



U.S. Masters Swimming – Sanction Recommendations

Phase 2 (Updated 4.6.2021)

As the pandemic trends continue to improve and more people are vaccinated, USMS has moved to a second phase of our return to competition. Events may still be challenging for some areas of the country due to state, local, and facility restrictions. Phase 2 provides flexibility for the sanctioning LMSC to determine appropriate safeguards for their region of the country and ensure the safety of USMS members while considering the requirements of the facility and local and state health expectations. These guidelines will continue to be revised as needed as conditions continue to evolve.

Phase 2:

Although no set of guidelines is exhaustive, we recommend the sanctioning of safe events under the following guidelines:

1. Federal, state, and local health guidelines and orders, as well as facility requirements, supersede all advice in this document when they are more restrictive than USMS guidance. If social distancing and/or gathering requirements prohibit any of the parameters listed here, LMSC sanctions chairs should NOT sanction the event.
2. USMS encourages members to be vaccinated for COVID-19, but we understand it is a personal decision based on individual factors. USMS is not requiring COVID-19 vaccination for participation in sanctioned events or club activities. If a facility, local municipality, or agency requires participant vaccination as a condition of hosting or permitting USMS activities, those requirements must be factored into planning those activities.
3. Since permits are required for most open water events, you'll want to work with your local/regional and/or state health departments and share with them your additional safety protocols. LMSCs are empowered to make decisions about whether they're able to sanction events within the scope of this phase. LMSC sanctions chairs should review meet information, safety plans, and additional documentation carefully to ensure that they adhere to federal, state, and local guidelines, as well as the guidelines in this document.
4. In-person competitions may be held with event directors and LMSC sanctions chairs considering appropriate participation limits based on the size, layout and features of the facility that ensures the safety of USMS members and accommodates all local, state and federal health guidelines pertaining to COVID-19. Multi-session meets and open water events with multiple staggered groups are permissible and encouraged to ensure physical distancing remains in place.
5. Event directors and LMSC sanction chairs should consider geographic requirements (e.g. event limited to specific LMSC or a specified radius from the venue) as an option to limit participation and comply with local and state health requirements.
6. Event directors shall submit a COVID-19 safety plan to the LMSC sanctions chair for review. Sanctions will not be granted without a safety plan in place. It is requested that LMSC sanctions chairs forward safety plans to events@usmastersswimming.org so the National Office can gather comprehensive best practices and assist as needed.

7. Require attendees to complete the USMS COVID-19 Participant Screening Form prior to entering the facility. Do not allow anyone exhibiting COVID-19-like symptoms to compete or enter the facility.
8. Event directors should institute a temperature check of each attendee before entry into the facility, provide hand sanitizer for attendees, and require face masks for all attendees (swimmers, volunteers, officials, and facility staff) except while in the water.
9. Social distancing on the deck will be imperative to allow for appropriate spacing in the venue between athletes, and to minimize the number of individuals at the starting end of the pool (swimmers, timers, and officials).
10. Event directors are responsible for clearly communicating event procedures and safety plans in published event information and providing email updates and virtual meetings (i.e. open water safety briefings) to attendees as needed including communications any possible exposure post-event if positive tests from attendees are reported [Here are positive test protocol recommendations](#) from the [Aquatics Coalition](#).
11. The most recent [USMS liability release form](#) must be executed by each participant during the event registration process. To be clear, USMS liability insurance doesn't cover transmission of viral or bacterial infections.

Most of all, use common sense to make events as safe as possible for all attendees. We'll be cheering for you, from a distance!