This document contains the administrative rules and regulations for the sanctioning of open water events.
# Table of Contents

Article OW-101: Sanction Management ........................................................................................ 3
   OW-101.1 Administration .................................................................................................... 3
   OW-101.2 Sanction Process ................................................................................................. 3

Article OW-102: Mandatory Safety Regulations ........................................................................... 4
   OW-102.1 General Information ............................................................................................ 4
   OW-102.2 Motorized Watercraft .......................................................................................... 4
   OW-102.3 Water Temperature ............................................................................................. 5
   OW-102.4 Safety Plan Application ...................................................................................... 5

Article OW-103: Sanction Fees ...................................................................................................... 6
   OW-103.1 Collection of Sanction Fees ................................................................................ 6

Addendum A: Mandatory Safety Regulations ................................................................................ 7
   Regulations Summary ................................................................................................................. 7
   Propeller Guard Examples ......................................................................................................... 7

Addendum B: Independent Safety Monitor .................................................................................... 9
   Placeholder .................................................................................................................................. 9
Part 1: Open Water Sanction Guidelines

Article OW-101: Sanction Management

OW-101.1 Administration

OW-101.1.1 Governing Bodies—The conduct and organization of open water sanctioning for U.S. Masters Swimming is governed by USMS through its Open Water Compliance Coordinator, Long Distance committee and LMSCs.

OW-101.1.2 Governing Regulations—The uniform sanction process operates according to the following rules and administrative regulations:
A) Article 201: Membership and Representation, USMS Rule Book Part 2;
B) Article 203: Open Water Sanction, USMS Rule Book Part 2;
C) Article 204: Liability Release, USMS Rule Book Part 2;
D) Open Water and Long Distance Swimming Rules, USMS Rule Book Part 3; and

OW-101.1.3 Sanction Management

A) Denial or Revocation of Sanction—The LMSC, USMS President and Executive Director have the authority to deny or revoke an open water sanction for failure to comply with any safety or administrative procedure. The Independent Safety Monitor has the authority to revoke the sanction on the day of the event if adequate safety precautions are not in place (see OW-101.1.3E).

B) Open Water Compliance Coordinator (OWCC)—The OWCC is a division of the USMS National Office and is a second level review over required safety plans and administrative procedures for all open water events. The OWCC must approve the safety plan before a sanction can be issued. Contact the OWCC at OWcompliance@usms.org.

C) LMSCs—The LMSC with jurisdiction is responsible for a first level review of the sanction applications and safety plans, then issuing the sanction once the safety plan is approved by the OWCC. The LMSC is also responsible for scheduling events held in their LMSC.

D) Event Directors—Event directors shall run their events according to applicable USMS rules and administrative regulations and according to the process defined in their approved Safety Plan.


F) Open Water Support—Assistance with any USMS open water activity may be obtained at openwater@usms.org.

OW-101.2 Sanction Process

OW-101.2.1 USMS has provided an online sanction application process for use by the OWCC, LMSC authorized representatives and event directors.
A) All open water sanctions shall apply through the online sanction application.
B) A link to the sanction system ("Sanction an Event") can be found under the "Events & Results" of the home page of USMS.
C) Tutorials may be viewed on the USMS Guide to Operations—Sanctions Section.
D) Safety Plans shall be uploaded during the sanction application process and must be approved by the OWCC prior to issuance of the sanction.

**OW-101.2.2 Sanction Eligible Events**—Events defined under the USMS Rule Book Article 302 are eligible for sanction.

**OW-101.2.3** The OWCC shall review the safety plan uploaded during the application process.

A) The OWCC may request that the event host make changes to the safety plan prior to sanction approval.

B) The sanction shall not be issued without an approved safety plan.

**OW-101.2.4** The event director shall provide to the LMSC all approvals and licenses from all necessary entities, including parks, U.S. Coast Guard, etc., prior to the event.

**OW-101.2.5** In addition to the information requested during the application process, the LMSC has the option to discuss and request other items including:

A) Use (or not) of the One-Event registration, including determination of the total fee, which includes a USMS-determined base price plus additional LMSC fees;

B) Determination of the amount of the sanction fee or bond, if required, and requirements attached to the bonding process; and

C) Additional documents and publicity information.

**OW-101.2.6** The LMSC may offer optional services to events, e.g., providing buoys and other equipment. These are not considered part of the official sanction process and are by agreement between the LMSC and the event director.

---

**Article OW-102: Mandatory Safety Regulations**

**OW-102.1 General Information**

**OW-102.1.1** All USMS sanctioned open water events are subject to administrative review to ensure compliance with these standards. Failure to comply with any safety or administrative procedure may result in denial or revocation of sanction (see Article OW-101.1.3 for authority).

**OW-102.1.2** Events are encouraged to use the Open Water Safety Guidelines document (OWGTO, USMS Guide to Operations—Long Distance / Open Water), checklists, worksheets and safety education documents posted on the USMS website and elsewhere for preparation of their safety plans and management of their event safety.

**OW-102.1.3** Event staff must attend a mandatory pre-event meeting.

**OW-102.1.4** Boat operators and swimmer monitors (see article OW-102.2.2B) must attend a mandatory pre-swim boat operator meeting.

**OW-102.1.5** Swimmers must attend a mandatory pre-swim meeting.

**OW-102.1.6** Administration of the Mandatory Safety Regulations is detailed in Addendum A: Mandatory Safety Regulations.

**OW-102.2 Motorized Watercraft**

**OW-102.2.1 Propeller Driven Motorized Craft**

A) All propeller driven watercraft used in conjunction with the sanctioned open water events must comply with one or more of the following:
i) Have a propeller guard design that protects swimmers from propeller strikes.

ii) Have a **swimmer monitor** on board to assist the boat captain while navigating on the swim course. Swimmer monitors shall be assigned to each motorized watercraft without a propeller guard. The swimmer monitor shall insure the boat steers clear of all swimmers while the motor is running. The swimmer monitor may not swim in the event. The swimmer monitor may not drive the boat; however they may perform other actions that do not detract from their primary role.

**OW-102.2.2 Exceptions to Article OW-102.2.1**

A) Boats owned and operated by or on behalf of Coast Guard, police, fire and rescue, or other government agencies;

B) Boats at anchor from start to finish of the sanctioned event with engine(s) off, while any swimmer is in the water; and

C) Boats with propellers fore of the rudder (e.g. inboard motors), provided:
   1. These boats do not run directly on the designated swim course.
   2. 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 boat with engines engaged.

**OW-102.3 Water Temperature**

**OW-102.3.1** Events shall conform to cold water temperature limits as defined in Article 302.2.2 (USMS Rule Book, Part 3).

**OW-102.3.2** Events with the possibility of water temperatures below 60° F shall be required to prepare a thermal plan.

**OW-102.3.3** Events with the possibility of water temperatures below 64° F are strongly urged to prepare a thermal plan.

**OW-102.3.4 Thermal Plan for Cold Water Swims**—The template for cold water thermal plans is part of the Safety Plan Application (OWGTO Part 2: Safety Guidelines, Addendum D: Safety Plan Application).

**OW-102.3.5 Recommended Method for Determining Water Temperature**—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.

**OW-102.4 Safety Plan Application**

**OW-102.4.1** All sanctioned events shall use the Safety Plan Application (OWGTO Part 2: Safety Guidelines, Addendum D: Safety Plan Application) to create their safety plan for review by the OWCC.

**OW-102.4.2** Implementation of the Safety Plan Application shall be as follows:

A) All events shall use the Safety Plan Application.
Part 1: Open Water Sanction Guidelines

B) Cold water events whose water temperature requires a thermal plan shall use the Safety Plan Application to prepare their enhanced thermal plan.

Article OW-103: Sanction Fees

OW-103.1 Collection of Sanction Fees

USMS shall collect from the LMSCs a sanction fee as established by the USMS House of Delegates for sanctioned open water events. The LMSC may pass along any portion of the surcharge to the event host.
Addendum A: Mandatory Safety Regulations

Regulations Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Verified By</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
<th>Required By</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety Plan</td>
<td>OWCC</td>
<td>Plan uploaded with sanction application</td>
<td>When sanction is applied for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Safety Plan Application</td>
<td>OWCC</td>
<td>Safety plan uploaded using the Safety Plan Application</td>
<td>All events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propeller Guards or on-board Swimmer monitor</td>
<td>Event Director, LMSC and ISM</td>
<td>Boat Operators Checklist report to be retained for 1 year</td>
<td>Morning of the event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety meetings for event workers, boat operators, swimmer monitors and swimmers</td>
<td>Event Director, LMSC and ISM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-event for event workers; pre-swim for boat operators, swimmer monitors and swimmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformance to water temperature regulations</td>
<td>OWCC, LMSC and ISM</td>
<td>Cold water event checklist, enhanced thermal plan</td>
<td>Enhanced thermal plan when sanction is applied for; Checklist on day of swims.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Propeller Guard Examples

Examples of allowable Propeller guards

![Propeller Guard Example 1](image1.png)
![Propeller Guard Example 2](image2.png)
Example of disallowable Propeller guards
Addendum B: Independent Safety Monitor

Placeholder

Once approved for publication, information on Independent Safety Monitors will be included here.