

How To Become a USA Swimming / Maine Swimming Official



Thank you for your interest in becoming a USA Swimming Official!

Maine Swimming (MESI) is the only governing body (called a Local Swimming Committee or LSC) of USA Swimming (USAS) in Maine. Most youth swimming clubs throughout Maine are members of MESI and rely on a network of volunteers to successfully hold and execute all levels of swim meets. Becoming trained as a MESI/USAS Official is of great service to not only your local club, but also to the success of Maine Swimming and all involved athletes. MESI has multiple levels of Officials, each progressing in responsibility via experience and additional training. Two officiating paths exist: Wet Deck and Dry Deck, with Officials usually choosing one or the other, however, many experienced Officials are certified in both. There is no requirement to advance at a particular pace or engage at a level you're uncomfortable with, but most Officials advance over multiple years and find great reward via engagement with the broader Officials community. Come join us!

The levels of MESI Officials are:

WET DECK OFFICIALS	DRY DECK OFFICIALS
Stroke & Turn (ST)*	Administrative Official (AO)*
Starter (SR)	Administrative Referee (AR)
Chief Judge (CJ)	
Deck Referee (DR)	
Associate Meet Referee (AM)	
Meet Referee (MR)	
<i>Open Water Judge (OJ)</i>	
<i>Open Water Referee (OR)</i>	

** These are the entry points for all new Officials*

If you are new and would like to try Officiating, please reach out to a Meet Referee at any upcoming meet for a one-time opportunity to work alongside an experienced Stroke & Turn Official! Ask your coach for an introduction to that person or talk to any other official you may know at your club. No paperwork or future commitment is required! Come give it a try!

NEXT STEPS:

When you're ready to proceed with becoming an Official, MESI has a 4-Step process. One must:

1. Register as a USA Swimming Non-Athlete Official Member
2. Attend a Stroke and Turn clinic or Administrative Official clinic (about 1-2 hours, usually online);
3. Take an open-book online test (test link is located on the USAS website); and
4. Apprentice on deck.

1. Register As a Non-Athlete Member with USA Swimming

Step One – [Create a USA Swimming account](#) and Register as a Non-Athlete Official through your swim club. If you are not affiliated with a swim club, reach out to MESI Officials Chair (mesiofficialschair@gmail.com) for more information.

Step Two – Submit a Background Check through your USA Swimming account

The first time, the fee is \$38 and the background check is good for two (2) years. Renewing your background check costs about \$18. Fees are subject to change depending on where you might have lived, former names, etc.

Step Three – Complete the Athlete Protection Training

The training consists of a video course which typically takes around 90 minutes to complete and can be accessed through the education tab on your USA Swimming account..

Step Four – Concussion Training

All MESI Officials must complete Concussion Training which can be accessed through your USA Swimming account under education. This training only needs to be done once. Please send your certificate to the MESI Office at meswimoffice@gmail.com.

It is very important that all officials are aware of when their certifications expire. All the information is found in your USA Swimming account. While all non-athlete registrations expire on December 31 of each year, background checks and athlete protection training expire at different times.

1. Attend a Stroke & Turn Clinic

All individuals seeking to become an official must attend a Stroke and Turn (dry deck path) or Administrative Official (wet deck path) clinic. Clinics are mostly online and are offered periodically throughout the year. There is no fee for attending any training clinics. Available clinics are posted on the MESI website

<https://www.gomotionapp.com/team/mams/page/officials1>

Regardless of officiating level, all current officials must attend a clinic once every three (3) years as part of the recertification process.

2. Take the Test

If you are a new official, you must take a multiple-choice test on the USA Swimming website. The test is open book and is specifically designed to have the takers go into the rulebook with each question, thus encouraging them to become familiar with the rules and where to find them. If you do not have a recent copy, the rules can be found on the USA Swimming website or at the link here: <https://www.usaswimming.org/utility/landing-pages/governance-lsc/rules-regulations>

To start the process, go to the USA Swimming website at <https://www.usaswimming.org/officials/popular-resources/online-testing>

If you are a new official, take the certification test for Stroke and Turn/Timer. If you are becoming an Administrative Official, please complete the Timer, Timing Judge, Clerk of Course and Administrative Official tests. If you are re-certifying in any position, click on the recertification test for the appropriate position. You do not need to complete the test in one sitting or while online. Many people simply print their test, log off, and then complete the responses in the coming days. When you log back in, the site will return you to your test and questions. You can return as many times as you like, just remember to submit your test when completed. The results will be displayed immediately and let you know if you passed. Remember to put in your LSC (ME for Maine Swimming) and the results will also be sent to our Officials Chair. Recertification tests must be completed every three years.

3. Apprentice on Deck

All new officials must apprentice on deck as part of the training process. You must apprentice at least four (4) sessions from at least two (2) meets. When you apprentice, you will be on deck and work with another experienced official watching the swimmers and training in the implementation and application of the rules. Please complete a [Request to Shadow Form](#) at least 48 hours prior to the meet. Your request will or will not be approved by the Officials Chair to ensure adequate training. As with any swim meet, you will be asked to sign in (on a form typically near the starter's podium or with meet management) so your service can be credited in the Officials Tracking System (OTS) for USA Swimming. Remember, if after four (4) sessions you want more experience, feel free to continue apprenticing until you feel you are ready.