, agents and employees.

It will be impossible to avoid such releases or waivers couched in general language. The owners, or their attorneys, will insist on this.

However, it is extremely important that the USA Swimming member does not sign a contract containing language which indemnifies or exculpates (clears from alleged fault or guilt), the owner from liability for damages resulting from the negligence of the owner or its agents and employees. Such language may or may not be valid in your particular state. If it is, it is usually subject to strict construction.

If you are in doubt on this, consult an attorney in your own state and at the same time refer him/her to the General Counsel for USA Swimming.

**If you see the following language or anything similar to it, consult legal counsel at once before signing the agreement:**

**“Club (LSC) agrees to indemnify Owner against all liability loss, or other damage claims or obligations because of or arising out of personal injury or property damage, related to Club's use and occupancy of the premises, including that caused by the negligence of the Owner or its agents or employees.”**

**SECTION 3d. FACILITY AND EMERGENCY PLANNING**

---

Accidents seldom “just happen,” and many can be prevented. According to the National Safety Council, 85 percent of all accidents are preventable; accidents that might have occurred are prevented or reduced by those who develop and execute risk management plans and loss control programs.

**WHY HAVE A PLAN?** Accidental injuries in sports result in high dollar litigation, making attention to safety especially important. With a risk management plan and ongoing loss control activities, you will be taking a proactive approach to managing accidents. You will project an attitude that says:

- We are knowledgeable professionals
- We are concerned for your safety
- We will do what is necessary to provide a safe environment

A risk management plan is also extremely important in the event of legal action. A proactive program shows intent, and serves as a deterrent to legal action, but also acts as evidence of responsible care.

Other benefits include:

- Increased safety for all participants
- Reduced losses to USA Swimming
- High appeal of swimming to potential participants
- Easier monitoring of claims, losses and insurance coverage

**WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PLAN?** There is an old adage that states, “Everyone’s responsibility is no one’s responsibility.” There is irony in that statement when it comes to risk management, because for such a plan to work, everyone in the organization needs to be involved. No program of this nature can be successful without the complete cooperation and understanding of all members.

USA Swimming shows its commitment to safety and risk management in all areas of the organization. At the national level, USA Swimming has established the Safety Education Committee, a standing committee. This committee’s role is to determine the best method to develop and monitor a risk management plan and loss control program. Since this program began in 1984 as a task force, it has had a powerful impact on policies and procedures adopted within USA Swimming.

The Local Swimming Committee (LSC) and its Safety Chair play a vital role in risk management planning and safety/loss control execution. The Safety Chair generally has the most influence and control over habits and attitudes throughout the local area. The Chair is responsible for providing leadership in coordinating training and distributing information to all member clubs, coaches and officials in the LSC. A strong leader in this position will spell success for the LSCs overall safety program. To further be effective, the coach, Club Safety Coordinator, Meet Director, Referee and Safety Marshals are required to address safety where events are held.

To ensure that all swimmers are aware of the concerns for their safety, it is recommended that you seek their input. Encourage swimmers to discuss any area they perceive to be a problem so immediate corrective steps can be taken.

**DEVELOPING THE PLAN.** A risk management plan and loss control program should contain procedures in prevention, safety inspections, safety meetings, proper care of the victim and supervision of the facility. Every type of emergency that could occur should be considered when planning for emergencies. A detailed plan should be put in writing and thoroughly reviewed and practiced by all members involved.

The following points should be considered when developing a plan:

***Safety Rules and Regulations:*** You can assist in the safe operation of the program by establishing and adhering to rules and regulations. Facility and USA Swimming policies are designed to minimize the risk of injury.

Assemble all the safety rules and regulations pertaining to the facility and USA Swimming. Review all rules and regulations and the procedures used to enforce them. Post and/or publish appropriate rules and procedures, e.g., warm-up procedures. Review the facility's signage, including directional and warning, to see if it is adequate and meets current regulations.

***Supervision:*** Supervision provides the highest level of service, using only qualified leaders and volunteers in accord with the best standard of care possible. Coaches and meet marshals should be active in enforcing rules and regulations, such as the warm-up procedures. The Club Safety Coordinator can act as liaison between the club and facility manager in developing such plans. Continual communication between individuals will instill a quality program.

***Training:*** USA Swimming requires that coaches be certified in Safety Training for Swim Coaches, First Aid and CPR (see list of approved courses Section 5a). This training should be encouraged to all participants. Swimmers, officials and parents can support the program by receiving this training. Some LSCs have been very successful in developing a risk management seminar, similar to the one USA Swimming provides, for the clubs in their own LSC.

***Safety Inspections:*** The first step toward actively preventing injuries is to recognize potential hazards. This requires a systematic and routine method of inspecting the swimming facility. First determine what is to be inspected and how often. Then develop a series of checklists and establish a method of reporting faulty equipment or facility dangers. Follow up on its repair or replacement and be sure to remove or rope off any faulty equipment or dangerous areas.

***Emergency Procedures:*** It is important to construct a general plan that will help you handle emergencies. The key components of the plan will include:

***Communication System:*** How will you get the attention of others during an emergency? Where is the phone located? What numbers do you call?

***Rescue Equipment:*** Is rescue equipment easily accessible? Does everyone know how to use it? Is it adequate to meet the needs for the event being held?

***Accessibility of the Facility:*** Plan how the rescue personnel can enter the pool facility most quickly. If it is via a locked gate, who has the keys? Work with your local rescue personnel to do a dry run.

***Emergency Support Personnel:*** Who is expected to respond to an emergency? Have they been trained in CPR, First Aid, and Emergency Water Safety (Safety Training for Swim Coaches) skills?

Accident prevention begins with managing risks and implementing loss control programs at your facility as well as any activity that occurs in or around your facility. Develop a procedure for

handling different types of emergencies and adapt it to all settings.

***Incident Reporting:*** USA Swimming requires that incidents be reported on a Report of Occurrence form during all meets, practices or club functions.

---

**SECTION 3e. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION**

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CLUB SAFETY CHECKLIST (The following checklist may be adapted to meet the needs of your club.)

WHO: Club President, Safety Officer, and Coach

- A. Review all Facilities used by your club: Evaluation needs to key on areas of exposure and potential problems.
- B. In writing, describe areas of exposure and specifically address the preventive measures that will be taken.
- C. Assure that proper signs are posted-special attention to NO SMOKING and NO GLASS.
- D. Discuss where and if marshals will be needed and what are the areas of concern.
- E. Establish safe warm-up procedures including 3-point entry, equipment usage procedures, and dry-land training protocols.
- F. Establish a communication center-EMERGENCY PHONE CALLS IN AND OUT OF FACILITY!
- G. First aid kit is well stocked and available.
- H. Emergency medical cards are current and readily available.

---

**SECTION 3f. SAMPLE CLUB SAFETY MANUAL**

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The following document was designed by Eric Fucito, former member of the Safety Education Committee. It is a sample guide that may be used by clubs for a Club Safety Manual.

**{Insert Club Name Here}  
Club Safety Manual**

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION ..... 1**

**A. Approval Process ..... 1**

    1. Club Head Coach Approval ..... 1

    2. Club Board of Directors Approval ..... 1

    3. Facility/Owner Approval..... 1

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    2. First Aid Squads ..... 2

    3. Police..... 2

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**B. Facility Emergency Numbers ..... 2**

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    2. Chemical and Electrical Companies ..... 2

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**D. USA Swimming..... 3**

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    2. LSC Safety Chair ..... 3

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**I. Administrative Section**

**A. Approval Process**

1. Club Head Coach Approval

Final approval should be given to the Club Head Coach. Suggestions of what items to place in this manual should be taken from the coaching staff.

2. Club Board of Directors Approval

The Club Board of Directors should look over all areas of the manual for liability issues that would be associated with the club. The Board of Directors should only approve this manual with the endorsement of the Head Coach.

3. Facility/Owner Approval

The facility the club uses should be consulted on many of the areas in the safety manual because the facility has a major role in the implementation of all safety/emergency plans.

**B. Distribution Procedure**

This section should include a procedure on who would get the manual (i.e. all coaches) and also which parts should be distributed to whom.

**C. Maintenance**

1. Forms

A person should be designated to store all medical release and incident forms. The forms must be made readily available in the event of an incident. Also latest versions of the forms must be distributed to the proper persons.

2. Club Safety Manual

a) Items Needing Approval

This section should include a list of the sections that would need the approvals established in the previous section before distribution.

b) Non-Approval Items

This section should include a list of the sections that would not need any approvals before distribution.

## II. Legal Section

### A. State and Local Ordinances

List the State and Local laws that would affect your club or reference where the laws would be found.

#### 1. Equipment

##### a) Required

List all equipment that is required by law for the club or facility to maintain.

##### b) Optional

List all equipment that the club has that is not required by law.

## III. Maps

### A. Facility Layout

This section should include a map that would indicate various points of interest such as those listed below. Visualizing where these items or areas are makes access to the items or areas easier.

#### 1. Emergency Exits

##### a) EMT Entrances

Knowing where the EMT's would enter the building and the path that they would most likely take to get around the facility would alleviate delays in treatment of victims.

##### b) Evacuation Exits

Indicate where everyone would exit the facility in the event of an emergency.

#### 2. Emergency Equipment

##### a) Location of:

The following items are important to know the location of in the event of an emergency. You can expand the list to include items that you feel are important.

- (1) Pump Shut Off Switches
- (2) AED
- (3) First Aid Kits
- (4) Oxygen Tank

## IV. Contact Information

### A. Emergency Numbers

#### 1. Fire Department

This section should include a list the emergency and non-emergency numbers and physical location of nearest station. You could include directions from the club to nearest station.

#### 2. First Aid Squads

This section should include a list the emergency and non-emergency numbers and physical location of nearest station. You could include directions from the club to nearest station.

3. Police

This section should include a list the emergency and non-emergency numbers and physical location of nearest station. You could include directions from the club to nearest station.

4. Poison Control Center

This section should include a list of the emergency numbers of the local, state, and national centers.

- B. Facility Emergency Numbers

1. Aquatic and Facility Managers

List the names along with contact information and emergency contact information.

2. Chemical and Electrical Companies

- a) Emergency Numbers

- b) General Information Numbers

- C. Insurance Companies

List all communication information for USA-Swimming insurance company and clubs insurance companies.

- D. USA Swimming

List the contact information located on the incident report forms. Also list the staff persons name and number that would be assigned to insurance and safety.

1. Safety Education Committee Assignee

List all contact information.

2. LSC Safety Chair

List all contact information.

3. Area Club Safety Chairs

List all contact information.

- E. Club Communication

- a) Club Spokesperson

List the contact information and Emergency numbers.

- b) Parent Board of Directors

List the contact information and Emergency numbers.

- c) Club Parents Emergency Phone Chains

List the emergency numbers of each individual that participates. This could be used in the event of an emergency closing or inclement weather or last minute closings.

## V. Preventive Plans

- A. Spectator Designated Areas

1. Practice

Limiting the movement of people would reduce the risk of injury. Also could be affective in keeping a safe environment would be to not allow anyone except swimmers, and coaches on deck during practice.

2. Meets

Limiting the movement of people would reduce the risk of injury.

**B. Facility Inspection****1. Pre Practice/Meet**

A list of the areas and items to inspect prior to a practice/meet should be listed in a check sheet format.

**2. During Practice/Meet**

A list of the areas and items to inspect during a practice/meet should be listed in a check sheet format.

**3. Post Practice/Meet**

A list of the areas and items to inspect after a practice/meet should be listed in a check sheet format.

**C. Meet Safety Marshal****1. USA Swimming Rules and Regulations****2. Responsibilities**

This section should include the responsibilities of the safety marshal.

**VI. Emergency Plans****A. Facility Emergency Action Plan**

Plan what people should do in the event of an emergency at your facility. Some facilities would already have this in place.

**B. Facility Evacuation Plans**

Plan what people should do in the event of an emergency that would require an evacuation of the facility. Also design a plan that would evacuate on lookers from the scene.

**C. Facility Emergency Access Plan**

Have a plan in the event of an emergency that would tell people how to assist the EMT's by either directing them to a first aid designated area or by keeping areas clear for complete access.

**VII. Training Program****A. Coaches Safety Training****1. Certification**

Include the list of the current required courses.

**2. In-Service Training****B. Club Parents Safety Training****1. Board of Directors****a) Certification****b) In-Service Training****2. General Club Parents****a) Certification****b) In-Service Training****C. Facility Staff Safety Training****1. Facility Management****a) Certification****b) In-Service Training**

2. Lifeguards
    - a) Certification
    - b) In-Service Training
  3. Maintenance Staff
    - a) Certification
    - b) In-Service Training
- D. Contact Information  
Information about schools or instructors where certifications can be obtained.

## VIII. Forms

- A. Report of Occurrence Forms
  1. USA Swimming
    - a) How to Fill Out and Who to Send
    - b) Blank Forms
  2. Facility
    - a) How to Fill Out and Who to Send
    - b) Blank Forms
- B. Medical Release Forms
  1. How to Fill Out and Who to Send
  2. Blank Forms

## IX. References

- A. USA Swimming Website Links
  1. USA Swimming Insurance and Risk Management Website Link:  
<http://www.usaswimming.org> (click on Swim Clubs, then Club Operations, then Insurance/Risk Management and “articles and forms” link)
  2. USA Swimming Safety Education Website Link:  
<http://www.usaswimming.org> (click on Swim Clubs, then Club Operations, then Insurance/Risk Management and “Safety/Loss Control Manual” link)
- B. Other References  
Add to this section other references that you would need to refer to occasionally.

## X. Miscellaneous

Include in this section items that have no relation to any titles that you create but feel it would be important to have in this manual.

END SAMPLE CLUB SAFETY MANUAL

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**CHAPTER 4: WARMUP GUIDELINES****SECTION 4a. GUIDELINES FOR MARSHALS**

---

**USA Swimming rulebook:**

*102.18 MARSHALS- Shall wear identifying attire and enforce warm-up procedures and maintain order in the swimming venue. The marshal shall have full authority to warn or order to cease and desist, and, with the concurrence of the Referee, to remove, or have removed from the swimming venue anyone behaving in an unsafe manner or using profane or abusive language, or whose actions are disrupting the orderly conduct of the meet.*

**Responsibilities of Marshals could include:**

Marshals should arrive at the swim venue at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to the beginning of warm-ups. They should check in with the referee to receive instructions, i.e. where they will be positioned, special safety concerns for the meet, etc.

The head marshal should have a whistle. Marshals should be easily identifiable by a distinctive article of attire. (Hat, jacket, vest, etc.)

Warm-down areas must be marshaled throughout the meet.

Marshals must not leave the area until coverage is provided or until excused by the referee.

**Marshals duties could include:**

Making sure that swimmers behave in a safe manner. (No running, abusive behavior, etc.)

During general warm-ups, make sure that swimmers enter the water feet first from the starting end only and ease into the water. Swimmers should **NOT** be entering from the opposite end or sides of the pool during warm-ups. **ABSOLUTELY NO DIVING!!!!**

Be alert to dangerously overcrowded warm-ups and alert the meet referee or manager.

Notify the coach of any swimmer who is behaving/acting in an unsafe manner.

Use appropriate language. **NO POWER TRIPS, PLEASE.**

Your role is to help maintain a safe environment. **Please, Pay Attention!**

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**SECTION 4b. SAFETY PREPARATION AND PROCEDURES FOR MEET DIRECTORS**

---

The following are suggestions that should be taken to help minimize the risk of injury at a swim meet.

**Preparation**

- Contact the facility Manager
  - Make sure that the person you are talking to is the one in-charge of the facility
  - Have a meeting with the facility manager to discuss the following:
    - Local Emergency Numbers
      - Police
      - Fire
      - Rescue Squads
    - Support of the Facility Staff
      - Lifeguards
      - Security
      - Janitorial
    - Location of the Emergency Exits
    - Evacuation Procedure for the Facility
      - Evacuation to a secure Location Outside the Facility
      - Evacuation to a secure Location Inside the Facility
    - Facility Emergency Action Plan
      - How it Works
      - How the Meet Staff will fit into the Plan
    - Location of First Aid Treatment Area
    - Location of Emergency Equipment
      - Fire
      - AED
      - First Aid
    - Determine the Location of where Rescue Squads Enter Facility

**In the Event of an Emergency**

- Allow the facilities staff to do their jobs and follow what the facility manager advised you to do
- Seek the assistance of swim coaches and officials
- Make sure all coaches and officials are aware of the Emergency Exits
- Know how long it would take the Emergency Personal to arrive at your facility
- Remain calm and keep control of the situation as best as you can

## Crowd Control

(For further help please refer to: *The American Red Cross Workplace Training: Workplace Violence Awareness*)

- Always keep calm, listen attentively, and ask the person to sit down
- If someone is causing a disruption or you think they will have to potential to cause a disruption escort them to an area away from everyone else to discuss his issue in private
- Do not grab the disgruntled person
- Keep the established rules in mind
- Answer questions carefully and make sure your answers are consistent with the established rules
- If someone becomes violent GET AWAY FROM THE SITUATION and call the police
- Give the person options that are consistent with the established rules in solving the situation
- If someone has a problem with a particular rule explain how to properly get the issue resolved
- Remember you are not a POLICE officer
- Never use inappropriate language or raising your voice
- Remember some people will not agree with your decision or remedy
- Allow the person to express their opinion in a private area of the facility
- Never be in a room alone with a disruptive or potentially violent person

## Parking Areas

- Check to see if the facility that the venue is at requires you to staff for parking attendants
- Each one of the parking attendants should have a flashlight or something that will draw attention to themselves.
- Use safety cones or other types of equipment to block off areas where vehicles should not pass through or park.
- Each one of the Parking Attendants should have a flashlight or something that will draw attention to themselves.
- Have multiple Parking Attendants working the same area
- Remind Parking Attendant to **stay alert**



**CHAPTER 5: SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR COACHES****SECTION 5a. COACHES SAFETY CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

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**Coaches Safety Curriculum 2009-2010 Requirements and Equivalents *Rev. July 2009***

Effective since 1988, all coach members are required to fulfill safety training requirements as established by the USA Swimming Board of Directors. USA Swimming currently requires coach members to hold current certifications for the following: Safety Training for Swim Coaches, CPR, and First Aid.

For a complete list of the current Coaches Safety Education Requirements (CPR, First Aid and Safety Training for Swim Coaches) go to this link on the USA Swimming web site:

[Safety Education Certification Courses](#) (list of approved courses to choose from for coaches certification)

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**SECTION 5b. GUIDELINES FOR A SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

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The following suggestions are offered to first improve the overall safety of any sport situation, and secondly, to demonstrate the safety consciousness of those in charge. If you demonstrate that you are a reasonable and prudent individual who is doing all that is possible to ensure a safe environment, you have created the best defense for any lawsuit. You have demonstrated and proved that you care.

1. Start any program with the aspects of safety being paramount.
2. Develop a personal safety checklist.
3. Record everything - keep records of injuries, lesson plans, etc.
4. Obtain a team doctor to supervise games and, more importantly, to teach about safety. There must be a doctor in the community who's willing to give some time to kids. Someone needs to ask.
5. Go to clinics - especially attend instructional clinics on safety.
6. Require permission slips from parents to permit children to play. Explain the program to parents.
7. Seek outside information, such as speakers and written material. No matter how good you feel your program is, one can always learn.
8. Join professional coaching organizations. Because you belong to a volunteer organization doesn't mean you cannot seek information from other organizations.
9. Obtain insurance coverage and learn about the coverage.
10. Establish equal competition. The 90-lb. seventh grader should not be playing against the 140-lb. seventh grader.
11. Think safety for children first, last and always. Everything else is a distant second.
12. Be able to say no! Coaches too often are so motivated to see kids move, play and have fun that they neglect potential hazards. The bottom line is simple - place the safety and welfare of the child first and long before championship seasons, touchdowns or being able to say "We're number one!" Remember you are coaching kids, not small models of college or professional athletes. The more you show that you are a prudent, reasonable person, interested in the safety of the player more than records and championships, the less chance you have of being sued, and if sued, of defending yourself and your organization successfully. You are also taking care of kids, so they can play on and on and on.

**SECTION 5c. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COACHES**

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The primary responsibility for the safety of swimmers at practice or meets lies with the coach. The coach has the most time with the swimmers and has a responsibility to the swimmers. The coach must be constantly aware of the hazards posed by the pool environments, workouts, and the swimmer's curiosity and enthusiasm. The coach is also a primary role model and, as such, directly influences the attitude of the swimmer toward safety.

The coach is designing and supervising the workout, sets the tone of the workout. The coach's concern for his/her swimmers can be the basis for a safe workout. The coach's attitude and persistent insistence on a safe workout environment translates into a safety conscious swimmer.

No coach wants swimmers to get hurt. Coaches are personally concerned for their swimmers in the water and out. Swimmers are not just trainable athletes. They are young people reaching for their fullest potential at the pool at home and at school. Coaches know that swimming is major force in that development and that it should be positive.

Coaches also have a professional stake in their swimmers. The swimmers' progress toward swimming goals is a reflection of the coach's skill, training, and good planning. In order for swimmers to swim well they must train well. It is hard to train a swimmer to the fullest potential when that swimmer is limited by an injury.

It really doesn't matter where or how an injury occurs. An injury is a LOST TIME situation. The time lost is training time toward that big met. It is lost meet time. It is missing that all important meet, swim or cut.

Safety is the way to minimize that LOST TIME.

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**SECTION 5d. WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW - SAFETY ON THE POOL DECK**

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The following are things you should know around the pool deck. Your clear understanding of these and other safety issues not contained in this article will aid to the reduction in the risk of injury.

- **Health and Wellness**
  - Hyperventilation and Hypoxic Training
  - Exercise – Induced Asthma
  - Signs and Symptoms of Heat and Cold Emergencies
  - Diabetic Emergencies
  
- **Observing Swimmers**
  - Circle Swimming
  - Swimmer separation
  - Feet first entry
  - Use of Starting Blocks
  
- **Responsibility for Athletes and Club Behavior**
  - Sportsmanlike Conduct
  - Properly Certified
  - Only Swimmers and Coaches on Deck
  
- **Coaching Ethics**
  - Code of Conduct
  - Membership Responsibilities
    - Re-certification of Safety Courses
    - Membership Dues
  - Education
    - Safety
    - General Knowledge
      - Rules and Regulations
      - Swimming Skills

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**SECTION 5e. REVIEW BEFORE PRACTICE-REDUCE THE RISK OF INJURY**

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How safe are we? Reducing the risk of injury will make the area safer for our athletes and coaches. We suggest reviewing these and any other safety issues with your athletes prior to the beginning of a new season and throughout the season. This would only take a few minutes to remind the athletes and fellow coaches of the risks of injuries involved in this sport. We would suggest modifying this list to what your facility or athletes and coaches call for. Also preparing ahead of time will make the information that you will give clearer for the athletes and coaches to understand and comprehend. For further help with understanding these risks you can review the American Red Cross Workplace Training: Slips, Trips, & Falls.

**Risks of Slips, Trips, & Falls**

- Staying alert and aware of your surroundings
- Getting plenty of rest
- Managing stress
- The hazards of slippery surfaces
- Hazards of uneven surfaces
- Poor Lighting
- Bad Weather
- Not planning for enough time
- Carrying large or unbalanced or oddly shaped loads
- Dangerous Clutter
- Horseplay

**Shallow Water**

- Danger of diving into shallow water
- Feet first entries

**Starting Blocks**

- Loose grips
- Uneven platforms
- Other swimmers swimming towards you
- Other swimmers swimming in the entry area

**Swimming Etiquette**

- Safely Entering the Water (Feet First Entry)
- Circle Swimming
- Passing
- Finishes

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**SECTION 5f. HYPOXIC TRAINING**

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**Hypoxic Training and Hyperventilation**

*Coach Johnson's swimmers love contests. Their favorite is to see who can swim the farthest underwater. Recently, Michael swam about 40 yards underwater before surfacing. Coach Johnson keeps teasing Michael about "quitting" 10 yards from the end and telling Michael that he can make the entire 50 yards. Michael and some other boys are ready to try it. Coach Johnson tells Michael to take "a lot" of deep breaths before diving in so that he can "build up the oxygen in his blood." Michael inhales deeply about 10 times. He feels a little dizzy, but dives in and starts to swim underwater. He turns and starts back. Suddenly Coach Johnson notices that Michael is just lying on the bottom, not moving. He jumps in and pulls Michael to the surface. What did Coach Johnson do that was dangerous?*

Coach Johnson thought he was engaging his swimmers in a fun and challenging activity, but actually he was endangering them. Teaching the swimmers to hyperventilate before submerging was particularly risky. Contests to see who can swim underwater the farthest are very dangerous and should never take place.

**Hyperventilation** (rapid deep breathing) before prolonged underwater swimming is a dangerous practice that may result in drowning. Hyperventilation does not increase the amount of oxygen or allow the swimmer to hold his breath longer; it lowers the carbon dioxide level in the body. This is risky because the drive to breathe is controlled by the amount of carbon dioxide in the blood. When a person hyperventilates and then swims underwater, the carbon dioxide level in the blood can drop to a point where the swimmer passes out before the brain signals that it is time to breathe. Then, when the person finally does take a breath instinctively, water rushes in and the drowning process begins.

There is a difference, however, between having swimmers hold their breath while swimming under water versus an extended breathing pattern while swimming on the surface. There is no evidence that swimming without oxygen necessarily trains the anaerobic system; however, extending the breathing pattern while swimming on the surface may improve oxygen management capacity. This training technique of extending the breathing pattern should be monitored carefully and swimmers should be instructed to breathe when necessary. To prevent hyperventilation, have swimmers take only one, or at the most, two deep breaths before beginning hypoxic training. Hypoxic training (breathing on a restricted schedule) may be used safely in a training program of experienced swimmers in good physical condition with proper supervision and instruction. The number of repeats of hypoxic swimming should be limited. Adequate time for recovery will vary from swimmer to swimmer.

Information on additional practice methods, procedures and games for swimming practice is available at professional clinics held yearly by USA Swimming and ASCA. A listing of these clinics can be found on their Web sites.

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## CHAPTER 6: SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR ATHLETES

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### SECTION 6a. RISK MANAGEMENT

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The swimmer's safety is the first concern for coaches, administrators, officials and parents. All injuries especially lost time injuries affect success. Accidents happen, but effectively evaluating the risk and implementing safety/loss control programs the number and severity of those accidents should be diminished.

Athletes can become ambassadors for safety. They can become the eyes and ears for facility inspections. Through leadership, they can affect new members' attitudes. They can promote the safety message at home and among friends. Swimmers are an excellent resource for team safety development.

Young people tend to ignore their fallibility and think, "It can't happen to me." How can adults promote safety to this enthusiastic and energetic group of people? How can adults target areas of concern effectively for each age group? The best way to achieve a safe program is to build safety INTO the program. Keep it consistent and reinforce it continuously. Reward safe behavior and remind athletes of the consequences of acting unsafely.

For instance, meet warm-up procedures are designed with specific water entry rules at specific times. The first half is feet first (3 point) with racing starts permitted later. Correlate practice to meet warm-ups. If swimmers are habitually reminded to enter "feet first" during practice warm-ups, they will be conditioned to act the same way at a meet. Make it part of practice, be consistent, remind them and recognize their efforts to comply and safety will become a habit. Safety will become a habit in the same way that touching the wall with both hands in breaststroke does. Training works for strokes, it will work for safety.

"Walk the Talk!" Adults must avoid paying lip service to safety. Promote it because you believe in your swimmers. Remind yourself how important safety is: Look at your swimmers and imagine any one of them as a victim. How will that affect their season? How will it affect the team's success? The team's morale? The team's attitude? Think about those consequences and explain them to your swimmers. Ask them: What if Johnny, a member of your relay team, broke his arm two days before State? How will that affect him? How will that affect you? How will it affect our team?

Consequences are important concepts and athletes can understand them. Discussions led by coaches will be enlightening. The athletes can provide more actual examples of consequence than any database. Lead the thinking, develop the attitude and Walk the Talk. Safety can become a habit!! Make it one of yours!

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**SECTION 6b. PROFESSIONAL CARE FROM THE AGE GROUP PERSPECTIVE**

---

*By Debora Packard, Former Chair, USA Swimming Safety Education Committee*

**INTRODUCTION**

Everyone benefits from a safety conscious team. The purpose of teaching **safety awareness** to athletes is to **emphasize safe habits** and **teach accident prevention techniques** by providing the necessary tools and guidance.

Every age group has different characteristics and there are methods available that appeal to each one.

Team activities that can be used with every group include:

- Publish the rules and go over them with the swimmers
- Talk to the swimmers about safety with a question and answer period
- Give a safety survey to swimmers and discuss the results as a group
- Give safety tips to swimmers before, during and after practice
- Adopt a team safety motto
- Make safety posters around the safety motto and display them in strategic areas
- Include your safety motto in the team newsletter
- Keep records of accident free seasons, months, and weeks; offer a reward
- Designate an annual/seasonal Safety Awareness Week

**10 & Unders**

Children in this category enjoy compliments, games, coloring contests and immediate feedback. They live in the here and now, with a shorter attention span, and will need constant reminders about their actions. Adults and older swimmers are their yardsticks to measure acceptable behavior. This group is easy to teach safety skills to because they haven't yet developed long standing bad habits. They still try to please adults and aren't as influenced by peer pressure yet.

1. Reward safe behavior with a sticker, pin, etc.
2. Sponsor a Safety Poster or coloring contest
3. Have a safety scavenger hunt with a facilities checklist
4. Be consistent

**11-12-13**

This group is in a transition stage. They want and need to be treated like adults some of the time, but sometimes they want and need to be treated like children. They are testing and challenging limits constantly, trying to develop their personalities. Peer pressure is a strong factor with this group. They don't like to stand out in a crowd and common goals will be a key for effective safety education. Give them respect and don't talk down to them.



**14 & Older**

The team leaders. They believe they are invincible. They will prefer discussion over worksheets. There is still the factor of peer pressure with this group; they will be more selective about their friends. The coaches' attitudes are extremely important for this group. They will follow rules for the "sake of the younger children."

1. Give them leadership and responsibility
2. Make them part of the solution rather than part of the problem
3. Tell them that they are setting the standards
4. Assign them a younger swimmer or swimmers to help
5. Let them help write the rules, i.e.,:
  - How can we make this team safe for the little guys?
  - Can you think of a good game for the little guys?
  - What would you tell a little guy about racing starts?
  - Running around?
7. Make safety a priority
8. Be consistent

Coaches need to develop a **safe** philosophy and incorporate **safe** practices into the overall swimming program. This is easy to do with a **positive** attitude. If the coach is having fun with safety the kids will follow suit.

There are several benefits for a swimming club with a Safety Program in place:

1. A safety program will help increase membership because parents want and expect their children to be in a safe environment.
2. Community support and pool use opportunities increase because the various agencies are aware that risk is lowered through active involvement in a safety program.
3. Team spirit and camaraderie increase because swimmers have a common goal, (i.e., accident free seasons and the rewards that go with that).
4. Safety programs **do** reduce the risk of accidents and injuries! This reduces **lost time** for swimmers during a season, as well as fewer headaches for coaches.
5. A safety program will make the coaches' jobs easier.

**Guidelines for Safety Discussions**

- I. Why safety is important
  - A. Avoid accidents because...
    1. Injuries hurt
    2. Injuries cost money
    3. You will feel bad if you hurt someone else
    4. Injuries result in lost time from swimming

- B. You can have more fun being safe because...
  - 1. You are less likely to get hurt
  - 2. Your friends are less likely to get hurt
  - 3. Other kids, parents and coaches won't get mad at you
  - 4. You learn to avoid trouble
  - 5. There will be more time for play if no one gets hurt
  
- II. Safety Rules have a reason
  - A. Following rules makes good times better because...
    - 1. You know what is expected from you
    - 2. You might avoid an injury
  
  - B. Rules are made to protect you
    - 1. Imagine a world with no rules
      - a. It would be crazy
      - b. No one would know what is expected from them
      - c. You would have no protection from bullies
      - d. You would not be safe
    - 2. Imagine a swim meet with no rules
      - a. There would be running, pushing and fighting
      - b. There would be diving, jumping and horseplay everywhere
      - c. You might be the one to get hurt and have no protection
      - d. It would not be fun
    - 3. Rules are good for you
      - a. They make the world a safe place
      - b. They make swimming pools safer
      - c. They are not something the coach just likes to yell about
  
- III. Keys for safe swimming
  - A. Common Sense
    - 1. If it could hurt you or someone else, **don't** do it
    - 2. If you have doubts about the safety of an action, **don't** do it
    - 3. Think about the consequences or results of your actions
    - 4. Thinking ahead will help you avoid a bad situation
  
  - B. Courtesy
    - 1. Follow the "Golden Rule"
    - 2. Respect other people and their feelings
  
  - C. Commitment
    - 1. Practice safety everyday in everything you do
    - 2. Remind others about safety
  
- IV. Three rules to avoid accidents
  - A. Stop
    - 1. Stop and think before you act

2. Remind others about safety
- B. Look
1. Look where you are going
  2. Look up, down, and all around
  3. Look before you leap
  4. Look for dangerous areas
- C. Listen
1. Listen to your coach
  2. Listen to the officials
  3. Listen to your parents
  4. Listen to your conscience (no matter how tempting a situation may be, your conscience knows if it is dangerous)
- V. Safety considerations for pool areas and locker rooms
- A. Always walk
1. Do not play chase games (especially with younger swimmers)
  2. Pool decks and locker room floors are often wet and slippery
  3. You may slip and fall
  4. You might run into someone else
    - a. It will hurt you if you run into a bigger person
    - b. It will hurt a smaller person if you run over them
  5. You might trip or stumble into a wall or other object
  6. When you play chase, sometimes you don't look where you're going
- B. Be careful on stairs and bleachers
1. Use handrails all the time
  2. Stairs and bleachers are steep and gravity pulls you down **fast**
  3. Injuries from falls on stairs/bleachers can be extreme
  4. Multiple injuries can result from falls on stairs and bleachers
- C. Stay off starting blocks, diving boards, lifeguard stands, railings and other equipment
1. If you fall from a platform...
    - a. You could land on your head on concrete
    - b. You could land on a lane rope
    - c. You could land on a another person
    - d. You could break bones or teeth
  2. If you don't know how to use equipment properly...
    - a. You could fall off of it
    - b. You can be pinched or caught in pulleys and cords
    - c. You can damage your muscles, joints, and bones
    - d. You can lose an eye, a tooth, bloody your nose or get bruised by popping cords and pulleys
  3. Railings and walls are to be used as boundaries, not climbing equipment

- D. Stay out of the water until your coach or instructor is present
  - 1. You can get into water over your head
  - 2. No one could help you if an accident did occur
  
- E. Keep hands, feet, and other objects to yourself
  - 1. No pushing, hitting, shoving or tripping
    - a. Serious injury can result from falling into something
    - b. If someone is pushed into the pool, they can
      - (1) land on another swimmer
      - (2) hit a lane line
      - (3) hit the edge of the pool
      - (4) hit the bottom of the pool
  - 2. No snapping towels, caps or goggles
    - a. Black eyes, bloody noses and broken teeth are possible
    - b. Broken equipment can result
  - 3. No hitting or throwing kickboards, paddles, buoys or other equipment
    - a. Being hit with equipment hurts a lot
    - b. Equipment is hard and can cause gashes, black eyes, bloody noses and lumps
  
- F. Use plastic containers for shampoo, lotion, conditioner, soap
  - 1. Glass is slippery when it is wet
  - 2. If glass bottles shatter, sharp pieces will fly in every direction
  - 3. Someone may get hit in the face with flying shards
  - 4. Anyone can step on glass slivers which are hard to see
  
- G. Turn **cold** water on first in the shower
  - 1. You may be scalded by water that is too hot
  - 2. Being scalded can cause a reaction and you can fall
  
- VI. Safety rules while you are in the water
  - A. No dunking or splashing
    - 1. It causes choking
    - 2. It scares people
  
  - B. Stay in the area of the pool your coach or instructor tells you to
    - 1. If you flip over the lanelines, you can be run over by other swimmers
    - 2. You may get in front of someone who is jumping into the pool
  
  - C. While circle swimming, watch where you are going
    - 1. You can bump into someone else and both get injured
    - 2. You can catch yourself on lane lines
    - 3. You can run into the walls
  
  - D. Look below, into the water, **before** you enter the pool
    - 1. Enter the water **feet first** the **first time**
    - 2. Check the depth of the water

3. No diving
  4. Do **not** practice racing starts without coach's supervision
  5. Look for swimmers who may be doing backstroke starts
  6. **Always** look for other swimmers
- E. Leave candy, gum and food for after practice. They can choke you
1. Leave jewelry at home
  2. Rings, bracelets, earrings and other jewelry can catch on lane ropes which will wrench you
  3. Jewelry can gash other swimmers
  4. You may lose your jewelry

VII. Summary

- A. You can learn to be safe around the pool
- B. Look out for yourself and others
- C. Respect the rights and feelings of others
- D. Consider your own responsibility for a safe swim team
- E. Be safe, not sorry

**Questions for Safety Surveys** (add your own to the list)

**10 & Unders**

Do you know the safety rules?

If you pushed someone in the pool, what would you feel like?

What would they feel like?

Would you get in trouble?

What types of safety games do you like to play?

**11-12-13**

Why is safety important?

What can you do to prevent accidents?

Should you watch out for younger swimmers in practice and meets?

What would you do to avoid a dangerous situation, especially when your friends are doing it?

Is it hard to say no to your friends?

Can you make up a safety game for little kids?

What would you tell an 8 & Under if they were running in the locker room?

Have you ever had an accident around the pool?

**14 & Older**

Why is safety important?

What can you do to prevent accidents?

How would you make this team safer for the younger swimmers?

What would you say to a little guy getting into trouble?

What would you say to a 10 & Under hanging from the rafters?

Do you know of any games we can use for little guys?

## SECTION 6c .

## SUMMER SAFETY-PROPER PREPARATION AND TRAINING

*By Mike Stromberg, former member, Safety Education Committee*

With summer in full swing, summer safety items come to mind dealing with swimmers, coaches, volunteers and spectators at a swim practice or swim meet. Coaches, swim parents, volunteers, meet management and pool operators must develop an emergency action plan to deal with these items: Dehydration, sunburns, heat stroke/heat exhaustion, bee sting/insect sting, and severe weather. All these situations can change a fun meet or practice into a serious situation without proper preparation and training.

**Dehydration** is due to lack of fluid in the body. Drink plenty of water or fluids - at least eight glasses "non-caffinated" each day. This will help prevent ***dehydration***, which is caused by exposure to high temperature (indoor or outdoor), sun and wind.

**Sunburn** is caused by overexposure. Also, overexposure can cause many problems, sun poisoning, heat stroke, heat exhaustion and skin cancer. Each individual's tolerance depends on many factors such as skin type, length of exposure, family health history or use of certain medications. Even your facility's geographic location and altitude can effect your skin tolerance. You can help reduce exposure by wearing protective clothing or using sunscreen with a sun protection factor of at least 15.

**Heat exhaustion** typically occurs after long periods of exercise or work in a hot environment. It can even be brought on by sitting an extended period in a hot environment. There are simple signs to watch for; normal or below normal body temperature, the skin can be cool, moist, pale or red, headache or nausea, dizziness or weak and exhausted body.

**Heat stroke** is the least common but the most severe heat emergency. It often occurs when an individual ignores the signs of heat exhaustion. ***Heat stroke*** develops when the body systems are overwhelmed by heat and begin to stop functioning. This is a serious medical emergency. The signs and symptoms of heat stroke include red, hot, dry skin; changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid, shallow breathing.

*Care for heat exhaustion or heat stroke:*

1. Get the victim out of the heat.
2. Cool the body with cool, wet cloths, such as towels, and loosen tight clothing.
3. If the victim is conscious, give the person cool water.
4. Minimize shock.
5. Call **EMS** personnel immediately.

**Bee/ insect stings**, many stinging insects, such as bees or hornets are found around some outdoor aquatic facilities. The stings are painful, they are rarely fatal. Fewer than 100 reported deaths from

insect stings occur each year. Some people do have a severe allergic reaction to an insect sting that can result in a life threatening respiratory emergency. To care for an insect sting, check the sting site to see if the stinger is in the skin. If it is, scrape the stinger away from the skin with your fingernail or a plastic credit card. ***Do not remove the stinger with tweezers, since putting pressure on the venom sac can cause further poisoning.*** Wash the site with soap and water, cover it up to keep it clean and apply ice or a cold pack on the area (not on the bare skin) to reduce the swelling. Watch the victim for severe allergic reaction.

**Severe weather** is always a concern to everyone, especially during a swim meet. The weather system that concerns most aquatic facilities is lightning, which kills more people in this country than tornadoes, flood, or hurricanes. July and August are the months when most thunderstorm activity occurs. Each facility should have guidelines on when to clear the pool and seek shelter with an approaching thunderstorm. The following procedures are recommended by *American Red Cross Lifeguarding Today*:

1. When a thunderstorm threatens, clear the pool. If possible, get everyone indoors.
2. Keep everyone away from windows or other possible flying debris.
3. Do not let anyone take a shower during the thunderstorm.
4. Do not use the telephone except for emergencies.

In case of tornadoes, weather stations issue a tornado watch, which means that tornadoes are possible; or a tornado warning, which means that a tornado has been sighted and that everyone should take shelter immediately. Things to do during a tornado warning:

1. Stay away from all windows, doors, and outside walls.
2. Go to the location specified by the facility's emergency action plan. Possible sites are a basement or an interior area of the building like a hallway. The best is the communities designated tornado shelters if time permits.

In all the above cases, an emergency action plan must be in place to properly handle each situation and provide an outline to deal with each emergency. The coaching staff of the facilities must take the time to review the emergency action plan at their home pool, along with the meet management at a pool hosting a swim meet. Most of the information provided in this article is from the 1995 release of American Red Cross Lifeguard Today manual, an excellent source of information for everyone to read.

Have a fun summer and safe summer!

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**SECTION 6d. SAFETY TIPS WHEN TRAVELING AND STAYING OVERNIGHT**

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Many of you will be traveling with your teams to meets and staying overnight in motels or hotels. The following are some tips to help make your trips safe and enjoyable.

**Checking In**

1. Protect your name by not repeating it aloud.
2. Guard your room number.
3. Protect your key at all times. Do not lay it on restaurant tables or pool chairs where it can be stolen.
4. Place any valuables in the motel or hotel safe.
5. Never leave valuables in your vehicle in clear view of others--lock them in the trunk.
6. Keep your itinerary to yourself.

**Getting To Your Room**

1. Proceed to your room along with others in your party. There is safety in numbers.
2. Know the exact location of your room.
3. Beware of being followed.
4. Have your key ready and enter quickly.

**(Stairways, Stairwells and Elevators)**

1. Generally avoid stairwells. They are not meant for guests to move from floor to floor. They are intended for emergency uses. If you have to travel on the stairways, be aware of someone following you up the stairway.
2. When entering the elevator, stand at the controls. If you were to be attacked, you would want to hit as many floor buttons as possible to be able to escape or call for help. Do not hit the emergency stop button.
3. Another tip for using elevators is to enter last. That way you are not forced to be in the back if you feel threatened. Always notice who exits with you. If you do not feel comfortable, step back into the elevator and return to the lobby to report your suspicions.

**Entering Your Room**

1. Once at your room, open the door fully. Glance around to make sure you are alone.
2. Hold the door open with one of your bags while you do a quick safety check. Notice any potential hiding places.

**Secure Your Room**

1. Lock the door and keep them locked at all times.
2. Lock any adjoining room doors and secure all windows.
3. Check to make sure the telephone is in working order.
4. Note how to place outside calls in case you would need to call the police or fire department. You would not want to rely on others to summon help for you.
5. Do not answer the doorbell in a motel or hotel room without verifying who it is. If they say they are an employee, call the desk first to verify someone from the staff is to have access to your room and why.

**Returning To Your Room At Night**

Use the main entrance. Be observant and look around before entering parking lots.



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## CHAPTER 7: SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACILITIES

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### SECTION 7a. EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

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The following is from the American Red Cross Safety Training for Swim Coaches Manual: (All suggestions should be adapted to meet the needs of your club or LSC)

Various types of emergencies can occur at an aquatic facility, even at one that is well supervised. Handling these emergencies is the responsibility of everyone involved, such as lifeguards, coaches and facility management. Consequently, every facility should have written, practiced procedures that are specific to every potential accident or emergency. Any delay during an emergency situation can cause additional injury or death.

In the initial development of an emergency plan, the pool or facility management should consider every type of emergency, both life-threatening and non-life-threatening, that could occur at the facility. A detailed plan for emergencies should be put in writing in the operations manual for facility staff. The plan should be thoroughly reviewed and practiced regularly by all staff members.

Additional personnel who should be involved in the development and practice of emergency plans include local law enforcement and fire departments, EMS personnel, gas and power companies, water authority agencies and chemical supply companies. Each of these groups will have helpful information; methods and procedures can be updated.

#### **The following points should be considered when developing an emergency action plan:**

**Chain of Command:** The chain of command or table of organization should be included so that all persons clearly know and understand the lines and limits of authority and responsibility for their own position and those of others in the structure. This must be clearly understood by the coaches and all staff.

**Local Ordinances:** State or local ordinances should be checked. Facility standards, policies and procedures should be updated to coincide with all ordinances. This information can be obtained from health departments, police and fire department and local utility companies.

**Record Keeping:** Past records of injuries and emergencies should be reviewed and analyzed. These records will give insight into the causes of previous injuries and the action that was taken by the staff during these situations. Conditions such as weather, number of swimmers, number of coaches on duty and any other influencing factors should be considered. Action plans should be established for the most common possible injuries.

**Public Safety Personnel:** Public safety personnel should be consulted and involved in the development of emergency plans. Police, fire and EMS personnel can provide valuable information about response times, lines and limits of authority and the amount and types of assistance that are available and that may be needed. Emergency personnel who are expected to respond to a call from a facility should be given clear directions on how to find and approach the facility. The directions to the facility should be posted by the telephone,

enabling anyone to direct safety personnel to the facility. The participation of public safety personnel will help to establish a smooth transition process for the victim and all of the staff who are involved in an emergency.

**First Aid Area:** An area should be designated for first aid care for all victims of accident or illness. When there is no danger of causing further injury, victims should be moved to the First Aid area as soon as possible. The area should be as private as possible, with easy access for rescue personnel. The location of the first aid area should be known to all staff. All personnel and equipment that will be used in this area should be specified so that there will be no confusion during an emergency. This area should have clear identification, such as "Emergency First Aid Room."

**Equipment:** All rescue and first aid equipment should be inspected on a regular basis and should be easily accessible. Any piece of equipment that is not in good condition should be removed and repaired or replaced immediately.

**Emergency Procedures:** While a coach may be the first to respond to an emergency, assistant coaches, swimmers and lifeguards should have responsibilities in the event of an emergency. All appropriate staff, plus swimmers included in this plan, should rehearse the procedures at least once a month. Included in this plan should be determining the wind direction for appropriate evacuation upwind from chlorine gas at an outdoor facility.

Determination of wind direction by a quick glance at the backstroke flags will help in proper evacuation procedures.

Repetition develops confidence and the likelihood that procedures will be conducted competently. Coaches must remember that in all cases their main responsibility is the safety of the swimmers. They must remain calm in all situations and do what they are trained to do.

**Equipment Replacement:** The facility management should make arrangements to replace all equipment and material used during an emergency as soon as possible. For example, if a victim has a suspected spinal injury and is transported to medical care on the facility's backboard, a second board should be available.

**Reports and Records:** All injuries and rescues should be reported in writing. A system of records and reports should be developed, and every coach and lifeguard should be thoroughly trained in the proper procedures for filling out and filing occurrence reports.

**Spokesperson:** In case of emergency, the owner or operator of an aquatic facility should designate a mature person to be responsible for informing the victim's relatives and for providing information and news releases. This helps eliminate the possibility of misinformation about an injury to the swimmer or the cause of the accident.

**SECTION 7b. FACILITY SAFETY AUDIT**

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**Purpose:** To determine the potential for injuries due to facility conditions.

**Objectives:**

1. Assess overall condition of facility or locations.
2. To identify hazards that may cause or contribute to bodily injury or property damage.
3. Document concerns and make recommendations for corrections to property owner.
4. Document actions taken or lease conditions.

*Checklist on following pages....*

**Facility Safety Checklist**

	Yes	No	Action Taken	Date of Safety Check	Action Needed
<b>Deck Checklist</b>					
Safety equipment in good condition and available					
Rescue tubes and straps in good condition and available					
Backboards with head immobilizers and straps readily accessible					
First Aid station clean, supplies accessible and well stocked.					
First Aid equipment-AED and oxygen equipment accessible.					
Telephones working properly – emergency phone numbers posted and visible					
Rules posted and clearly visible					
Deck not slippery and in good condition – no raised edges, cracked tiles, etc.					
Deck clear of patrons’ belongings					
All equipment used by patrons stored properly					
Deck is clear of standing water					
Deck is not slippery					
Deck is clear of glass objects					
<b>Pool Checklist</b>					
Ladders secured properly					
Steps not slippery and in good condition					
Ramp not slippery and in good condition					
Lanelines attached properly and buoys intact – no sharp edges					
Water temperature in the pool meet the USA Swimming Regulation 103.7					
Pool depth markings/warnings are clearly visible					
Water color and clarity satisfactory					
Pool free of debris and drain cover secured					
Gutters cover intact and with no sharp edges					
Water chemical readings and circulation meet the local ordinance standards					
Starting blocks are anchored properly and secure					
Starting blocks starting surface – non slippery					
Starting blocks properly labeled or closed for warm-ups					
Backstroke flags at the correct distance and height					
<b>Locker rooms</b>					
All areas clean and free of algae					
Floors clean and not slippery					
Drains clean and wastebaskets empty					

	Yes	No	Action Taken	Date of Safety Check	Action Needed
<b>Locker rooms – continue</b>					
Lighting fixtures operate properly					
Drinking fountains and sinks clean					
Lockers/benches secured in place with no rough edges					
Toilets and urinals clean and operating					
Toilet and paper towels stocked and supplies available					
Locker rooms clear of glass objects					
<b>Recreational Equipment and Play Structures</b>					
Ladders to diving boards – Closed					
All play structures – Closed					
<b>Chemical Storage Areas</b>					
Chemicals stored properly					
Doors labeled properly					
Signs legible and in good condition					
Doors locked					
No suspicious odors					
<b>Other Areas of Concern</b>					
Pavements for walkways and parking lots are free of damage and/or deterioration that could lead to accidents resulting in an injury					
Lighting fixtures along walkways and in parking lots are operable					
Building exits are free of debris, permitting easy access and egress					
Fences and gates surrounding the facility are in safe and working order					
Entrances to the pool area can be locked to prevent access during non-operating hours					
<b>Emergency Plans</b>					
Facility Emergency Action Plan					
Facility Weather Action Plan					
Emergency equipment is readily accessible					
LSC Incident Report Form Available					
LSC Incident Report Form Has Been Completed and Filed					

A signature is required of one of the following:

Facility or Meet Director \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Referee \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Designated Safety Officer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**SECTION 7c. POOL-SPECIFIC FIRST AID KIT**

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A well-stocked first-aid kit, kept in easy reach, is a necessity in every facility. It is not difficult to put together a good first aid kit if you use a step by step approach. The items will fit into several categories (see below). You don't need a fancy container for your first-aid items – just make sure you will be able to find what you need without tearing the whole thing apart. Also, build into your step by step approach, a plan to restock the first-aid kit on a regular basis.

When deciding which products to put in your kit, think about where and how it will be used and by whom. A first aid kit for outdoor facilities would contain materials for the care of sunburn for instance.

Protecting yourself first is very important so the first item in your kit will be latex or vinyl gloves.

**Artificial Respiration:** If the victim is not breathing and you are going to do Artificial Respiration, you will want to protect yourself with a shield or a mask with a one way valve.

**Bleeding Control:** Something to absorb blood and perhaps to apply pressure is needed. It may be necessary to pull edges of a cut together. This can be done with a suture kit or a needle and thread or more simply by using a strip that will stick well to skin.

**Cleansing and Disinfecting:** Most injuries will not require pads or pressure dressings but they all must be cleaned to prevent infection. You will need some gauze pads for use with antiseptics. To prevent infection an antibiotic ointment is used.

**Dressing the Wound:** Some wounds are bigger than a bandaid would cover, so you will have to make your own. There are several different kinds of dressings available and a variety of shapes and sizes to cover most wounds.

**Care of Burns:** A burn is your flesh cooking and the first step in treatment is to stop that process as quickly as possible. Once that is done, the burn can be assessed. Plunging the area into icy cold water or Cold Spray or an instant cold pack are some ways to do this.

**Strains and Sprains and Splinting:** There is a variety of strains and sprains and a variety of products to deal with them. Tongue depressors make great splints for fingers.

**Care of Eyes:** An eye flush should be available in case something gets in someone's eye.

**Miscellaneous Items:** Ice packs, scissors, tweezers, blanket, flashlight, etc. are ideas of extra items in a first-aid kit.

*See following page for items in first aid kit.....*

**Suggested items for a first-aid kit:**

- first-aid manual
- sterile gauze (pads and roller)
- tape (adhesive, paper, plastic, etc.)
- adhesive bandages in several sizes
- elastic bandage
- butterfly bandages
- antiseptic wipes
- antibiotic cream
- antiseptic solution
- disposable instant ice packs
- plastic gloves
- mouthpiece for administering CPR
- blanket
- glucose tube
- tweezers
- scissors
- eye wash
- triangular bandage
- burn spray
- flashlight

## CHAPTER 8: OPEN WATER

### SECTION 8a. When You Train In The Lake Don't Miss The Boat

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*by Rick Walker, Open Water National Team Coach*

As more and more clubs, coaches and athletes are becoming aware of the benefits that Open Water training can provide, it is important that they also understand the hazards involved. As the Open Water season begins USA Swimming would like to inform you of certain precautions that should not be overlooked while training. Please read the following suggestions and have a great summer of training out of the pool so you can swim faster in the pool.

As a coach, you must first identify the factors that you will be dealing with so you will eliminate unforeseen risks. The known factors which are sometimes overlooked are: age, experience, physical ability, and athlete to supervisor ratio. It is important to understand that your athletes might be able to handle the distance going out, but may struggle coming back. If you are ill-prepared, you could find yourself and your athletes in trouble. Please make sure that you also have enough escort craft with you in a large group. If you have to stop for one athlete the other athletes will then be unattended. Should they need assistance they will be essentially alone. Keep in mind that going from yards to meters can be difficult because there are less walls, open water swimming has no turns and no lane ropes to hang onto. Make sure your athletes are prepared and know what to do when in trouble.

There are certain environmental factors that should be considered. As the Red Cross has always taught us never to dive into water which you can not see the bottom, so to should you never do an open water session without considering these factors: wind velocity, water and air temperature, dangerous marine life, cleanliness of water, visibility, water depth and currents, weather conditions, and floating object dangers. How many stories have we heard of being in a boat in the middle of a lake and a storm just blew up out of nowhere? This is one of the most dangerous of situations that can happen. If you are training near shore for most of your session you can avoid most of this risk. However, if you are swimming out and back, then please be aware of your weather conditions and swim back at the first sign of foul weather. When swimming in clear water, winds can often times kick up bottom soils and make things unclear. If you don't know what you're swimming in this can sometimes become a danger. The coach should have signals that will indicate to the swimmer when they need to look up or stop. This way the coach can stop an athlete before they run into a floating object or another boat.

While USA Swimming requires its coaches to know how to deal with aquatic dangers; the open water coach, whether they are heavily into it or not, should be aware of the risks and know how to respond to dangerous situations. Please read up on hypothermia, hydration, and deep water rescue. Knowing these safety measures will help to ensure your athletes safety. Under no uncertain terms should a group of swimmers be left unescorted. Know your craft and make sure you can handle emergency situations. If you are using a motor craft be sure to keep your distance, let no athlete swim from behind the craft, and always know where your athletes are during the swim. Open Water swimming is a great alternative to the boredom of training in the pool. It can literally bring back the enthusiasm of a program. Studies have shown that swimmers who have trained in open water show a higher level of aerobic conditioning and enter into aerobic energy systems quicker than a majority of the pool only swimmers. We have also seen tremendous positive crossover when swimmers return to the pool. Many clubs, colleges and universities use this as part of their pre-season and season preparation. USA Swimming wants to make sure you do it safe so you can keep on doing it. Don't let these guidelines scare you, let them prepare you. When swimming in open water you prepare accordingly. Have a great season and don't miss the boat!



**CHAPTER 9: MISCELLANEOUS/FORMS****SECTION 9a. BLOOD BORNE PATHOGENS**

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Aggressive treatment of open wounds or skin lesions should be followed. In particular, whenever a swimmer or any other person suffers a laceration or wound where oozing or bleeding occurs, the competition will be stopped at the earliest possible time and the swimmer or person should leave the pool or area and be given appropriate medical treatment. When it is deemed necessary by the meet referee (or his or her appointed person) a swimmer or any other person at a USA Swimming meet may be disqualified from further competition if bleeding or oozing cannot be controlled or wound covered appropriately.

**SECTION 9b. MISCELLANEOUS**

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**Resources for Risk Management Meetings:**

- USA Swimming Headquarters is there to support you and supply you with other information that can assist in planning and presentation. Call 719/866-4578 and ask for Member Services.
- Your local American Red Cross office is an excellent resource on many of these topics.
- Your own team is a source of information: coaches, parents involved in health and safety fields, or legal fields can help plan meetings.
- Community resources such as the pool staff, fire departments, medical, legal and risk management professionals are excellent resources.

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**SECTION 9c. RESOURCE LIST**

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**National Agencies:****American Red Cross National Headquarters**

Health and Safety Services  
8111 Gatehouse Road  
Falls Church, VA 22042  
Website: <http://www.redcross.org>

**OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration)**

(Domestic Only)  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Occupational Safety & Health Administration  
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20210  
Website: <http://www.osha.gov>

**USA Swimming Member Services Staff**

1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
Website: <http://www.usaswimming.org>  
Phone: (719) 866-4578

*Staff Contacts:*

*Safety Education Committee Staff Liaison – Carol Burch*

*Coaches Safety Education Certification Requirements -- Cathy Durance*

*Insurance/Risk Management Program Manager – Mary Illich*

**Risk Management Services, Inc. (*Insurance/Risk Management*)**

Post Office Box 32712  
Phoenix, AZ 85064-2712  
Phone: (800) 777-4930 (Sandi Blumit x12 or Eric Peterson x11)  
E-mail: [sblumit@theriskpeople.com](mailto:sblumit@theriskpeople.com) or [epeterson@theriskpeople.com](mailto:epeterson@theriskpeople.com)

**USA Swimming Safety Education Committee**

Allan Meier, Chair  
E-mail: [allan.meier214@gmail.com](mailto:allan.meier214@gmail.com)

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**SECTION 9d. FORMS**

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**REPORT OF OCCURRENCE FORMS**

How do USA Swimming and Risk Management Services, Inc. find out when an accident occurs? The Report of Occurrence form, supplied to all club and non-athlete members in annual membership mailings, is used for this purpose. Reporting all incidents, no matter how minor, is important to inform both USA Swimming and its insurer of accidents and potential claims.

As stated in the USA Swimming Insurance Summary, a Report of Occurrence form must be completed any time an accident occurs at a USA Swimming function, whether or not it involves a USA Swimming member. This form must be filled out and submitted regardless of how minor the accident may appear. Injuries involving spectators should also be reported. The form should be completed by the meet director/referee or club personnel responsible at the time of the incident; the parents of the injured athletes should not be asked to complete the report form.

Copies of the report should be sent to the following:

USA Swimming  
Attn: Risk Management  
1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
Fax: 719/866-4050

Risk Management Services, Inc.    Local LSC Safety Chair  
P.O. Box 32712  
Phoenix, AZ 85064-2712  
Fax: 602/274-9138

Once the report is received at USA Swimming National Headquarters, information about the incident is entered into the USA Swimming database for future safety education and insurance references. When a Report of Occurrence form is received, membership status is verified. If the participant is a USA Swimming registered athlete, information about the Excess Accident Medical Insurance policy and claim forms are sent to the injured party's family. In the case of a non-athlete member, claim forms are sent to the injured party. As a reminder, this is an excess accident medical policy. This program is secondary to other primary insurance in place through the member's employment, school or family. The deductible is the greater of the total of other collectible benefits from primary insurance sources applicable to the injury or \$100 of medical expense where there is no primary insurance.

The Report of Occurrence form helps Risk Management Services, Inc. to identify potential claims or liability situations. If the accident is of a serious nature, USA Swimming National Headquarters confers with Risk Management Services, Inc. and an investigation of the incident is initiated.

A copy of the report of occurrence form is attached. The form is also found on the website at: [usaswimming.org](http://usaswimming.org) then click on "Swim Clubs" and then click "Insurance/Risk Management."

USA SWIMMING - Report of Occurrence

(Circle one) Personal Injury/Property Damage

(Please Print Clearly)

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ LSC: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Club: \_\_\_\_\_

Injured:  Athlete  Coach  Official  Member/other: \_\_\_\_\_  Guest/Spectator  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Legal): \_\_\_\_\_ USA Swimming ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex:  M  F Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the incident occur?:  In Water  Deck  On Blocks  Locker Room  Bleachers  Hallway  Stairs

Gym  Outside Venue (List) \_\_\_\_\_  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Activity:  Meet/Competition  Meet/Warm-up  Meet/Warm down

Practice/Water  Practice/Dry-land  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility Name: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility Type:  Indoor  Outdoor

Describe the incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Affected Body Part (Specify R or L):  Head/Neck  Leg/Foot  Ears/Nose/Mouth/Teeth  Hand/Arm  Knees

Shoulder  Torso  Internal  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the Injury: \_\_\_\_\_

On Site Care Given by:  Coach  Parent  EMT/Paramedic  Facility Staff: \_\_\_\_\_

*name of person giving care*

Care Given on Site:  Ice  Immobilized  Bandage  Cleaned  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Care Refused by Injured:  Yes  No

If yes, Signature of Injured or of Guardian/Parents if under 18 yrs of age: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian notified:  No  Yes Comment? \_\_\_\_\_

Taken to Clinic/Hospital:  No  Yes If yes, location: \_\_\_\_\_

Please include names and phone numbers of two (2) witnesses: (If others, list on reverse)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Activity Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
*Please print Daytime Phone Evening Phone*

Report Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
*Please print Daytime Phone Evening Phone*

Date Report was submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Club Personnel/Club Safety Coordinator is responsible for returning completed form immediately following incident to:

USA Swimming and: Risk Management Services, Inc. and: LSC Safety Chairman

Risk Management Department P. O. Box 32712

1 Olympic Plaza Phoenix, AZ 85064-2712

Colorado Springs, CO 80909 FAX: (602) 274-9138

FAX: (719) 866-4050

Please attach any additional reports (facility reports, newspaper articles, witness statements).

## ***Important Legal Issues For USA Swimming Clubs***

Clubs have certain legal obligations and duties to protect themselves, their members and USA Swimming from financial losses. Listed below are several items the Club must be aware of.

1. **Facility Contracts**. All member Clubs that enter into contracts for the use of facilities owned by others must be careful with regard to the indemnity and hold harmless language that is used. In the insurance overview, there is a section on facility contracts. The italicized language should be reviewed.
2. **Club Organization**. Each Club is an autonomous body organized and operated under the laws of its state. The officers must be in total compliance with the laws of their state. This review is valuable for protection of the officers and board members as well as the employees of the Club.
3. **Compliance with USA Swimming Rules**. In order to remain in good standing, each Club has a legal obligation to comply with the rules and regulations of USA Swimming. These rules relate to sanction of meets, proper registration of coaches, implementation of safety programs, compliance with membership requirements and other obligations as set forth in the rules and regulations of USA Swimming. In particular, note that all athletes and all coaches must be USA Swimming members.

### **LIABILITY PROVISIONS IN CLUB CONTRACTS**

Many USA Swimming Member Clubs are party to contracts with owners of swimming pools, public or private. Almost all USA Swimming Members, including LSCs and the national organization itself, will, at one time or another, enter into contracts for

the use of a swimming venue for a meet or other authorized aquatic activity.

Such contracts also contain language with regard to the tort liability of both parties during the use of the facility. The owner/operator usually includes indemnification and hold-harmless clauses on liability for bodily injury and property damage resulting from the negligence of the USA Swimming Member, its officers, agents and employees.

It is impossible to avoid such releases or waivers couched in general language. The owners, or their attorneys, will insist on this.

However, it is extremely important that the USA Swimming Member does not sign a contract containing language that indemnifies or exculpates (clears from alleged fault or guilt), the owner from liability for damages resulting from the negligence of the owner or its agents and employees. Such language may or may not be valid in your particular state. If it is, it is usually subject to strict construction.

If you are in doubt, consult an attorney in your own state and at the same time refer him/her to Wells O'Brien, General Counsel for USA Swimming.

**If you see the following language or anything similar to it, consult legal counsel at once before signing the agreement:**

***Club (LSC) agrees to indemnify Owner against all liability loss, or other damage claims or obligations because of or arising out of personal injury or property damage, related to Club's use and occupancy of the premises, including that caused by the negligence of the Owner or its agents or employees.***



# Pre-Employment Screening Program Summary

## **General Information**

At the 2010 USAS Convention the USA Swimming House of Delegates approved a series of rules regarding the Athlete Protection Program. One of these measures was Article 502.6.8 which requires clubs to comply with USA Swimming's Pre-Employment Screening program. The new requirement is effective August 31, 2011. This document is intended to explain the new program and provide clubs with the information related to the pre-employment screening requirement.

## **Purpose**

Clubs are responsible for hiring and supervising their own coaches and staff, and managing their own volunteers. USA Swimming does not hire, supervise, or manage a club's employment relationship with its coaches, staff, or volunteers, as that is an independent responsibility of the club. The pre-employment screening program requires clubs to certify to USA Swimming that they have conducted certain pre-employment checks for covered individuals. Note that USA Swimming's Background Check Program is a criminal record search and is not a substitute for a club conducting appropriate pre-employment inquiries. Clubs should carefully check references and previous employers and verify information provided by the applicant using available screening resources.

## **Requirement**

Under Article 502.6.8 of the USA Swimming rulebook, all clubs are required to comply with the *USA Swimming Pre-Employment Screening Procedures for New Employees* for all new employees, hired after August 31, 2011, who are required to be USA Swimming members under Article 305.4 and 502.6.3.

## **Required Pre-Employment Screening Procedures**

This section describes the required components of the Pre-Employment Screening program. As a condition of membership in USA Swimming, member clubs are required to conduct the following pre-employment screens on their new employees who are required to be USA Swimming members by USA Swimming rules.

- 1) Past Employment Reference Checks or Verifications. Where there have been multiple employers, minimum of the 3 most recent employers.
- 2) Education Verification (highest held)
- 3) State Motor Vehicle Report Examination

The club should carefully review and evaluate the information gathered as part of making a final decision to offer employment to a candidate. The screening process should be completed before the employee is officially hired and begins employment.

## **Additional Recommended Screening Procedures**

In addition to the three screening procedures outlined above, the program originally approved by the Board of Directors includes some additional recommended screening procedures.

Implementation of the recommended pre-employment screening procedures is delayed until September 30, 2011 to give the USA Swimming Board of Directors a chance to review the entire program at the USAS Convention on September 13-17, 2011. Only the required screening procedures outlined in the previous section will be effective August 31, 2011.

## **Recommended Providers**

USA Swimming has identified three nationally-recognized companies that can assist clubs with fulfilling the requirements of the Pre-Employment Screening program. These companies are accredited consumer reporting agencies that have agreed to provide the required services at preferred pricing for USA Swimming clubs. In addition to providing the required services, these companies are able to assist clubs with fulfilling mandated employer obligations related to the screening process.

The three providers recommended by USA Swimming are:

- Acxiom (Cleveland, OH)
- BackgroundChecks.com (Dallas, TX)
- Frasco Profiles (Burbank, CA)

Although recommended by USA Swimming, clubs are not required to use these vendors as there are several options available for implementing the Pre-Employment Screening Program.

- 1) Clubs can choose to work with any of the three recommended companies;
- 2) Clubs may also utilize another consumer reporting agency of their choice; or
- 3) Clubs can use a provider to gather some of the information and rely on their own resources for gathering other information. For example, a club might choose to contact employment references themselves while utilizing a vendor to verify education and obtain a motor vehicle report.

To learn more about each company and their services, please view the PDF promotional flyers and/or the links to each vendor's website as provided on the Pre-Employment Screening landing page on the USA Swimming website. The USA-S website landing page link is: [www.usaswimming.org/preemploymentscreens](http://www.usaswimming.org/preemploymentscreens).

The provider link will take clubs to the vendor website and a special landing page for the pre-employment screening program. The vendor's landing page provides all necessary information and access to required forms for clubs to create an account and initiate service with that vendor. Regardless of what provider the club uses, USA Swimming is not a party to the relationship and, therefore, cannot be responsible for the services provided.

## **Cost**

The cost of the three required screening procedures – past employment reference checks, education verification, and state motor vehicle report examination – will include the provider's base fee for each service plus any additional fees charged by employment reference services, educational institutions, or states. The following chart provides an outline of the range of potential fees that clubs may pay for each candidate that is screened:

Employment References:	\$6.45 - \$6.95 provider fee plus \$0 - \$12.50 additional fee
Education Verification:	\$6.45 - \$6.95 provider fee plus \$0 - \$21.00 additional fee
Motor Vehicle Report:	\$1.95 - \$3.00 provider fee plus \$2.00 - \$15.00 state fee *

\*Three states – Hawaii, Oklahoma, and Rhode Island –charge higher fees for motor vehicle reports. In these states, the total cost could be higher than the range provided above.

For example , a club that chooses to use a provider to do an education verification and a motor vehicle report could pay about \$8.45 in base fees plus up to another \$36.00 in additional fees. Specific cost information is available on the provider landing pages.

## **Key Program Details**

- 1) The Pre-Employment Screening program requirement goes into effect on August 31, 2011. After that date, clubs must conduct the three required pre-employment screening procedures for all new employees who must be non-athlete members of USA Swimming.
- 2) Clubs are responsible for complying with applicable laws regarding obtaining an applicant's authorization to request information from various sources to evaluate their suitability for employment at the club. The recommended vendors will provide the necessary consent form.
- 3) In order to utilize screening services, clubs will establish an account with the screening provider of their choice. USA Swimming is not a party to these transactions.
- 4) Clubs are not required to use one of the recommended service providers.
- 5) Clubs are also not required to contract for services that they would rather perform themselves, but remain subject to applicable regulations governing certain data, such as motor vehicle reports.
- 6) The recommended companies will provide the required screening procedures 'a la carte.' Clubs can order the services of their choice from the vendor of their choice. The recommended companies also provide access to compliance information and federal- and state-mandated employer obligations.
- 7) As the employer, it the club's responsibility to evaluate the screening information and utilize that information to make a hiring decision that reflects the club's values and standards. USA Swimming does not mandate employment criteria, evaluate candidates or screening information under this program, or provide advice to clubs regarding their hiring decisions or supervision responsibilities.
- 8) In order to comply with the pre-employment screening program, a club representative must certify on the annual club membership application that the club is conducting pre-employment screening as required by Article 502.6.8 in the USA Swimming rulebook. Failure to certify and sign this section of the club application form will result in the club application being rejected.
- 9) As the employer, clubs may be subject to a variety of federal and state regulations governing the protection and maintenance of employee records. Clubs should consult human resource professionals to establish appropriate policies to safeguard employee records. Nothing in USA Swimming's program should be interpreted as a mandate or warranty in this area.
- 10) USA Swimming assumes no responsibility for a club's compliance with this rule or any applicable state, local, or federal duties relating to a club's status as an employer or supervisor of staff, coaches, or volunteers. Compliance with USA Swimming's Program is not a guaranty that a club's pre-employment screening is adequate or complete, and the obligation remains solely on clubs to screen, hire, supervise and manage its employees and volunteers, regardless of their additional status as USA Swimming members. USA Swimming is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.

## **For More Information**

Please refer to the *Frequently Asked Questions* available on the USA Swimming website at [www.usaswimming.org/preemploymentscreens](http://www.usaswimming.org/preemploymentscreens).

If you have additional questions after reviewing the FAQ document, please contact [preemploymentscreening@usaswimming.org](mailto:preemploymentscreening@usaswimming.org).

Created 8/30/11





## **Frequently Asked Questions** **Pre-Employment Screening Program**

**1) Is pre-employment screening required for all coach members?**

Yes. Effective August 31, 2011, clubs are required to conduct pre-employment screening on all newly-hired coaches. Existing USA Swimming coaches are subject to the pre-employment screening program when they seek employment at a different club.

**2) Are other club employees subject to the pre-employment screening requirement?**

Possibly. All club employees that are required to be non-athlete members of USA Swimming are subject to this screening requirement.

Article 305.4 of the USA Swimming rules requires that club employees who interact directly and frequently with athletes as a regular part of their duties must be non-athlete members. It is the responsibility of the club to self-determine which employees other than coaches interact directly and frequently with athletes as a regular part of their duties. Any new employee that the club determines must be a member of USA Swimming is subject to the pre-employment screening requirement.

**3) What constitutes a past employment reference check?**

A past employment reference check typically involves speaking to a former or current supervisor to gather information about the applicant's job performance, work ethic, personality and attitude. An attorney or local Chamber of Commerce, Better Business Bureau, or human resources organization, such as the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), can provide you with information about typical employer policies, practices, and obligations with regard to employment references. Information about reference checks is also available online, for example, through websites such as:

<http://www.bridgestar.org/Library/HiringToolkit/ReferenceCheck.aspx>

(Note: USA Swimming is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.)

**4) Can clubs fulfill the pre-employment screening requirements in-house or must they utilize the services of an outside vendor?**

Clubs are not required to use one of the recommended service providers. Clubs are also not required to contract for services that they would rather perform themselves. However, please note that federal regulations require employers to use a consumer reporting agency to acquire the state motor vehicle reports.

**5) Does USA Swimming require that the club contact all previous employers?**

Where there have been multiple employers, a minimum of the 3 most recent employers must be contacted.

**6) What is the purpose of the education verification and the motor vehicle record examination requirements?**

Education history is the most common falsified information on resumes and job applications.

A motor vehicle report examination is the best way to identify prospective employees with unsafe driving records. In some states, convictions for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs cannot be found on the criminal court record and can only be revealed

with a motor vehicle record examination. Reported information typically includes state of issuance, issue and expiration date, license status, and any accident or violation history.

**7) Are the staff members of a newly approved USA Swimming club subject to the additional screening requirements?**

Whether the new club is a newly created entity or an existing program choosing to join USA Swimming, any new employee that the club determines must be a member of USA Swimming is subject to the pre-employment screening requirement.

**8) What will clubs need to do to start working with a consumer reporting agency?**

In order to utilize the services of a consumer reporting agency, clubs will need to establish an account and provide the paperwork required by state and federal regulations. It typically takes 2 days or less to accomplish the account set-up.

**9) How will the required pre-employment screening information be reported by the consumer reporting agency to clubs?**

Typically, the consumer reporting agency will send an electronic report or the club can go online to a secured webpage to retrieve the information.

**10) Once ordered, how long will it take for clubs to receive screening reports?**

Once a club submits the necessary information to request screening services for an applicant, the club will usually receive all parts of the report within 2-5 business days. Clubs should check with the consumer reporting agency they plan to work with to find out their specific policies and practices with regard to this information.

**11) Will USA Swimming receive a copy of the screening information sent to the club?**

No. As the employer, clubs will contract directly with the consumer reporting agencies to provide pre-employment screening services. USA Swimming is not a party to this transaction and will not receive the screening information provided to clubs.

**12) How will USA Swimming monitor compliance with the pre-employment screening requirement?**

In order to ensure compliance with the pre-employment screening program, a club representative must certify on the annual club membership application that the club is conducting pre-employment screening as required by Article 502.6.8 in the USA Swimming rulebook. Failure to certify and sign this section of the club application form will result in the club application being rejected.

**13) Where do I go for more information?**

Please refer to the *Program Summary* available on the USA Swimming website at [www.usaswimming.org/preemploymentscreens](http://www.usaswimming.org/preemploymentscreens).

If you have additional questions after reviewing the *Program Summary*, please contact [preemploymentscreening@usaswimming.org](mailto:preemploymentscreening@usaswimming.org).

Created 8/30/11

**REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING BY  
MEMBER CLUBS ON NEW EMPLOYEES AND NEW VOLUNTEERS**

**As a condition of membership in USA Swimming, member clubs are required to conduct the following additional screens on their new employees who are required to be USA Swimming members by USA Swimming rules:**

1. Past employment reference checks or verifications (where there have been multiple employers, minimum of 3 most recent employers in the last 10 years);
2. Education Verification (highest held);
3. State Motor Vehicle Report;

**USA Swimming recommends that local member clubs conduct the following internal research into new employees who are required to be members by USA Swimming rules:**

4. Social Network Search;
5. Google Media Search.

**USA Swimming also recommends that local member clubs conduct the following additional screening on new employees who are required to be members by USA Swimming rules:**

6. Fingerprinting in any state which allows fingerprinting of individuals who will have oversight of children;

**USA Swimming further recommends that local member clubs perform the pre-employment screens described in paragraphs 1 through 6 above on all new volunteers who are asked to perform services for the clubs that require them to become members under USA Swimming Rules.**

Depending on the specific job to be performed by the employee or volunteer and the screening services that have already been completed, additional background screening may be appropriate in some situations (i.e. a credit report for a bookkeeper or a motor vehicle report for a volunteer who will be transporting athletes).

Amended by Board of Directors on 9-17-11



Home / Member Resources / Programs & Services / Safe Sport / Pre-Employment Screening / **Key Program Details**

## KEY PROGRAM DETAILS

- 1) The Pre-Employment Screening program requirement goes into effect on August 31, 2011. After that date, clubs must conduct the three required pre-employment screening procedures for all new employees who must be non-athlete members of USA Swimming.
- 2) Clubs are responsible for complying with applicable laws regarding obtaining an applicant's authorization to request information from various sources to evaluate their suitability for employment at the club. The recommended vendors will provide the necessary consent form.
- 3) In order to utilize screening services, clubs will establish an account with the screening provider of their choice. USA Swimming is not a party to these transactions.
- 4) Clubs are not required to use one of the recommended service providers.
- 5) Clubs are also not required to contract for services that they would rather perform themselves, subject to applicable regulations governing certain data, such as motor vehicle reports.
- 6) The recommended companies will provide the required screening procedures 'a la carte.' Clubs can order the services of their choice from the vendor of their choice. They also provide access to compliance information and federal- and state-mandated employer obligations.
- 7) As the employer, it the club's responsibility to evaluate the screening information and utilize that information to make a hiring decision that reflects the club's values and standards. USA Swimming does not mandate employment criteria, evaluate candidates or screening information under this program, or provide advice to clubs regarding their hiring decisions or supervision responsibilities.
- 8) In order to comply with the pre-employment screening program, a club representative must certify on the annual club membership application that the club is conducting pre-employment screening as required by Article 502.6.8 in the USA Swimming rulebook. Failure to certify and sign this section of the club application form will result in the club application being rejected.
- 9) As the employer, clubs may be subject to a variety of federal and state regulations governing the protection and maintenance of employee records. Clubs should consult human resource professionals to establish appropriate policies to safeguard employee records. Nothing in USA Swimming's program should be interpreted as a mandate or warranty in this area.
- 10) USA Swimming assumes no responsibility for a club's compliance with this rule or any applicable state, local, or federal duties relating to a club's status as an employer or supervisor of staff, coaches, or volunteers. Compliance with USA Swimming's Program is not a guarantee that a club's pre-employment screening is adequate or complete, and the obligation remains solely on clubs to screen, hire, supervise and manage its employees and volunteers, regardless of their additional status as USA Swimming members.



[usaswimming.org/protect](https://usaswimming.org/protect)

## **Protecting Athletes**

We believe that the experience of children and young athletes in all organized sports should be guided by what is best for the safe and healthy development of the young person. Young athletes who participate in organized sports activities have a unique opportunity for learning. In working with each child, it is essential that we are mindful of their physical, emotional, and developmental needs. We must also be particularly diligent in recognizing the unique vulnerabilities that are an inherent part of childhood. It is the responsibility of all adults to not only recognize these vulnerabilities, but to develop the knowledge and skills needed to create and maintain a safe and child-centered sports environment.

We recognize the important role that USA Swimming plays in providing leadership and creating an organizational culture that is focused on the safety and wellbeing of young people. The protection of children requires that all adults work together to support young athletes. As the child's first and enduring resource for safety, parents and guardians play a critical role in athlete protection. When parents participate they are able to help educate other adults about the needs of the child, and help prepare the child to participate in sports programs in a way that promotes safety, enjoyment, and learning.

Adults, including coaches, officials, staff, facility workers, volunteers, chaperones, and others who interact with children, are in also positions of great trust and influence. The ability to use this position of trust to support the well-being of children is critical. The overwhelming majority of these adults fulfill their roles in a positive and responsible manner. Nonetheless, we must also understand that a few adults may seek to use the trust and authority that comes with their access and status to take advantage of a child.

USA Swimming strives to continually improve the programs and services it offers to its members and among these some of the most important relate to the safeguards for protecting young athletes. Because we aspire to foster safe and positive environments within all our member clubs, we believe it is especially important to provide our member adult leaders with policies and best practice guidelines that help define elements of appropriate behavior and conduct.



[usaswimming.org/protect](http://usaswimming.org/protect)

## **Policies and Best Practice Guidelines for Athlete Protection**

In order to provide a positive experience and a safe environment for athletes, all non-athlete adult members of USA Swimming should maintain professionalism and avoid any appearance of impropriety in their relationships with athletes. Coaches, in particular, should recognize the influence, power and position of trust they have with athletes and should use these only in an athlete's best interest.

This document provides specific mandatory policies and best practice guidelines that are strongly recommended.

### **Policies**

**The following Policies from the USA Swimming Code of Conduct are mandatory for all USA Swimming members.**

#### **Article 304**

#### **USA Swimming Code of Conduct**

304.1 The mission of USA Swimming is to encourage participation and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of Swimming. USA swimming grants the privilege of membership to individuals and organizations committed to that mission. The privilege of membership may, therefore, be withdrawn or denied by USA Swimming at any time where USA Swimming determines that a member or prospective member's conduct is inconsistent with the mission of the organization or the best interest of the sport and those who participate in it.

In order to assist all members to better serve the interests of those who participate in swimming, USA Swimming has adopted this Code of Conduct.

304.2 Any member or prospective member of USA Swimming may be denied membership, censured, placed on probation, suspended for a definite or indefinite period of time with or without terms of probation, fined or expelled from USA Swimming if such member violates the provisions of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct, set forth in 304.3, or aids, abets or encourages another person to violate any of the provisions of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct.

**The following policies in the USA Swimming Code of Conduct Article 304 specifically pertain to Athlete Protection:**

304.3.4 Violation of any of the Athlete Protection Policies set forth in Article 305

304.3.5 Conviction of, imposition of a deferred sentence for, or any plea of guilty or no contest at any time, past or present, or the existence of any pending charges for (i) any felony, (ii) any offense involving use, possession, distribution, or intent to distribute illegal drugs or substances, (iii) any crime involving sexual misconduct, or (iv) any criminal offense against a minor.

304.3.6 Violation of the Sexual Misconduct Reporting Requirements set forth in Article 306.

304.3.7 Any sexual conduct, advance, or other inappropriate sexual oriented behavior or action directed towards an athlete by (i) a coach member or other non-athlete member, or (ii) any other adult participating in any capacity whatsoever in the affairs or activities of USA Swimming (whether such adult is a member or not). Any nonconsensual physical sexual conduct, or pattern of other sexual harassment in connection or incidental to a USA Swimming-related activity by any person participating in the affairs or activities of USA Swimming (Whether such person is a member or not) directed toward any member or other person participating in the affairs or activities of USA Swimming.



usaswimming.org/protect

- 304.3.12 Physical abuse of an athlete by any person who, in the context of swimming, is in a position of authority over that athlete.
- 304.3.17 Any other material and intentional act, conduct, or omission not provided for above, which is detrimental to the image or reputation of USA Swimming, an LSC, or the sport of swimming .

**The following policies related to Athlete Protection are mandatory components of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct:**

**Article 305  
Athlete Protection Policies**

- 305.1 Inappropriate touching between an athlete and an adult non-athlete member or Participating Non-Member (as defined in 401.1) is prohibited, including, but not limited to, excessive touching, hugging, kissing, sexually oriented behavior, sexually stimulating or otherwise inappropriate games, and having an athlete sit on a non-family member adult's lap.
- 305.2 Any rubdown or massage performed on an athlete by any adult member or Participating Non-Member, excluding the spouse, parent, guardian, sibling, or personal assistant of such athlete, is prohibited unless such adult is a licensed massage therapist or other certified professional. Any rubdown or massage performed at a swim venue by a licensed professional must be conducted in open/public locations and must never be done with only the athlete and licensed massage therapist in the room. Even if a coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach shall not perform a rubdown or massage of an athlete under any circumstances.
- 305.3 Use of audio or visual recording, including a cell phone camera, is not allowed in changing areas, rest rooms or locker rooms.
- 305.4 Employees and volunteers of USA Swimming, LSCs and member clubs who interact directly and frequently with athletes as a regular part of their duties and individuals with any ownership interest in a member club must be non-athlete members of USA Swimming and satisfactorily complete criminal background checks as required by USA Swimming. This does not apply to volunteers such as timers, marshals, computer operators, etc. who only have limited contact with athletes during a meet.
- 305.5 Travel
- A Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete).
- In order to clarify the intent of Article 305.5.A, the Board of Directors of USA Swimming, at its meeting on November 21, 2010, made the following interpretation:*
- For the purposes of Article 305.5.A, where an adult is registered both as a coach and an athlete member of USA Swimming, and is functioning primarily as a coach, he/she may share sleeping arrangements with another registered coach.*
- B Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check.



usaswimming.org/protect

- C When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have his/her parents' (or legal guardian's) written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach.
- D Clubs and LSCs shall develop their own travel policies. USA Swimming will provide a model club travel policy as an example. Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.

**The following policies related to sexual misconduct reporting are mandatory components of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct:**

#### **Article 306**

#### **Sexual Misconduct Reporting Requirements**

- 306.1 It is every member's responsibility to promptly report any incident regarding sexual misconduct by a member as described in Article 304.3.7 to USA Swimming's Athlete Protection Officer. Reporting must occur when an individual has firsthand knowledge of misconduct or where specific and credible information has been received from a victim or knowledgeable third party. Various state laws may also require reporting to law enforcement or to a designated child protection agency.
- 306.2 No member shall retaliate against any individual who has made a good faith report under 306.1.
- 306.3 False reporting of sexual misconduct made in bad faith is prohibited.
- 306.4 Neither civil nor criminal statutes of limitation apply to reports of cases of sexual abuse.

You can report one of three ways to the USA Swimming Athlete Protection Officer, Susan Woessner:

- 1) Online at [www.usaswimming.org/report](http://www.usaswimming.org/report)
- 2) Via email to [swoessner@usaswimming.org](mailto:swoessner@usaswimming.org)
- 3) Via phone at (719) 866-3589





[usaswimming.org/protect](https://usaswimming.org/protect)

## **Best Practice Guidelines**

**The following Best Practice Guidelines are strongly recommended for all USA Swimming members.**

1. Parents should be encouraged to appropriately support their children's swimming experience.
2. All swimming practices should be open to observation by parents.
3. Two-deep Leadership: One coach member and at least one other adult who is not in the water should be present at all practices and other sanctioned club activities whenever at least one athlete is present. Clubs and coaches should evaluate their seasonal plans and map out how to best accomplish this strongly recommended guideline.
4. Open and Observable Environment: An open and observable environment should be maintained for all interactions between adults and athletes. Private, or one-on-one situations, should be avoided unless they are open and observable. Common sense should be used to move a meeting to an open and observable location if the meeting inadvertently begins in private.
5. Coaches should not invite or have an athlete(s) to their home without the permission of the athlete's parents (or legal guardian).
6. During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and open and observable environments should be maintained.
7. Athletes should not ride in a coach's vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete, unless prior parental permission is obtained.
8. During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes they shall be of the same gender and should be a similar age. Where athletes are age 13 & Over, chaperones and/or team managers would ideally stay in nearby rooms. When athletes are age 12 & Under, chaperones and/or team managers may stay with athletes. Where chaperones/team managers are staying in a room with athletes, they should be the same gender as the athlete and written consent should be given by athlete's parents (or legal guardian).
9. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, at the competition the coach and athlete should attempt to establish a "buddy" club to associate with during the competition and when away from the venue.
10. Communications between non-athlete adult members and athletes should not include any topic or language that is sexual or inappropriate in nature.
11. Non-athlete adult members should respect the privacy of athletes in situations such as changing of clothes, showering, etc. Non-athlete adult members should protect their own privacy in similar situations.



[usaswimming.org/protect](http://usaswimming.org/protect)

12. Relationships of a peer-to-peer nature with any athletes should be avoided. For example, coaches should avoid sharing their own personal problems with athletes.
13. Coaches and other non-athlete adult members should avoid horseplay and roughhousing with athletes.
14. When a coach touches an athlete as part of instruction, the coach should do so in direct view of others and inform the athlete of what he/she is doing prior to the initial contact. Touching athletes should be minimized outside the boundaries of what is considered normal instruction. Appropriate interaction would include high fives, fist bumps, side-to-side hugs and handshakes.
15. Coaches should not initiate contact with or accept supervisory responsibility for athletes outside club programs and activities.
16. Coaches should not engage in sexual intimacies with a former athlete for at least two years after the cessation or termination of professional services.

Because sexual intimacies with a former athlete are frequently harmful to the athlete, and because such intimacies undermine public confidence in the coaching profession and thereby deter the public's use of needed services, coaches should not engage in sexual intimacies with former athletes even after a two-year interval except in the most unusual circumstances. The coach who engages in such activity after the two years following cessation or termination of the coach-athlete relationship bears the burden of demonstrating that there has been no exploitation, in light of all relevant factors, including:

1. The amount of time that has passed since the coach-athlete relationship terminated;
2. The circumstances of termination;
3. The athlete's personal history;
4. The athlete's current mental status;
5. The likelihood of adverse impact on the athlete and others; and
6. Any statements or actions made by the coach during the course of the athlete-coach relationship suggesting or inviting the possibility of a post-termination sexual or romantic relationship with the athlete or coach.
7. Both the athlete and the coach must be 18 years of age or older.

*Updated: 8 December 2010*

*V14*



## Model Travel Policies

### Introduction

As part of USA Swimming's enhanced athlete protection efforts, USA Swimming rules now require clubs and Local Swimming Committees (LSCs) to have published policies for team travel. Team Travel is defined as overnight travel to a swim meet or other team activity that is planned and supervised by the club or LSC. Club and LSC travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.

This document has been developed by USA Swimming's Club Development Committee to provide a tool that clubs and LSCs can use to create a customized set of travel policies that reflect the type of travel that is typical for that club or LSC. It provides a compilation of required and recommended policies as well as a bullet-point list of other policies used by clubs with experience conducting team travel.

The deadline that has been established for clubs and LSCs to adopt a set of travel policies is **December 31, 2010**. If a club or LSC chooses not to, or is unable to create a written and approved set of travel policies by that deadline, Sections 1 and 2 of the enclosed Model Travel Policies will become the default travel policies for that team or LSC. Once a customized set of policies is developed and approved by your club or LSC, the default policies will no longer apply. Each member club and LSC has the responsibility for approval and implementation of a set of travel policies by **December 31, 2010**. Please direct any questions you might have regarding the travel policy requirement to [athleteprotection@usaswimming.org](mailto:athleteprotection@usaswimming.org).

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### How to Use this Document

#### Travel Policies

As outlined in the "Contents" the segment on travel policies is divided into three parts. The first section provides specific policies that are required by USA Swimming rules. **The policies in Section 1 must be included in the travel polices developed by clubs and LSCs.**

The second section provides a selection of recommended travel policies. The first four policies are travel-related USA Swimming Best Practice Guidelines for Athlete Protection that are strongly recommended. The remaining items in this section are specific policies suggested by the Club Development Committee. In developing their travel policies, clubs and LSCs can choose to include and/or disregard any of the policies in Section 2. They may also modify these polices to address their preferences and specific needs. **The policies in Section 2 are not required, but they are recommended.**

The third section under travel policies is entitled “Other Policies to Consider.” This bullet-point list provides examples of additional policies used by some clubs and LSCs. It may include policies that clubs and LSCs choose to add or modify. The list may also spark ideas for other policies. **The policies provided in Section 3 are optional.**

### Code of Conduct

Although USA Swimming Rules require clubs and LSCs to develop travel policies only, **the Club Development Committee strongly recommends that clubs and LSCs also develop a general Code of Conduct that supplements the travel policies.** Behavior that is inappropriate and unwanted on travel trips would likely be inappropriate and unwanted at any time a team member is participating in practice, swim meets, and other team activities.

The Club Development Committee also strongly recommends that the USA Swimming Code of Conduct be part of the club or LSC Code of Conduct. A provision of the club or LSC Code of Conduct should reference the USA Swimming Code of Conduct. This practice will help ensure that USA Swimming members are familiar with the USA Swimming Code of Conduct. It is available on the web site in *About→Rules & Regulations*

### Related Documents

In developing this document, the Club Development Committee determined that it would be helpful to supplement Team Travel Policies and Codes of Conduct with other supporting documents. The Committee will provide the following related documents and post them in the “Sample Club Documents” section of the USA Swimming website as they become available. This section can be found at *Member Resources→Swim Clubs→Business & Administration*.

- 1) Other Travel Policy Considerations
- 2) General Swim Meet Policies
- 3) Medical Consent / Authorization to Treat Form
- 4) Medical Background Information Form
- 5) Chaperone Policies / Duties / Procedures
- 6) Permission to Participate Form
- 7) Waiver or Indemnification Form
- 8) Sample Travel Policies from other clubs

### Team Travel Policies

#### Section 1 - USA Swimming Required Policies

Club and LSC travel policies must include these policies. These items are Code of Conduct stipulations in the USA Swimming Rulebook.

- a) Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club. (305.5.D)
- b) Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check. (305.5.B)
- c) Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete). (305.5.A)
- d) When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have his/her parents’ (or legal guardian’s) written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach. (305.5C)

## Section 2 - Recommended Policies

These policies are recommended; they are not required. They may also be modified to address specific preferences or needs. Items a) through d) are travel-related recommendations taken directly from USA Swimming's Best Practice Guidelines for Athlete Protection.

- a) During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and open and observable environments should be maintained.
- b) Athletes should not ride in a coach's vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete, unless prior parental permission is obtained.
- c) During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes they shall be of the same gender and should be a similar age. Where athletes are age 13 & Over, chaperones and/or team managers would ideally stay in nearby rooms. When athletes are age 12 & Under, chaperones and/or team managers may stay with athletes. Where chaperones/team managers are staying in a room with athletes, they should be the same gender as the athlete and written consent should be given by athlete's parents (or legal guardian).
- d) When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, at the competition the coach and athlete should attempt to establish a "buddy" club to associate with during the competition and when away from the venue.
  
- e) To ensure the propriety of the athletes and to protect the staff, there will be no male athletes in female athlete's rooms and no female athletes in male athlete's rooms (unless the other athlete is a sibling or spouse of that particular athlete).
- f) A copy of the Club Code of Conduct must be signed by the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian.
- g) Team or LSC officials should obtain a signed Liability Release and/or Indemnification Form for each athlete.
- h) Team or LSC officials should carry a signed Medical Consent or Authorization to Treat Form for each athlete.
- i) Curfews shall be established by the team or LSC staff each day of the trip.
- j) Team members and staff traveling with the team will attend all team functions including meetings, practices, meals, meet sessions, etc. unless otherwise excused or instructed by the head coach or his/her designee.
- k) The directions & decisions of coaches/chaperones are final.
- l) Swimmers are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Swimmers are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, a restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.
- m) When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc. swimmers will stay in groups of no less than three persons. 12 & Under athletes will be accompanied by a chaperone.
- n) The Head Coach or his/her designee shall make a written report of travel policy or code of conduct violations to the appropriate club (LSC) leadership and the parent or legal guardian of any affected minor athlete.

### Section 3 - Other Policies to Consider

The following, organized by topic, is a bullet-point list of additional travel policies to consider. Teams and LSCs may want to utilize some of these policies based on their individual preferences and needs. A list of sample policies entitled "Other Travel Policy Considerations" is available on the USA Swimming website in the "Sample Club Documents Section" which can be found at *Member Resources* → *Swim Clubs* → *Business & Administration*.

#### Safety

- a) Additional guidelines to be established as needed by the coaches
- b) Supervised team room provided for relaxation and recreation
- c) Respect the privacy of each other
- d) Only use hotel rooms with interior entrances.
- e) Must wear seat belts and remain seated in vehicles.

#### Behavior

- f) Be quiet and respect the rights of teammates and others in hotel
- g) Be prompt and on time
- h) Develop cell phone usage guidelines
- i) Develop computer use guidelines including social media
- j) Respect travel vehicles
- k) Establish travel dress code
- l) Use appropriate behavior in public facilities.
- m) Establish two different curfews – in own rooms and lights out
- n) Must stay in assigned hotel room
- o) Needs and well being of the team come first

#### Financial

- p) No room service without permission
- q) Swimmers responsible for all incidental charges
- r) Swimmers responsible for any damages or thievery at hotel
- s) Must participate in contracted group meals
- t) Communicate travel reimbursement information and policies

#### General

- u) Establish trip eligibility requirements
- v) Establish age guidelines for travel trips
- w) Parent(s) responsible for getting swimmer(s) to stated departure point
- x) Requirements for families to attend "Team Travel Meets"

## **Code of Conduct / Honor Code**

The Club Development Committee strongly encourages teams and LSCs to create a Code of Conduct or Honor Code as a companion document to the team travel policies.

### **Required:**

- a. All team members, team staff, and parents of minors are apprised in writing of this Code of Conduct and the attached USA Swimming Code of Conduct. A signature on this document constitutes unconditional agreement to comply with the stipulations of both documents.

### **Recommended:**

- a. Team members will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrators, teammates, fellow competitors and the public at all times.
- b. Team members and staff will refrain from any illegal or inappropriate behavior that would detract from a positive image of the team or be detrimental to its performance objectives.
- c. The possession or use of alcohol or tobacco products by any athlete is prohibited.
- d. The possession, use, or sale/distribution of any controlled or illegal substance or any form of weapon is strictly forbidden.
- e. No “deck” changes are permitted. Athletes are expected to use available change facilities.
- f. Team members are reminded that when competing in meets, traveling on trips, and attending other meet-related functions, they are representing both themselves and the \_\_\_\_\_ program. Athlete behavior must positively reflect the high standards of the club (or LSC).

### **For consideration:**

- a. Failure to comply with the Honor Code as set forth in this document may result in disciplinary action. Such discipline may include, but may not be limited to:
  - i. Dismissal from the trip and immediate return home at the athlete’s expense
  - ii. Disqualification from one or more events, or all events of competition
  - iii. Disqualification from future team travel meets
  - iv. Financial penalties
  - v. Dismissal from the team
  - vi. Proceedings for a LSC or USA Swimming Board of Review
- b. Swimmers are to refrain from inappropriate physical contact at team activities and events.
- c. Swimmers are to refrain from use of inappropriate language.



## **USA SWIMMING NATIONAL OFFICE ATHLETE PROTECTION POLICY**

### **1.0 PURPOSE**

Our purpose is to implement and maintain a program that will enable the USA Swimming National Office to carry out its mission while safeguarding athletes against physical or sexual abuse.

### **2.0 APPLICATION OF THE POLICY**

The USA Swimming Athlete Protection Officer is responsible for the administration of, distribution of and training under this Policy.

All references to “employees” in this Policy refer to USA Swimming staff, paid by USA Swimming.

All references to “volunteers” in this Policy refer to individuals who are specifically appointed by USA Swimming to serve as volunteers in connection with the activities of the National Office who, in the opinion of the Athlete Protection Officer, are likely to have significant in-person interaction with swimmers.

This Policy is solely applicable to USA Swimming employees and defined USA Swimming volunteers. This Policy does not apply to Local Swimming Committees or member clubs.

No exceptions, changes or deletions can be made to this Policy without the prior approval of the USA Swimming Board of Directors.

### **2.1 POLICY OBJECTIVES**

2.1.1 PROTECT THE ATHLETES – The primary goal of this Policy is to reduce the risk of harm to athletes and provide a safe and secure environment for athletes participating in USA Swimming National Office activities.

2.1.2 PROTECT EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS - By implementing this Policy, we also reduce the risk of misunderstandings and false accusations against employees and volunteers.



### **3.0 WHAT IS ATHLETE ABUSE?**

3.1 Definition – A simple definition of athlete abuse is: Any non-accidental action that causes injury or harm to an athlete or otherwise violates USA Swimming’s Athlete Protection Policy (Article 305 of USA Swimming’s Rules) or Articles 304.3.4, 304.3.7, 304.3.8, 304.3.9, or 304.3.10 of USA Swimming’s Code of Conduct.

### **4.0 SCREENING AND SELECTION**

#### 4.1 Member Background Checks

All USA Swimming employees and volunteers shall be required to become members of USA Swimming and will therefore be subject to the criminal background check requirements of Article 502.4 of the USA Swimming Rules.

#### 4.2 Additional Criminal Background Checks

All USA Swimming volunteers and employees who, in the opinion of the Athlete Protection Officer, are likely to have significant in-person interaction with swimmers, shall be subject to the same additional criminal background check requirements as member coaches and officials.

#### 4.3 Additional Screening

New volunteers and employees covered by 4.2 above or existing employees and volunteers who are assigned to a new position where, for the first time, they will have significant in-person interaction with athletes, shall be subject to both the mandatory and recommended pre-employment screening requirements imposed on clubs before hiring of new club coaches. This information will be reviewed by the Athlete Protection Officer.

### **5.0 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

5.1 Reporting - All employees and volunteers have a responsibility to report actual or suspected athlete abuse involving any activity of the National Office. In addition, all employees and volunteers shall fully comply with the reporting requirements of Article 306 of the USA Swimming Rules.

5.2 How to Report - Should an incident of suspected or known athlete abuse arise, the employee or volunteer should immediately notify the Athlete Protection Officer, or in his/her absence, the Executive Director. A written report must be forwarded to the Athlete Protection Officer within 24 hours via fax or email. The Athlete Protection Officer will report all complaints involving sexual abuse of an athlete under the age of 18 to the police and will report other instances of athlete abuse as required by law.

5.3 Who Investigates? - No employee or volunteer should conduct any investigation or attempt to “solve the problem” independently. Investigations are to be handled by the Athlete Protection Officer and legal counsel.

### **6.0 ADMINISTRATION**

6.1 Athlete Protection Education - All employees and volunteers shall participate in USA Swimming's mandatory Athlete Protection Education Program.

6.2 Storage and Retention of Files - The Athlete Protection Officer will retain the pre-employment screen information of employees and volunteers who are subject to the requirements of paragraph 4.3 in secure corporate files as part of the permanent record. Such files shall not be shared outside of USA Swimming for any purpose, other than as required by law. Further, such files shall be treated as highly confidential within USA Swimming and shall be utilized only for appropriate purposes in accordance with this policy. Background check information for employees and volunteers will be maintained by USA Swimming's service provider.

6.5 USA Swimming National Office Athlete Protection Policy Inclusion – This Policy shall be included in relevant USA Swimming materials, publications and websites.

## For More Information

[usaswimming.org/protect](https://usaswimming.org/protect)  
or contact

Susan Woessner

Athlete Protection Officer

719.866.3589

[athleteprotection@usaswimming.org](mailto:athleteprotection@usaswimming.org)



**FOSTERING A SAFE AND  
POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT**

[usaswimming.org/protect](https://usaswimming.org/protect)

## FOSTERING A SAFE AND POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT



**A**t USA Swimming, we believe that all members should have the opportunity to participate and compete in a safe and healthy environment.

We can provide the best possible experience for our nearly 300,000 athletes and 12,000 coaches by encouraging all of our independent clubs to pay close attention to and follow USA Swimming's Athlete Protection Programming.

Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with these action steps so that your club can be as safe and healthy as it can be.

## WHAT CAN MY CLUB DO?

- Follow USA Swimming's Athlete Protection Policies**  
USA Swimming's Athlete Protection Policies are mandatory for all members. Communicate these policies to your athletes, staff, parents and volunteers.
- Abide by USA Swimming's Best Practice Guidelines**  
USA Swimming also offers "Best Practice Guidelines" for establishing healthy boundaries between adults and athletes. Become familiar with these Guidelines and be diligent in making sure your club follows them.

- Complete Your Pre-Employment Screening**  
Hiring individuals who will interact with athletes is a serious responsibility. Clubs are required to complete pre-employment screening on all new employees who have frequent and direct contact with athletes. These screens must be conducted through a USA Swimming-recommended provider starting Aug.31, 2011.
- Complete Your Education Requirements**  
Athlete Protection Education will be required of all non-athlete members before registration for the 2012 registration year. These courses will be available online beginning in 2011.
- Educate Your Members**  
USA Swimming will begin offering Athlete Protection Education to athletes and parents at no cost beginning in the spring of 2011. While education is optional for athletes and parents, you should encourage all of your members to become educated on this important topic.
- If in Doubt, Report**  
If you suspect abuse, or have specific and credible information about inappropriate behavior, it is your duty as a member of USA Swimming to report to USA Swimming's Athlete Protection Officer. You can report one of three ways:
  - 1 Online at [www.usaswimming.org/report](http://www.usaswimming.org/report)
  - 2 Via email to [swoessner@usaswimming.org](mailto:swoessner@usaswimming.org)
  - 3 Via phone at 719-866-3589

[usaswimming.org/protect](http://usaswimming.org/protect)



## USA Swimming Privacy Policy

Information concerning members of USA Swimming acquired during the registration process is the property of USA Swimming and its use is within the control of USA Swimming. USA Swimming strictly limits the use of member's personal information to that information necessary for the conduct of the business of USA Swimming and its LSCs.

To clarify the issue of publishing information regarding USA Swimming members by USA Swimming and its LSCs, the Board of Directors of USA Swimming has approved the following policy:

**The following information, and only the following information, shall be acceptable for publication in any form, including but not limited to the world wide web,** regarding any USA Swimming member without authorization from the athlete, if of majority; the athlete's parent/guardian, if a minor; or the non-athlete member:

name,  
age in years,  
club affiliation,  
time and place, and  
any awards or honors.

**Authorization to publish the contact information provided by the member (limited to name, address, telephone number(s), email address and fax number) is deemed given by any member serving USA Swimming, an LSC or a club member as an officer, Board member, committee member or designated club contact, and any Meet Referee or Meet Director with respect to any meet announcement wherein they have agreed to be so designated.** USA Swimming membership numbers may be published when done for data transmission only. USA Swimming membership numbers may not under any circumstance be published together with the name of the member or in a series of reports that when taken together will reveal the name and membership number of the member.

The foregoing policy shall be effective immediately. All LSCs need to review their publications and website to determine if there is any information published therein which is not permitted pursuant to this policy, such as member's address, telephone number, birth date or USA Swimming ID number. If prohibited information is published, the LSC needs to take steps to remove the information immediately.



## Model Travel Policies

### Introduction

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The third section under travel policies is entitled “Other Policies to Consider.” This bullet-point list provides examples of additional policies used by some clubs and LSCs. It may include policies that clubs and LSCs choose to add or modify. The list may also spark ideas for other policies. **The policies provided in Section 3 are optional.**

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Although USA Swimming Rules require clubs and LSCs to develop travel policies only, **the Club Development Committee strongly recommends that clubs and LSCs also develop a general Code of Conduct that supplements the travel policies.** Behavior that is inappropriate and unwanted on travel trips would likely be inappropriate and unwanted at any time a team member is participating in practice, swim meets, and other team activities.

The Club Development Committee also strongly recommends that the USA Swimming Code of Conduct be part of the club or LSC Code of Conduct. A provision of the club or LSC Code of Conduct should reference the USA Swimming Code of Conduct. This practice will help ensure that USA Swimming members are familiar with the USA Swimming Code of Conduct. It is available on the web site in *About→Rules & Regulations*

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### Team Travel Policies

#### Section 1 - USA Swimming Required Policies

Club and LSC travel policies must include these policies. These items are Code of Conduct stipulations in the USA Swimming Rulebook.

- a) Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club. (305.5.D)
- b) Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check. (305.5.B)
- c) Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete). (305.5.A)
- d) When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have his/her parents’ (or legal guardian’s) written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach. (305.5C)

## Section 2 - Recommended Policies

These policies are recommended; they are not required. They may also be modified to address specific preferences or needs. Items a) through d) are travel-related recommendations taken directly from USA Swimming's Best Practice Guidelines for Athlete Protection.

- a) During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and open and observable environments should be maintained.
  - b) Athletes should not ride in a coach's vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete, unless prior parental permission is obtained.
  - c) During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes they shall be of the same gender and should be a similar age. Where athletes are age 13 & Over, chaperones and/or team managers would ideally stay in nearby rooms. When athletes are age 12 & Under, chaperones and/or team managers may stay with athletes. Where chaperones/team managers are staying in a room with athletes, they should be the same gender as the athlete and written consent should be given by athlete's parents (or legal guardian).
  - d) When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, at the competition the coach and athlete should attempt to establish a "buddy" club to associate with during the competition and when away from the venue.
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- e) To ensure the propriety of the athletes and to protect the staff, there will be no male athletes in female athlete's rooms and no female athletes in male athlete's rooms (unless the other athlete is a sibling or spouse of that particular athlete).
  - f) A copy of the Club Code of Conduct must be signed by the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian.
  - g) Team or LSC officials should obtain a signed Liability Release and/or Indemnification Form for each athlete.
  - h) Team or LSC officials should carry a signed Medical Consent or Authorization to Treat Form for each athlete.
  - i) Curfews shall be established by the team or LSC staff each day of the trip.
  - j) Team members and staff traveling with the team will attend all team functions including meetings, practices, meals, meet sessions, etc. unless otherwise excused or instructed by the head coach or his/her designee.
  - k) The directions & decisions of coaches/chaperones are final.
  - l) Swimmers are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Swimmers are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, a restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.
  - m) When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc. swimmers will stay in groups of no less than three persons. 12 & Under athletes will be accompanied by a chaperone.
  - n) The Head Coach or his/her designee shall make a written report of travel policy or code of conduct violations to the appropriate club (LSC) leadership and the parent or legal guardian of any affected minor athlete.



### Section 3 - Other Policies to Consider

The following, organized by topic, is a bullet-point list of additional travel policies to consider. Teams and LSCs may want to utilize some of these policies based on their individual preferences and needs. A list of sample policies entitled "Other Travel Policy Considerations" is available on the USA Swimming website in the "Sample Club Documents Section" which can be found at *Member Resources* → *Swim Clubs* → *Business & Administration*.

#### Safety

- a) Additional guidelines to be established as needed by the coaches
- b) Supervised team room provided for relaxation and recreation
- c) Respect the privacy of each other
- d) Only use hotel rooms with interior entrances.
- e) Must wear seat belts and remain seated in vehicles.

#### Behavior

- f) Be quiet and respect the rights of teammates and others in hotel
- g) Be prompt and on time
- h) Develop cell phone usage guidelines
- i) Develop computer use guidelines including social media
- j) Respect travel vehicles
- k) Establish travel dress code
- l) Use appropriate behavior in public facilities.
- m) Establish two different curfews – in own rooms and lights out
- n) Must stay in assigned hotel room
- o) Needs and well being of the team come first

#### Financial

- p) No room service without permission
- q) Swimmers responsible for all incidental charges
- r) Swimmers responsible for any damages or thievery at hotel
- s) Must participate in contracted group meals
- t) Communicate travel reimbursement information and policies

#### General

- u) Establish trip eligibility requirements
- v) Establish age guidelines for travel trips
- w) Parent(s) responsible for getting swimmer(s) to stated departure point
- x) Requirements for families to attend "Team Travel Meets"

## **Code of Conduct / Honor Code**

The Club Development Committee strongly encourages teams and LSCs to create a Code of Conduct or Honor Code as a companion document to the team travel policies.

### **Required:**

- a. All team members, team staff, and parents of minors are apprised in writing of this Code of Conduct and the attached USA Swimming Code of Conduct. A signature on this document constitutes unconditional agreement to comply with the stipulations of both documents.

### **Recommended:**

- a. Team members will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrators, teammates, fellow competitors and the public at all times.
- b. Team members and staff will refrain from any illegal or inappropriate behavior that would detract from a positive image of the team or be detrimental to its performance objectives.
- c. The possession or use of alcohol or tobacco products by any athlete is prohibited.
- d. The possession, use, or sale/distribution of any controlled or illegal substance or any form of weapon is strictly forbidden.
- e. No "deck" changes are permitted. Athletes are expected to use available change facilities.
- f. Team members are reminded that when competing in meets, traveling on trips, and attending other meet-related functions, they are representing both themselves and the \_\_\_\_\_ program. Athlete behavior must positively reflect the high standards of the club (or LSC).

### **For consideration:**

- a. Failure to comply with the Honor Code as set forth in this document may result in disciplinary action. Such discipline may include, but may not be limited to:
  - i. Dismissal from the trip and immediate return home at the athlete's expense
  - ii. Disqualification from one or more events, or all events of competition
  - iii. Disqualification from future team travel meets
  - iv. Financial penalties
  - v. Dismissal from the team
  - vi. Proceedings for a LSC or USA Swimming Board of Review
- b. Swimmers are to refrain from inappropriate physical contact at team activities and events.
- c. Swimmers are to refrain from use of inappropriate language.