

How to Become An Official With USA Swimming and NM Swimming

Thank you for your interest in becoming a USA Swimming Official and we're eager to answer the questions you'll likely have once reading through the steps below.

There have been a number of questions recently regarding the registration of new officials with New Mexico Swimming (NMSI) along with others for renewing existing non-athlete members. This document should provide answers to the most common questions and provide step by step instructions for both new officials and returning officials.

The process for becoming a USA Swimming has four (4) separate components. One must:

- 1) Attend a Stroke and Turn clinic, or other clinic for desired position(s);
- 2) Register as a USA Swimming Non-Athlete Member through the NMSI;
- 3) Take an on-line test (test is located on the USA Swimming (USAS) website); and,
- 4) Apprentice on deck (six session for New Mexico).

While there are many varying arguments for the order in which one completes the four (4) requirements, the reality is there is no rule dictating which should be done first, second, third or fourth. Some say you should register first, attend a clinic, take the test, and then apprentice. However, there is nothing that says you cannot apprentice a few sessions and see if this is something you would like to do. If so, then you can attend a clinic, pay the money and take the test. Regardless of the order, all are required and will be addressed in more detail below.

1) Attending A Clinic

All individuals seeking to register as a non-athlete member with USA Swimming and become an official must attend a Stroke and Turn clinic and/or other desired position(s). Clinics are offered periodically throughout the year. They are facilitated by a seasoned official /or other clinic for desired position(s) and typically run two (2) to three (3) hours. There is no fee for attending any NMSI training clinics.

If you are interested in attending a clinic, contact the Official's Chair, Ken Bernier and your Regional Vice Chair and look at the NM Swimming website for posted upcoming clinics or through a Google Group email.

Be sure to check back often as clinics are added to the schedule throughout the year. If your team has a number of people interested in becoming an official then contact our Officials Chair, Ken Bernier, at k.bernier@comcast.net, and he will arrange a clinic for your team along with the Regional Vice Chair and Training Sub-Committee Chairs.

Returning officials must also periodically re-certify in their current position. Whether as Stroke and Turn, Starter or Referee, all current officials must attend a clinic once every three (3) years as part of the recertification process.

2) Registering As Non-Athlete Member With USA Swimming

All officials *must* be registered with USA Swimming in order to appear on deck and work a meet. While the registration process may appear a bit complicated, in reality it is quite simple. It is comprised of three (3) steps described in detail below..... The USA Swimming "Steps on How to Become an Official" link is located at: <https://www.usaswimming.org/officials/how-to-become-an-official>

Step One – Register as a Non-Athlete on the NMSI website

Simply go to the New Mexico Swimming website and locate the information under the Admin Tab and look for Forms <https://www.teamunify.com/Home.jsp?team=nmlsc> or https://www.teamunify.com/nmlsc/UserFiles/Image/QuickUpload/nms-2021-na_063852.pdf

There you will see a button prominently displayed for the current year's registration forms under the Admin and then Forms tab.

You will then be re-directed to the registration page:

First click on the link for the officials. Then click on the link for the Registration Form. It is a fillable pdf and seeks basic information such as name, address and contact information. After completing the non-athlete form, please return the completed form to your team registrar or contact our NMSI Business Person, Kathy Beaudet, at nmregs@comcast.net. Officials that are unattached would contact Kathy Beaudet directly. Officials registered with individual clubs would contact the head coach or team registrar to turn in forms.

Register and set up your USA Swimming Officials account at:

<https://www.usaswimming.org/sign-in>

Once you have set up your user name and password, you may enter through the USA Swimming (Sign In) link. Next, click on the tab to the left labeled (For You). The next step is to click on the link that is labeled (Officials). You are now in the Officials Tracking System (OTS) area where you may locate and take tests, track the meets you work etc...

It must be noted that all officials must register as a USA Swimming Non-Athlete Member each and every year with USA Swimming through the NM Swimming Office. There are no exceptions and all registrations expire on December 31 of each calendar year. If you are registering for the first time, and it is after September 1st, you will receive a registration card for the next year and the balance of the current year will be included.

As a courtesy to the NM Swimming Office all officials are asked to be aware of the time of year and the expiration of their certifications. Please be sure to submit your annual registration with ample time for the office to process your request. Do not place yourself in the difficult position of sending in the registration on the last couple days of the year and expect to be working on deck the first couple of weeks in January.

The following are the procedures for registration as an official:

1. Complete A or B below.

A. Complete a Non-Athlete USA Registration form obtained from your team Registrar or from <https://www.teamunify.com/Home.jsp?team=nmlsc> or https://www.teamunify.com/nmlsc/UserFiles/Image/QuickUpload/nms-2021-na_063852.pdf. Return the completed form to your team Registrar for submission to the NMS Swimming Registrar. Do Not mail the form directly to the NMS Registrar.

B. Alternately, complete an Apprentice Official Application obtained from an NMS Official authorized to mentor your onboarding process. This is essentially a temporary (60 days) registration to allow deck time and linkage with your web account (discussed below).

Step Two – Submit a Background Screening

In the continuing effort to protect our athletes, all non-athlete members, including officials, must successfully submit and pass a background check. The first time the fee is thirty-eight (\$38) dollars and it is good for two (2) years. Renewing your background check about nineteen (\$19) dollars. Please be aware these fees are subject to change depending on where you might have lived, former names, etc. To start the process simply click on the “Background Screening” link under the officials registration section located on the MSI website.”

Step Three – Complete the Athlete Protection Training. Again, all non-athlete members of USA Swimming, including officials, must complete an Athlete Protection Training as another component of protecting our athletes. The training consists of on-line video courses and tests. It typically takes 45 minutes to an hour to complete and to receive the notification of successful completion of the course is sent to the NM Swimming Office. The training is very informative and the multiple-choice test is easy once you have watched the video. Once you click the link under the official registration at the NM Swimming website you will be re-directed to the following page on the USA Swimming site. This training is completed one time a year and your valid date is the date of completion.

Step Four – Complete the Concussion Protocol Training. Again, all non-athlete members of USA Swimming, including officials, must complete the Concussion Protocol Training as another component of protecting our athletes. The training consists of an on-line video course and tests. It typically takes 45 minutes to an hour to complete and to receive the notification of successful completion of the course is sent to the NM Swimming Office. The training is very informative and when completed save your certificate to your computer and email to Kathy Beaudet at nmregs@comcast.net . This training is completed only one time.

Once you click the link under the official registration at the NM Swimming website you will be re-directed to the following page on the USA Swimming site:

It is very important that all officials be aware of when not only their annual registration expires, but when their background screen and athlete protection training lapses. All the information is found on your Deck Pass. While all non-athlete registrations expire on December 31 of each year, background checks and athlete protection training lapse at different times. Simply login to Deck Pass, identify the dates the background check and athlete protection training lapse and plan accordingly. If you need to update your background check be sure to visit the appropriate page on the USA Swimming website.

3) Taking The Test

If you are a new official you must take a multiple choice test on the USA Swimming website. Each question consists of two (2) parts. The first is either a multiple choice or true / false question. The second part is again multiple choice and provides the citation in the rule book for the correct answer. The test is open book and is specifically designed to have the takers go into the rule book with each question, thus encouraging them to become familiar with the rules and where to find them. It is highly recommended that you download the current USA Swimming Rulebook, to your computer hard drive, located under the Officials tab discussed above and keep that rulebook open while taking the exam. You may use the adobe search engine to assist you as you are taking the exam(s).

To start the process, go to the USA Swimming website at www.USASwimming.org and log in.

Once you have logged in, copy and paste this link in your browser
<https://www.usaswimming.org/utility/landing-pages/officials/officials-online-testing>
The link will bring you to the testing page where you can select your test.

At this point you will be asked to select the test you wish to take. If you are a new official, take the certification test for Stroke and Turn / Timer. If you are re-certifying in any position click on the recertification test for the appropriate position.

When you select your test level, USA Swimming generates a test with a certain number of randomly selected approved questions. You do not need to complete the test in one sitting or while on line. 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 will let you know if you passed. Remember to put in your LSC (NM for NMSI) and the results will also be sent to our Officials Chair. This can be done if you “link” your account when it is created.

Remember, all the tests are open book and designed to encourage familiarity with the rule book. You will need a copy of the rule book to successfully complete the test. 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>

4) Apprentice Time on Deck

All new officials must apprentice on deck as part of the training process. You must apprentice at least six (6) sessions from at least two (2) meets. You will typically be asked to make, call in and write up the possible disqualification calls during your final two apprentice sessions. 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. When you arrive at the swim meet go onto deck and ask for the Meet Referee. Introduce yourself and let her or him know you are there to apprentice. 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 OTS, the Officials Tracking System for USA Swimming. If after six (6) sessions you want more experience feel free to continue apprenticing until you feel you are ready.

Officials are required to purchase their own two-way radios. To ensure that you purchase the correct radios make sure that you discuss the various radio options with officials that already have radios.

Special Reminder Regarding Expirations

All officials are responsible for maintaining current certifications, whether it be their annual registration, background check, athlete protection training or recertification in their current positions. All this information can be found on Deck Pass. However, the most comprehensive source is to log into USA Swimming, go to the officials page, click the tab for the “Officials Tracking System. Here, you will see when you need to re-certify in your current position, along with the dates your background check, registration and athlete protection training all expire.

Remember, you are responsible for keeping all aspects of your non-athlete registration current.

In addition, you can also access the same information via the USA Swimming Deck Pass app on your smartphone. To find out more about Deck Pass go to:

<https://www.usaswimming.org/utility/landing-pages/create-a-deck-pass-account>

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email Ken Bernier at k.bernier@comcast.net or talk with officials that you may have a working relationship with.