



Becoming a Starter

Summary of Steps to Certification (v. 02/21/2025)

Thank you for your interest in becoming a USA Swimming Starter. This document is meant to provide you with an outline of what you need to do to become certified.

Prerequisites

- Minimum age of 18
- Certified as a Stroke and Turn Judge for a minimum of 3 months; worked at least 4 sessions at a minimum of 2 meets since Stroke and Turn certification
- Must be in good standing as a Non-Athlete Member of USA Swimming in the “Officials” category

Steps Needed to Complete Your Training

Complete the on-line USA Swimming *Starter Certification Course* and pass the accompanying test (see Appendix for a more detailed explanation of the following steps)

- Logon to your USA Swimming account.
- Click on the “Education – Course Catalog” tab
- Select “Officials” and then “Certification” in the window that opens.
- Complete and pass the “*Starter Certification Course*” (an integrated certification course and assessment)

Obtain a Starter Apprentice Training Card

- [Follow this link](#) to request your Starter apprentice training card (please allow up to one week to receive this card via email).

On-Deck Apprentice Sessions

- Complete 4 on-deck training sessions with a basic understanding of each required skill.
- An apprentice may voluntarily request additional training sessions if the apprentice feels that he/she needs additional training to master the required skills.
- If the validating Meet Referee does not believe the apprentice is ready to be certified and the apprentice does not voluntarily agree to additional training sessions, the Meet Referee must provide the VSI Officials Chair and corresponding District Chair with specific deficiencies that need to be remedied, and the VSI Officials Chair or District Chair will provide the apprentice with a written action plan of the steps needed to successfully obtain certification.

Following Completion of All Off- and On-Deck Training Requirements

- Make a copy of your completed training card and email it to your district officials chair (see email links below).
- If all certification requirements are met, and barring any rare and unusual circumstances, your District Chair will enter your certification into OTS.

Steps Needed to Recertify as a Starter

- Work a minimum of 8 sessions, within a 3-year period, as a Starter.
- Attend clinic (recommend Starter) every 3 years.
- Pass USA Swimming recertification test every 3 years for the highest certification held.
- Satisfactory performance.

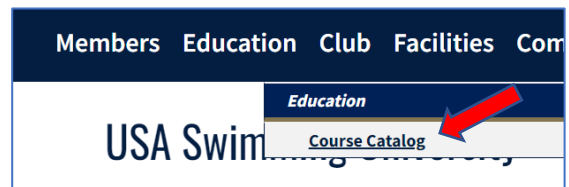
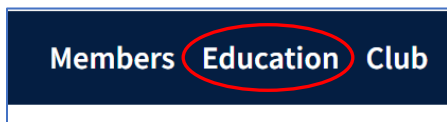
Contact Information

- [Click on this link](#) to find email contact information for the VSI District Officials Chairs and the VSI Club Officials Chairs.
- The VSI Officials Chair can be contacted at officialschair@virginiaswimming.org.

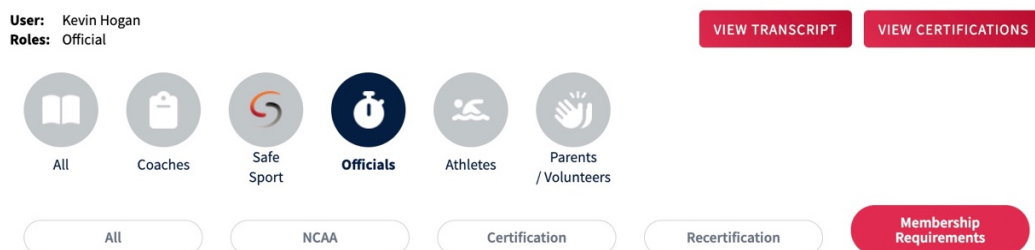
APPENDIX

Instructions for Completing Membership, Educational, and Testing Requirements for Non-Athlete Members (Officials)

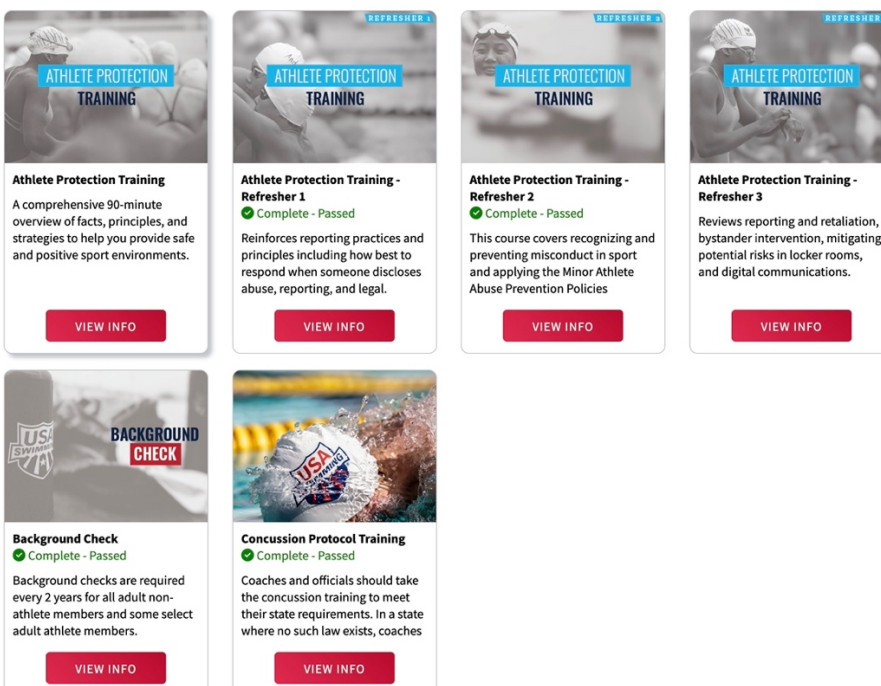
1. Log into your account on the USA Swimming website.
2. Click the Education tab and select Course Catalog



3. In the window that opens, select Officials → Membership Requirements to access Athlete Protection Training (APT), Background Check (BGC), and Concussion Protocol Training (CPT).



4. The required courses will be visible. (The order of the APT courses to be completed over a four-year cycle is Athlete Protection Training, Refresher 1, Refresher 2, Refresher 3. You will only be able to access the course that you need to complete.)



5. Once you complete any course, take a screen shot of the certificate or the final screen that includes the date of completion. This will be helpful if the course fails to update in your record.
6. The background check (once finalized) and APT will automatically update in your record but it may up to 24 hours. If it doesn't match after that, please contact businessoffice@virginiawimming.org for assistance. That will be the most efficient and effective way to get assistance.
7. The certificate for the Concussion Protocol Training will not automatically update in your record. Please send a copy of that certificate to businessoffice@virginiawimming.org so that it can be added.
8. Next, select Officials → Certification. The *Starter Certification Course* can then be selected here.

The screenshot shows the Virginia Swimming Officials Certification website. At the top, there are six circular icons representing different roles: All, Coaches, Safe Sport, Officials (highlighted in blue), Athletes, and Parents / Volunteers. Below these icons are five tabs: All, NCAA, Certification (highlighted in red), Recertification, and Membership Requirements. The main content area displays a grid of certification courses. Each course card includes a title, a description, and a 'VIEW INFO' button. The courses shown are:

- Administrative Official Certification**: This exam is for those who want to become an Administrative Official.
- Administrative Official Certification Course**: This course is required as part of the Officials Certification as an Administrative Official.
- Foundations of Officiating**: Complete - Passed, Doesn't Expire. This is an introductory course to the Officials certifications and is required before moving to your first role-specific course.
- Open Water Judge Certification**: This exam is for those who want to become an Open Water Judge.
- Open Water Referee Certification**: This exam is for those who want to become an Open Water Referee.
- Referee Certification**: This exam is for those who want to become a Referee.
- Starter Certification**: This exam is for those who want to become a Starter.
- Starter Certification Course**: This course is required as part of the Officials Certification as a Starter.
- Starter Recertification**: This exam is for those who want to recertify as a Starter.
- Stroke and Turn Certification Course**: Due for Renewal, Expires on 04/07/2027. This course is required as part of the certification as a Stroke and Turn Judge.