

## Event Safety

### Introduction

All of us appreciate the freedom and relaxed nature in open water swimming. As fun as it is to enjoy, we all must recognize the inherent risks we face in open water as opposed to pool swimming.

1. Most pools have some insurance to protect swimmers from any accident.
2. Most pools are regularly inspected by local health departments for water quality and safety.
3. Most pools are maintained to near perfect swimming conditions.
4. Most pools are staffed with full time certified lifeguards.
5. Most pools have emergency life saving equipment.
6. Most pools are near hospitals with emergency departments.
7. Lifeguards are able to see the entire pool including the bottom.
8. Swimmers have lane lines separating the lanes and lines on the bottom and turn targets on the wall to follow.
9. Most pools will suspend operations in dangerous weather conditions.

The follow are measures to mitigate these risks.

### Event Preparation

All participants must be currently registered USMS members. (This requirement along with one requiring all participants being under direct observation of a USMS registered member during the event means participants will have USMS insurance for the event under practice rules. See: <https://www.usms.org/club-central/insurance> )

All participants need to practice and develop their swimming in a pool prior to trying an open water event. Participants will enter the event through Swim.com. By that time, they are required to have recorded swims in a pool of equal distance or greater than the event they plan to enter.

Participants may swim in any open water venue of their choosing. They should have permission from the venue operator to make their swim.

They should swim in a venue where water quality is tested regularly and conditions are posted daily on the venue's website. If any issues occur you should have ample time to reschedule or change the event location.

By swimming these events virtually each week, participants have built in schedule flexibility to adjust the event swim due to poor weather conditions without losing the opportunity to complete the swim.

### Event Participation

All participants must sign the Event Participation Waiver prior to the event.

All participants should have and use a “safe swim buoy” during their event. (See <https://www.xterrawetsuits.com/collections/accessories/products/xterra-swim-buoy-orange> )

During your scheduled event swims, participants should be under constant observation by a USMS member during their swim to comply with USMS insurance requirements. Participants may bring their own support person and non-motorized watercraft if they choose.

All event swims should occur in designated swim areas or in designated no wake zones. Participants should stay in these zones. In general swims should occur within 100m of the shoreline.

No participants should swim in water temperatures less than 57°F. Participants should wear wetsuits if water temperature is 57°F or less than 60.8°F. No participants should swim in water temperatures greater than 85°F.

During group swims all participants should avoid physical contact with other participants and their swim buoys. Participants should not change directions during their swim to prevent other participants from overtaking them. Individual support non motorized water craft should avoid all participants unless aid is requested.

No participant shall swim in conditions in which they are not confident of their ability to complete the swim. During a swim if weather conditions worsen, participants should swim to the nearest shoreline and signal to their USMS member observer their decision to stop their swim.

If during a swim participants need assistance for any reason, they should stop swimming, hold onto their swim buoy, signal to a USMS member observer by waving one arm. They may rest or recover until they are ready to resume their swim or they may stop their swim at that point.