

Meet Marshal Training Guide

Introduction

- This Meet Marshal Training Guide has been developed to assist you in understanding your role as a Meet Marshal at USA Swimming sanctioned events.
- This Guide will give you a basic understanding of the role and the importance of the Meet Marshal to both USA swimming and the LSC.
- You will gain additional expertise and confidence while working on deck at meets.

Meet Marshal Requirements:

- Age 18 & Over
- Affiliated with a USA Swimming member club

Meet Marshal Position Description

- A Meet Marshal is a required meet official whose responsibility is to enforce warm-up procedures and maintain order in the swimming venue.
- Safety in the swimming venue is the priority.
- The role is described in the [USA Swimming Rules & Regulations](#) Article 102.18.

USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Article 102.18

Marshals Shall wear identifying attire and enforce warm-up procedures and maintain order in the swimming venue. The Marshal shall have full authority to warn or order to cease and desist, and, with the concurrence of the Referee, to remove, or have removed from the swimming venue anyone behaving in an unsafe manner or using profane or abusive language, or whose actions are disrupting the orderly conduct of the meet.

About the Role

- Meet Marshals should be friendly and have a smile on their face as they walk about the swimming venue.
- The Meet Marshal is a representative of the host club and the sport of swimming.
- Meet Marshals are recruited/assigned by the meet director and report to the Meet Referee.

Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy

- The Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy prohibits the Meet Marshal from having one-on-one interactions with a minor athlete that is not within an observable and interruptible distance from another adult.
- In your role, you will interact with minor athletes, therefore you are required to abide by this Policy during the time you are volunteering.
- [MAAPP Policy](#)

Meet Procedures

- Warm-ups should not start without the Meet Marshals on deck.
- Meet Marshals are also required during time trials.

- Meet Marshals are dismissed by the Meet Referee at the conclusion of the meet, after any final swimming warm-downs are completed and locker rooms are emptied.
- Meet Marshals should have a radio to communicate, if available, but must be on a different channel than meet officials.

Attire

- Meet Marshals are required to wear identifying attire as designated by the LSC.
- Meet Marshals will be removed from the deck by the Meet Referee if not properly credentialed, identified, or wearing the correct attire.

Upon Arrival

- Be on the pool deck 15 minutes prior to the start of warm-up. Sign in at the Officials' Table.
- Report to the Meet Referee - discuss preferred warm-up positions and warm-up guidelines.
- Locate the first-aid equipment, emergency action plans, and lifeguards, so that you can access the equipment if necessary. Participate in an emergency action plan and communicate with the lifeguards as needed.
- It is important to know who will activate the emergency action plan if needed.

Phones, Cameras, and Recording Devices

- Meet Marshals should not use a cell phone while on duty.
- Meet Marshals should focus on the pool and the job at hand.
- Cell phones are also not allowed behind the starting blocks by anyone at the meet.
 - Remind timers and any others behind the blocks that cell phones must be put away.
 - If anyone refuses to comply, report the issue to the Meet Referee right away.
 - Notify the Meet Referee/Meet Director any time you warn about cell phone or camera use.
- If there is a credentialed photographer at the meet, the photographer can only photograph from behind the starting blocks after the swimmers are in the water.

Meet Sessions

- Prelims/Finals meets
 - Minimum of 4 Meet Marshals
 - At least one Meet Marshal of each gender
- Timed Finals Sessions
 - Minimum of 2 Meet Marshals
 - At least one Meet Marshal of each gender

Reporting Structure at Meets

- All Meet Marshals report to the Meet Referee who will assign Meet Marshals with specific instructions (Article 102.11.4)

- Meet Marshals must confer with the Meet Referee regarding the removal of anyone from the venue.
- The Meet Director, pool personnel, security, etc., are responsible for the actual physical removal of an individual from the venue at the direction of the Meet Referee.
- The Meet Director and facility staff are also responsible for administering First Aid, bodily fluid clean up, and submitting a Report of Occurrence.

Safety/Operational Risk Director

- Some meets may have a Safety/Operational Risk Director.
- Meet Marshals may be asked to have a meeting prior to the meet with the Safety/Operational Risk Director or the Head/Lead Meet Marshal.
- The Meet Referee may delegate to the Safety/Operational Risk Director the meet-specific Meet Marshal placement and on-deck assignments.
- No matter what, the Meet Marshals still report to the Meet Referee.

Lifeguards

- Lifeguards are not Meet Marshals and are not trained in the Meet Marshal role.
- Per the American Red Cross and the YMCA, the responsibility of a lifeguard during swim meets (including warm-up and warm-down) is to conduct patron surveillance by closely watching over the swimmers and to take necessary actions to prevent injuries and also to respond to emergencies.

Where on deck should Meet Marshals be During Warm-Ups?

- When there are two Meet Marshals:
 - One Meet Marshal should be at the start stand corner of the pool observing the warm-up.
 - The other Meet Marshal should be located diagonally across the pool.
 - Each Meet Marshal is responsible for an “L-shape”: the two sides of the pool nearest them.
- When there are four Meet Marshals:
 - Each Meet Marshal can take a quadrant of the pool during warm-ups.
 - You may walk down the side of the pool. If you observe unsafe behavior, talk to the individual to correct the behavior, then return to your original position.

Meet Marshal Location

- If there is a separate warm-up pool, at least one Meet Marshal should be stationed at the warm-up pool at all times.
- Locker room checks should occur regularly.
- In a meet where there are more than four Meet Marshals, locker room checks can be scheduled every 30 minutes.
- When only two-to-four Meet Marshals are present, the priority is observing warm-ups.
 - Once competition starts, locker room checks may begin.
- If there are more than two Meet Marshals, two non-athlete, same gender Meet Marshals are to check the locker rooms together.

- If there are breaks during competition and the pool is open for warm-ups, the Meet Marshals must be on deck in the “L-shape” position.

During the Meet

- Avoid walking the pool deck with other Meet Marshals unless a specific person requires a witness.
- Never have your back to the pool.
- You may meet and discuss issues or concerns with other Meet Marshals, but face the pool at all times.
- Rotating positions frequently helps keep all Meet Marshals alert.
- Never leave the warm-down pool unattended when rotating positions.
- Diving boards are never to be used at a meet. Starting blocks should never be used in the warm-up pool.

Meet Marshal Responsibilities

- Observe the warm-up lanes with eyes on the pool at all times.
- Observe for inappropriate people on the pool deck
 - Only credentialed swimmers, coaches, officials, and meet volunteers are allowed on the pool deck.
 - Credentialed means the individual has current certifications and have been approved by the Meet Director or Meet Referee.
 - Some meets will provide wristbands or other identification to be on deck.
 - Parents are to remain in the spectator area.
 - Marshals are to direct uncredentialed people to leave the deck immediately.
- Athletes with disabilities may have a Personal Assistant. The Personal Assistant must be a credentialed member of USA Swimming.
- Conduct locker room checks (with another adult non-athlete member). Ensure there are no recording devices, horseplay, or other adults present.

Once the Meet Begins

- During the meet, the Meet Marshals shall monitor any separate warm-down pool.
- If there is no separate warm-down pool, the Meet Marshals shall walk the deck area.
 - Remind swimmers as needed regarding walking, not running, on deck, no toys being tossed on deck, no swimmers creating obstructions on the pool deck.
 - Tour locker rooms (with another non-athlete member) for safety concerns, no recording devices, etc.
 - Report any swimmer deck changing.
- There may be breaks during the meet when the pool is open for warm-up or warm-down swims. Meet Marshals must be in place to observe the pool.
- Check the deck again to verify that only credentialed coaches, officials, and swimmers are on deck.

What are Meet Marshals NOT expected to do?

- Respond to emergency medical situations.

- Meet Marshals report problems to the Meet Referee and Meet Director
 - Meet Marshals direct swimmers and others in safe on-deck behaviors
 - Meet Marshals follow the directions of the Meet Referee and Meet Director
- Meet Marshals cannot be coaches or the Meet Director in the session in which they are serving as a Meet Marshal.

After the Meet Session

- At the conclusion of the meet or session, continue to walk the pool deck, monitor locker rooms and warm-down pool, looking for safety concerns.
- Swimmers may still be warming down from their final race(s).
- You must remain on deck for at least 15 minutes and until released by the Meet Referee.
- Always report to the Meet Referee prior to leaving the venue.

Meet Warm-Ups

- Warm-up procedures/lane assignments will vary by meet.
- Some meets will have clubs assigned to lanes for warm-up at specific times.
- Other meets will have general warm-up for all swimmers entered into the meet.
- Specific warm-up procedures will be different depending on which type is used.
- All swimmers MUST be supervised by the swimmer's coach during warm-ups.
- Coaches are responsible for training/certifying their swimmers on starts.
- Meet Marshals will observe all warm-up lanes for swimmers following warm-up procedures safely.

Warm-Up with Specific Assigned Lane Times

- Clubs will be assigned lanes and the exact warm-up times.
- Swimmers will use feet-first entry and circle swim during their warm-up.
- General warm-up and start/pace may occur within designated lanes/specific times.
- Each club determines its warm-up procedures within its lanes.

Warm-Up with General Meet Warm-Up

- General warm-up is the first half of the meet warm-up.
- Swimmers will use feet-first entry and circle swim during their warm-up.
- Swimmers may be in any lane.
- Start and pace practice will begin at a designated time.
- The outside lanes are used for pace work at a designated time.
- The next lanes in from the pace lanes are used to practice starts.
- The third lane in is for general practice and can be used for the return of the swimmer who worked on a start in the adjacent lane.
- Coaches may ask for additional start lanes. Please refer any such requests to the Meet Referee (or designee).

Backstroke Ledge Starts - Warm Up

- Backstroke ledges may be used for starts during warm-up.
- The swimmers may or may not have experience using a backstroke ledge.

- Backstroke ledges should be used in a separate start lane.
- There should be additional coaches/staff to assist with the use of the backstroke ledges for practice starts during warm-up.
- Some backstroke ledges may be retractable and may snap as they retract.
- Backstroke ledge use is the responsibility of the swimmers and coaches.

Orange Cones - Warm Up

- Usually, orange cones are placed on top of the starting blocks to show that the warm-up lane is not open for practice starts.
- When a lane is opened for practice starts, the orange cone needs to be removed just prior to the swimmers starting.
- Once the pool is cleared to start the meet, the remaining orange cones are also removed and placed next to the block on the pool deck or other designated area.

Warm-Ups

- Swimmers are to clear the pool upon completion of warm-ups.
- The pool is not for socializing, chatting, or horseplay.
- The same policy applies to warm-up lanes or the warm-up pool once competition has started.
- Only registered participants in the meet may use the pool facilities (i.e. spectators are not allowed to be in the pools at any time)
 - Non-participating children should be removed from all warm-up and wading pools.

Sportsmanship

- Bullying or taunting is prohibited at all times.
- If you observe this behavior, intervene to stop the bullying behavior immediately.
- Inform the Meet Referee or Meet Director so they may handle it further.

Additional Safe Sport Issues

- Rubdowns, massages, and athletic training modalities are not allowed except by a licensed massage therapist or other certified professional.
- Coaches are not allowed to perform massages, rubdowns, or athletic training modalities - including stretching.
 - If you observe a coach performing a massage, rubdown, or athletic training modality on an athlete, report the behavior immediately to the Meet Director or Meet Referee.
- Swimmers may not sit on the lap of any non-family member coach or official.
 - If you think this is happening, remind the adult of the prohibition and ask them to stop.
 - Inform the Meet Director or Meet Referee of the behavior.

Deck Hazards

- Report to the Meet Referee any unsafe areas on deck, including loose wires, slippery areas, loose blocks, or overcrowding of swimmers in a lane.
- Be alert for electronic equipment cores, pad cords, buttons, etc. that may fall into the pool during warm-up.
- Remove any glass bottles, vessels, etc., that you may see on deck.

Rude or Disrespectful Behavior

- Rude or disrespectful behavior is not tolerated.
- This includes, without limitation, profanity, even if not directed at the Meet Marshal or another meet official.

Hazards

Drones

- Drones are prohibited over venues any time athletes, coaches, officials and/or spectators are present.
 - Unless prior written approval is obtained by USA Swimming.
 - Report any drone spotted to the Meet Referee.

Weapons

- Observe any facility-prohibited weapons.
- Notify the Meet Director or Meet Referee immediately if you observe weapons (i.e. guns, knives, etc.) on the premises.
- Do not attempt to intervene with a weapon-carrying individual.

Locker Rooms

- Locker rooms should be surveyed per the Safe Sport Locker Room Monitoring requirements of the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy.
- Cameras, cell phones, or other electronic recording devices are not allowed to be used in locker rooms.
- If you see anyone taking pictures or possibly recording in the locker rooms, report the person and the activity to the Meet Referee.
 - Do not permit the person to remain in the locker room.
 - Ask a nearby bystander to go to the officials' table and get the Meet Referee to come to the locker room immediately or use your radio to get assistance.
- Do not physically touch the person.

Bulkheads

- Swimming under the bulkhead is extremely dangerous.
- There should be a lane line in place to prevent swimmers from swimming directly next to a bulkhead.
- When under the bulkhead a swimmer is hidden from view.
- A swimmer could get caught underneath and not be able to get free, which could result in a serious medical emergency and drowning risk.

- Swimmers are permitted one warning. If a swimmer continues to swim under the bulkhead, they should be removed from the venue (with concurrence of the Meet Referee).
- Only meet officials can walk across the bulkhead unless the bulkhead is also a general meet walkway.
 - Meet Marshals and lifeguards are considered meet officials for this purpose.

Outdoor Meet Issues

- No open fire of any sort is allowed in the hospitality area or on the pool deck without prior LSC permission.
- Be alert for propane or electric heaters or cooling units that may be brought on deck or be placed inside tents on deck.
 - These items should also have received prior approval from the Meet Director for use.
- In tight quarters, heaters may be a safety hazard in causing a fire or carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Cooling units, fans, or heating units may cause tripping hazards with the cords.
- Cooling units or heaters may put a strain on the venue's electrical system.
- Cords should be covered with tape, a rug, or other cord protector to reduce tripping and should always be away from the water.
- Report any issues to the Meet Referee or Meet Director.

Emergency Response

Injuries

- If someone is hurt, even someone only needing minimal attention, such as ice or a bandage, notify a lifeguard first, if present, then the Meet Director.
- The Meet Director is in charge of completing the Report of Occurrence form with USA Swimming.
- If an ambulance is needed, the lifeguard or Meet Director should notify authorities.
- If your assistance is not required in the area of the injury, continue your role as Meet Marshal.
- The Meet Director may ask you to assist with emergency procedures such as crowd control or waiting for an ambulance.
- Take emergency instructions from the Meet Director, but notify the Meet Referee if you need to temporarily leave your Meet Marshal duties.

Bodily Fluids and Biohazards

- If you notice bodily fluids or biohazards, notify the Meet Referee and Meet Director.
- Bodily fluids or biohazards must be cleaned up as quickly as possible.
- Prevent others from accidentally coming into contact with the substance.
- If the substance prevents swimmers from safely entering or exiting the competition pool, the meet should be delayed until clean-up is completed.

- It is not the responsibility of the Meet Marshal to complete the clean-up process. It is the responsibility of the Meet Marshal to help protect others from exposure.

Emergencies

- All directives should come from facility personnel, the Meet Referee, or the Meet Director.
- The Meet Marshal will take direction from the Meet Referee and may be asked to assist facility staff and the Meet Director, depending on the emergency.
- The meet announcer may be instructed to make public announcements to participants and spectators.
- Depending on the circumstances, the pool area, facility, or both may be evacuated under the direction of lifeguards, meet personnel, and/or emergency responders.

Final Reminders

- Go to the Meet Referee with any questions.
- When you are having issues with individuals not wanting to follow the safety guidelines, you have the authority to take actions. However, remember you work under the direction of the Meet Referee.
- Always keep the Meet Referee informed.
- By keeping a friendly, positive, demeanor while you maintain a safe environment, you show others that you want to keep them safe and allow a fun atmosphere at the meet.
- Meet Marshals have an active role in keeping swimmers safe at the meet.
- Your role is that of a Meet Marshal, not a parent, fan, or coach.
- Be vigilant in keeping your assigned area safe for all swimmers, volunteers and non-athlete members.
- Always remember, your role is in service to the event and the swimmers.

LSC Procedures

- Complete this training.
- Follow your LSC procedures regarding testing and next steps.
- Every LSC may have different procedures.
 - Be aware of the procedures in the LSC that is sanctioning the event.
 - You can submit your Meet Marshal Training completion certificate to the LSC Registrar.
- Wear the LSC designated uniform (i.e. Meet Marshal ID/safety vest)