

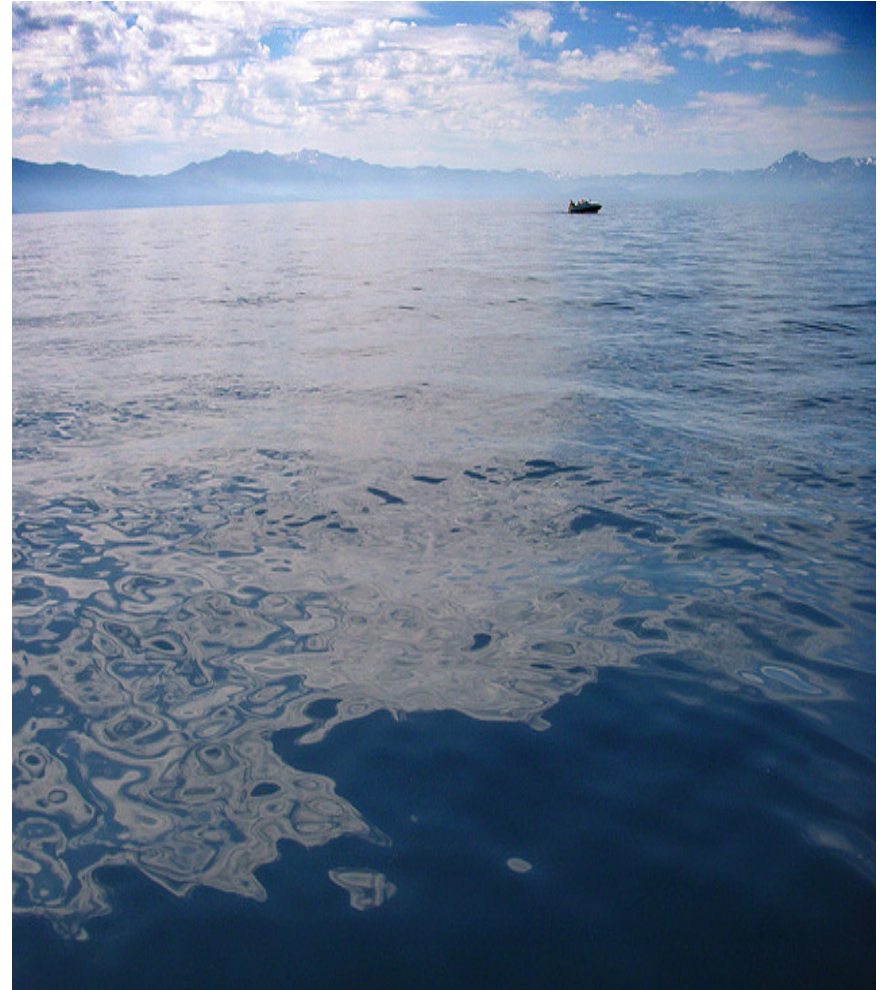
# Open Water Safety



USMS Open Water Safety Webinar  
2014

# Introduction: 7 Critical Areas

- The Venue
- Event Director
- Swimmer Safety
- Staffing for Safety
- Swimmer Supervision
- Communication
- Emergency Action Plans



# Assessment



- Selecting the right venue in which to hold a particular event is possibly the most important decision event organizers make relating to safety.



# Permission/Permits

- Like a Drivers License
- Ensures Big Picture Safety
- Adds an extra layer of protection



# Maps

- Course Map
  - Start/Finish, Unique Features, Distances, Buoy Locations, Danger/Hazard Areas
- Site Map
  - “Nerve Center”, Evacuation Points, First Aid Station, Restrooms, Other Amenities
- Off site EMS



# Water Conditions

- Research seasonal trends regarding temperature and environmental factors
- Depth of water
- Marine Life
- Clean water verification



# The Event Director

- If seeking a USMS sanction, Event Directors shall run their events according to applicable USMS rules and administrative regulations.
- The “Sanction and Safety Guidelines - Major Changes for 2014” document and the “Open Water Guide to Operations” are a “**must read**” when seeking sanctioning for event management team . These are found at USMS.org On the front page look for the pull down for “Volunteers”, then “Guide to Operations”, then “Long Distance / Open Water”

# Planning Tools

- The Open Water Guide to Operations  
Part 1: Sanction Guidelines contains:
  - Sanction Management (Article OW-101)
  - Sanction Process (Article OW- 101.2)
  - Mandatory Safety Regulations (Article OW-102 & Addendum A)
  - Motorized Watercraft and “swimmer monitors” (Article OW- 102.2)
  - Watercraft and Operators Insurance Coverage (Article OW-102.3)
  - Insurance Surcharge (Article OW 103.1)



# More Planning Tools

- The OWGTO Part 2: Open Water Safety Guidelines contains:
  - USMS Open Water Activities (Article OW-201), this contains much of the safety information presented in this webinar.
  - Addendum A: Open Water Safety Plan Worksheet for event information, conditions and safety
  - Addendum B: Safety Director's Checklist
  - Addendum C: Boat Operators Checklist
  - Addendum D: Coaches and Safety Director's Checklist for Open Water Training

# More on Part II – OWGTO

## Open Water Safety Guidelines

- The Safety “Guidelines” are just that guidelines meant to assist you. They have been simplified for ease of use and represent USMS’ expectations for performance at all USMS OW sanctioned events, trainings and clinics. Questions regarding guidelines should be directed to your LMSC or the Open Water Compliance Coordinator.
- Addendum A is the “Open Water Safety Plan Worksheet”. This is a great guide for new event hosts and a critical tool for event planning and safety. It must be uploaded to the OWCC for sanction approval. If possible a course map with key elements should be uploaded also.

# Checklists and Meetings

- Checklists are a recommended resource to ensure good planning and safety.
- Checklists should be completed prior to the event and signed off on by the proper event staff for each check list this could include: Event Director, Referee, Safety Director, Boat Operators
- Checklists should be kept for one year following the event.

# 3 Required Pre-event Meetings

- All Event Staff must attend a mandatory “Pre-event Meeting”
- All Boat Operators and Swimmer Monitors must attend a mandatory pre-swim “Boat Operator Meeting”
- All Swimmers must attend a mandatory pre-swim “Swimmer Meeting”



The Event Director  
and  
the LMSC are responsible for  
enforcement of guidelines and  
mandatory regulations

# Swimmer Safety

- Waiver, Disclaimer, Warning
- Emergency Contacts
- Caps and Numbers
- Safety Briefing
- Postpone, Cancel, Modify
- Plan for Potential Situations



# Waiver, Disclaimer, Warning...

- Aquatics is a high risk activity
- 1 in 140,000
- Duty to warn and protect
- Participant Responsibility



# Emergency Contacts

- Everything I ever needed to know about emergency contacts I learned on a Kindergarten field trip...

## **CONFIDENTIAL** **Emergency Contact Information**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Special Needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Special Needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Pets: \_\_\_\_\_

Party with key to **YOUR** address:

#1 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

#2 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**Next of Kin:**

#1 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

#2 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_



# Caps and Numbers

- High Visibility Caps
- Categories
- Number Corresponds to Emergency Info
- Visible Numbering



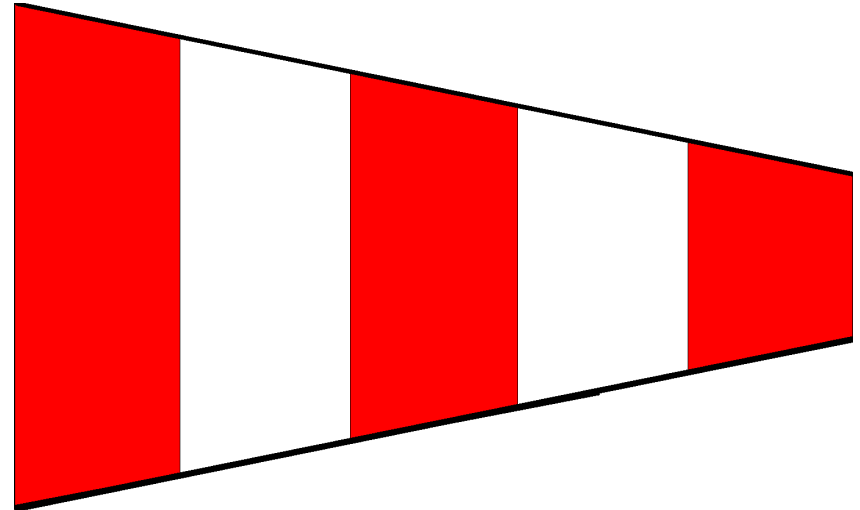
# Swimmer Pre-swim Meeting

- Mandatory for all participants
- Visibly and audibly accessible to all
- Actual “race time” water conditions and expectations
- Start and Finish procedures, potential hazards and other tips
- The course and safety monitor locations
- If you need assistance on the course...
- Evacuation points



# Postpone/Cancel/Modify

- Postponements
- Cancellations
- Modifications



# Plan for Potential Situations

- Heat and/or cold
- Tired swimmers
- Distressed swimmers
- Heart attack/stroke/seizure
- Marine life
- Cuts, bumps, bruises and abrasions
- In over their head





# Staffing for Safety

- Event Director vs. Safety Director
- EMS must be on site
- Course “monitor” placement and numbers
- Non-motorized vs. motorized rescue craft
- Safety Staff pre-race briefing
- Safety “monitor” training
- Safety gear



# Safety Director

- Must work “hand-in-hand” with the Event Director
- EMS
- Monitors
- Training
- Equipment
- Communication



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# EMS Must be on Site

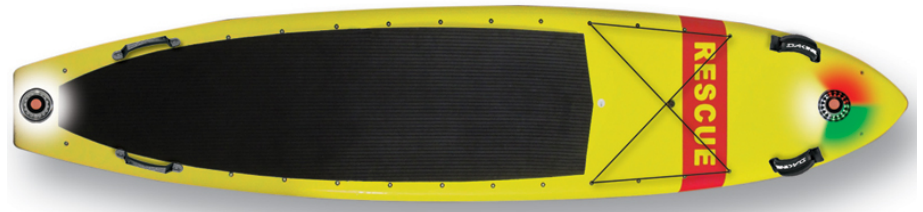


# Course Monitor Placement





# Non-motorized vs. Motorized Rescue Craft





# Motorized Watercraft

## MANDATORY

- All motorized craft used in conjunction with sanctioned open water events must have propeller guard(s) installed for the duration of the event **OR** each vessel must have a designated “swimmer monitor” whose primary duty is to keep the boat clear of swimmers.

Examples of allowable propeller guards



Example of disallowable propeller guard



# Exceptions to mandatory propeller guard requirements

- Boats owned and operated by or on behalf of Coast Guard, police, fire and rescue, or other government agencies;
- Boats at anchor from start to finish of the sanctioned event with engines off, while any swimmer is in the water;
- Boats with propellers fore of the rudder (e.g. “inboard motors”)
- Boats with a designated “swimmer monitor”

# Boats with propellers fore of the rudder can be used provided:

- These boats do not run directly on the designated swim course
- For events requiring personal escort craft, water craft with inboard motors may be allowed on the course provided their engines are off when any swimmer is within 20 feet of the propeller and during relay exchanges. For feedings the swimmer may approach within 5 feet of the bow or side of the boat with engines engaged.

# Watercraft and Operators Insurance Coverage

## MANDATORY

- Motorized watercraft and/or watercraft operators performing any role in the operation of the event shall produce “proof of insurance”. Proof must be submitted to the Event Director at least 24 hours prior to the event and kept on file for one year.



# Safety Staff Pre-race Briefing



- Equipment
- Event Procedures outlined
- Positioning
- General assistance duties
- Response and care duties
- Communication
- Evacuation
- Cancellation

# Safety “Monitor” Training





# Safety Gear

- Lifeguards use rescue tubes...



- Not just EMS can use:
  - AED
  - Oxygen
  - Back Board
  - Epi Pen



# Swimmer Supervision

- Accounting of Swimmers, number in versus number out...
- The “Big Eye” Theory
- What is your Response and Care Objective?



# Accounting of Swimmers, number in versus number out...

- Actual Number in the Water
- Number out of the Water
- It would be so easy to lose one!



# The “Big Eye” Theory

- Layers of Protection”
- “Active Supervision”
- Someone watches everyone



# Communication

- Identifiable people to communicate with
- Public Address System
- On or in Water Communication
  - Whistle, Air Horn, Flag, Hand Signals
- Above or Out of Water Communication
  - Radios, Phones, Flares





# Emergency Action Plans

- Keep it easy and build it to the level of your staffing
- Consider the size of the course
- Consider the types of craft you are using
- Consider potential conditions when planning
- Take your response and care objective into consideration



# Emergency Action Plans cont.

- Practice “pull outs” and “transfers” if possible
- Know your evacuation options
- Have EMS on site
- If you use EMS get more EMS, have someone there the whole time.
- Document it all, fill out reports and fill with all appropriate parties.

# Thank You

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