

# Certification and Recertification of Virginia Swimming Officials

Implementation of the “R-9” Standards

v. 20240416



# VSI Officials Training Webpage

Officials Training	
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General Information	VSI Training Clinic Schedule
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Starter (SR)	Referee (DR)
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# R-9 Background Information

- In September 2023, the USA Swimming House of Delegates adopted legislation referred to as R-9
- R-9 revised the wording of section 102.10.2 of the USA Swimming Rules & Regulations

# R-9 Background Information

- Specifically, 102.10.2 now requires that *“All officials acting in the capacity of **Referee, Starter, Stroke and Turn Judge, or Administrative Official** at a sanctioned or approved USA Swimming meet shall be certified and trained in such position by their LSC to the uniform and consistent standards set by **USA Swimming** with recommendation from the National Officials Committee in conjunction with the Coach Advisory Council prior to being assigned to officiate in that capacity. **LSCs and clubs shall not require any additional certifications. . . .”***

# R-9 Background Information

- Representatives of the National Officials Committee and Coach Advisory Committee met in Oct-Dec 2023 to set the standards
- The USA Swimming Board of Directors finalized the standards on February 5, 2024, and they are published in the *USA Swimming Operating Policy Manual*
- The National Officials Committee has published an *Officials Certification Standards FAQ* to answer common questions regarding the implementation of the standards

# The New Standards

- ***Officials Certification Standards for Utilization by LSC Officials*** (v. 02/05/2024)
- ***Officials Certification Standards—Frequently Asked Questions*** (v. 04/02/2024)
- Prerequisites, clinics, exams, and on-deck training must all conform to the standards
- The new standards do not include open water officiating, which has its own standards

# Trainees Who Began Prior to February 1, 2024

- Have the choice of continuing under the old standards or switching to the new standards (we cannot tell them which path to take)
- In some cases, this may mean that the individual is effectively done with their training (eg, a ST apprentice with 5 sessions completed)

# New Certification Standards Highlights

- Administrative Official (AO), Stroke and Turn (ST), Starter (SR), and Referee (DR) are the only positions for which an LSC can require certification
- Chief Judge (CJ) is an optional certification
- Only AO, ST, CJ, SR, and DR are certifiable positions in OTS
- Certification for Administrative Referee (AR), Clerk of Course (CC), Computer Operator (CO), Timing Equipment Operator (TO), Timing Judge (TJ), and Meet Referee (MR) can no longer be required nor entered into OTS



# New Certification Standards Highlights

- Previous certifications for Administrative Referee (AR) and Meet Referee (MR) have been remapped to Referee (DR) in OTS
- Previous certifications for Clerk of Course (CC), Computer Operator (CO), Timing Equipment Operator (TO), and Timing Judge (TJ) have been remapped to AO in OTS
- AR, CC, CO, TO, and MR have been retained as session roles in OTS, but the sessions will map to AO or DR as indicated above for session credit

# USA Swimming Membership Requirements

- To train as a new AO or ST
  - Apprentice Official Member (60 days; no APT, BGC, or CPT required) **OR**
  - Non-Athlete Member (Official) (membership year based; requires APT, BGC, and CPT)
  - **No training allowed without current membership**
- To be certified as an AO, ST, CJ, SR, or DR; or to train for CJ, SR, or DR
  - Non-Athlete Member (Official) (membership year based; requires APT, BGC, and CPT)
- TO (trainees, certified, or non-certified)
  - No membership is required

# Apprentice Official Member Category \*IMPORTANT INFO\*

- Good for only 60 days
- If going this route, don't sign up and then wait weeks to start training or it won't be of much use
- If it expires prior to finishing training, upgrading to a full membership is required to continue training
- Certification **requires** upgrading to a full membership

# General Certification Requirements

- Non-Athlete Member (Official) + APT + BGC + CPT
- Clinic\*
- Exam\*
- Position prerequisites as applicable
- On-deck training (4 sessions)

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\* Must be completed prior to certification, but recommended that they be completed early

# Training Courses/Clinics

- Required for all positions
- USA-S is creating online courses with embedded exams for all positions (once available, no other courses/clinics are allowed)
  - Foundations of Officiating (April 1)—all new AO & ST
  - Stroke and Turn (April 1)—all new ST
  - Administrative Official and Starter (October 1)
  - Referee (2025) and Chief Judge (?)
- VSI will continue offering clinics for AO, CJ, SR, and DR until the online USA-S course is available

# VSI “Introduction to Officiating Course” Retired & Replaced

- Previous starting point for new trainees
  - New apprentices (ST, AO, or TO) started with the VSI “Introduction to Officiating” clinic
- Current starting point
  - VSI “New Official FAQ”
  - VSI “Becoming a Stroke and Turn Official” document  
or  
VSI “Becoming an Administrative Official” document  
or  
VSI “Becoming a Timing Equipment Operator”  
document
  - USA-S “Foundations of Officiating” course

# AO & ST Are the Gateway Positions to Officiating

- Dry-deck
  - AO will be the only certified position
  - TO (timing equipment operator) will continue as a non-required certified, but highly recommended, position
- Wet-deck
  - ST is the starting point
  - ST > CJ
  - ST > SR
  - ST > SR + AO > DR

# Pathway for STs

- Start at VSI Official's Training web page
- First read "VSI New Apprentice Official FAQ"
- Next read "Becoming a Stroke and Turn Official" which will walk the individual through each necessary step
  - Registration
  - Foundations of Officiating Course
  - USA-S online Stroke and Turn Course/Exam
  - Training card
  - On-deck training (4 sessions)
  - Certified by District Chair



# Pathway for AOs

- Start at VSI Official's Training web page
- First read "VSI New Apprentice Official FAQ"
- Next read "Becoming an Administrative Official" which will walk the individual through each necessary step
  - Registration
  - Foundations of Officiating
  - AO clinic
  - AO test
  - Training card
  - On-deck training (4 sessions)
  - Certified by District Chair

# Pathway for TOs

- An optional, non-required certification
- Start at VSI Official's Training web page
- First read "VSI New Apprentice Official FAQ"
- Next read "Becoming a Timing Equipment Operator" which will walk the individual through each necessary step
  - Foundations of Officiating
  - PVS online TO self-paced course
  - Training card
  - On-deck training (4 sessions)
  - Certified by District Chair

# AO vs TO Certification

- AO training is meant to qualify an individual to have basic skills in the use of Meet Manager, to be able to recognize when and how to make timing adjustments, and to have a basic understanding of how the timing equipment works and communicates with the meet management computer
- AO training is not meant to qualify an individual as competent in running an automatic timing system
- AOs who desire to run the automatic timing system should avail themselves of TO certification
- TO certification is not required, but we encourage clubs to make use of it so that they have qualified operators at their meets

# AO/TO Meet Staffing Challenges

- Previous TOs were remapped to AO, even if not AO certified
- Not all previous AOs were TO qualified
- We can't assume that all AOs are qualified to run the automatic timing system at a meet
- Although we can't require TO certification, clubs who run meets should seek to maintain one or more qualified TO
- When staffing a meet, look for both AO and TO

# Tracking AO Sessions and AO Expertise

- AO certification will be tracked in OTS
- If an AO is also a TO and works TO at a session, they will get session credit for the meet position of TO, which will map back to AO
- A separate database will be established on the VSI website to list AOs and ARs with prelims/finals experience; this list can be used by MRs to help find qualified AOs/ARs for prelims/finals meets

# Tracking TO Expertise

- TO certification can't be tracked in OTS
- TO certification will be tracked in a separate database that will be established on the VSI website
- AOs who are also TOs will also be listed in this database

# Pathway for CJs, SRs, DRs

- Start at VSI Official's Training web page
- Read the applicable “Becoming a Chief Judge / Starter / Referee” which will walk the individual through each necessary step
  - Required prerequisites
  - CJ / SR/ DR Clinic
  - SR / DR test
  - Training card
  - On-deck training (4 sessions)
  - Certified by District Chair (CJ, SR) or LSC Officials Chair (DR)

# Training Cards

- Training cards for AO, ST, CJ, SR, DR, and TO have all been redesigned (***AO and ST cards will not be issued unless Apprentice Official or Non-Athlete Member membership is in place***)
- AO, ST, and TO apprentices will request a training card through a “New Official Apprentice Portal”
- CJ, SR, and DR apprentices will automatically receive a training card following the completion of the required clinic



VIRGINIA SWIMMING STROKE AND TURN APPRENTICE			
<b>Apprentice Name:</b>		<b>Club:</b>	
<b>Telephone:</b>		<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Issued By:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>USA Swimming Member Registration Requirement</b>			
Apprentices must be registered members in good standing to be on deck to train. Initial registration as an Apprentice Official is optional and if used, must be converted to a Non-Athlete Membership before the Apprentice Official membership expires and before certification.			
In Good Standing Until Date	USA Swimming Member as an Apprentice Official – Good for 60 days and then must be converted to a USA Swimming Non-Athlete Member in the Official category to continue training or to certify.		
In Good Standing Until Date	USA Swimming Non-Athlete Member in the Official category including Athlete Protection Training (APT), Concussion Protocol Training (CPT), and Background Check (BGC).		
<b>Off-Deck Training Requirements</b>			
Must complete prior to certification (prior to on-deck training is recommended).			
Date	Complete the online USA Swimming <i>Foundations of Officiating</i> course.		
Date	Complete the online USA Swimming <i>Stroke and Turn Certification Course</i> and pass the accompanying test with a score of 80% or greater.		
<b>On-Deck Training Session Feedback</b>			
Apprentice as a Stroke & Turn Judge for at least 4 training sessions over a minimum of 2 meets. An apprentice may choose voluntarily to do additional sessions, but they cannot be required to do additional sessions (beyond 4) unless specific deficiencies are noted and the VSI Officials Chair or District Chair provides a written action plan of the steps needed to successfully obtain certification. Must complete sessions within one year of the Stroke & Turn Clinic.			
Session 1. Date:	Meet:	Trainer:	MR:
Session 2. Date:	Meet:	Trainer:	MR:
Session 3. Date:	Meet:	Trainer:	MR:
Session 4. Date:	Meet:	Trainer:	MR:
<input type="checkbox"/> Recommend certification; <input type="checkbox"/> Do not recommend certification; <input type="checkbox"/> Apprentice voluntarily requests an additional training session			
Vol Ses 5. Date:	Meet:	Trainer:	MR:
<input type="checkbox"/> Recommend certification; <input type="checkbox"/> Do not recommend certification; <input type="checkbox"/> Apprentice voluntarily requests an additional training session			
Vol Ses 6. Date:	Meet:	Trainer:	MR:
<input type="checkbox"/> Recommend certification; <input type="checkbox"/> Do not recommend certification; <input type="checkbox"/> Apprentice voluntarily requests an additional training session			
<b>Certification</b>			
The completed apprentice training card should be copied and sent as an attachment to the District Officials Chair who serves as the designated Certifier for VSI; certification is not complete until signed off on by the District Officials Chair			
Northern District: Annemarie Juhlin (ajuhlin@msn.com)		Central District: Bob Rustin (brustin55@gmail.com)	
Southeastern District: Genny Kimbel (gennykimbel@gmail.com)		Southwestern District: Beth Arnold (arnoldeaa@gmail.com) or George Zolovick (gzolovick@gmail.com)	

Knowledge Assessment–R: Item Reviewed by trainer; P: Partial knowledge; S: Satisfactory knowledge						
SKILL	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
<b>PRE-SESSION</b>						
Arrives on time, prepared with necessary personal equipment, in proper and professional uniform (white polo shirt, navy blue shorts/pants/skirt, white socks and shoes—not required during apprentice sessions).						
Attentive during stroke briefing and if needed, asks appropriate questions.						
<b>DURING SESSION</b>						
Understands and applies proper positioning on deck.						
Understands and applies communicated jurisdictions and protocols.						
Understands the concept of equitable judging over the assigned jurisdiction (including spending time watching empty lanes).						
Understands how relief might be given during a session.						
Understands how a reserve Stroke and Turn Official is used.						
Understands and applies the rules for the start, stroke, kick, turn, and finish of butterfly.						
Understands and applies the rules for the start, stroke, kick, turn, and finish of backstroke.						
Understands and applies the rules for the start, stroke, kick, turn, and finish of breaststroke.						
Understands and applies the rules for the start, stroke, kick, turn, and finish of freestyle.						
Understands and applies the rules for the individual medley.						
Understands and applies the rules for the freestyle relay.						
Understands and applies the rules for the medley relay.						
Understands how to judge relay take-offs and understands how dual confirmation works.						
Understands when making a call is appropriate and also understands when not making a call is appropriate.						
Understands that the swimmer always gets the benefit of the doubt.						
Understands that a hand must be raised with open palm (confidently, but not enthusiastically) in order to call a disqualification.						
Understands how to correctly communicate a disqualification and what was observed using USA Swimming Rulebook language.						
Understand how to make appropriate notes on the heat sheet.						
Understands how to fill out a DQ slip correctly.						
Understands how to fill out a Relay Take-Off Slips correctly.						
Understands the role of the Chief Judge and Deck Referee in communicating and accepting or rejecting a disqualification.						
<b>GENERAL</b>						
Is respectful of other officials, coaches, meet volunteers, spectators, and athletes.						
Understands the need to conduct themselves as a professional at all times as that they are always being observed by coaches, swimmers and parents; can separate the roles of parent and official when on deck.						
Understands performance criteria as outlined in the Professional Stroke & Turn Judge document.						
Understands how to handle a potential concussion.						
Understands the USA Swimming Safe Sport and MAAPP rules.						



# New Official Apprentice Portal

THIS PORTAL SHOULD BE USED ONLY BY NEW STROKE & TURN JUDGE, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL, AND TIMING EQUIPMENT OPERATOR APPRENTICES. APPRENTICES FOR ALL OTHER OFFICIATING POSITIONS (CHIEF JUDGE, STARTER, REFEREE) WILL AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE A TRAINING CARD FROM THEIR DISTRICT CHAIR AFTER ATTENDING THE POSITION-SPECIFIC CLINIC.

Training card requests received by noon on Wednesday of each week, will normally be sent no later than Thursday of that week. Training card requests received after noon on Wednesday of each week will generally be sent the following week.

## NEW STROKE & TURN JUDGE AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL APPRENTICES

This form should be filled out and submitted **after** registering to become a member of USA Swimming, either as a non-athlete member in the "official" category or as an apprentice official (good for only 60 days, after which you will need to become a non-athlete member in order to continue). Instructions for doing this can be found in the [Becoming a Stroke and Turn Official](#) or [Becoming an Administrative Official](#) documents on the Virginia Swimming website under officials' training. This card will be sent to you via email, and it must be brought with you to meets where you would like to train.

## NEW TIMING EQUIPMENT OPERATOR APPRENTICES

Fill out this form and submit it (USA Swimming membership is not required for Timing Equipment Operators). This card will be sent to you via email, and it must be brought with you to meets where you would like to train.

Thank you for volunteering!

hogan.kevin.t@gmail.com [Switch account](#)

Not shared

\* Indicates required question

Legal First Name \*

Your answer

Preferred First Name

Your answer

Last Name \*

Your answer

Email \*

Your answer

Phone \*

Your answer

Name of Swim Club \*

Choose

Location or best guess for name of club if not found above (Info not needed if club selected above)

Your answer

Apprentice Position \*

- Stroke and Turn (ST)
- Chief Judge (CJ)
- Starter (SR)
- Referee (DR)
- Administrative Official (AO)
- Timing Equipment Operator (TO)

Name Badge and Shirt Information

Upon successful completion of your first Virginia Swimming official's certification, you will receive an official's shirt (white polo with Virginia Swimming logo) and a name badge. Please provide the following information so that these items can be sent to you once you are certified.

Name Exactly as it Should Appear on Name Badge \*

Your answer

Shirt Cut \*

- Men's
- Women's

Shirt Material \*

- Cotton
- Dry Fit

Shirt Size \*

- Extra Small
- Small
- Medium
- Large
- Extra Large
- 2X Large
- 3X Large
- 4X Large

Mailing Address (Street, City, State, Zip) \*

Your answer

# On-Deck Training Changes

- Trainer should preferably have 1 year of experience, but if not available, use the next most experienced official
- There is no minimal session length
- Freestyle-only sessions do not count—the session must include technical strokes (back, breast, fly, or IM) and/or relays
- ST officials will no longer make calls as part of their training

# On-Deck Training Changes

- Training can no longer be excluded from championship-level meets—this may require creative ways to have meaningful training opportunities
- If session length, lack of observable opportunities, or other circumstances make for a poor training activity, it may be worthwhile for the MR to have a discussion with the apprentice as to using the session as a training session

# Evaluating Apprentice Knowledge

- It is expected that most apprentices, most of the time, will complete their training in 4 sessions
- Apprentices are not expected to become experts prior to certification, but they are expected to demonstrate basic knowledge
- Apprentices do not need to observe or handle every skill on the training card, but they should be able to describe how they would handle the situation

# Training Beyond 4 Sessions

- The apprentice may voluntarily request additional training beyond the required 4 sessions
- If the trainer/MR does not believe the individual is ready to be certified after 4 sessions and the apprentice disagrees, the MR must provide the district chair with specific deficiencies so that a written Action Plan can be written that provides the steps necessary to successfully complete certification

# Certification

- After February 1, 2024, all certification periods will be on a 3-year basis
- Currently, new certifications should be set to run through 12/31/2026
- Further details will be forthcoming on how the date will be set in the future (eg, exactly 3 years or something else)

# Recertification

- On a 3-year basis
- Most VSI officials were recertified prior to February 1 with an end date of 12/31/2024—any recertifications after February 1 must now adhere to the new requirements
- Clinic required at highest certification level
- Test(s) required, generally at highest certification level
- Must meet minimum session requirements

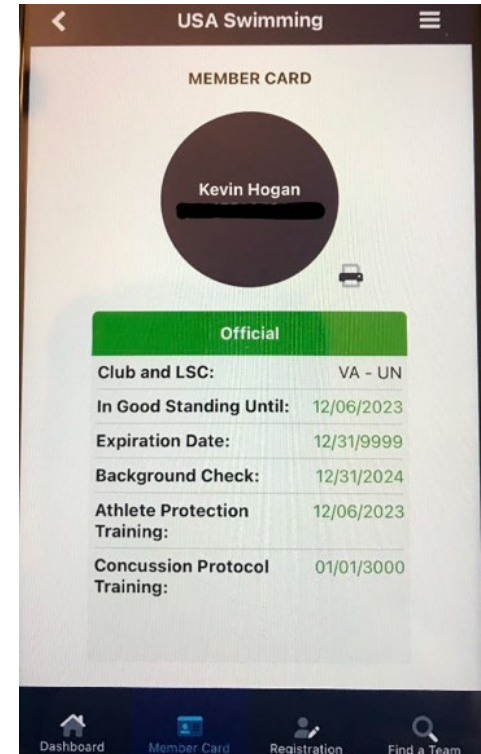
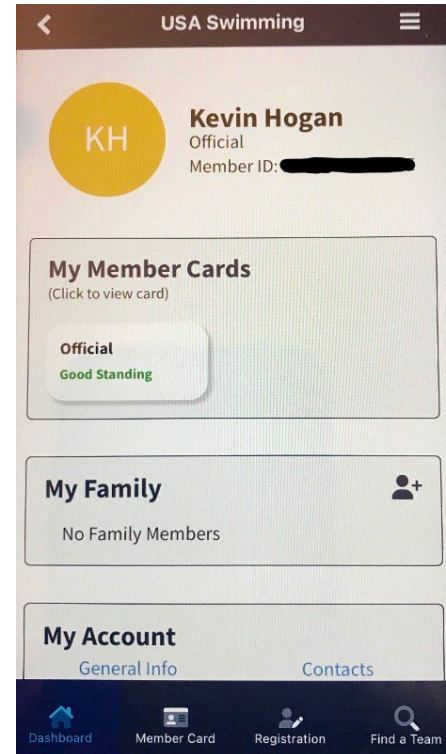


# Advanced Training

- While we can't require training beyond what is in the Standards, we still have the ability to create additional optional learning opportunities to advance the skills and knowledge of our certified officials—examples:
  - Running a prelims/finals meet for AOs and Referees who aspire to the AR role
  - Stepping up to Meet Referee—what does a Referee need to know?
- These and other opportunities will be developed in the future

# USA Swimming App

- **Encourage use by all trainees and officials**
- Available for download in the Apple App Store and Google Play Store
- Displays membership information including registration, APT, BGC, and CPT
- Will eventually display certifications



# Club Officials Chairs Responsibilities

- Recruit new trainees
- Serves as a resource to new trainees
- Guides new trainees through the process
- Assists as needed with signing up for on-deck training sessions
- Encourages progression through training
- Checks that the completed training card is returned to the District Chair and that certification is in place

# Apprentice Responsibilities

- Follows training guidelines
- Completes individual components (registration, training card request, clinic, exam, on-deck training) in a timely fashion
- On-time for briefings, works full session, and actively engages in the educational process
- Brings training card to on-deck sessions
- Returns completed training card to District Chair for certification

# Meet Referee Responsibilities

- Understand and be able to explain the current certification standards
- Ensure that all trainees are members in good standing of USA-Swimming
  - Apprentice Official Member (60-day membership)
  - Non-Athlete Member including APT, BGC, CPT
  - Confirm via OTS, USA Swimming App, training card
  - If not a member, training is NOT allowed
- Confirm that the trainee has a training card
- Assign trainee to trainer and ensure training card is completed at end of session
- Mentors as needed

# District Officials Chairs Responsibilities

- Certifies trainee after receiving completed training card and confirming that all prerequisites are met
- Updates OTS to reflect certification
- Writes Action Plan if needed and communicates with trainee regarding next steps
- Following certification, triggers the sending of a name badge and official's shirt to the new official

# Parting Thoughts

- Change can be difficult—the new standards are in many respects a big change from past practices, but we need to make this work
- If you have questions or comments, please bring them to the attention of Michael Sizemore
- Convey to apprentices that certification is the first step in a process and not the final step—there is always more to learn
- Treat adults like adults and have adult conversations—most people want to do their best—find a way to help get them there