

Meet Marshals Training Guide

Virginia Swimming

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Introduction

- This Meet Marshal Training Guide has been developed to assist in understanding your role as a Meet Marshal at USA Swimming sanctioned events.
- This Guide will give you a basic understanding of the role and the importance of the Meet Marshal to both USA Swimming and the LSC.
- You will gain additional expertise and confidence while working on deck at meets.
- It is suggested that all Meet Directors, Safety/Operational Risk Chairs and Meet Referees read through this Guide.

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Meet Marshal Requirements

- Must be at least 18 years old
- Must be affiliated with a USA Swimming member club

Meet Marshal Position Description

- A Meet Marshal is a required meet official whose responsibility is to enforce warm-up procedures and maintain order in the swimming venue.
- Safety in the swimming venue is the priority.
- The role is described in the USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Article 102.19.

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USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Article 102.19

Marshals shall wear identifying attire and enforce warm-up procedures and maintain order in the swimming venue. The Marshal shall have full authority to warn or order to cease and desist, and with concurrence of the Referee to remove or have removed from the venue anyone behaving in an unsafe manner or using profane or abusive language, or whose actions are disrupting the orderly conduct of the meet.

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About the Role

- The Meet Marshal shall have full authority to warn or order to cease and desist, and with concurrence of the Referee to remove or have removed from the venue anyone behaving in an unsafe manner or using profane or abusive language, or whose actions are disrupting the orderly conduct of the meet.
- Meet Marshals should be friendly and have a smile on their face as they walk about the swimming venue.
- The Meet Marshal is a representative of the host club and the sport of swimming.
- Meet Marshals are recruited/assigned by the Meet Safety Officer and report to the Meet Referee.

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Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy

- The Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy prohibits the Meet Marshal from having one-on-one interactions with a minor athlete that is not within an observable and interruptible distance from another adult.
- In your role, you will interact with minor athletes, therefore you are required to abide by this Policy during the time you are volunteering.
- www.usaswimming.org/maapp

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Upon Arrival at the Facility

- Be on the pool deck 15 minutes prior to the start of warm-ups.
- Report to the Meet Referee and/or Meet Safety Officer - discuss preferred warm-up positions and warm-up guidelines.
- Locate the first-aid equipment/emergency action plans/lifeguards so that you can access the equipment, if necessary, participate in an emergency action plan and communicate with the lifeguards as needed.
- It is important to know who will activate the emergency action plan if needed.

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Generally

- Warm-ups should not start without the Meet Marshals on deck.
- Meet Marshals are also required during time trials.
- Meet Marshals should have a radio to communicate, if available, but must be on a different channel than meet officials.
- Meet Marshals are required to wear identifying attire as designated by the LSC.
- A minimum of 2 Meet Marshals, at least one of each gender required. Lifeguards are not Meet Marshals and may not serve in that role.
- Athletes with disabilities may have a Personal Assistant. The Personal Assistant must be a credentialed member of USA Swimming.

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Phones, Cameras, Recording Devices

- Meet Marshals should not use a cell phone while on duty.
- Meet Marshals should focus on the pool and the job at hand.
- Cell phones are also not allowed behind the starting blocks by anyone at the meet.
- Remind timers and any others behind the blocks that cell phones must be put away.
- If anyone refuses to comply, report the issue to the Meet Referee right away.
- Notify the Meet Referee/Meet Director any time you warn about cell phone or camera use.
- If there is a credentialed photographer at the meet, the photographer can only photograph from behind the starting blocks after the swimmers are in the water.

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Reporting Structure at Meets

- All Meet Marshals report to the Meet Referee and/or Meet Safety Officer who will make assignments and give specific instructions (Article 102.11.4).
- Meet Marshals must confer with the Meet Referee regarding the removal of anyone from the venue.
- The Meet Director, pool personnel, security, etc., are responsible for the actual, physical, removal of an individual from the venue at the direction of the Meet Referee.
- The Meet Director and facility staff are also responsible for administering First Aid, bodily fluid clean up and submitting a Report of Occurrence.

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Responsibilities

- Observe the warm-up lanes with eyes on the pool at all times.
- Observe for inappropriate people on the pool deck
- Only credentialed swimmers, coaches, officials and meet volunteers are allowed on the pool deck.
- Credentialed means the individual has current certifications and has been approved by the Meet Director or Meet Referee.
- Some meets will provide wrist bands or other identification to be on deck.
- Parents are to remain in the spectator area.
- Marshals are to direct uncredentialed people to leave the deck immediately.

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- When conducting locker room checks (with another adult), ensure there are no recording devices, horseplay or other adults present.
- During the meet, at least one Meet Marshal must always monitor any separate warm-down pool.
- If there is no separate warm-down pool, the Meet Marshals shall walk the deck area. As needed remind swimmers to walk, not run, not to toss toys on deck, or create obstructions that impede movement around the deck.

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Warm-ups

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Positioning of Marshals during Warm-up

- When there are two Meet Marshals:
 - One Meet Marshal should be at the start stand corner of the pool observing the warm-up.
 - The other Meet Marshal should be located diagonally across the pool.
 - Each Meet Marshal is responsible for an "L-shape": the two sides of the pool nearest them.
- If there are four Meet Marshals, each may take a quadrant on the pool during warm-up
- When only two to four Marshals are assigned, priority is given to observing warm-ups.

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Meet Warm-ups

- Warm-up procedures/lane assignments will vary by meet depending upon the type of warm-up format is being followed at the meet:
 - Clubs are assigned to specific lanes for warm-up at specific times, or
 - General warm-up where the pools is open to all swimmers in the meet can with no specific assignments.
- All swimmers **MUST** be supervised by the swimmer's coach during warm-ups.
- Meet Marshals will observe all warm-up lanes to ensure swimmers are following warm-up procedures safely.

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- Swimmers are to clear the pool upon completion of warm-ups.
- The pool is not for socializing, chatting or horseplay.
- The same policy applies to warm-up lanes or the warm-up pool once competition has started.
- Only registered participants in the meet may use the pool facilities (e.g., spectators are not allowed to be in the pools at any time).
- Non-participating children should be removed from all warm-up and wading pools.

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Types of Warm-up Sessions

- **Assigned Warm-up**
 - Clubs will be assigned lanes and the exact warm-up times.
 - Swimmers will use feet-first entry and circle swim during their warm-up.
 - Each club determines its warm-up procedures within its assigned lanes.
- **Open Warm-up**
 - Teams are not assigned specific lanes or times.

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- **Open Warm-up cont.**
 - General warm-up occurs during the first half of the meet warm-up.
 - Swimmers will use feet-first entry and circle swim during their warm-up.
 - Swimmers may be in any lane.
 - Start and pace practice will begin at a designated time.
 - The outside lanes are used for pace work at a designated time.
 - The next lanes in from the pace lanes are used to practice starts.
 - The third lane in is for general practice and can be used for the return of the swimmer who worked on a start in the adjacent lane.
 - Coaches may ask for additional start lanes, please refer any such requests to the Meet Referee (or designee).

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Backstroke Ledge Starts during Warm-up

- Backstroke ledges may be used for starts during warm-up.
- The swimmers may or may not have experience using a backstroke ledge.
- Backstroke ledges should be used in a separate start lane.
- There should be additional coaches/staff to assist with the use of the backstroke ledges for practice starts during warm-up.
- Backstroke ledge use is the responsibility of the swimmers and coaches.

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Competition

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Positioning during Competition

- If there is a separate warm-up pool, at least one Meet Marshal should be stationed at the warm-up pool at all times.
- Locker room should be checked regularly by two adults of the same gender.
 - If two to four Meet Marshals are present, locker room checks begin during competitions.
 - In a meet where there are more than four Meet Marshals, locker room checks can be scheduled every 30 minutes.
- If there are breaks during competition and the pool is open for warm-ups, the Meet Marshals must be on deck in the "L shape" positions.

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During the meet

- Avoid walking the pool deck with other Meet Marshals unless a specific inspection requires a witness.
- Never have your back to the pool.
- You may meet and discuss issues or concerns with other Meet Marshals but face the pool at all times.
- Rotating positions frequently helps keep all Meet Marshals alert.
- Never leave the warm-down pool unattended when rotating positions.
- REMEMBER: Diving boards are never to be used at a meet and starting blocks should never be used in the warm-up pool.

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Meet Marshals should not...

- Respond to emergency medical situations.
 - Meet Marshals should report problems to the Meet Referee and Meet Director
 - Meet Marshals should direct swimmers and others in safe on-deck behaviors
 - Meet Marshals should follow the directions of the Meet Referee and Meet Director
- Meet Marshals cannot be coaches or the Meet Director in the session in which they are serving as a Meet Marshal.

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What to look for:

- Sportsmanship - Bullying or taunting is prohibited at all times. If you observed this behavior, intervene. Inform the Meet Referee or Meet Director so they can handle it further.
- Additional Safe Sport Issues:
 - Rubdowns, massages, and athletic training modalities are not allowed except by a licensed professional. Coaches may not perform these modalities to include stretching. If you observe a coach performing one of these, immediately report it to the Meet Referee or Meet Director.
 - Swimmers may not sit on the lap of any non-family member, coach or official. Remind the adult involved about this prohibition and report the behavior to the Meet Referee or Meet Director.

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What to look for cont.

- Deck Hazards
 - Report to the Meet Referee any unsafe areas on deck, including loose wires, slippery areas, loose blocks or over crowding of swimmers in a lane.
 - Be alert for electronic equipment cords/pad cords/buttons, etc., that may fall into the pool during warm-up
 - Remove any glass bottles/vessels, etc., that you may see on deck.
- Rude or Disrespectful Behavior
 - This includes, without limitation, profanity, even if not directed at the Meet Marshal or another meet official.

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After Session Ends

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- Continue to walk the pool deck, monitor locker rooms and warm-down pool looking for safety concerns.
- Remain on deck for at least 15 minutes and until released by the Meet Referee or Meet Safety Officer.
- Inform Meet Referee or Meet Safety Officer when you leave the venue.

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Hazards & Emergencies

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Hazards

- Locker Rooms
 - Locker rooms should be surveyed per the Safe Sport Locker Room Monitoring requirements of the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy.
 - Cameras, cell phones or other electronic recording devices are not allowed to be used in locker rooms.
 - If you see anyone taking pictures or possibly recording in the locker rooms, report the person and the activity to the Meet Referee.
 - Do not permit the person to remain in the locker room.
 - Ask a nearby bystander to go to the officials table and get the Meet Referee to come to the locker room immediately or use your radio to get assistance.
 - Do not physically touch the person.

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Hazards cont.

- Drones
 - Drones are prohibited over venues any time athletes, coaches, officials and/or spectators are present.
 - Report any drone spotted to the Meet Referee.
- Weapons
 - Observe for any facility-prohibited weapons.
 - Notify the Meet Director or Meet Referee immediately if you observe weapons (e.g., guns, knives, etc.) on the premises.
 - Do not attempt to intervene with a weapon-carrying individual.

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Hazards cont.

- Bulkheads
 - Swimming under the bulkhead is extremely dangerous.
 - There should be a lane line in place to prevent swimmers from swimming directly next to a bulkhead.
 - When under the bulkhead a swimmer is hidden from view.
 - A swimmer could get caught underneath and not be able to get free, which could result in a serious medical emergency and drowning risk.
 - Swimmers are permitted one warning. If a swimmer continues to swim under the bulkhead they should be removed from the venue (with concurrence of the Meet Referee).
 - Only meet officials can walk across the bulkhead unless the bulkhead is also a general meet walkway.
 - Meet Marshals and lifeguards are considered meet officials for this purpose.

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Outdoor Meet Issues

- No open fire of any sort is allowed in the hospitality area or on the pool deck without prior LSC permission.
- Be alert for propane or electric heaters or cooling units that may be brought on deck or be placed inside tents on deck.
- These items should also have received prior approval from the Meet Director for use.
- In tight quarters, heaters may be a safety hazard in causing a fire or carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Cooling units, fans or heating units may cause tripping hazards with the cords.
- Cooling units or heaters may put a strain on the venue's electrical system.
- Cords should be covered with tape, a rug or other cord protector to reduce tripping and should always be away from the water.
- Report any issues to the Meet Referee or Meet Safety Officer.

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Emergencies

- All directives should come from facility personnel, the Meet Referee or the Meet Director.
- The Meet Marshal will take direction from the Meet Referee and may be asked to assist facility staff and the Meet Director, depending on the emergency.
- The meet announcer may be instructed to make public announcements to participants and spectators.
- Depending on the circumstances, the pool area, facility or both may be evacuated under the direction of lifeguards, meet personnel and/or emergency responders.

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Emergency Response

- Injuries
 - If someone is hurt, even someone only needing minimal attention such as ice or a bandage, notify a lifeguard first, if present, and then the Meet Director.
 - The Meet Referee or designee is responsible for completing the Report of Occurrence form with USA Swimming.
 - If an ambulance is needed, the lifeguard or Meet Director should notify authorities.
 - If your assistance is not required in the area of the injury, continue your role as Meet Marshal.
 - The Meet Director may ask you to assist with emergency procedures such as crowd control or waiting for an ambulance.
 - Take emergency instructions from the Meet Director but notify the Meet Referee if you need to temporarily leave your Meet Marshal duties.

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Emergency Response cont.

- Bodily Fluids and Biohazards
 - If you notice bodily fluids or biohazards, notify the Meet Referee and Meet Director.
 - Bodily fluids or biohazards must be cleaned up as quickly as possible.
 - Prevent others from accidentally coming into contact with the substance.
 - If the substance prevents swimmers from safely entering or exiting the competition pool, the meet should be delayed until clean-up is completed.
 - It is not the responsibility of the Meet Marshal to complete the clean-up process. It is the responsibility of the Meet Marshal to help protect others from exposure.

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Final Reminders

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Final Reminders

- Go to the Meet Referee or Meet Safety Officer with any questions.
- When you are having issues with individuals not wanting to follow the safety guidelines, you have the authority to take action. However, remember you work under the direction of the Meet Referee.
- Always keep the Meet Referee informed.