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2025-2026 CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR YMCA SWIM COACH REGISTRATION

YMCA competitive swimming is a program structured to provide a safe, fair and coordinated competitive progression from local competitions to YMCA of the USA sponsored national events. The governance of YMCA competitive sports is coordinated through Y-USA and an authorized National Advisory Committee for each sport. The Y is committed to the safety of everyone who uses our aquatic facilities and participates in our aquatic programs. In the interest of maintaining the highest level of safety, under the Rules that Govern YMCA Competitive Sports – Swimming Addendum, in order for an individual to serve as a designated coach representing a member association in swimming, that coach must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Complete background screenings every 2 years, conducted by his/her YMCA association
- Complete child/athlete protection training
- Complete all safety certifications and other training and certification as required by his/her association, Y-USA and the US Center for Safe Sport
- Per YMCA of the USA coach eligibility standards, all YMCA registered coaches who work with competitive swimmers must maintain current certifications in the following areas:
 - a. Safety Training for Swim Coaches
 - b. Basic Life Support (Professional Rescuer CPR with AED)
 - c. First Aid*
 - d. Principles of YMCA Swimming and Diving
 - e. Child Protection Training Including Mandated Reporter

*Note that some states may require those who work with youth to have both Pediatric and Adult First Aid as certification. Please follow state and local regulatory guidance when applicable.

The YMCA of the USA recognizes the following basic-level certifications below as meeting the safety certification requirements for swim coaches (**Note: Instructor certifications and online-only CPR and First Aid courses are not acceptable.**). Upload each certification for your annual coach registration on the [YMCA Swimming and Diving website](#). Find a complete list of acceptable courses in this guide on [Link](#).

SAFETY TRAINING FOR SWIM COACHES

The Safety Training for Swim Coaches (STSC) certification requirement consists of two components:

- **An Online Course and Test.** All coaches must complete the online course and test. To take the online component of Safety Training for Swim Coaches go to www.redcross.org/take-a-class and complete the following steps:
 1. Scroll down and click on the “Online Only” box
 2. Scroll down to “Aquatic Online Courses” and select Safety Training for Swim Coaches
 3. The next screen will display the cost - \$25. Click on the large red square that reads “Sign Me Up”
 4. When the course is completed, save/print the Online Content Only certificate

The course takes about 3 hours to complete. Coaches can exit the course at any time and log back in to resume where they left off; However once the final exam is started it needs to be completed in one session.

Note for Mac Users: Use Mozilla Firefox as your browser to complete the online course and test. The use of other browsers may cause you to lose any record of having completed any part of the course.

- **An In-Water Skills Session.** There are three options for completing the in-water skills session. Find the option below that best works best for your situation. *Note: The online component of the course must be completed prior to the in-water component.*

OPTION 1: COACHES WHO USE THE YMCA STSC IN-WATER SKILLS VERIFICATION FORM

1. Contact a lifeguard instructor or water safety/swimming instructor certified by one of the national training agencies listed below. Set a time to review the skills in a pool with the instructor.
2. Bring a copy of the Online Content Only certificate and the YMCA version of the STSC [In-Water Skills Verification Form](#) to the pool for the skills review with the instructor. Review the skills with the instructor, sign the verification form, have the instructor sign it, and then upload the form and online certificate to your YMCA coach registration on the [YMCA Swimming and Diving website](#). The earlier of the two expiration dates will determine the STSC expiration date.
3. Repeat this procedure every two years.

OPTION 2: COACHES WHO HAVE AN ACCEPTABLE LIFEGUARD CERTIFICATION:

1. Obtain or renew an acceptable lifeguarding certificate (see the list below for acceptable certifications).
2. Upload an acceptable lifeguarding certificate and the STSC Online Content Only certificate to your YMCA coach registration on the [YMCA Swimming and Diving website](#). The earlier of the two expiration dates will determine the STSC expiration date.
3. Repeat this procedure every two years.

OPTION 3: COACHES WHO HAVE ACCESS TO AN AMERICAN RED CROSS (ARC) INSTRUCTOR:

1. Contact an ARC water safety, STSC, or lifeguard instructor to schedule the ARC STSC in-water skills session in a pool with the instructor. (This session will be an abbreviated review session for those with a current STSC certification or a full session for those without a current STSC certification.)
2. Take a copy of the Online Content Only certificate to the pool to prove you have passed the online course. Complete the in-water skills session with the ARC instructor, who will issue a STSC In-Water Skills Session certificate. Upload both certificates to your YMCA coach registration on the [YMCA Swimming and Diving website](#). The earlier of the two expiration dates will determine the STSC expiration date.
3. Repeat this procedure every two years.

APPROVED AGENCIES FOR LIFEGUARDING CERTIFICATIONS

YMCA of the USA:

- YMCA Lifeguard (2 year certification) YMCA Aquatic Safety Assistant (2 year certification)

American Red Cross:

- Lifeguarding/First Aid/CPR/AED (2 year certification)

International Lifeguard Training Program (Ellis & Associates):

- Pool Lifeguard Training (1 year license validity)
- Special Facilities Training (1 year license validity)

StarGuard Elite:

- StarGuard (1 year certification)

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (PROFESSIONAL RESCUER CPR)

All YMCA registered swimming coaches must maintain a certification in Basic Life Support (Professional Rescuer CPR) and renew that certification annually*. The Basic Life Support (Professional Rescuer CPR) course must be completed in person. Online certifications are not accepted.

***Note: Although some training agencies provide CPR certifications with a validity of two years, Y-USA only recognizes the first year of a two-year certification.**

APPROVED AGENCIES FOR BLS (PROFESSIONAL RESCUER CPR)

The YMCA of the USA recognizes basic- level certifications from the following training agencies as meeting the CPR-PRO or BLS requirement:	
American Heart Association	• BLS for Healthcare Providers • HeartCode® BLS (must include the hands-on skill session plus online session)
American Red Cross	• Basic Life Support for Health Care Providers • CPR/AED for Professional Rescuers and Health Care Providers • Lifeguarding/First Aid/CPR/AED
American Safety and Health Institute (ASHI)	• Basic Life Support CPR & AED
Ellis and Associates	• Health Care Provider Basic Life Support • Health Care Provider Basic Life Support as part of Ellis & Associates Lifeguard certification. Note: The Basic Life Support as part of Ellis & Associates facility specific lifeguard license is not approved
Emergency Care and Safety Institute (ECSI)	• <i>Health Care Provider CPR</i>
EMS Safety	• Basic Life Support Course
National Safety Council	• Basic Life Support for Health Care & Professional Rescuers
Starfish Aquatics Institute	• Basic Life Support
StarGuard ELITE	• SGE StarGuard Elite Lifeguard / American Safety & Health Institute Basic Life Support

FIRST AID

All registered YMCA swimming coaches must maintain a certification in basic-level First Aid. It is recommended that the First Aid training include both adult and pediatric components. The First Aid course must be completed in person with skills verification. Online certifications are not accepted.

*Note that some states may require those who work with youth to have both Pediatric and Adult First Aid as certification. Please follow state and local regulatory guidance when applicable.

APPROVED AGENCIES FOR FIRST AID

The YMCA of the USA recognizes basic- level certifications from the following training agencies as meeting the First Aid requirement:	
American Heart Association	• Heartsaver First Aid
American Red Cross	• First Aid • Responding to Emergencies Adult First Aid/CPR/AED • Responding to Emergencies Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED • Emergency Medical Response
American Safety and Health Institute (ASHI)	• Basic First Aid • Advanced First Aid • Emergency Medical Response • Adult First Aid / CPR AED and Pediatric First Aid
Ellis & Associates	• Standard First Aid with written exam (Certificate must indicate "This certifies that the individual named below has successfully completed the knowledge (including written exam) and skill requirements for this course.") • Standard First Aid as part of Ellis & Associates Lifeguard certification. Note: The First Aid as part of Ellis & Associates facility specific lifeguard license is not approved.
Emergency Care and Safety Institute (ECSI)	• <i>First Aid, CPR, and AED with written exam (Certificate must indicate "This certifies that the individual named below has successfully completed the knowledge (including written exam) and skill requirements for this course.")</i>
EMS Safety	• First Aid & Oxygen Administration Course
National Safety Council	• First Aid • Advanced First Aid • Emergency Medical Response
National Ski Patrol	• Outdoor Emergency Care Program
EMTs/Nurses/Physicians	• Individuals who are either emergency medical technicians (EMT) or registered nurses (RN) should upload a copy of their current license or state certification plus documentation of official course criteria.
Starfish Aquatics Institute	• First Aid
StarGuard ELITE	• SGE StarGuard Elite Lifeguard / American Safety & Health Institute Basic First Aid

PRINCIPLES OF YMCA COMPETITIVE SWIMMING AND DIVING

This course addresses the basic YMCA principles of coaching and leadership in a YMCA competitive swimming or diving program. The focus is on delivering a quality YMCA program with a youth development impact. This course is taken only once. There is no recertification required.

There are two parts to the course:

- Online content
- Workbook, including meetings/interviews with fellow YMCA staff and leaders – be sure to download the workbook while taking the online content.

In order to complete the course, follow these steps:

- Go to <https://lcdc.yexchange.org> and log in.
- Under the Catalog & Schedule tab, select Search for Course Availability.
- Find Principles of Competitive Swimming and Diving under Aquatics.
- Take the course, being careful to print the workbook and save the completion certificate.
- Complete all workbook assignments then scan and save the completed document electronically.

When completing the annual YMCA coach registration, upload the certificate **and** the completed workbook as indicated.

CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING

All registered coaches must annually complete an approved child protection training course that contains sexual abuse prevention and mandated reporter components. Your YMCA may have a preferred provider among these. In that case you will get your direct link and code from your YMCA supervisor.

APPROVED AGENCIES FOR CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING

The YMCA of the USA recognizes the designated courses from the following training agencies as satisfying the child/athlete protection training requirement.	
Praesidium	• Complete the YUSA Competitive Sports learning path Any YMCA staff and volunteer interested in taking this course may do so by following this Praesidium Academy Quick Start Guide at no cost
Redwoods	• Child Sexual Abuse Prevention
USA Swimming	• Athlete Protection Training: SafeSport Trained <i>Once you take the course the first time, you will then take the subsequent Refresher courses in the following years.</i>
U.S. Center for SafeSport	• SafeSport Trained <i>Once you take the course the first time, you will then take the subsequent Refresher courses in the following years.</i>
West Bend / in2vate	• Preventing Child Sexual Abuse <i>and</i> Mandated Reporter for Child Abuse

USA SWIMMING MEMBERS

A current USA Swimming member credential/deck pass may be used to show current certifications in child (athlete) protection training and in Safety Training for Swim Coaches only.