Charles River Swimming Club

49 Garden Street ▪ Boston, MA 02114 ▪ www.charlesriverswimmingclub.org ▪ 617.306.8083

**2013 Charles River One Mile Swim – Safety Plan**

**The race**: The Charles River Swimming Club is hosting its annual Charles River One Mile Swim. The race will begin as a water-start a short distance from the Riverdock and end with finishers touching a designated area on the side of the Riverdock.

**Medical and Legal:** The race will be sanctioned by the United States Masters Swimming (USMS) association and will only be open to members of USMS. Race participants will be required to sign the Charles River Swimming Club liability waiver as part of their online registration. One-day USMS members will also sign the USMS liability waiver as part of this process. Participants are required to provide an emergency contact name and phone number and must indicate that they are able to swim one mile in 40 minutes or less.

**Safety considerations:**  Ensuring swimmer safety is of paramount importance to the CRSC. The club has identified three categories of safety issues:

1. Water quality
2. Debris and bottom sediment
3. Swimmer safety

**Water quality:** Although the water quality of the Charles River has improved significantly over the past decade, many sections of the river still experience bacterial concentration variability that often exceeds the swimming standard. The variations in bacteria levels are typically tied to prior levels of rainfall. Our event permit, which will be issued by the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation is contingent upon water quality meeting swimmability standards. We work with the MWRA and DPH on pre-race water quality testing. The race will only take place if the applicable state standards are met.

**Debris and bottom sediment:** The Charles River One Mile Swim uses an in-water start and finish adjacent to the Riverdock, where the water is relatively deep, to avoid any potential hazards at the bottom of the river. Swimmers are advised to not dive off the dock to get to the starting line.

**Swimmer Safety:** In addition to the hazards specific to the Charles River, the CRSC will take measures to ensure that the standard dangers associated with swimming are mitigated. The race will be sanctioned by United States Masters Swimming, and, in accordance with the sanction requirements, a number of safeguards will be put into place. These safeguards include:

* Coast Guard marine event permit, which restricts boat traffic during that time and at that location
* An EMS at the race site
* A minimum of 10 safety kayakers to accompany the swimmers
* One lifeguard and a boat-certified EMT on a Boston Whaler serving as an evacuation craft
* Boston Whaler (support boat) will have propeller guard.
* DCR Park Ranger boat and/or State Police boat to ensure river is clear of watercrafts.
* Two additional lifeguards onsite (on land or in kayaks)
* Briefing all swimmers, volunteers, emergency personnel and escorts on emergency procedures, water conditions, temperature and any known hazards.
  + Swimmers are required to wear the fluorescent caps provided by the race organizer.
  + Swimmers are briefed on the course, conditions, temperature, start and finish and emergency procedures.
  + Swimmers are told to raise their hand and wave and yell if they need assistance. A safety kayaker will respond and, if necessary, guide the swimmer either to shore or away from other swimmers, where the Boston Whaler can take the person onboard and return to dock for medical assistance, if necessary.
  + Should it be necessary to cancel the race after it has begun, the safety boaters will blow their whistles for a prolonged period and guide the swimmers to the dock or the closest shore. A headcount will be conducted as the swimmers arrive.
  + Warm up is not allowed unless lifeguards are present.
  + In case swimmers need non-emergency medical assistance, they will be directed to Massachusetts General Hospital, a few blocks away from the race site.
* Swimmers are checked in and checked out to make sure everybody is accounted for after the race. The club established and enforces a cut-off time. Swimmers who do not meet the cut-off time will be escorted to the shore.
* Communication will be done with cell phones between the powerboat and shore.  Safety boaters will be equipped with whistles and the use of hand signals.  Lead and clean-up safety boaters will be equipped with cell phones in addition to whistles for communication with the power boat and shore. A P/A system is available for announcements. EMS, Park Rangers / State Police and Boston Whaler are in touch via radio communication.
* Only authorized personnel and volunteers are allowed on the Riverdock during the duration of the race.

**Documents CRSC will submitt to USMS prior to race day:**

* Event permit issued by Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
* Marine event permit issued by U.S. Coast Guard
* Insurance certificate for volunteer operating support boat