

USMS Open Water Guide to Operations

Part 1: Open Water Sanction Guidelines Revision Date: <u>January 2016</u>

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

About U.S. Masters Swimming

U.S. Masters Swimming, founded in 1970, is a membership-operated national governing body that promotes health, wellness, fitness and competition for adults through swimming. It does so by partnering with more than 1,500 adult swim programs across the country; promoting information via the bimonthly member magazine, SWIMMER, monthly e-newsletters, STREAMLINES, and website, usms.org; and by sanctioning and promoting pool, open water and virtual events and competitions. More than 55,000 adults are registered members of U.S. Masters Swimming.

Part 1: Open Water Sanction Guidelines

Table of Contents

Article OW-101	: Sanction Management	3		
OW-101.1 OW-101.2	Administration Sanction Process			
	: Mandatory Safety Regulations			
OW-102.1 OW-102.2	General Information Motorized Watercraft			
OW-102.2 OW-102.3 OW-102.4	Water Temperature Safety Plan Application	5		
Article OW-103: Sanction Fees				
OW-103.1	Collection of Sanction Fees	6		
Addendum A: Mandatory Safety Regulations7				
Regulations Summary 7 Propeller Guard Examples 7				
Addendum B: Independent Safety Monitor				
Placeholder		9		

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
 - E) Open Water Guide to Operations (OWGTO), USMS Guide to Operations—Long Distance / Open Water Section.

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.
- E) Independent Safety Monitor (ISM)—An Independent Safety Monitor shall be in attendance to ensure the safety of the event. See USMS Rule Book, Article 303.8.3 and OWGTO Part 1: Sanction Guidelines Addendum B: Independent Safety Monitor.
- 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.

USMS OPEN WATER GUIDE TO OPERATIONS

Part 1: Open Water Sanction Guidelines

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:

Part 1: Open Water Sanction Guidelines

- 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.

- 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.

Part 1: Open Water Sanction Guidelines

Addendum A: Mandatory Safety Regulations

Regulations Summary

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

Propeller Guard Examples

Examples of allowable Propeller guards



USMS OPEN WATER GUIDE TO OPERATIONS

Part 1: Open Water Sanction Guidelines

Example of disallowable Propeller guards





Addendum B: Independent Safety Monitor

Placeholder

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