



**SAFETY/LOSS CONTROL
MANUAL**

The 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.

We encourage you to send material and suggestions to:

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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 duties include:

- 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

Each USA Swimming club shall appoint an active Individual Member to be the Club Safety Coordinator. The Club Safety Coordinator shall 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 shall make contact with the LSC Safety Chair and make any reports requested by the LSC Safety Chair.

The Club Safety Coordinator should report to the club's head coach and parent board. 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 needs to 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 needs to be involved or aware of every accident involving any of the club's facilities or members. She needs to 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. 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.

Their involvement comes in different ways, but daily contact with each other determines the overall success of the safety program.

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

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

The following document was designed by Eric Fucito, 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

B. Distribution Procedure..... 1

C. Maintenance..... 1

 1. Forms..... 1

 2. Club Safety Manual..... 1

II. LEGAL SECTION..... 1

A. State and Local Ordinances..... 1

 1. Equipment 1

III. MAPS..... 2

A. Facility Layout..... 2

 1. Emergency Exits 2

 2. Emergency Equipment 2

IV. CONTACT INFORMATION..... 2

A. Emergency Numbers..... 2

 1. Fire Department..... 2

 2. First Aid Squads 2

 3. Police..... 2

 4. Poison Control Center 2

B. Facility Emergency Numbers 2

 1. Aquatic and Facility Managers 2

 2. Chemical and Electrical Companies 2

C. Insurance Companies..... 2

D. USA Swimming..... 3

 1. Safety Education Committee Assignee 3

 2. LSC Safety Chair 3

 3. Area Club Safety Chairs..... 3

E. Club Communication..... 3

V. PREVENTIVE PLANS..... 3

A. Spectator Designated Areas..... 3

 1. Practice 3

 2. Meets 3

B. Facility Inspection..... 3

 1. Pre Practice/Meet 3

 2. During Practice/Meet 3

 3. Post Practice/Meet..... 3

C. Meet Safety Marshal 3

 1. USA Swimming Rule and Regulation 3

 2. Responsibilities 3

VI. EMERGENCY PLANS..... 3

A. Facility Emergency Action Plan..... 3

B. Facility Evacuation Plans..... 3

C. Facility Emergency Access Plan..... 3

VII. TRAINING PROGRAM 4

A. Coaches Safety Training..... 4

 1. Certification..... 4

 2. In-Service Training 4

B. Club Parents Safety Training..... 4

 1. Board of Directors 4

 2. General Club Parents..... 4

C. Facility Staff Safety Training 4

 1. Facility Management..... 4

 2. Lifeguards..... 4

 3. Maintenance Staff 4

D. Contact Information..... 4

VIII. FORMS..... 4

A. Report of Occurrence Forms..... 4

 1. USA Swimming 4

 2. Facility..... 4

B. Medical Release Forms 4
 1. How to Fill Out and Who to Send..... 4
 2. Blank Forms 4

IX. REFERENCES..... 4

A. USA Swimming Website Links 4
 1. USA Swimming Insurance and Risk Management Website Link 4
 2. USA Swimming Safety Education Website Link 4

B. Other References 4

X. MISCELLANEOUS..... 4

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 Insurance/Risk Management)
 2. USA Swimming Safety Education Website Link:
<http://www.usaswimming.org> (click on Swim Clubs, then Insurance/Risk Management)
- 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

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

Marshals must be current members of USA Swimming.**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 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 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.**

Make sure lanes are cleared before sprint lanes begin.

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

SECTION 4b. MEET SAFETY MARSHAL ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities and Requirements:

- Appointed Safety Marshals must be members of USA Swimming.
- The position of Safety Marshal is to be performed by individuals age 18 or older. Safety Marshals shall engage in no other duties while serving as Safety Marshal.
- Meet directors, officials, or other assigned meet personnel are not permitted to serve as Safety Marshal.
- During warm-ups the Safety Marshal is required to be on deck prior to and during the entire warm-up session. Shall enforce warm-up procedures and maintain order in the swimming venue in accordance with the LSC Safety Guidelines and Warm-up Procedures. The Safety Marshal shall have the authority to remove from the deck for the remainder of the warm-up session, any swimmer or coach who is in violation of safety guidelines or warm-up procedures.

Pre-Meet Roles:

- Post several area maps showing location and phone number of nearest Hospital or Emergency clinic. (Post at main entrance to natatorium and at least one other appropriate location)
- Post several copies during the swim meet of a map showing the location of the:
 - First Aid Station
 - Spinal Backboard
 - Blankets/towels
 - Rescue implements
- Perform a detailed walk through of the meet facilities to identify potential hazard areas (such as slip areas, head bangers, trip hazards...). Take corrective action for all identified hazard areas.
- Review safety checklist with meet referee.

During the Swim Meet:

- Shall enforce warm-up procedures and maintain order in the swimming venue in accordance with the LSC Safety Guidelines and Warm-up Procedures. Including any separate warm-up/warm-down area used during the meet.
- The Safety Marshal should be clearly visible by wearing identifying clothing or marker such a fluorescent vest prior to and during the meet.
- Insure the First Aid Station is identified and accessible throughout the meet.
- Approx. every 2 hours walk through all areas of the meet to identify potential hazards (horseplay, slippery floors...)
- Upon being advised by any person (parent, swimmer, coach, etc) of a safety hazard, the Safety Marshal shall investigate and take any immediate action to correct the hazard.
- Each accident requires that a Report of Occurrence form be completed.

Post Meet:

- Complete and return report of occurrence forms to USA Swimming, Risk Management Services, Inc., and the LSC Safety Chairman.
- Report any hazards to be corrected by facility personnel to facility management.

SECTION 4c. PROCEDURES

Marshals shall be identified by easily recognizable clothing such as a bright vest, shirt or cap. Signage is recommended for each starting block on both ends of the pool. Bright orange safety cones or bread delivery trays work well.

I. Pre-meet Warm-up Period

- A. Control/supervise - key words for safe warm-ups.
- B. Marshals should be actively supervising the warm-up to ensure that proper procedures are followed.

II. General Warm-up Period in Small Pools (4-6 lanes)

- A. In effect except for 60 minutes prior to the meet.
- B. There should be no racing starts or diving off the blocks or off the edge of the pool at this time. Athletes should slide into the pool feet first (3 point entry).
- C. Outside lanes - kicking only.
- D. Inside lane - swimming and pulling only, no paddles.
- E. No sprinting or pace work.
- F. In large pools (8-10 lanes) pace work may be conducted in the outside lanes.

III. Specific Warm-up Period

- A. Last 60 minutes of pre-meet warm-up period.
- B. Suggestions for 8-lane pool: each lane scheduled as follows:
 - 1. Push off one or two lengths and back, beginning at starting end of pool. Circle swimming only. No racing starts or diving.
 - 2. Racing start only. Swim one length only. All swimmers begin at starting end of pool.
 - 3. General warm-up only (as above). No racing starts or diving.
 - 4. General warm-up only (as above). No racing starts or diving.
 - 5. General warm-up only (as above). No racing starts or diving.
 - 6. General warm-up only (as above). No racing starts or diving.
 - 7. Racing start only. Swim one length only. All swimmers begin at starting end of pool.
 - 8. Push off one or two lengths and back, beginning at starting end of pool. Circle swimming only. No racing starts or diving.
- C. Suggestion for 6-lane pool; each lane scheduled as follows:
 - 1. Push off one or two lengths and back, beginning at starting end of pool. Circle swimming only. No racing starts or diving.
 - 2. Racing start only. Swim one length only. All swimmers begin at starting end of pool.
 - 3. General warm-up only (as above). No racing starts or diving.
 - 4. General warm-up only (as above). No racing starts or diving.

5. Racing start only. Swim one length only. All swimmers begin at starting end of pool.
 6. Push off one or two lengths and back, beginning at starting end of pool. Circle swimming only. No racing starts or diving.
- D. No racing starts or diving are allowed in the outside lanes so that those who are supervising the warm-up do not have to move away from the pool to avoid getting wet.
- E. Important points for specific warm-up period.
1. No racing starts or diving in lanes other than those designated for diving. The blocks should be marked to remind swimmers they should not dive.
 2. Start all swimmers in all lanes at starting end of pool.
 3. Coaches should stand at starting end of pool when verbally starting swimmers on sprint or pace work.
 4. Swimmers should be reminded by coaches that breaststrokers need more lead time than freestyle or butterfly swimmers.
 5. Backstrokers should be reminded of the danger of leaving simultaneously with someone on the block. No one should be allowed on the starting block until the backstroker has executed his/her start.
- F. Additional considerations.
1. The announcer should announce lane changes and/or warm-up changes as per general and specific. The announcer can serve as the reminder of procedure.
 2. Coaches should maintain as much contact with their swimmers as possible - verbal and visual - throughout the warm-up period.
 3. Coaches are reminded that the responsibility for supervision of their swimmer(s) is the same at the meet as when on deck at practice.
 4. Marshals have authority through the meet referee over the warm-up. A swimmer and/or coach may be removed from the deck for interfering with this authority.
- G. Relay Break.
1. Supervised relay exchanges between the individual events and relays should be conducted in the four interior lanes.

These are guidelines. Discretion and common sense must be used when establishing procedures. The procedures must fit the type of meet and circumstances - the number of swimmers, lanes available (possibly only four at some meets) and time available.

SECTION 4d. LIABILITY OF MARSHALS

Legal Liability and USA Swimming Safety Marshals

By Barney Favaro, Ex-Officio, Board of Directors

As an aid to understanding the legal liability stemming from whatever duties you are assigned as a USA Swimming Safety Marshal, try to relate it to your everyday life.

To be a USA Swimming Safety Marshal, acting for and on behalf of USA Swimming and its organizational members, is no different than the circumstance when you are an employee or agent acting in behalf of your employer within the scope of your duties as such.

If you are negligent in the discharge of your duties, either as a Marshal or as an employee-agent, you may be individually liable but so also is your employer. Your negligence is imputed to your employer.

But that is what insurance is for. Your employer carries liability insurance to protect both him/her and you, just as USA Swimming carries liability insurance to protect it, its organizational members, and you individually.

Do not let the necessary emphasis in USA Swimming on safety and risk management paralyze you in the performance of your duties or temper the enjoyable avocation of being an official dedicated to one of the very best of amateur sports. Do what you've always done, but carry with it safety awareness. In other words, just be actively aware of the risks and hazards associated with running a swim meet, particularly in the area to which you are assigned as Marshal, and do not hesitate to do something about those you see. You are, in effect, a playground supervisor.

The elements of tort liability are simple. If any one of the four is missing, there is no liability.

1. **Duty.** We in USA Swimming are obliged to provide as safe an environment for the conduct of our sport as we reasonably can.

Example: If you, as a Safety Marshal assigned to the warm-up pool, see swimmers "horsing around" (e.g., jumping on top of each other in the warm-up lanes), it is your duty to stop it.

Example: While driving an automobile in the course of your duties as an employee in your employer's business, you have a duty to obey traffic laws.

2. **Breach of That Duty.** If you breach your duty you have taken the second step toward liability.

Example: You ignore the swimmers.

Example: You run a stop sign.

3. **Proximate Cause.** If the fact that you breached your duty results in injuries to the person or

property of another (i.e., it is the "proximate cause" of the injuries), then liability for those injuries attach.

Example: A swimmer is injured when another swimmer in the lane(s) for which you are responsible as Safety Marshal dives on top of him.

Example: Your vehicle rams another in the intersection.

4. Damages. Swimmers may violate the warm-up rules all day, and drivers may run stop signs all day, but if there are no damages there can be no liability; but if there are, no matter how much or how little, you and USA Swimming, or you and your employer, are responsible for it.

There will always be people, young and old alike, in the swimming venue who act irresponsibly, just as there are hundreds of people running stop signs throughout this country as you read this Memorandum. It is your responsibility to cut those risks down as much as you can. The law does not require you to do more than a reasonably prudent person would do to ensure safety, and if what you've done is reasonable under the circumstances and about as best can be done--that is as good a defense as any.

Just remember that the liability issues are the same today as they were five, or ten, or twenty years ago. They haven't changed one bit. But I think it can safely be said that, despite the fact that we now live in a very litigious society, exposure to liability of a USA Swimming volunteer member is far less today because of USA Swimming's aggressive safety and risk management programs.

USA Swimming's General Liability policy provides coverage for any USA Swimming member, local member club, or volunteer **while acting on behalf of and with the approval of USA Swimming**, for:

- Claims of negligence against an Insured, by participants, or any other person, for bodily injury, property damage or personal injury for Insured Activities.
- Limited Contractual Liability for claims arising from a written contract for Insured Activities. **Coverage is only provided for claims resulting from the negligence of the insured.**

SECTION 4e. 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
 - o Make sure that the person you are talking to is the one in-charge of the facility
 - o Have a meeting with the facility manager to discuss the following:
 - Local Emergency Numbers

- o Police
- o Fire
- o Rescue Squads
- Support of the Facility Staff
 - o Lifeguards
 - o Security
 - o Janitorial
- Location of the Emergency Exits
- Evacuation Procedure for the Facility
 - o Evacuation to a secure Location Outside the Facility
 - o Evacuation to a secure Location Inside the Facility
- Facility Emergency Action Plan
 - o How it Works
 - o How the Meet Staff will fit into the Plan
- Location of First Aid Treatment Area
- Location of Emergency Equipment
 - o Fire
 - o AED
 - o 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

Coaches Safety Curriculum 2005 - 2006 Requirements and Equivalents *Rev. Nov. 2005*

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 certification cards for the following courses: Safety Training for Swim Coaches, CPR and First Aid.

ARC/USOC Sport Safety Training is recommended by USA Swimming because of its coaching specific content and materials. This course includes Adult CPR, fulfilling both the first aid and CPR requirements for coach membership.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

Any one of the following courses will satisfy the requirement:

American Red Cross: *(all ARC CPR courses are good for one year) (NO instructor certifications are acceptable)*

- Adult CPR (4 hours)
- Adult CPR/AED
- Community CPR (6.5 hours) (includes adult, infant and child CPR)
- CPR for the Professional Rescuer (9 hours)

American Heart Association: *(all AHA CPR cards are good for two years)*

- Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)
- Basic Life Support (BLS) for the Health Care Provider (card will read "Healthcare Provider")
- Heartsaver CPR (Adult and/or Child; Infant only is not acceptable)
(USA Swimming does NOT accept "Heartsaver" or "Heartsaver AED")
- Any AHA Basic Life Support Instructor or Instructor Trainer for the courses listed above

National Safety Council: *(NSC CPR courses are good for either one or two years, depending on the training agency)*

- Adult CPR
- First Responder (includes First Aid)

Jeff Ellis & Associates:

- Water Safety+ (4 hour course includes First Aid)
- National Pool & Waterpark Lifeguard Training Program (one year certification, includes First Aid)
- National Pool & Waterpark Lifeguard Training Program Instructor License (12-18 month certification)

CPR Courses offered by other organizations:

- AAOS (Amer Acad of Orthopaedic Surgeons) Emergency Care & Safety Institute CPR (two year cert)
- American Safety & Health Institute (ASHI) CPR Pro
- American Safety & Health Institute (ASHI) CPR/AED for the Community and Workplace (two year cert)
- Medic First Aid (course includes First Aid) (coach must also submit a completed, scored test signed by the course instructor)
- E.M.S. Safety Services CPR
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Basic (course includes First Aid)
- Save-A-Life Educators: CPR
- StarGuard
- Tacoma Fire Department First Aid & CPR Course (course includes First Aid)
- University Training Centers, Inc. – Healthcare Provider BLS (C)

continued next page.....

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First Aid

Any one of the following courses will satisfy the requirement:

American Red Cross: *(NO instructor certifications are acceptable)*

- ARC/USOC Sport Safety Training (6.5 hours with Adult CPR; 7 hrs with elective Child CPR)
 - Also called ARC Sports Injury Prevention and First Aid
- Community First Aid & Safety (9 hours) (includes Community CPR)
- First Aid – Responding to Emergencies (23.5 hrs) (includes Adult and/or Infant/Child CPR)
- First Aid Basics
- Emergency Response (43.5 hrs) (includes CPR for the Professional Rescuer)
- Lifeguard Training (includes CPR for the Professional Rescuer)
- Standard First Aid/CPR/AED (includes Adult CPR)

American Safety & Health Institute:

- Adult Basic First Aid (4 hour course)
- Universal Basic First Aid (4-6 hours)

National Safety Council: *(NSC FA certifications are good for two or three years, depending on the training agency)*

- First Aid
- First Responder (includes CPR)

Jeff Ellis & Associates:

- Water Safety+ (4 hour course includes First Aid)
- National Pool & Waterpark Lifeguard Training Program (one year certification, includes First Aid)
- National Pool & Waterpark Lifeguard Training Program Instructor License (12-18 month certification)

First Aid courses offered by other organizations:

- AAOS (Amer Acad of Orthopaedic Surgeons) Emergency Care & Safety Institute First Aid
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Basic (includes CPR)
- Medic First Aid (includes CPR) (coach must also submit a completed, scored test signed by the course instructor)
- E.M.S. Safety Services First Aid
- Life Education of Florida – First Aid for All Ages: A Common Sense Approach
- Save-A-Life Educators: First Aid
- StarGuard
- Tacoma Fire Department First Aid & CPR Course (includes CPR)
- University Training Centers, Inc. – Standard First Aid

Safety Training For Swim Coaches

Any one of the following courses will satisfy the requirement:

American Red Cross: *(NO instructor certifications are acceptable)*

- Safety Training for Swim Coaches (8 hour course)
- Safety Training for Swim Coaches Review Course (4 hour renewal course)
- Lifeguard Training (may be referred to as *Lifeguarding Today* on some certifications)

Jeff Ellis & Associates:

- National Pool & Waterpark Lifeguard Training Program (one year certification, includes First Aid)
- National Pool & Waterpark Lifeguard Training Program Instructor License (12-18 month certification)

YMCA Lifeguarding

SECTION 5b. GUIDELINES FOR A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

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

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.

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

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

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

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

SECTION 5f. HYPOXIC TRAINING

by Jim Miller, MD, USA Swimming Sports Medicine Committee

Sports science attempts to establish parameters that assist coaches in designing programs, which improve both technique and training. The term “technique” could include stroke specific adaptations as well as psychological training. If science turns to the study of muscle performance specifically, the end goal of any training program is to modify a muscle into a state that is capable of enhanced performance. That capacity would include aerobic and anaerobic training. Hypoxic training is aimed only at the anaerobic system.

There are numerous articles dealing with muscle fiber specificity and the energy systems. Very basically, these systems can be divided into those that burn stored energy (i.e. anaerobic systems,) and those that utilize oxygen in combination with circulating energy sources (i.e. aerobic systems). It is also well-documented that these systems have different training requirements. The anaerobic system requires fast swimming that in turn builds up metabolic byproducts, such as lactic acid. There are other muscle breakdown products that are involved, but lactic acid is the chemical that is most easily measured. This, combined with the measurement of oxygen-carrying capacity, leads to the evaluation of fitness levels. Over time and under optimal training conditions, the athlete’s muscle adapts by making microscopic intracellular changes. Debate remains about exactly which structures are changing inside the cell, but they would determine the muscle characteristics of fast versus slow twitch. It is also possible that the muscle is simply learning to store more energy to burn anaerobically.

Despite the name, there is no evidence that swimming without oxygen necessarily trains the anaerobic system. The anaerobic system is activated based upon the percentile of maximum exercise performance that is required and not the breathing pattern used. Extending the breathing pattern may improve oxygen management capacity. More simply stated, at what rate should the athlete exhale in a specific situation for the desired effect of fast swimming over short distances? Do any of these techniques carry over into longer events? It is very doubtful that they do, unless the brief hypoxia experienced during turns is considered.

The literature does, however, discuss the dangers of hypoxic swimming, including deaths. Though these are extreme cases, they do continue to occur. The setting is almost always either “lung buster 25 repeats” or underwater swims to maximum distances. Both are usually preceded by a series of hyperventilations getting ready for the effort. This combination effectively turns off the CO₂-driven protective mechanisms that signal the brain to cause respiration. These centers activate the sensation of needing a breath. Thus, such hyperventilation can set the stage for disaster. Considering that the desired effect of training the anaerobic system has nothing to do with breathing frequency, it appears that the dangers associated with excessive hypoxic training are not warranted. Given these considerations, hypoxic training should be carried out only under close supervision.

CHAPTER 6: SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR ATHLETES**SECTION 6a. RISK MANAGEMENT**

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!

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. SAFETY TIPS WHEN TRAVELING AND STAYING OVERNIGHT

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.

CHAPTER 7: SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACILITIES

SECTION 7a. EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

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

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
Deck Checklist					
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					
Pool Checklist					
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					
Locker rooms					
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
Locker rooms – continue					
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					
Recreational Equipment and Play Structures					
Ladders to diving boards – Closed					
All play structures – Closed					
Chemical Storage Areas					
Chemicals stored properly					
Doors labeled properly					
Signs legible and in good condition					
Doors locked					
No suspicious odors					
Other Areas of Concern					
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					
Emergency Plans					
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 _____

SECTION 7c. POOL-SPECIFIC FIRST AID KIT

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 SWIMMING

INTRODUCTION

This safety Guide for Open Water Competition will assist in planning the full range of preventative and corrective safety measures prior to an event, It will remind organizers of the various aspects of safety they must be concerned about. **Open Water by its nature is not pool swimming. It will never be as sanitized as pool swimming.**

SAFETY STATEMENT

USA Swimming places the safety of its athletes as paramount to their involvement in the sport. Therefore the Open Water Committee, in conjunction with the Safety Education Committee, will increase the level of awareness through the education of athletes, coaches, volunteers and officials. The education program will cover the risks of involvement in competitive swimming and methods to reduce those risks.

This chapter is divided into the following sections explained in further detail below:

Section 8a. Identify the risk factors

- A) Human
- B) Mechanical
- C) Environmental

Section 8b. Control or eliminate risk factors

- A) PRIMARY PREVENTION
 - 1. Organization/supervision
 - 2. Information
 - 3. Facilities and Equipment
 - 4. Selection
- B) SECONDARY PREVENTION
 - 1. Detection
 - 2. Communication
 - 3. First Aid
 - 4. Transportation
- C) TERTIARY PREVENTION-Evaluation

8a. IDENTIFYING THE RISK FACTORS

The first step toward prevention is to become aware of the risks associated with open water swimming competitions and to be able to identify them. Listed below are three types of risk factors and potential problems related to each one.

A) HUMAN FACTORS: *Those directly related to individuals and their psychological and physical condition*

1. Age and health of participants
2. Experience of participants
3. Physical condition (technical level)
4. Competition stress
5. Number and competence of lifeguards
6. Competence of guides
7. Officials

B) MECHANICAL FACTORS: *Those related to the quality of the competition site and equipment used in the competition*

1. Swimmer's personal equipment
(ear/nose plugs, goggles, swim cap, body grease)
2. Safety equipment
(Motorboats, propellers, engine exhaust, kayaks, turning buoys, surf boards, course markers)

C) ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS: *Those related to the nature and condition of the environment*

1. Wind Velocity
2. Water and air temperature (hypothermia and dehydration)
3. Algae
4. Dangerous marine life
5. Cleanliness of water
6. Water level
7. Visibility
8. Water depth and strength of current
9. Weather conditions/lightning (what to do with swimmers)
10. Floating objects
11. Wave conditions/swells

Identifying the risk factors will help to decide which prevention measures are essential to the safe of the participants.

8b. ELIMINATING OR CONTROLLING THE RISK FACTORS

After drawing up a list of the risk factors associated with the open water competition, the second phase consists of minimizing risks whenever possible and controlling those factors that cannot be minimized.

In extreme cases, it may be necessary to cancel or postpone a competition when conditions are beyond human control and are unsafe. This is the radical way of minimizing risk factors. This should be used only when all other measures have been taken.

It is also possible to control certain risks. For example, by only accepting participants who have demonstrated a standard of physical fitness equal to or greater than the competition's level of difficulty.

These are only examples of prevention. The best way to minimize or control risk is a systematic prevention approach. Planning and foresight are the key to a safe competition. This involves planning all of the possible safety measures in accordance with the *USA Swimming Rules and Regulations* and by following prevention measures outline.

A) PRIMARY PREVENTION

Primary prevention measures involve reliance on a range of physical, human and financial resources in order to prevent the occurrence of injury:

- Organization
- Information
- Equipment/Facility
- Selection of Participants

1. Organization And Supervision (Refer also to Open Water Meet Manager's Guide and USA Swimming Rules and Regulations)

Organization and supervision refer to services that support and make possible the holding of events. Obtaining official authorization, recruiting personnel and volunteers are all examples of organizational planning. The quality of the organization and supervision efforts depend on the timing and implementation of the operation (When will the members of the organization committee begin their work?). The organizer of an open water swimming competition should:

- a. Request a sanction under the policies of the Local Swimming committee.
- b. Request authorization to use:
 - The start and finish area (the beach) from the municipality or the State, i.e., Department of Recreation, Fish and Game if it is in a State park.
 - Safety escort craft on the waterway to follow the swimmers.
 - Safety escort craft to ensure the safety of all the swimmers.
- c. Request the services of duly authorized officers to control traffic around the competition course.
- d. Hold or be covered by liability insurance equal to or greater than that required by USA Swimming. Remember to inquire about the liability coverage limits with the

- local government. If local government is higher, organizers must comply.
- e. If swimming competition starts or finishes on private land, reach an agreement with the owner.
 - f. Ensure that all officials are present.
 - g. Formulate an intervention plan in order to coordinate personnel and ensure that aid provided quickly and effectively.
 - h. Arrange for security personnel to be on site who have jurisdiction to expel anyone from the site who disturbs the competition.
 - i. In swims of 10k or less safety craft should be provided. The ratio of swimmers to craft needed should be: 1-8:3; 9-16:5; 17-24:7; 25-50:10; 50-100:20. (This may vary on size of course recommendations.) In swims over 10k it is recommended to have a 1:1 ratio. In swims over 15k you *shall* have a 1:1 ratio.
 - j. Ensure that senior lifeguards are on hand (Safety rules in public pools)
 - k. Establish criteria for cancellation or postponement.
 - Water Temperature and Currents
 - Wind Velocity
 - Visibility
 - Weather Conditions
 - l. Draw up a timetable for the event with limits.
 - m. Ensure communication capabilities among all parties involved.
 - n. Ensure duties are defined and understood.
 - o. Medical facilities.

2. Information

This includes all information provided to the participants, volunteers, coaches, spectators prior to the event. Note: Inform a local hospital when the event will take place.

- a. Information session for the coaches and participants.
- b. Information session with the escort/safety craft operators. Specifically the difficulties of the course and emergency plans.
 - Position of buoys
 - Distance of the course
 - Strength of the water currents
 - Finish area
 - Safety instructions (Hazardous areas on the course)
- c. Information session with all personnel on their duties.
- d. If using a public beach, advise recreational swimmers that a competition is being held.

3. Facilities And Equipment

All facilities and equipment used in the competition must be carefully planned and checked. This phase constitutes another important aspect of primary prevention.

- a. When using a public beach or land, contact the person responsible for the equipment and facilities to ensure that the latter meet the regulations on safety in public pools.

- b. Ensure that the facilities meet the regulations for USA Swimming.
- c. Designate areas for participants, spectators and officials.
- d. Set up refreshment area.
- e. Mandatory equipment for participants.
 - Letter or number displayed on both arms at shoulder level, or;
 - on the back, or;
 - on the swim cap.
- f. ARC-approved personal floatation devices for persons aboard boats who do not know how to swim. Note: All persons in motor boats should wear personal flotation devices as a safety precaution.
- g. Protective grid for boat propellers are recommended.
- h. Official boats clearly marked.
- i. Choice of the site:
 - cleanliness of the water.
 - approach to and from the waterway are clear of debris, sharp objects, trip hazards
 - low volume of traffic.
- j. Distinctive buoys and markers at the start/finish and each turning point.
- k. Sanitary facilities.
- l. Parking nearby
- m. Timing equipment
- n. Finish area management

4. Selection

Selection is the final step in primary prevention. Selection means identifying those participants who are fit or unfit to take part in the competition. Prior to participation:

- a. Competitors must read and sign the waiver form.
- b. In the event a competitor is under the age of 18, the parent or guardian must read and sign the waiver form with a release to medical staff to treat.
- c. Participants are responsible for being in the proper state of physical fitness to take part in an open water race.
- d. Competitors age 40 or older should, upon registering, provide a medical opinion from a licensed physician, which is dated no more than a year prior to the competition date.

B) SECONDARY PREVENTION

When all possible precautions have been taken, primary prevention does not guarantee that an accident will not occur. One must anticipate what must be done once an accident has occurred. Providing prompt and effective aid is indispensable to the safety of an event. Without quick and appropriate intervention organizations cannot claim to have an optimum safe environment. It is imperative an organization minimize the possibility of aggravation or complication due to delays or improper medical aid. This leads to a discussion of the secondary prevention measures, which are:

- Detection

- Communication
- First Aid
- Transportation

1. Detection

Detection is the first link in the chain of secondary prevention measures. When an accident occurs, the effectiveness and speed of the intervention are indications that the organization is aware of the accident. The faster safety personnel can detect any accident occurring at the competition site, the safer the competition will be.

- a. Professional rescuers
- b. Sweeper boats (inflatable rescue boat)
- c. Flotation devices
- d. Jet skis
- e. Medical personnel on site

2. Communication

Communication is also an important function, since it depends on the effectiveness of the safety system and its ability to intervene quickly. After detecting an accident, the personnel involved must be able to rely on an effective means of communication.

- a. Location of Telephone
- b. Effective communication between officials and escort/safety craft (CB radio, walkie talkie, cellular phone, marine radio/UHF) with medical on site
- c. List of emergency numbers available
- d. Ability to contact those on land that emergencies are coming in

3. First Aid

If detection and communication function properly, first aid should not be delayed. The quality of aid provided to the victim will depend on the human and physical resources available at the site. The first aid phase may include evacuation of the victim from the accident site.

- a. A waterway that does not have a public beach should be equipped with a first aid station.
- b. If the waterway has a public beach, check with the person responsible for the facility to ensure that they have safety equipment and emergency procedures.
- c. Have a first aid station or a medical tent at the start and the finish of the course.

4. Transportation

In the event of an accident, ensure the participant will receive the appropriate treatment, plans must be made for transportation to a treatment unit or a hospital if necessary. Note: Under no circumstances will an official, coach, or volunteer transport anyone to a medical facility.

- a. Emergency vehicle
- b. Access to the hospital

C) TERTIARY PREVENTION - EVALUATION

The final phase of prevention is evaluation and corrective action. If the competition is likely to be repeated, documentation from previous competitions and evaluating the operation of the safety system, help to identify appropriate corrective action and improve the safety of the next competition.

- a. A report must be submitted to the Local Swimming Committee no later than 30 days after the sanctioned competition.
- b. This report must, among other things, include any infractions which occurred and were brought to the attention of the competition director during the competition. All corrective measures should be duly documented.
- c. In the event that an accident or injury occurs during the competition, a report must be submitted to USA Swimming. Use the Report of Occurrence form from page 70. It should be submitted to USA Swimming, Risk Management Services and the LSC Safety Chair promptly after the conclusion of the sanctioned competition.

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

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**

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

Resources for Risk Management Meetings:

- Your LSC Safety Chair has a risk management handbook that is a source of information and topics for safety 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.

SECTION 9c. RESOURCE LIST

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

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 Administrative Assistant – 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 or epeterson@theriskpeople.com

USA Swimming Safety Education Committee

Priscilla Davis, Chair
E-mail: pdswim@netway.com

SECTION 9d. FORMS

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: www.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).