Changing USMS Rules and Regulations

Process Overview

Proposed changes to the Code of Regulations and the Rules of Competition governing USMS originate from the careful thought of individual members. These proposals, however, cannot be submitted by individuals but must come from LMSCs, standing committees, the Executive Committee, or the Board of Directors. Proposed changes to geographic boundaries must be submitted by an LMSC to the chair of the LMSC Development Committee by February 1. Proposed changes to the USMS Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition must be submitted by an LMSC to the chair of the Legislation, Long Distance or Rules Committee not later than July 10. The Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and standing committees of the House Delegates are encouraged to submit proposed changes by July 10 also; proposed changes submitted by those groups after July 10 are considered as emergency amendments unless the committee of jurisdiction decides by two-thirds vote that such changes will be treated the same as those submitted by July 10.

Only the House of Delegates can change the rules and regulations. Four standing committees—Legislation, Rules, Long Distance and LMSC Development—consider proposed changes for recommendation to the House. These committees and the parts of the rule book over which they have jurisdiction are:

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<th>Odd Years</th>
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<td>LMSC Development Committee</td>
<td>Appendix D (Zone and LMSC Boundaries)</td>
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| Long Distance Committee | Glossary | Part 3 (Long Distance Swimming Rules) |

The Executive Committee has jurisdiction to consider proposed changes to all other sections of the code.

In even-numbered years, the emphasis is on changes affecting Rules and Long Distance. Legislation and LMSC Development changes are advanced by those committees only if deemed emergencies. In odd-numbered years, Legislation and LMSC Development issues are paramount and Rules and Long Distance changes are presented by those committees only as emergencies. In Rules (even) years, all proposals properly submitted to the Rules and Long Distance Committees are evaluated by those committees and presented to the House of Delegates for vote. Similarly, in Legislation (odd) years, the Legislation and LMSC Development Committees evaluate properly submitted proposals for presentation to the House.

Those committees are responsible for recommending whether or not the House should adopt each submittal. Proposals presented with committee approval require a simple majority in the House to gain adoption. Proposals lacking approval require a two-thirds House majority to overturn the committee recommendation. Emergency proposals (again, any that are presented in the “off” year from their normal consideration cycle) require more stringent adoption criteria: committee recommendation and a 90 percent majority vote for passage.

If a proposed change would require modification of sections that are the responsibility of more than one of these four committees, they may be submitted as a package for consideration in any year. A two-thirds vote of each committee is required for acceptance of the package. Proposals receiving recommendation for adoption by all committees with jurisdiction require a simple majority in the House to gain adoption. If one or more committees fails to recommend adoption, the proposal requires a two-thirds House majority for adoption.
Proposing Changes to the Rules and Regulations

As stated, individual members are the source for ideas that cause our organization to evolve via its body of rules and regulations. Individuals present their ideas to their LMSCs or USMS standing committees. The role of the committees involved is to guide those ideas to studied and careful acceptance or rejection.

In considering a proposal, the committees must ensure that the proposed wording is consistent with the intent of the submitter. Wording must also conform to the style and form used in the rule book. The committees must also determine whether additional rules or code changes are warranted to maintain consistency. Overall fairness and implementation feasibility are considered. In addition, the history of the issue may play a significant role in determining whether or not to recommend. For example, a proposed rule change that reverses a previous change may be tabled if the committee decides that the previous change has had insufficient time to develop its intended effect.

The committees are available to help individuals craft their proposals. Individuals submitting proposals are encouraged to work with the applicable committee via the LMSC and zone chairs to acquire the greatest insight in developing proposed rule and regulation changes. The remaining pages of this section contain guidelines and a form to help individuals write proposals.

Instructions for Submitting Proposed Amendments to the USMS Rule Book

Conventions held in even-numbered years are “Rules years,” whereby the Rules and Long Distance Committees consider proposed amendments to the code. The Legislation and LMSC Development Committees will only consider emergency changes. Use the Proposed Amendment to the USMS Rule Book form following to submit proposed changes to any part of the rule book. Copy the form freely, and submit one change per form. You may submit proposals in electronic format as well, preferably using a popular word processing format (Microsoft Word or Corel WordPerfect). The USMS standing committee chair must endorse proposed amendments submitted by the committee. If the proposal is from the LMSC, the LMSC chair’s endorsement indicates that the LMSC has approved submission of the proposal.

1. List the current rule book reference number (article, section, and subsection numbers and letters).
2. List the affected page number(s).
3. List the LMSC or standing committee that will be submitting the proposal (example following).
4. Write the change as it will show if adopted. Strike through existing text and punctuation to be deleted. Insert and underline new text and punctuation to be added. Use correct spelling, grammar, and sentence structure. Pay attention to parallel sentence construction, keep verb tense in agreement, and maintain uniform singular or plural structure. If the existing language is lengthy and the proposed change affects only a small section, use an ellipsis (…) in place of unaffected text to simplify the redefinition.
5. Include a BRIEF rationale for the amendment, describing the reasoning as to why the House of Delegates should consider this proposal.
6. Find all references in the rule book that may be affected by the proposal and indicate these as well.

It is wise to seek other voices and views by sharing the proposal with others who are well versed in the rule book and its change process before submitting it to the appropriate USMS committee.

Examples of Proposed Rules Changes

Example 1 (not adopted):

101.7.3 p. 5 Florida Add and renumber:

.3 IM Relay—Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance by individually completing an individual medley (all rules for individuals competing in an individual medley apply—rule 101.6)
Rationale: This would be the most exciting relay possible (with many lead changes as swimmers perform their best/worst strokes) and a test of which team has the most complete swimmers, while encouraging more swimmers to master more of the strokes, thereby promoting more new challenges to athletes.

Example 2 (adopted):

102.5  pp. 6-7 Championship

102.5  Events—In planning … sheltered rest areas.

Any of the following events may be conducted for each age group. Any event conducted must be offered for all age groups and both genders. It is not necessary to conduct all events in each meet. For long distance events, see Part 3.

Rationale: Housekeeping change. The existing rule opens the door to conducting some events for only some age groups or one gender.

Deadlines for Submitting Proposals

No Later Than February 1:
Submit proposed changes to Appendix D (LMSC Boundaries) to:

USMS LMSC Development Committee Chair
LMSCdevelopment@usms.org

No Later Than July 10:
Submit proposed changes to Part 1 (Swimming Rules and the Glossary) to:

USMS Rules Committee Chair
Rules@usms.org

Submit proposed changes to Part 3 (Long Distance Swimming Rules and the Glossary) to:

USMS Long Distance Committee Chair
LongDistance@usms.org

Submit emergency proposed changes to the code (Preamble, Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives, Parts 2, 4, 5, and 6, and the Glossary) to:

USMS Legislation Committee Chair
Legislation@usms.org

A list of all USMS Committee Chairs can be found on the USMS web site at http://www.usms.org/admin/org.php
Proposed Amendment to the USMS Rule Book

Rule book reference number _______________ page __________
Submitted by: _______________________________________________________________________________________
(proposals must be submitted by an LMSC or USMS committee)
Body of the text with deletions noted by strikeout and additions noted by underlining:

BRIEF Rationale:

Other articles that would require changing in order to maintain consistency (please include appropriate changes)

Name of LMSC or USMS Committee Chair ______________________________ Signature ____________________________