



Return to Competition / Return to Pool Guidelines Maine Swimming LSC

The following material has been developed to provide expectations and guidance for hosting swim meets, practices, and other swimming activities as pool facilities and swim clubs incorporate COVID-19 considerations. The guidelines herein are presented in no particular order of importance. Please read entire listing as all apply equally.

Introduction and Summary:

Maine Swimming (MESI) is a Local Swim Club (LSC) that is part of the national USA Swimming organization. Under the most recent COVID-19 guidance issued by the State of Maine (September 1, 2020), MESI is classified as a “Community Sport” Organization and, therefore, all clubs, athletes, coaches, volunteers, and those affiliated with MESI, must abide by these expectations. Please review the State guidance in addition to this document.

<https://www.maine.gov/decd/checklists/community-sports>

The State of Maine defines swimming as a low to moderate risk activity. At this time, the MESI Crisis Management Committee and Board of Directors are abiding by the **moderate risk classification guidance**. The most significant impact of the current MESI position and State of Maine guidance is that **no multi-team activities may occur at indoor pools** (e.g. no combined practices, no dual meets).

Each club/team should work with their local pool facility (e.g. YMCA) to ensure adherence to both the State of Maine Community Sports and these MESI expectations.

Each club/team wishing to be considered for a sanction must complete a “Return to Competition Plan” as detailed in the USA Swimming publication posted on the MESI website under “Return to Competition Guidelines”. The items in the document must be incorporated into your plan, as well as your club/teams specific local considerations. Your Plan must be submitted with any sanction request.

For sanctioned meets, the host team must secure a Meet Referee that will guide you through the ever-changing expectations of hosting the meet. If you need a Meet Referee, contact Henry Clauson at mesiofficialschair@gmail.com or call 207-620-4375.

No sanctioned meet can occur without concurrence with the LSC Officials Chair.



Failure to abide by the established Return to Competition / Return to Pool MESI and USA Swimming expectations and/or the State of Maine guidelines may result in a financial penalty of up to **\$500** imposed on the violating club(s), along with additional sanctions not being approved for that/those entities for 12 months. The Meet Referee or LSC Operational Risk Chair, LSC Officials Chair, and LSC Sanction Chair will be the 3 member governing body that will review, recommend, and assess penalties. Any protest or appeal of these penalties must be filed pursuant to Article 713 of the MESI Policies & Procedures.

Allowed Types of Meets:

1. Virtual Sanctioned Meet: This is a meet with one host team and one sanction for a period of up to 10 days across one or more sites. The sites are under the umbrella of the host team using the same order of events. Results will be merged and sent into the database. The host team Meet Referee needs to be up to date and in touch with the latest expectations. Results are uploaded into SWIM by the MESI Office. See: *USA-S Virtual Meet Information* documentation on the MESI website for additional guidance.
2. Sanctioned Intra-squad Meet: same as Virtual sanctioned meets but without other sites.
3. Non-Sanctioned Intra-squad Meets: No officials are required to be used in a non-sanctioned meet. Results are for information purposes only and cannot be used for future seeding or qualification. All guidelines in this document still apply to non-sanctioned meets and activities, with the exception being the presence of officials. Results files are sent by the meet host to USA Swimming directly for loading into the non-sanctioned meet SWIMS database.

Applications for sanctioned meets should be submitted at least seven (7) days prior to the event.

The following detailed guidelines are presented on the following pages for:

- 1) Pool Deck / Meet,**
- 2) Officials for Swim Meets,**
- 3) Athletes, and**
- 4) Spectators.**



Pool Deck / Meet:

- Total attendance limitations must be in accordance with State of Maine requirements / Executive Orders or the pool facility requirements, whichever is strictest. Currently, the total capacity limit for all attendees, in accordance with the State of Maine Executive Order active as of the date of this document version, is no more than fifty (50) persons for **indoor** pool facilities or no more than one hundred (100) persons for **outdoor** pool facilities. This includes swimmers, coaches, officials, timers, other roles, and spectators.
- Access to the pool deck / spectator area(s) should be controlled and attendance continuously recorded. Only persons pre-approved to attend a meet or practice session may do so.
- A complete facility pool deck (including blocks) clean and disinfection should occur before and after each meet or practice session.
- Pool facilities and/or Clubs may impose additional requirements for arrival temperature checks and waiver of liability releases. Any releases must be completed before the day of the meet.
- Attendees will be allowed to participate in a sanctioned meet only if they complete the one-time *MESI COVID-19/Photography Waiver*. Additionally, each participant or attendee must submit the *MESI COVID-19 Affirmation Form* within 72 hours prior to the start of the meet as designated in the Meet Announcement. Each participant and/or attendee (or legal guardian) must sign both forms in order to attend the meet. Electronic copies of these forms must be kept on file with the hosting club for each meet. It is recommended that these forms are sent, received, and filed electronically. These forms will be used for contact tracing if a positive COVID-19 case is detected. MESI will establish an electronic repository for these documents to be uploaded and securely stored. See MESI website for these forms.
- All attendees should wear a facemask at all times. The only exception is for a swimmer in the water.
- Hand sanitizer should be readily available and regularly used by all attendees, including swimmers.
- Coaches should remain stationary and physically distanced by 6' or more to the extent possible.



- Floor / seat markings should be used to define physical spacing. This for all competition and spectator areas. Such marking should be put in place under the direction of the Meet Referee prior to any other people entering the pool deck. No more than 10 persons should be on deck & spectator areas combined without markings in place.
- No food is allowed on deck or in spectator areas.
- No persons may gather on the turn end of the pool. Only Officials should be present on the turn end. The only exception is for longer distance events where lap counters are needed, and then, only one lap counter / person per lane.
- Multiple sessions may need to occur to comply with capacity limitations - No more than three (3) sessions per day. The host team must allow enough time between sessions for a complete facility cleaning.
- Practices, as well as warm ups and warm downs at meets, may occur, but are limited to no more than **3** swimmers per lane at one time **and all swimmers in the lane must be from the same team**. During a meet session, consider using a designated lane(s) for warm up and warm down.
- Bathrooms should be for emergency use only. You should designate a separate bathroom for 1) swimmers, 2) volunteers/timers, and 3) coaches and officials – and label as such. Only one person in a bathroom at a time. If a locker room is the only available bathroom space, that locker room must be closed to all other usage with only one person allowed in at a time. Bathrooms must be monitored **and thoroughly disinfected after each session. Frequent disinfection throughout the meet is encouraged.**
- Staging of swimmers for next heat should occur in a designated area on deck. Traffic flow must be one way. For example, swimmers in the current heat exit the same direction while the next heat enters from the opposite direction (e.g. swimmers never pass each other). Staging should have a designed floor marking (e.g. tape, cones, etc.) for each lane with each being at least 6' apart. Swimmers should remain in the same order by lane assignment when entering and exiting the pool (e.g. swimmers should not pass each other).
- Meets must be pre-seeded, and no deck entries or changes are allowed.
- The use of live stream media platforms is encouraged (e.g. Facebook Live, etc). It is suggested to have 1 designated volunteer on deck running this platform, or better if a camera can be on deck and the operator off-deck.



Officials for Swim Meets:

- Each venue must have an AO physically present.
- Multi-site virtual meets should have one (1) AO that is the “lead” AO and performs the merge of the meet from all venues.
- Sanctioned meet sessions must be staffed with a minimum of 4, but no more than 7, officials. The minimum official’s positions are AO, Meet Referee, Deck Referee, Starter, and one (1) Stroke and Turn (S&T). The same person may serve as the Meet Referee and Deck Referee if that official is correctly certified.
- Deck Referees must use an electronic whistle. If requested by a club, Maine Swimming will reimburse a club for up to two (2) electronic whistles.
- In-person officials and timers briefings should not occur; rather a handout of expectations should be provided before the meet via email. Ideally, a virtual meeting should occur within 24 hours of the start of the meet / session as organized by the Meet Referee (for Officials) or Starter (for Timers).
- Officials should be pre-assigned a wet or dry deck role and position by the Meet Referee prior to the start of the meet.
- No rotation of officials in role and position should occur during a session.
- Officials who leave the deck during a session, should not return without disinfection.
- Radio use is encouraged between officials. If not available, communications should be limited and preferably written.
- Deck Referee and Starter should be on opposite sides of the pool.
- No official(s) should be positioned behind the blocks. Start-end S&T officiating should be performed by the Starter, Deck Referee, or a designated official(s) from the side of the pool.
- Officials should be physically distanced by 6’ or more to the extent possible.
- AO station should be in a separate room or area (such as up in the stands off the pool deck), or have a transparent barrier up to at least 6 feet on three sides. Only minimal verbal swimmer, coach, or spectator interaction should occur with the AO; written communication is encouraged.



- A maximum of two (2) persons are allowed at the AO station and should be physically distanced by 6' or more, or there should be a physical barrier between them.
- If radios are available:
 - Disqualification (DQ) slips are not to be used.
 - DQs or other issues should be recorded on a heat sheet, and called into the Deck or Meet Referee
 - DQs should be processed by the AO once verbally approved by the Deck or Meet Referee.
- If radios are unavailable:
 - DQ slips are not to be used.
 - If swimmers are staged on the pool deck, DQs should be recorded on a heat sheet, and shown to the Deck Referee at the end of the session, and then processed by the AO as a batch at the end of the session.
 - If swimmers are staged off the pool deck (e.g. outside building, in a gym, etc.), DQs should be recorded on a heat sheet, and shown to the Deck Referee at the end of each event, and then processed by the AO as a batch at the end of each event.
- Timers:
 - Limited to one (1) timer per lane, and one (1) backup timer per session.
 - Should not speak to or assist the swimmers.
 - Should be pre-assigned prior to the meet to a lane.
 - Should not rotate in role or position during a session.
 - Should each have a spray bottle of disinfectant available.
 - Are responsible for disinfecting the blocks after each heat.
 - Who leave the deck during a Session, may not return without disinfection.
 - Should maintain 6' distance to the extent practical from the block as swimmers are starting or exiting the lane.
 - Should only approach the block / edge of the pool as the lane swimmer completes the heat; otherwise, should stand at least 6' behind the block and others in attendance to the extent practical.
- Timing equipment should be disinfested prior to and after each session.
- All meet equipment (pens, clipboards, stopwatches, timing buttons, etc...) should be sanitized with wipes or cleaner containing at least 70% alcohol.



Athletes:

- Must remain masked at all times, except when swimming. Bring a plastic bag or use a facility provide receptacle (e.g. plastic basket, chair, etc.) to put your mask into or on when behind blocks before heat. Masks should not be placed on the blocks. Masks should be put back on as soon as swimmers exit the water to the extent practical. Bring extra masks in case one gets wet.
- Should physically distance 6' or greater from any other person to the extent possible.
- Should arrive and depart the facility in their swimsuits. Locker rooms should not be used.
- Swimmers should rinse off while maintaining physical distancing before entering pool if an on-deck shower is available. Swimmers should not enter the locker rooms.
- Should minimize their personal belongings on deck. Belongings should be kept tidy and self-contained. Loose belongings will be discarded.
- Should not share water or food.
- Only the active heat of swimmer(s) allowed behind the assigned block at any time.
- Must remain in their designated area.
- Any swimmer leaving the pool deck, must disinfest hands and body before returning to the deck.
- Should bring a chair or extra towel to sit on for wherever they are waiting for their event(s). Do not sit on the pool deck with no barrier between oneself and the floor.
- Swimmers should remain in the same order by lane assignment when entering and exiting the pool from/to the heat staging area (e.g. swimmers should not pass each other).



Spectators:

- Should be discouraged. If unavoidable, spectators should be kept to a minimum. Only one (1) person per swimmer allowed. If an immediate family has multiple sibling swimmers, then still only one (1) spectator person in total. Attendance by young children or the elderly is strongly discouraged. **All spectators are counted in the 50 (or 100) person total per meet session.**
- The use of live stream media platforms is encouraged (e.g. Facebook Live, etc.).
- Any spectator in the same room (e.g. spectator area of a pool deck) counts towards total session allowance (e.g. the less spectators = more swimmers)
- Personal belongings kept to a minimum. No backpacks, chairs, or extra gear in stands.
- No food or drink allowed.
- Should remain masked and physically distanced 6' or greater from any other person to the extent possible.

This document (Return to Competition Guidelines) was adopted by the MESI Board of Directors on October 12, 2020.

Changes to this document may occur on a regular basis to comply with USA Swimming, State of Maine, or other COVID-19 guidelines imposed on Maine Swimming LSC. Subsequent changes may also include lessons learned efficiencies without compromising safety. Such document revisions will be reviewed by the MESI Crisis Management Committee and recommended to the full MESI Board for approval; however, must be done in concurrence with the MESI Sanction Chair and MESI Officials Chair. The most recent version of this document will be maintained on the MESI website.