



SwimMAC Carolina Travel Policy

Updated as of 2025-2026 Season

For purposes of this policy, a Minor Athlete is an athlete under the age of 18 and any reference to an athlete's parent shall mean the athlete's parent(s) or legal guardian(s), as applicable. Adult Participant is any adult 18 years of age or older who is a:

- USA Swimming member, either athlete or non-athlete;
- Participating non-member (e.g., meet marshals, meet computer operators, timers, etc.);
- Authorized, approved or appointed by USA Swimming, Zones, Local Swimming Committees ("LSCs") or member clubs to have regular contact with (e.g., ongoing interactions during a 12-month period wherein the individual is in a role of active engagement) or authority over Minor Athletes; and/or
- Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of USA Swimming, Zones, LSCs or member clubs.

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SwimMAC Individual Travel

- Any Minor Athlete attending a meet or camp that requires an overnight stay must be accompanied by a parent or a chaperone arranged by the Minor Athlete's parent(s) / guardian(s).
- Athletes who are 18 years of age or older may drive themselves to/from meets/camps.
- Athletes who are 18 years of age or older may travel alone to an away meet or camp but must inform their lead coach.
- Athletes who are 18 years of age or older should be encouraged to carpool together to/from meets/camps.
- No Minor Athlete may travel alone with an Adult Participant unless: (i) an emergency situation exists; (ii) the Adult Participant has a relationship with the Minor Athlete that is outside the swimming program and the Minor Athlete's parent provided permission in writing; (iii) the Adult Participant has no authority over the Minor Athlete and the Adult Participant is not more than four years older than the Minor Athlete; and/or (iv) the Minor Athlete's parent provided permission in writing at least annually, which can be withdrawn at any time.

SwimMAC Team Travel

All SwimMAC Team Travel trips will be conducted in compliance with USA Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Protection Policies and Best Practice Guidelines, including the following:

- **Each Minor Athlete's parents must provide annual withdrawable written consent for the Minor Athlete to travel and lodge with SwimMAC.**
- For meets and camps designated as Team Travel events, athletes are expected to travel with and stay with the team. **Requests for an exemption to this policy must be approved by both your Group Lead Coach and the Head Coach prior to the trip.**
- Each athlete is reminded that when traveling on trips, competing in meets, and attending other meet-related functions or camps, you are representing both yourself and the SwimMAC program. Your behavior must positively reflect the high standards of the club.
- All athletes, coaches, chaperones and team managers must attend all team functions and are expected to know all travel/meeting schedules provided by the coach in charge and strictly adhere to them. Coaches will establish warm-up times and other trip-related timetables as needed. Being prompt and on time is essential.
- All athletes are expected to remain with the team at all times during a trip. Athletes are not to leave the pool, the hotel, restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission of a coach or chaperone.
- Rooms and travel vehicles are to be treated with respect and kept neat. Belongings should be kept together, and all trash deposited appropriately.
- Any damage to rooms or vehicles will be the responsibility of the parties involved and may result in being sent home early from the trip at no cost to the club.
- When traveling by van, all passengers must wear seat belts and remain seated at all times.
- When traveling by other vehicles, all passengers must wear seat belts in accordance with applicable state laws.
- Athletes are not allowed in hotel rooms of athletes of the opposite gender.
- Athletes must stay in the hotel room assigned to them. Athletes may not change rooms or roommates without authorization from the lead coach and head chaperone.
- Minor Athletes may only room with an Adult Participant if their parents gave written consent and the Adult Participant either has a relationship with the Minor Athlete that is unrelated to swimming, or the Adult Participant is fewer than four years older than the Minor Athlete and has no authority over them.
- Athletes may be assigned to share a hotel room with other athletes of the same gender and a similar age and competition category.
- Hotel rooms may have up to 4 athletes in each room provided that there are at least 2 queen-sized beds available in the room.
 - We will endeavor to limit room capacity to 2 athletes in each room so that each swimmer will have their own bed for meets where National Team selection is a factor, for example, Long Course Junior Nationals, Nationals, U.S. Open and Olympic Trials.
- All athletes are expected to strictly adhere to the curfew established by the coaching staff. At curfew, all lights, TVs, and other electronic equipment must be turned off. Talking is not

permitted. Cell phones should be set on silent or alarm mode only so as not to disturb teammates who are rooming with you. Any complaint of disturbance in the middle of the night by a cell phone will result in the removal of cell phone privileges for the offender.

- Athletes are expected to be quiet and respect the rights of teammates and other hotel guests during evening hours and during rest time between prelims and finals. There is to be no telephone or cell phone use, including texting, Skype, FaceTime, social media applications, etc., after curfew or during afternoon rest time.
- Room checks will be conducted by two Adult Participants, at least one of whom is the same gender as the athletes in the room and will be conducted in observable and interruptible environments.
- All telephone and incidental room charges must be paid prior to curfew on the final night of the trip.
- When group meals are contracted with a hotel or restaurant, all athletes, coaches, chaperones and team managers on the trip are expected to participate in and share the cost of these meals.
- Chaperones, team managers and coaches must agree to fulfill their responsibilities to the athletes entrusted to their care and to the other chaperones and coaches. Athletes may not be chaperones.
- Chaperones and team managers must be non-athlete members of USA Swimming, which includes successfully passing the USA Swimming criminal background check and the Athlete Protection Course. All coaches must be current coach members of USA Swimming.
- SwimMAC will ensure all chaperones, team managers and coaches have successfully completed all required background checks and non-athlete member registration.
- To provide a positive experience and safe environment for athletes, all coaches and non-athlete adult members of USA Swimming should maintain professionalism and avoid any appearance of impropriety in their relationships with athletes by limiting contact to observable and interruptible environments.
- Meetings between Minor Athletes and Adult Participants must be observable and interruptible. No meeting may be conducted in either the Adult Participant or Minor Athlete's hotel room or other overnight lodging location.
- Chaperones and team managers shall not possess or use alcohol, tobacco / vape, illegal drugs or controlled substances during team travel trips.
- Coaches shall not possess or use tobacco / vape, illegal drugs, or controlled substances; and coaches who serve as chaperones shall not possess or use alcohol during team travel trips.
- Regardless of gender, at no time shall a coach share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete, unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling or spouse of the athlete.
- If an athlete is 18 years of age or older and acting as both a coach and athlete at a meet, the athlete must room with a coach; however, if the athlete is acting solely as an athlete at a meet, the athlete should room with other athletes, age 18 or older, and not with any athlete from a group that the athlete coaches.
- Coaches, chaperones, and team managers traveling with athletes are expected to demonstrate excellent judgment and behavior to positively represent our sport and SwimMAC Carolina at all times, using Best Practice Guidelines of USA Swimming as a reference.

- All athletes must abide by the Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Policy.
- Athletes with medically prescribed drugs must declare them prior to the trip.
- When visiting public places, such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc., Minor Athletes will stay in groups of no less than three people. Athletes aged 12 or under shall be accompanied by a chaperone, team manager or coach.

SwimMAC Championship Meet Travel Philosophy

As SwimMAC Athletes reach the Senior division (and some Shark swimmers), many will qualify to represent SwimMAC at Championship meets on a regional (Sectionals) and up to a National level (Futures, Juniors, Nationals, Olympic Trials). The time, energy, and money required to participate at this level can be challenging for both families and athletes (especially when missing school).

As swimmers achieve times that qualify them for a particular regional and/or national level championship meet, we believe participation in such meet can be a crucial experience for the future of that athlete. Regardless of the number of events for which the swimmer has qualified or the travel distance to the meet, athletes who can be a part of the next level of competition consistently return to the pool more dedicated, motivated, and educated. When traveling to a championship meet as a team, the SwimMAC staff is working to accomplish the following:

- Create a safe and positive environment/atmosphere that encourages athletes to give their best efforts.
- Focus on competing to win (not just participate) both individually and as a team.
- Simulate the patterns of college and national level championship meets.
- Give athletes a focused environment to execute the best race preparation & learn directly from the coaches.
- Highlight and recognize the achievements of all swimmers and the team during the event. Afterwards we want to highlight those achievements to the club and the immediate community.

SwimMAC Carolina's size and focus on elite levels of swimming creates an opportunity for swimmers to travel to Championship meets in large teams – a distinct and unique advantage in an otherwise individual sport. It is important for the swimmer's development and the team atmosphere for swimmers to participate fully in the planned meet itinerary including, but not limited to traveling with the team, pre-session team meetings, post-session meals, and being present for the awards ceremonies.

It is by design that swimmers that can be present with the team, both on and off the pool deck, are put into an environment that keeps them excited and focused for the event. Parents of athletes often take a more passive role at these meets and we encourage you to enjoy this process of watching your athlete develop championship level skills. If you have any questions about what full participation in any championship meet looks like or requires, please speak directly to the coach in charge or your group coach.

SwimMAC Championship Meet Travel

- All participating athletes are expected to attend the full duration of the meet (unless otherwise directed) including all relay swims, time trials, and awards ceremonies. Coaches will develop a plan for athletes to gain experience from each session and direct team participation throughout the meet.
- Coaches will be working to ensure the safety of all athletes according to USA Swimming and Team Travel practices outlined in the SwimMAC Team Travel section above.
- In situations where a late qualifier cannot be included in the logistics of team travel and all options have been discussed with the coaches, that athlete may travel with their family and should make every effort to participate in the full team itinerary for the event.
 - The calculation of travel expenses outlined in the “SwimMAC Billing Protocol for Travel Meets & Camps” section (see below) will be adjusted to remove any expenses the swimmer did not incur. For example, if a late qualifier could not be included in the team’s hotel block, the hotel cost will not be included in their portion of the *Total Swimmers Travel Expenses*.
- If necessary for high travel-cost events, coaches may arrange travel for athletes on an individual basis to arrive and depart separately. In these situations, expenses will be determined by day for all athletes and billed accordingly. This arrangement will be included in the meet invitation/information.

SwimMAC Travel Trip Coach/Chaperone to Swimmer Ratio Guidelines

10 and Under – When team travel trips include 10 and Under swimmers, they will travel with their parents and not with the team.

11- to 18-year-olds – The ratio should be a minimum of 1:14 including coaches. The ratio of 1:14 should be applied to each gender group of swimmers, not just the total group of all swimmers.

Any changes to these best practice guidelines with respect to the travel trip coach/chaperone to swimmer ratio requires prior approval by the SwimMAC Board of Directors.

Violations, Consequences & Concerns

Violation

- Violation of these rules will result in disciplinary action, including the possibility of being sent home from the meet or camp at no expense to the club. Furthermore, SwimMAC Carolina Travel Policy will be deemed to have been violated if the athlete:
 - Fails to conduct himself or herself with due regard to public conventions and morals.
 - Engages in any situation or occurrence including the use of illegal drugs or prohibited substances.
 - Brings himself or herself into public disrepute, contempt, scandal, or ridicule.

Consequences

- Violation of any part of the SwimMAC Carolina Travel Policies will be grounds for appropriate action up to expulsion from SwimMAC programs and facilities.

Concerns

- To report a violation of SwimMAC Policies by a swimmer, parent, chaperone or SwimMAC staff member, please first communicate the concern to your coach or the coach in charge of the trip. If you feel a violation has not been addressed, please communicate the concern to the Head Coach, Executive Director or any Board Member.
- To report Safe Sport violations, refer to the Safe Sport resources posted on our website under the [Safe Sport](#) tab.

SwimMAC Billing Protocol for Travel Meets & Camps

In an effort to reduce travel costs for our families and provide more accurate estimates further in advance, below outlines the planning process for SwimMAC meets and camps.

Twice a year, SwimMAC staff meet to review the Short Course and Long Course Meet Calendar to decide which home meets to bid/host and which meets to attend that require traveling locally, regionally or nationally. Travel meets will be designated as Family Travel or Team Travel at that time and the designation will be included in the Meet Calendar. The Meet Calendar is then sent to families, and any adjustments will be communicated as quickly as possible.

- 1) At least 4 months in advance – SwimMAC staff reviews the upcoming calendar to identify upcoming events in staff meetings.
- 2) At least 3 months in advance – SwimMAC staff makes decisions about travel dates, reviews flight options and requests room rate options from at least 3 area hotels.
- 3) At least 2 months in advance – SwimMAC staff will finalize the itinerary details and communicate them to families with an estimated cost for the travel portion.
 - a. If the Meet Information document is available, it will be provided at this time as well. If it's not available from the host team, the estimated cost will be posted with the sign-up and the Meet Information will be provided as soon as it's available.

Calculation of Travel Expenses per Swimmer

The estimated cost for the travel portion of the event will reflect the estimated costs as calculated below. The final cost may vary depending on actual costs and the final number of swimmers attending the event, but SwimMAC will try to provide as accurate an estimate as possible.

*****NO EXCEPTIONS FOR LATE ARRIVALS OR EARLY DEPARTURES*****

The *Total Swimmers Travel Expenses* include, but are not limited to: Hotel, Ground Transportation, Airfare, Gas, Parking, Meals and Incidentals **for all swimmers attending the event**. The *Total Swimmers Travel Expenses* **only** applies to Team Travel events.

The *Total Staff Travel Expenses* include, but are not limited to: Hotel, Ground Transportation, Airfare, Gas, Parking, Meals and Incidentals **for all coaches, chaperones and staff working the event**. The Total Staff Travel Expenses will be billed to **all** families attending a Team Travel designated event, even if they are approved to Family Travel. Swimmers approved to Family Travel while attending a Team Travel event will **not** be billed for any of the "Total Swimmers Travel Expenses."

Travel Expenses Per Swimmer =

Total Swimmers Travel Expenses / Number of Swimmers
+ Total Staff Travel Expenses / Number of Swimmers

Travel Meets Billing Timeline

- 1) An estimated cost for the travel portion will be included in the meet announcement before sign-ups are closed. Also, individual entry fees and athlete surcharges will be listed in the meet announcement.
- 2) Travel Meets that are estimated to cost under \$300 for the *Travel Expenses* portion of the trip will require a \$100 non-refundable deposit prior to departure.
- 3) Travel Meets that are estimated to cost over \$300 for the *Travel Expenses* portion of the trip will require a \$200 non-refundable deposit prior to departure.
- 4) Balance of travel costs will be billed as soon as all expenses have been calculated after the meet has been completed.
- 5) Meet fees and athlete surcharges will be billed separately and submitted to billing as soon as meet fees have been paid by SwimMAC to the host team/organization.
- 6) For travel meets involving air travel, such as Nationals and/or Junior Nationals, member families will be responsible for directly booking and paying for their flights. SwimMAC will distribute the flight schedule SwimMAC coaches and chaperones attending such travel meets will utilize and encourage families to book the same flights if available.

Camp Billing Timeline

- 1) Camp fees will be provided to families before sign-ups are closed.
- 2) A non-refundable deposit up to 50% of the total cost for the camp will be billed prior to departure.
 - a. Swimmers that initially commit to attend camp and then elect not to go camp, but do not decommit from camp by the registration deadline will still be charged the deposit.
- 3) Where possible, the additional camp travel fees will be billed on the 1st of the month the camp will occur.
- 4) The balance of the remainder cost for camps will be billed as soon as all expenses have been calculated after the camp has been completed.
- 5) If swimmers attend a meet along with the camp, meet fees and athlete surcharges will be billed separately and submitted to billing as soon as meet fees have been paid by SwimMAC to the host team/organization.