

# **Sanctioning your Open Water Swim**

Presented at the USAS Convention

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# Part One:

What's this Sanction  
Thing Anyway?

# What's in it for USMS?

## Sanctioning is Event Quality Control

- USMS has an obligation to its member swimmers to ensure a safe, well-run, and properly reported event.
- Sanctioning events is a fundamental function of the LMSC, representing USMS.
- The LMSC must ensure that event hosts follow the requirements of USMS Rule 203, “Sanctioning of Open Water Events”.

# What's in it for You?

## Sanctioning is Access to USMS Help

- Help with event information & entry development.
- Help with safety planning.
- Help with insurance coverage, the best in the land!

# The LMSC Sanctions Chair

- Each LMSC should have a sanctions chair responsible for the sanctioning process, including early scheduling to avoid conflicts, oversight of the event, and follow-up to ensure meet results are submitted in a proper and timely manner.
- If the LMSC is active in open water swimming, it is preferable for an LMSC to also have an Open Water/Long Distance Chair (who could also serve as Sanctions Chair for open water events).
- There must be good two-way communication between event hosts and the sanctions chair.

# Information: The USMS Rule Book

- Event Hosts are required to have a copy of the current USMS rule book at all events.
- The USMS Open Water and Long Distance Rules are found in Part 3 of the rule book.
- All registered USMS clubs receive a copy of the rule book. Event hosts may obtain a rule book from the USMS National Office for \$10.
- Event Hosts must make themselves familiar with these rules.

# Information: The USMS Open Water Guide to Operations

- [http://www.usms.org/admin/lmschb/owgto\\_sanctions.pdf](http://www.usms.org/admin/lmschb/owgto_sanctions.pdf)
  - OW 101 – Sanction Management
  - OW 102 – Mandatory Safety Regulations
  - OW 103 – Insurance Requirements Event
- Event Hosts must make themselves familiar with these guidelines.

# Part Two:

What Do You Need to Do  
Before You Apply for an  
Open Water Sanction?



# Step #1: Identify your Venue & Event Date

- Working together with the agency that controls the proposed venue and your LMSC Sanctions Chair, determine an appropriate date for your event.
- Do not move forward with other steps until you have completed this one!

# Step #2:

## Secure Your Venue

- Work with the agency that controls the venue so that you understand and meet their expectations. Meeting face-to-face with a responsible agency representative is a great help when you do this for the first time.
- Complete the application for a special use permit for the venue and pay the permit fee(s).

Some agencies require that you use their safety personnel at their venue for your event. Although this may be costly, this is almost always the best kind of help available.

## Step #3:

### Recruit Your Safety Director & Referee

- Identify & recruit your Safety Director & Referee early in the planning process so that these critical members of your event team can help with event development from this point onwards.
- Have your Safety Director & Referee complete the USMS Certification Program, required of both positions.

# Step #4:

## Develop Event Info & Entry Form

- Working with your LMSC Sanctions Chair, develop your event information package & entry form carefully.
- Event information & entry development is a cooperative back-and-forth process that you must complete before you even think about actually applying for sanction.
- Your LMSC Sanctions Chair must approve the final version of your event information and entry form. There should be no surprises on either side when you finally apply for sanction.

# Step #5:

## Develop Your Safety Plan

- You must submit a safety plan on the standardized safety plan application.
- Working with your LMSC Sanctions Chair, develop your safety plan carefully. You may also ask for advice from the USMS Safety Compliance Coordinator.
- Safety plan development is a cooperative back-and-forth process that you must complete before you even think about actually applying for sanction.
- Your LMSC Sanctions Chair must approve the final version of your safety plan. There should be no surprises on either side when you finally apply for sanction.
- The USMS Open Water Compliance Coordinator must approve the final version of your safety plan.

## Step #6:

### Contact Your Online Entry Provider

- Make initial contact with your online entry provider.
- Agree to contractual terms for your event.
- Obtain a URL for your event early.

Once you have obtained your sanction, you can use that information to create online entry forms & paper entry forms (which you will need if you accept day-of-swim entries).

# Part Three:

How Do You Apply  
for an  
Open Water Sanction?

# Step #1: Collect Necessary Info

Before you go online to apply for your sanction, gather the necessary info and have it ready:

- Personal info for Event Director, Safety Director, & Referee (names, phones, mail & email addresses).
- Your event info (in pdf format).
- Your safety plan (in pdf format).
- A short description of your event (maximum 500 characters). Be brief but promotional.
- Attendance: Last year's attendance if applicable & an estimate for this year.
- A picture of your venue, the nicer the better.



# Step #2: Apply for Sanction

- Go to USMS Home Page:  
<http://www.usms.org>. Select “Events & Results”, then the “Sanction an Event” drop-down.
- Follow the directions, using your previously prepared information to complete the form.
- When you have finished, press “Apply”

# Step #3: Let the Process Happen

- You will receive an email receipt from USMS after you have applied for sanction. Save it.
- You will receive an email receipt from USMS after your LMSC Sanction Chair approves your sanction request. Save it.
- You will probably receive a phone call or email from the USMS Open Water Compliance Coordinator with comments and questions about your safety plan. Work together to make any adjustments necessary.
- You will receive an email notification (including your sanction number) from the USMS Safety Compliance Coordinator when your safety plan is approved.
- Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for you have completed your sanction process.

**Let's Go  
Swimming!**