



How to Become an Official – STROKE & TURN ONLY



There are a number of steps that need to be completed to become a certified USA Swimming Official. These steps do not have a strict order (you do not need to follow an exact sequence of steps), but some steps are required before completing others.

The following list contains the steps necessary. Each item with a capital letter (A, B, C, etc.) must be completed.

- A. As of February 1, 2024, you must take the “Foundations of Officiating” course on the USA Swimming website. This is an introductory course to the Officials certifications and is required before moving to your first role-specific course.**

Contact the AMS Officials Chair, Donna Beyerl at donna.beyerl@amswim.org to confirm you have completed the course.



- B.** Before setting foot on a pool deck, you must register with USA Swimming either as an Apprentice Official or a full non-athlete Official member.
1. The Apprentice Official designation allows you to be “registered” without paying the registration fee upfront. This allows you to see if you enjoy officiating prior to paying any money. As an Apprentice Official, you have 60 days to complete your full USA Swimming non-athlete Official registration. If you have not completed your USA Swimming non-athlete Official registration after 60 days, you will no longer be allowed to shadow on deck and must become a full non-athlete member of USA Swimming to continue. With the conversion to SWIMS 3.0 you will need to contact your Club's Administrator to complete the registration.
 2. When your 60-day Apprentice Official registration expires, you will need to register as a full non-athlete member of USA Swimming to continue on deck. Contact your Club's Administrator to complete this registration.
- C.** Complete the online Athlete Protection Training course on the USA Swimming website. This must also be done before beginning your on-deck training.
1. There is no charge for this training and generally takes less than an hour to complete.
 2. Click [here](#) to complete the APT.
- D.** Successfully complete the USA Swimming Background Check (for coaches and officials).
1. Note: If you have security clearances from other areas of your life (teachers' clearances, work, volunteering, etc.), you'll still need to complete USA Swimming's Background Check. USA Swimming does not allow exceptions.
 2. There is a fee for completing this step. Some clubs reimburse their non-athlete members for this requirement, others don't. [Click here](#) to initiate a Background Check.
- E.** Complete a **minimum** of four (4) sessions on deck as an Apprentice Official before you can certify as a Stroke & Turn.
1. Sessions take place at AMS sanctioned swim meets. Mentees will move around the deck and work with a number of Stroke & Turn Official mentors during each session shadowing. This is where most of your learning will take place. While reading and understanding the rules is critical, nothing is better than actually seeing the swimmers in the pool to learn what officials really do.
 2. "Bronze" and "10 and Under" level meets are often the best meets to learn to officiate because there are more opportunities to see swimmers performing incorrect stroke technique.
 3. The Officials Certification document located on the AMS website should be provided to the Referee for that mentoring session. They will need to sign off on each of the mentoring sessions. You will need to have additional copies for each of the sessions you will be mentoring. Once you have completed your four (4) mentoring sessions, all four documents will be e-mailed to the following address – certifier@amswim.org
 4. Once the certifier receives all four certification documents, they will review the documents and recommend certification to the Official's Committee. If there are areas where more mentoring is recommended, an action plan shall be provided to the mentee within two (2) weeks of their submission to the Certifier with those appropriate action items.
 5. The mentee will sign up for additional sessions until the action plan has been met.
 6. Resubmission of additional certification documents will be sent to the certifier until the official becomes certified.

- F. Take the online Stroke & Turn/Timer test administered by USA Swimming. **A passing score is 80% or higher.** [Click here](#) to initiate a test.
- G. When you have completed all requirements, please notify the Officials Chair: [Donna Beyert](#) so that you may be marked as a Stroke & Turn Official in the OTS system.
- H. Congratulations and Welcome to a Great group of volunteers and we all look forward to working with you on Deck.



Stroke and Turn Certification Course

This course is required as part of the certification as a Stroke and Turn Judge.

[VIEW INFO](#)

Benefits of becoming an AMS Official

- The pool deck is the best view to watch a swim meet.
- AMS Officials are volunteers and one of the nicest groups of people you'll ever meet.
- USA Swimming is one of the few sports that relies on a well-trained, all-volunteer group for its Officials. By becoming an Official, you are helping our athletes in a very meaningful way.
- Becoming an Official is a wonderful way to spend time in the sport your child is invested in, and to support your child's swimming "career."
- Each team, depending on its size, is required to maintain a minimum number of officials. By officiating, you help your team stay in compliance with its AMS team/club registration requirements.
- At some meets, you may actually get preferential parking.
- Learning the rules of the sport will make you dangerous at the dinner table.
- AMS Officials will tell you that standing on deck and being involved in the action of the meet is far better than sitting in the stands (yes, those incredibly hard stands), exchanging recipes with your friends.
- As your child advances in swimming, there are also opportunities for you to advance as an Official by becoming a Chief Judge, Starter, or Referee. And let's not forget the Administrative Official. With additional training and N2 or N3 certification, you can attend various National Level Meets as an Official.
- Being an AMS Official will undoubtedly be one of the more rewarding things you'll do!