



Strategies to Incentivize Officials to Volunteer at Meets

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Clubs utilize many different strategies to encourage participation by new officials and incentivize officials to volunteer at meets. Below are some strategies to encourage officials to volunteer at your club's meets.

For new officials:

- **Have a coach or coaches take the lead in recruiting new officials.** Coaches are a familiar face who parents often see at practice. Therefore, they are a great messenger as to the need for officials, even more so than current officials. A personal invitation goes a long way in welcoming officials to the deck!
- **Cover the costs of USA Swimming registration and background check.** Costs of USA Swimming registration and a background check are over \$100 total – which can be a barrier to entry. Consider including the costs of USA Swimming registration and a background check in your club's budget, for both new officials and current officials.
- **Cover the costs of a Minnesota Swimming-branded polo shirt.** The cost of the officials uniform is another barrier to entry. Consider covering the cost of a Minnesota Swimming branded polo shirt for new officials from your club for new officials. *Note: The Officials Committee discourages club-branded officials uniforms.*
- **Hold a mock meet or an intrasquad meet for a lower-pressure introduction to officiating.** A mock meet or an intrasquad meet is a great low-pressure introduction to officiating in a familiar environment with familiar people. *Note: only sessions at USA Swimming sanctioned or approved meets count towards apprentice requirements, but non-sanctioned competition is still a valuable learning tool.*

For current officials:

- **Thank officials!** This is the easiest strategy to make officials feel appreciated on deck. Officials are volunteering their time, and many do not have swimmer in the water. A small 'thank you' at the end of the session (or even during the session) goes a long way in making officials feel appreciated.
- **Offer volunteer credit for home and away officials sessions.** Officials are an integral part of any home or away swim meet, and the hard work of officials at both should be rewarded. Consider counting sessions on deck at both home and away meets towards your club's volunteering or fundraising requirements.