



**U.S. MASTERS
SWIMMING**
OPEN WATER

Open Water Guide to Operations Major Changes for 2015 *(Updated February 2015)*

OWGTO Part 1: Sanction Guidelines

Updated [Sanction Guidelines](#) have been posted on the [USMS Guide to Operations](#). Please refer to the full document for complete guidelines, regulations and implementation requirements. Major changes for 2015 include:

- The Independent Safety Monitor has the authority to revoke a sanction on the day of the event if adequate safety precautions are not in place (*see Articles OW-101.1.3A and OW-101.1.3E, and Article 303.73, USMS 2015 Rule Book*).
- The Open Water Compliance Coordinator must approve the safety plan before a sanction can be issued (*see Article OW-101.1.3B*).
- The LMSC with jurisdiction is responsible for a first level review of the sanction application and safety plan and then issues the sanction following approval of the safety plan by the OWCC (*see Article OW-101.1.3C*).
- Events shall conform to cold water temperature rules (*see Article OW-102.3 and Article 302.2.2, USMS 2015 Rule Book*). Events with the possibility of water temperature under 64° F are advised to file a thermal plan with the OWCC. Events with the possibility of water temperature under 60° F are required to file a thermal plan with the OWCC.
- **Recommended Method for Determining Water Temperature** (*see Article OW-102.3.5*)—Using an accurate thermometer, the event host should take three to five measurements at various places on the course—12 to 18 inches below the water surface and no closer to the shore than 25 meters (if possible)—within one hour before the start of an open water swim. The host should average these measurements, post and/or announce the resulting average temperature at least 30 minutes before the start of the swim, and announce it during the pre-race staff safety and swimmers' meetings.
- **Safety Plan Application** (*see OWGTO Part 2: Addendum D*)—For 2015, any event not sanctioned in 2014 shall use the Safety Plan Application. Events sanctioned in 2014 may use the Safety Plan Application or a plan similar to the one approved in 2014. For 2016, all events shall use the Safety Plan Application. For 2015, cold water events whose water temperature requires a thermal plan shall use the Safety Plan Application to prepare their enhanced thermal plan. (*see Article OW-102.4.2*). A separate digital Safety Plan application form is posted on the OWGTO.

- **Proof of Insurance**—Proof of insurance for operators of motorized watercraft has been rescinded and no longer appears in the guidelines.
- **Regulations Summary** (*see OWGTO Part 1 Article Addendum A*)—The summary of Mandatory Safety Regulations has been updated to include changes in the guidelines.

OWGTO Part 2: Safety Guidelines

Updated [Safety Guidelines](#) have been posted on the [USMS Guide to Operations](#). Please refer to the full document for complete guidelines, safety plan worksheet and check-lists. Major changes for 2015 include:

- By 2016, all events shall file safety plans on the Safety Plan Application located in OWGTO Part 2: Safety Guidelines Addendum D" Open Water Safety Plan Application (*see OWGTO Part 1 Article 102.4.2*).
- Course and Venue Maps are now required to be uploaded as part of the safety plan (see Addendum D: Safety Plan Application introduction).
- A Thermal Plan for Cold Water Swims has been added to the end of the Safety Plan Application. Events with potential water temperatures under 64° F are urged to fill out the plan. Events with water temperature under 60° F are required to fill out the thermal plan and include it in the safety plan application to the OWCC.
- Additional Items for Cold Water Events have been added to the Safety Directors Checklist.