

# Officials Handbook

## Virginia Swimming, Inc. (VSI)

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## INTRODUCTION

For many if not most, officiating begins with volunteering to time at a child's swim meet. While you may not realize it, Timers are officials, and very important officials at that. While few swimmers will earn ribbons or medals, all swimmers can strive for an improvement of their times, and thus all those involved in determining the official time of a swim are of great importance to the swimmers.

A relatively small number of individuals move beyond acting as Timers and become certified officials. The motivations for advancing into the officiating ranks are as varied as those volunteering their services. Frequently though, individuals become involved with officiating because they've become bored with timing and are looking for a new challenge, because their club needs officials to host a meet, or because someone has twisted his/her arm. Others become involved because they were former swimmers and they see officiating as a way in which to stay involved in the sport, while others volunteer because they feel it is important to make a major commitment to his/her child's activities. A common thread among all these volunteers is a desire to help in a way that requires more than a minimal investment of time.

Probably because it is one of the most visible officiating positions on the deck, most new volunteers start off as Stroke & Turn officials and many see this as their only option. For a variety of reasons not everyone is comfortable in this role. Some individuals can't readily translate the rules to what they see happening in the pool, while others find the idea of disqualifying swimmers as terrifying. The good news is there are multiple positions for which we need volunteers, and Stroke & Turn officiating is only one of them. Other officiating positions at which one can begin to include Timing Equipment Operator (more comfortable working with computers than people?), Administrative Official (like working with numbers?), and Recorder (another position involving computers). All these positions are equally important when it comes to running a swim meet and one of them may be right for you.

Like many things in life, there are varying levels of commitment that one can make to swim officiating. For most, certification at a single

position will be obtained and most or all their officiating will be done at the sessions in which they have a child participating. Others will become certified in two or more positions and frequently begin to officiate at sessions in which they do not have a child swimming. And for a select few, officiating becomes a lifetime commitment.

## WHO'S WHO AND WHO CAN HELP YOU

Whether you are curious about officiating, just getting started, or are a seasoned officiating veteran, this handbook is designed to answer your basic questions about officiating. You should never feel that you're alone as there are lots of people to help answer your questions.

- **CLUB OFFICIALS CHAIR:** Each club should have an Officials Chair. The primary responsibilities of the Club Officials Chair include setting up training clinics for new officials, assisting training officials with scheduling training sessions at meets, and organizing officials for both home and away meets. The Club Officials Chair is ordinarily the training official's first point of contact. The Club Officials Chair usually functions as the OFFICIALS COORDINATOR for any meet that the club is hosting. A guide for Club Chairs can be found here [Club Chair Guide](#)
- **DISTRICT OFFICIALS CHAIR:** For the purposes of competition VSI is divided into four districts and these same districts are used by the Officials Committee to oversee training. Each district has a chairperson. The primary responsibility of the District Officials Chair is to organize and oversee the training of officials in their district.
- **VSI OFFICIALS CHAIR:** The Officials Committee is a standing committee of VSI and is charged with the recruitment, training, testing, certification, evaluation, retesting, recertification, and supervision of officials. The Chairperson of the Committee is responsible for seeing that these functions are fulfilled by the Committee.
- **ASSIGNED TRAINER:** Each trainee is assigned to a trainer when he/she trains at a session of a meet. The trainer is responsible for overseeing the training of the trainee at that session and should be able to answer

most questions. If the trainer doesn't know the answer, the MEET REFEREE should be asked. If no one knows the answer, he/she will find someone that does.

- **CONTACT INFORMATION:** Contact information for all the above individuals can be found on the officials' section of the VSI website ([www.virginiawimming.org](http://www.virginiawimming.org))

## PHILOSOPHY

The sport of swimming places a heavy reliance on volunteers to conduct swim meets, and nowhere is this reliance heavier than it is in providing high quality officials at swim meets to achieve the goal of providing fair and equitable competition for our athletes. To achieve this goal, minimum standards for the certification and recertification of officials have been set forth by the USA Swimming Officials Committee and been adopted by resolution of the USA Swimming Board of Directors. It is the responsibility of the Local Swim Committees (LSC) to meet or exceed these standards in developing their training programs for officials.

Virginia Swimming, Inc. (VSI), the LSC that primarily covers the state of Virginia, certifies officials in wet-deck (Stroke & Turn, Chief Judge, Starter, and Referee) and dry-deck (Administrative Referee, Administrative Official, Clerk-of-Course, and Timing Equipment Operator) positions. The requirements for certification and recertification at these positions meet or exceed the minimal requirements as set forth by USA Swimming. Because the USA Swimming requirements are minimal standards, the VSI Officials Committee has determined that some cases positions require additional training/education to provide the high quality of officiating our swimmers expect and deserve.

The combination of clinic-based education, test taking, and on-the-job training as provided for in the attached requirements are meant to accomplish the following:

- Assure a clear and consistent knowledge of the rules
- Provide sufficient time in training to assure familiarity with all levels of competition
- Provide opportunities to work on the deck and advance through the certification process

- Allow automatic acceptance at the Stroke & Turn level between all LSCs meeting the *USA Swimming Minimum Standards Guidelines*

## INTRODUCTION TO OFFICIATING

The following section is a simple introduction to how competitive swimming is organized at the international, national, regional, and local levels. It introduces the officials needed to run a swim meet and briefly describes how officials are trained and certified.

### Swim Organizations

- *FINA* – Federation Internationale de Natation (International Federation of Swimming)
  - International governing body
  - Olympics, World Championships
- United States Aquatic Sports, Inc. (USAS)
  - United States aquatic sports federation recognized by FINA
  - Represents five aquatic sports
    - Swimming
    - Diving
    - Synchronized Swimming
    - Water Polo
    - Masters Swimming
- *USA Swimming* (USA-S; unofficial abbreviation)
  - National governing body for swimming in the United States under USAS
  - Subdivided into 59 Local Swim Committees (LSC) that cover the United States
- *Virginia Swimming, Inc. (VSI)*
  - One of the 59 LSCs of USA-S
  - Territory covers most of Virginia except portions of Northern Virginia; also includes small portions of North Carolina
  - Approximately 50 clubs
- **Additional Organizations Involved with Swimming**
  - AAU - governed swimming in USA prior to 1980; uses USA-S rules

- YMCA – uses USA-S rules
- NCAA – college; uses its own rules
- NFHS – high school; uses its own rules
- Summer/Recreational Leagues – may use any rules as adopted by the league

### **Rules and Regulations**

- Because each organization has its own rules it is important to know which rules are in force for the meet you are working
- VSI/USA-S meets are run under USA-S Rules & Regulations

### **Meet Organization**

- Meet Invitation – When, where, who, events
- Major responsibilities divided between:
  - Meet Director
  - Meet Referee

### **Meet Director**

- Pre-meet planning
- Writes Meet Invitation and has it approved
- Organizes volunteers
- Runs the non-technical aspects of the meet
- Files post-meet reports

### **Meet Referee**

- Reviews Meet Invitation
- Runs the technical aspects of the meet
- In charge of all officials
- Has authority over all officials and enforces all applicable rules
- May also function as a Deck Referee or Administrative Referee

### **Certified Officials**

- Broadly categorized into “wet deck” and “dry deck” officials

#### **“Wet Deck” Officials**

- Deck Referee – Has authority over all wet deck officials and enforces all applicable rules
- Starter - Ensures that all swimmers receive a fair start

- Stroke and Turn - Ensures that the swimmers comply with the technical rules of swimming
- Chief Judge - Assigns/supervises Stroke and Turn officials; Reports DQs from S&T officials to the Referee

### **“Dry Deck” Officials**

- Administrative Referee – Has authority overall all dry deck officials and enforces all applicable rules
- Administrative Official (AO) – reports directly to the Meet Referee (or Administrative Referee (AR)) and may supervise/direct the “dry” side of the meet. Has authority over all dry deck officials and enforces all applicable rules
- Clerk-of-Course – Seeds swimmers by time into appropriate lanes and heats, and “shepherds” swimmers to the blocks. Normally completed by AO or AR.
- Timing Equipment Operator (TEO) – Runs the electronic timing system
- Recorder – Determines the official time for each swimmer under the guidance of the Referee and Administrative Official, records and publishes the results of the meet. Normally certified as AO.

### **Non-Certified Officials**

- Chief Timer - Organizes Timers before session; Assist Starter with Timers’ briefing; Starts extra watches for each heat
- Timers – Time swimmers and record watch times
- Marshal – At least two are responsible for maintaining a safe and orderly swim venue
- Announcer - Announces events, heats, and other pertinent meet information

### **Certification Requirements (General)**

- Attend clinic (as required)
- All must take and pass the timer’s test
- Work required *minimum* number of sessions as Apprentice
- Work final 1-3 sessions as the primary official under the observation of the Trainer
- Positive recommendation from Trainer and

## Referee

- Final certification card issued by District Chair or LSC Officials Chair (Referee)

## Paperwork

- USA-S non-athlete membership is required for all certified officials including S&T, Starter, Chief Judge, Referee, Clerk, AO.TEO, and Recorder, and is required for S&T trainees prior to beginning their fourth training walk (First walk in whites). USA-S membership is also required for Meet Directors
- Trainees receive training cards which are filled-out by the Trainer and signed by the Referee after each training session
- Certified officials will have a certification card generated through the OTS

## Training at a Meet

- Signing-up for sessions prior to the meet is best
- Signing-up is usually done through your Club Officials Chair but can be done on your own (see Meet Invitation for details)
- The number of Trainers and Trainees at a given session/meet may sometimes preclude the ability to train at a given session – we do our best, however, to accommodate as many requests as possible

## Responsibilities of Trainees & Officials When Training/Working

- Work sessions that you agreed to work
- Arrive on time for pre-session officials briefing
- Work the entire session
- Once certified, maintain current technical and philosophical understanding of the rules
- Maintain a professional decorum
  - Must be fair and impartial
  - Must not cheer for your children/club during competition

## Re-Certification Requirements (General)

- Work minimal # of sessions (differs by position)
- Fulfill any continuing education requirements

## Attire

- Prior to certification or final walks for S&T please wear neat street clothes
- For final S&T walks or following certification
  - White polo shirt
  - Navy blue shorts, pants, or skirt
  - White socks and shoes (sandals are okay)
  - Dress may be modified at some meets, especially the finals session of a championship meets.
  - See Officials' Attire on page 9 for complete details

## Resources

- USA-Swimming
  - [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org)
- Virginia Swimming, Inc.
  - [www.virginiaswimming.org](http://www.virginiaswimming.org)

## OFFICIALS TRACKING SYSTEM (OTS)

OTS is used to track the tests that that a trainee/official has taken, the sessions that a trainee/official has worked, the educational activities in which the individual has participated, mentoring activity, the certification status of the official, and any national evaluations that have been performed of the official. OTS is located on the USA-S website. For an individual to access his or her information in OTS, the individual must register on the site.

VSI clinic and meet activity will ordinarily be entered for everyone by a clinic/meet administrator. It is recommended that each official periodically check the database for accuracy and let their District Officials Chair know if mistakes or omissions are found. While data for all meets and clinics within VSI should automatically be entered into OTS, this may not be the case when working a meet in another LSC. If a meet is worked out of LSC and the activity is not entered automatically, it can be entered manually on an individual basis.

Mentoring activity such as working with a Stroke & Turn trainee at a meet is also tracked in OTS, but these activities can be entered by the

individual official or by the meet referee or designee, tracking mentoring activity is particularly important if an official is interested in pursuing national certification as evidence of mentoring activity is required for N3 certification.

## **TRAINING GUIDELINES AND INITIAL CERTIFICATION**

- Clinics and clinicians must be approved by the Officials Committee Chairperson, or by the District Officials Chairperson in whose region the clinic will be conducted.
  - The apprentice should keep his/her Club Officials Chair apprised of his/her progress, and the Club Officials Chair should work with the apprentice to schedule training sessions at upcoming meets.
  - In general, training at meets is on a first-come, first-served basis, however, every attempt is made to give as many people as possible an opportunity to train. This may mean that an apprentice will train for one session rather than two, or train at a different position than otherwise expected (Recorder rather than Timing Judge, for example).
  - In general, all training sessions must be performed at VSI/USA Swimming sanctioned meets. Approval to train at non-VSI LSC meets requires prior approval of the apprentice's District Officials Chair, or the Officials Committee Chairperson.
  - For the purposes of defining level appropriate training sessions, A+ or AA+ meets correspond to an "A" meet in the requirements. B/C, A/BB, A/BB/B/C, B+, and BB+ meets are all considered non- "A" meets.
  - Age Group Championships may only be used to complete Administrative Referee training with the permission of the Officials Chair under supervision of the assigned Administrative Referee.
  - District/Regional Championship Meets (District Champs, Regional Champs, Summer Awards) may be used for limited training of apprentices subject to the discretion of the meet referee as follows:
    - Dry deck apprentices must have completed at least four training sessions with positive ratings, including the familiarization sessions at other administrative positions. Final sessions and certification may occur if all requirements are met.
- Stroke & Turn apprentice training is not allowed except under unusual circumstances which must be approved by the VSI Officials Chair in consultation with the District Chair. Final ("white and blue") sessions may not be accomplished, nor may final certification.
  - Chief Judge apprentices must have completed at least two training sessions with positive ratings.
  - Starter apprentices must have completed at least five training sessions with positive ratings. Final sessions and certification may occur if all other requirements are met.
  - Referee apprentices must have completed at least four sessions and have the positive recommendation of their District Officials Chair. Referees may complete the administrative referee session.
  - Other championship-format meets run by individual host clubs provide additional opportunities for specialized training in the administrative aspects of trials and finals as well as for all other types and forms of training, including initial sessions. Stroke and Turn training are available at preliminary sessions but not during finals sessions of LSC non-championship prelims/finals format meets.
  - High School, NCAA, and non-VSI sanctioned or approved YMCA meets are not acceptable for training.
  - Up to two sessions of training will be accepted at US Masters Swimming meets, but all final training sessions must be VSI/USA Swimming sanctioned meets.
  - The designated trainer at a session should ordinarily have a minimum of one year of experience in the position being trained. When possible, it is recommended that the apprentice train one or more sessions with a referee, administrative supervisor, or other designated experienced official.

- A session should be a minimum of two hours in length, and of such a nature as to allow for a meaningful training experience for the apprentice (i.e., watching two hours of the 1650 does not constitute a meaningful training experience for a Stroke & Turn apprentice, but would constitute an appropriate training experience for a Starter apprentice in need of a “bell-lap” session). The session Referee should *not* sign-off on a training session of insufficient duration or one lacking in sufficient training experience.
- The apprentice must work the entire session.
- No more than two sessions may be worked as a trainee at a meet and no more than two sessions may be worked in one day
- While many, if not most apprentices, will complete their training in the minimal number of suggested training sessions, some apprentices will require more than the minimum number of sessions. This may reflect the fact that some sessions may not provide a meaningful training or evaluation experience, or it may reflect the fact that some individuals may require more than the average amount of training before certification. In all cases, the intent is ensured that certified officials can provide “fair and equitable” conditions of competition for the athletes, and to ensure that the officials have achieved an appropriate level of competency at their level of certification.
- S&T trainees must become non-athlete members of USA-S prior to beginning their fourth training walk (membership is mandated by the USA-S Rules & Regulations for individuals making calls). Only a valid membership card or confirmation of membership in OTS will be accepted as evidence of having met this requirement. This provision will be enforced at meets by the Meet Referee/Deck Referee/Chief Judge. It is the trainee’s responsibility to submit their registration early enough that it can be processed prior to the fourth training walk. In addition, they complete their background check, Athlete Protection Training (APT), S&T Test and Concussion training prior to their fourth walk.
- Administrative Officials, Timing Equipment Operators, Recorders, and Clerks of Course

trainees must become non-athlete members of USA-S prior to being certified. District Officials Chairs will only certify trainees after this condition has been met.

- S&T trainees must pass the S&T/Timer test prior to their fourth training walk. It is the trainee’s responsibility to append the e-mail notification that the test has been passed to their training card as evidence of having completed this requirement. This provision will be enforced at meets by the Meet Referee/Deck Referee/Chief Judge.
- Administrative Officials Timing Equipment Operators, and Clerks of Course trainees must pass the applicable test(s) (see the specific Certification Requirements below) prior to their final training session in position. It is the trainee’s responsibility to append the e-mail notification that the test has been passed to their training card as evidence of having completed this requirement. This provision will be enforced at meets by the Meet Referee/Administrative Referee/Chief Judge.
- Training for all positions must be completed within one year of the initial clinic or orientation date.
- Ordinarily one year of experience is required in a position before training for a higher-level position. Depending upon individual circumstances this provision may be waived by the District Chair or the VSI Officials Committee Chair.
- Certification is not complete until the apprentice’s District Official Chair “signs-off” on the training. This can frequently occur at a meet, but it may also require the apprentice to scan and email the completed training card to the District Officials Chair. The District Officials Chair will update the certification status in OTS upon the satisfactory completion of all the training requirements for the position. District Officials Chairs should not issue the final certification for apprentices from another district, even if they observed the final training session.
- Certification is on a calendar year basis and runs from January 1 to December 31. Officials certifying prior to October 1 will be certified through the end of the current

calendar year; officials certifying after October 1 will be certified through the end of the next calendar year.

- The District Officials Chair is responsible for ensuring that OTS and the VSI Officials Database is updated with the current certification information, and changes to the certification information can only come from the District Officials Chairs or the Officials Committee Chairperson. Changes to personal information (phone number, address, email) is the responsibility of the individual officials.

## RECERTIFICATION

It is important to note that certification is for a defined period. Recertification is based on working the required number of sessions within the calendar year, attendance at pre-session briefings, and in some cases, continuing education. Only sessions worked at USA Swimming sanctioned/approved/observed meets or USMS sanctioned/recognized meets may be counted towards the session requirement. Sessions at meets run by another organization (such as AAU, High School, NCAA, YMCA) may be counted if the meet is sanctioned, approved, or observed by USA Swimming.

Certification is on an annual basis and expires on December 31 of each year. The certification of those officials not recertifying will be suspended, and those individuals will not be allowed to officiate unless and until they recertify.

Recertification requirements are based on the highest position for which recertification is sought. Unless requested otherwise by the official, Referees will automatically be recertified at Starter, Stroke & Turn Judge, and Timing Judge (if already certified). Starters will automatically be recertified at Chief Judge and Stroke & Turn. Administrative Officials will automatically recertify at recorder and timing equipment operator...

It is *recommended* that all Referees not currently certified as AO or Timing Equipment Operator, seek such certification.

The recertification of all officials except Referees will be handled through their respective District Officials Chairperson. The recertification of

Referees will be handled by the Officials Committee Chairperson.

Officials not meeting the recertification requirements may be provisionally recertified for one year. Depending upon the circumstances, provisional recertification may require retraining which may include, but is not limited to: (i) clinic attendance; (ii) passing the respective recertification test, (iii) passing the full version of the respective certification test; and/or (iv) observation by a designated trainer with positive recommendation for provisional certification. Officials not meeting the recertification requirements for two consecutive years will ordinarily not be recertified. Request for waiver to this policy must be made in writing to the Officials Committee Chairperson.

## CERTIFICATION LEVELS

*VSI Certification (C):*

The VSI Officials Committee is responsible for the training, certification, and recertification of officials within the VSI boundaries. The criteria used for certification within VSI meets or exceeds the *USA Swimming Minimum Standards* guidelines. Initial certification at each position is given at the C level within VSI. This designation means that officials are minimally qualified to perform in the position. VSI certification is administered through the VSI Officials Committee.

*National Certification (N2, N3):*

N2 certification qualifies an individual to work in position at national level meets while N3 certification qualifies an individual to work in position at national championship meets. Advancement to N2 and N3 certification requires that an individual work a minimal number of sessions at designated qualifying meets, that he/she be satisfactorily evaluated at the qualifying meet, and that he/she is continuing education and mentorship within VSI as shown by such activities as attendance at clinics, conducting clinics, and one-on-one training of new officials. National certification is administered by the National Officials Committee. Details of N2 and N3 certification can be found on the USA Swimming website.

## CERTIFICATION Q AND A

*What responsibilities does a trainee have while seeking certification?*



- Join USA Swimming as required by their fourth walk (first walk in whites).
- Ensure the USA Swimming Website Account is linked to their non-athlete registration (under my account on USA Swimming Website) after registration has been processed.
- Complete all applicable tests, APT, Concussion Training and background check, by their fourth walk (first walk in whites).
- Obtain a training record card from the District Chair
- Have the Trainer and Referee sign-off on the training record at the completion of each session worked
- Upon completion of training and receiving the recommendation of the Referee in the last session worked, return the training card to the District Chair for final approval
- Complete all certification requirements within one year of attending clinic

*How does a trainee go about arranging for training at a meet?*

The coordination of the training of officials at a meet is usually handled by the Club Officials Chair of the host club in conjunction with the Meet Referee. Contact information for the responsible person is found in the Meet Invitation for each meet, with the Meet Invitation usually being posted to the VSI website a minimum of four weeks prior to the meet. Ordinarily, the trainee's Club Official Chair should contact the trainee two to three weeks prior to the meet, determine when the individual can train, and then send this information to the Officials Coordinator for the meet. The Officials Coordinator should in turn confirm that the trainee can train at the selected sessions and this information should be transmitted to the trainee in a timely fashion. If the Club Officials Chair of the trainee does not request the training, it is perfectly fine for the training official to directly contact the Officials Coordinator for the meet.

*Sometimes it isn't possible to train at a particular session. Why is this?*

We never want to turn a volunteer away, but there is a limit to the amount of effective training that can take place at a meet. As an example,

there is only one timing system in use at most, if not all meets, at which training is allowed. A very experienced Timing System Operator might be able to manage the training of two individuals at the same session, while a less experienced Timing System Operator might be able to manage the training of only a single individual in a session, and a new Timing System Operator may not yet be comfortable training anyone. Every attempt is made by the Meet Referee and host club to accommodate as many trainees as possible. Priority is generally given to those individuals who sign up for specific sessions before a meet, although we always strive to balance the training needs of a specific individual against those of all the individuals seeking training at a given meet. For this reason, it is important that if a trainee will be attending a session for training purposes only (no swimmer in the session), that this is made known to the person coordinating officials for the meet as early as possible so that he/she will have the best chance of training. If it is not possible for them to train at the desired session, this information should be communicated to the trainee so that he/she does not travel to the session.

*I started training and didn't finish within a year. Now I'm being told that I must start over. Why don't I get credit for what I've already done?*

It is important to keep in mind that learning is enhanced by repetition, and that, when spread out over a large period, it is less effective than repetition in a more concentrated period. It is generally felt that the minimum required number of training sessions within a one-year training period is the minimum that is required for good retention of the material. Circumstances differ and District Officials Chairs have discretion in how to handle these situations on a case-by-case basis. This also applies to the tests that are associated with positions. The tests are meant to be training tools that force the trainee to read and understand the rulebook. If it has been more than a year since a test was taken, and less than the minimal number of training sessions have been worked, it is reasonable to conclude that the trainee may need to refresh his/her knowledge of the rules.

*I'm relatively certain that I'd like to advance to \_\_\_\_\_ (fill-in the blank) or I'd like to obtain multiple certifications. What's the best way to go about doing this?*

First, it is important to recognize that all officials should periodically assess their officiating skills. While a self-assessment can be very valuable, an assessment by more senior level officials including your Club Officials Chair, your District Officials Chair, and the Referees with whom you work can prove to be very valuable. Whether just starting off, or at any point in your officiating career, please share with these individuals your goals and your questions. While we can't promise any person certification at any position, we can offer suggestions to help with your professional development. The bottom line is that while recommendations are required to move on to some levels of officiating, expressing an interest in moving up through the ranks can only help us to identify those individuals who can and want to take on additional responsibility.

*How long must I wait between certifying for one position and beginning to train for a new position?*

As a rule of thumb, individuals must be certified for one year in a position before they certify for a new position. This is meant to ensure that an individual spends some time acting in the newly certified capacity. For example, if someone has just certified as a Stroke and Turn Judge, we find it best that he/she continue to hone his/her skills at that position, rather than to immediately start training for another position. As many of our officials only work the required minimum number of sessions required for recertification (or not many more than that), immediately training for a new position may also mean that they will not attain enough sessions to recertify at the original position. When combined with the fact that many of our officials only remain active for 2-3 years, we'd like to maximize the contribution that they can make to officiating.

There can be exceptions to this rule. Some individuals easily work 30-40 sessions a year and can be ideal candidates for beginning training at additional positions on an accelerated schedule. This is best managed on a case by case basis and should be discussed with the District Officials Chair.

## **SPECIFIC CERTIFICATION AND RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

The specific certification and recertification requirements are listed below.

<b>Timer (Minimum Age 11)</b>		
<b>Initial Education &amp; Training</b>	<b>On-the-Job Training &amp; Initial Certification</b>	<b>Recertification</b>
<p><i>USA-S Membership:</i> None required.</p> <p><i>Test:</i> Timer.</p>	Attend pre-meet briefing.	Based on satisfactory performance.

<b>Stroke &amp; Turn (Minimum Age 18)</b>		
<b>Initial Education &amp; Training</b>	<b>On-the-Job Training &amp; Initial Certification</b>	<b>Recertification</b>
<p><i>USA-S Membership, USA-S Background Check and Athlete Protection Training Concussion Training and pass applicable test required prior to fourth training walk (1<sup>st</sup> walk in whites).</i></p> <p><i>Concurrent Certification:</i> Timer.</p> <p><i>Clinic:</i> VSI-approved training clinic required.</p> <p><i>Test:</i> Prior to fourth training walk (1<sup>st</sup> walk in whites), must pass Stroke &amp; Turn Judge test with a minimal passing grade of 80% or better.</p>	<p>Complete a minimum of three sessions of training at VSI-sanctioned swim meets and achieve mastery (4 rating) in each of the assessment areas listed on the training card. No more than two sessions may be worked at "A" meets.</p> <p>Upon satisfactory completion of the three initial training sessions, work an additional three sessions in "white &amp; blue" and make the calls under the observation of the assigned Trainer. Only one of these sessions may be at an "A" meet. At least one of the first two of these walks and the third walk must be satisfactorily completed (all satisfactory assessments listed on the training card) for the Referee to recommend certification.</p> <p>No training may occur at Age Group or Senior Championship meets.</p> <p>The District Officials Chairperson will update the trainee's status in OTS to Certified upon the satisfactory completion of all the training requirements.</p>	<p>Work a minimum of 8 sessions during the previous year at events hosted by at least 2 LSC Clubs.</p> <p>Based on continuing USA Swimming membership and satisfactory performance.</p>

<b>Relay Take-Off Judge (Minimum Age 19)</b>		
<b>Initial Education &amp; Training</b>	<b>On-the-Job Training &amp; Initial Certification</b>	<b>Recertification</b>
Must be certified as a Stroke & Turn Judge or higher.	Considered part of Stroke & Turn Judge certification.	Recertify as a Stroke & Turn official or higher.

<b>Chief Judge (Minimum Age 19)</b>		
<b>Initial Education &amp; Training</b>	<b>On-the-Job Training &amp; Initial Certification</b>	<b>Recertification</b>
<p><i>USA-S Membership:</i> Required.</p> <p><i>Previous Certifications:</i> Certified as a Stroke &amp; Turn Judge for a minimum of one year, with satisfactory performance during that time.</p> <p><i>Clinic:</i> VSI-approved training clinic required.</p>	<p>Complete a minimum of four sessions of training at VSI-sanctioned swim meets with positive recommendations from the Trainer and Meet Referee.</p> <p>Individuals currently certified as Referees may certify by attending a training clinic.</p> <p>The District Officials Chairperson will update the trainee's status in OTS to Certified upon the satisfactory completion of all the training requirements.</p>	<p>Work a minimum of two sessions during the previous year.</p> <p>Based on continuing USA Swimming membership and satisfactory performance.</p>

<b>Starter (Minimum Age 19)</b>		
<b>Initial Education &amp; Training</b>	<b>On-the-Job Training &amp; Initial Certification</b>	<b>Recertification</b>
<p><i>USA-S Membership:</i> Required.</p> <p><i>Previous Certifications:</i> Certified as a Stroke &amp; Turn Judge for a minimum of one year, with satisfactory performance during that time.</p> <p><i>Clinic:</i> VSI-approved training clinic required.</p> <p><i>Test:</i> Prior to final session, must pass Starter test with a minimal passing grade of 80% or better.</p>	<p>Complete a minimum of six sessions of training at VSI-sanctioned swim meets with positive recommendations from the Trainer and Meet Referee. Sessions must include a variety of meet classifications and at least one session must include 500 Y events or longer. A minimum of one session must be worked at a B/C meet.</p> <p>Prior to one of the first six training sessions, do a complete set-up and check of the starting equipment. Upon satisfactory completion of the six initial training sessions, work an additional session as the primary Starter, under the observation of an assigned Trainer. Receive positive recommendations from the Trainer and Referee.</p> <p>No training may occur at Age Group or Senior Championship meets.</p> <p>The District Officials Chairperson will update the trainee's status in OTS to Certified upon the satisfactory completion of all the training requirements.</p>	<p>Work a minimum of eight sessions per year, four of which must be at Starter or a higher capacity.</p> <p>Based on continuing USA Swimming membership and satisfactory evaluation.</p>

<b>Referee (Minimum Age 21)</b>		
<b>Initial Education &amp; Training</b>	<b>On-the-Job Training &amp; Initial Certification</b>	<b>Recertification</b>
<p><i>USA-S Membership:</i> Required.</p> <p><i>Previous Certifications:</i> Certified as a Chief Judge. Certified as a Starter for a minimum of one year, with satisfactory performance during that time.</p> <p><i>Other:</i> Training for Referee is only by invitation of the Officials Committee Chairperson.</p> <p><i>Clinic:</i> By arrangement with the Officials Committee Chairperson</p> <p><i>Test:</i> Must pass Referee test with a minimal passing grade of 90% or better. Must take and pass with a minimal grade of 80%, all other tests for which the candidate does not have current certification. These tests include Admin. Referee, Timing Judge and Clerk of Course.</p>	<p>Complete a minimum of eight sessions of training at VSI-sanctioned meets with positive recommendations from the Meet Referee. Sessions must include a variety of meet classifications and age groups. A minimum of one session must be worked at a B/C meet.</p> <p>The Referee apprentice should be given and assume increasing levels of responsibility over the course of his/her training, such that by the last non-administrative session worked, the apprentice is working as the primary Referee, under the observation of a certified Referee. Receive positive recommendations from at least two different Referees.</p> <p>Four administrative sessions must be completed. Two sessions as an Administrative Official at a Timed Final meet. At least two sessions must be worked as an Administrative Referee at the trial's session of a VSI Championship meet or an equivalent trials/finals meet approved by the Officials Committee Chair.</p> <p>The Officials Committee Chairperson is the sole certifying authority for Referees. Based on the reports of the Referee Trainers as well as personal observation(s), he/she will decide when and if an individual is ready to be certified as a Referee and will indicate that status in OTS.</p>	<p>Work a minimum of eight sessions per year, at least two of which must be at Referee.</p> <p>Attend Swimposium or Referee Clinic every two years or pass recertification tests at the end of even numbered years.</p> <p>Based on continuing USA Swimming membership and satisfactory evaluation by the Officials Committee Chair or his/her designee.</p> <p><i>Recommendation:</i> Obtain AO or TEO certifications if not already certified; alternatively work a refresher session at AO or TEO.</p>

<b>Timing Equipment Operator (Minimum Age 18)</b>		
<b>Initial Education &amp; Training</b>	<b>On-the-Job Training &amp; Initial Certification</b>	<b>Recertification</b>
<p><i>USA-S Membership, USA-S Background Check and Athlete Protection Training Concussion Training and pass applicable test required prior to fourth training walk (1<sup>st</sup> walk in whites).</i></p> <p><i>Concurrent Certification:</i> Timer.</p> <p><i>Clinic:</i> VSI-approved training clinic preferred. By prior arrangement, a one-hour orientation session prior to first training session is acceptable.</p> <p><i>Test:</i> Prior to 4<sup>th</sup> walk (1<sup>st</sup> walk in whites), must pass Timer test with a minimal passing grade of 80% or better.</p>	<p>Complete a minimum of four sessions of training at VSI-sanctioned swim meets working under the direction of a certified Timing Equipment Operator.</p> <p>Prior to one of the training sessions, perform a complete set-up (including a manual set-up) and check-out of the timing system.</p> <p>Work one session each as a Timing Judge trainee and a Recorder trainee.</p> <p>Upon satisfactory completion of the initial training sessions, work an additional session as the primary Timing Equipment Operator, under the observation of an assigned Timing Equipment Operator. Receive positive recommendations from the Trainer and Referee.</p> <p>The District Officials Chairperson will update the trainee's status in OTS to Certified upon the satisfactory completion of all the training requirements.</p>	<p>Work a minimum of four sessions per year. If certified in multiple administrative positions, work two or more sessions in each additional certified position.</p> <p>Based on satisfactory performance.</p>
<b>Administrative Official (Minimum Age 21)</b>		
<b>Initial Education &amp; Training</b>	<b>On-the-Job Training &amp; Initial Certification</b>	<b>Recertification</b>
<p><i>USA-S Membership, USA-S Background Check and Athlete Protection Training Concussion Training and pass applicable test required prior to fourth training walk (1<sup>st</sup> walk in whites).</i></p> <p><i>Previous Certifications:</i> Timer.</p> <p><i>Clinic:</i> VSI-approved training clinic</p> <p><i>Tests:</i> Prior to fourth walk (1<sup>st</sup> walk in whites) must pass both Administrative Official and Timing Judge test with minimal passing grades of 80% or better</p>	<p>The Administrative Official apprentice will work 5 sessions under the primary Administrative Official, or under the observation of a certified Administrative Referee or Administrative Official. Receive positive recommendations from at least two different Referees</p> <p>Work 2 session each as a Timing Equipment Operator.</p> <p>The District Officials Chairperson will issue a certification upon the satisfactory completion of all the training requirements.</p>	<p><i>Minimum Number of Sessions:</i> Work a minimum of 6 sessions including 1 as a Timing Equipment Operator. Sessions worked as an assigned Administrative Referee may be counted in place of the above sessions.</p> <p>Based on satisfactory performance</p>

<b>Clerk-of-Course (Minimum Age 18)</b>		
<b>Initial Education &amp; Training</b>	<b>On-the-Job Training &amp; Initial Certification</b>	<b>Recertification</b>
<p><i>USA-S Membership, USA-S Background Check and Athlete Protection Training Concussion Training and pass applicable test required prior to fourth training walk (1<sup>st</sup> walk in whites).</i></p> <p><i>Concurrent Certification: None.</i></p> <p><i>Clinic: VSI-approved training clinic preferred. By prior arrangement, a 1-hour orientation session prior to first training session is acceptable.</i></p> <p><i>Test: Prior to final session, must pass Timer test and Clerk-of-Course test with minimal passing grades of 80% or better.</i></p>	<p>Complete a minimum of two sessions of training at VSI-sanctioned swim meets working under the direction of a certified Clerk-of-Course.</p> <p>Upon satisfactory completion of the two initial training sessions, work an additional session in which you will act as the primary Clerk-of-Course, under the observation of an assigned Clerk-of-Course. Receive positive recommendations from the Trainer and Referee.</p> <p>The District Officials Chair will update the trainee's status in OTS to Certified upon the satisfactory completion of all the training requirements.</p>	<p><i>Minimum Number of Sessions: Work a minimum of four sessions per year.</i></p> <p>Based on satisfactory performance.</p>
<b>Administrative Referee (Minimum Age 21)</b>		
<b>Initial Education &amp; Training</b>	<b>On-the-Job Training &amp; Initial Certification</b>	<b>Recertification</b>
<p><i>USA-S Membership: Required.</i></p> <p><i>Previous Certifications: Certified as an AO and Referee.</i></p>	<p>Satisfactorily function as an Assistant Administrative Referee or Administrative Referee at a prelims/finals format meet below the level of Senior Champs.</p> <p>Evaluation can be conducted over the course of three days at a single meet, or over two days in each of two meets. A day of evaluation includes all sessions (prelims, finals, and if held, timed finals); it does not include a distance or distance plus relays only single session day.</p> <p>The Officials Committee Chairperson is the sole certifying authority for Administrative Referees. Based on the reports of the Administrative Referee Trainers as well as personal observation(s), he/she will decide when and if an individual is ready to be certified as an Administrative Referee and will indicate the status in OTS.</p>	<p>Work one day as an Administrative Referee or Meet Referee at a prelims/finals format meet.</p> <p>Maintain certification as a Referee.</p> <p><i>Recommendation: Obtain Recorder certification if not already certified</i></p> <p>Based on continuing USA Swimming membership and satisfactory evaluation by the Officials Committee Chair or his/her designee.</p>

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF CERTIFIED OFFICIALS

- Remain current in the rules and official interpretations
- Work at least the minimal number of sessions required to remain certified
- Participate in continuing educational opportunities
- Always act in a professional manner
- When volunteering to work, report prior to the start of any briefings and expect to stay through the conclusion of the session
- Recertify during the recertification period

## TRANSFERRING OFFICIALS

### *Transferring Into VSI*

1. The VSI Officials Chair needs to be notified of the desired transfer. The notification can come from the transferring official, the Club Officials Chair, or the District Chair. Notification should include the following information:
  - a. Name and contact information (phone number, e-mail address, mailing address) of the transferring official
  - b. Club or unattached status of the individual
  - c. Listing of any certifications that the individual desires to transfer (providing a copy of individual's current certification card is highly recommended)
  - d. The name of the LSC in which the official is currently certified, and if known, the name and contact information of the LSC's Official Chair
2. The VSI Officials Chair will:
  - a. Contact the LSC Officials Chair of the transferring official and determine:
    - i. The current certification status of the transferring official
    - ii. That the official is currently in good standing with the LSC
    - iii. That the certification and recertification guidelines of the LSC meet the minimal standards as set

forth by the USA Swimming Officials Committee

- b. Notify the transferring official, the District Officials Chair, and the Club Officials Chair that the transfer has been made and any conditions placed on the transfer (such as additional training requirements)
  - c. Notify the VSI Officials Committee Database Coordinator with the contact information and certification status of the transferring official
3. The District Chair will ensure that the transferring official:
    - a. Meets the VSI certification guidelines
    - b. Is familiar with the applicable VSI deck procedures

### *Transferring From VSI to Another LSC*

1. The transferring official should contact the VSI Officials Chair and indicate the LSC to which he/she is transferring
2. The VSI Officials Chair will provide the following information to the Officials Chair of the LSC to which the individual is transferring
  - a. The current certification status of the transferring official
  - b. That the official is currently in good standing with the LSC
  - c. That the certification and recertification guidelines of the VSI meet the minimal standards as set forth by the USA Swimming Officials Committee

## OFFICIALS' ATTIRE

*The following dress code has been developed so that all officials can dress in a neat and consistent manner and thus convey a professional appearance. Attire should be such that it does not draw attention to the official – no short shorts, no short skirts, and no revealing shirts/blouses. The attire is worn by wet-deck and dry-deck officials alike.*

*Attire for non-championship (timed finals) and prelims in championship level meets*

*Shirt:* The shirt worn shall be plain white, with a collar, and long or short sleeve. Female officials may wear sleeveless collared shirts. Logos may appear on the

shirt; however, the logo shall be restricted to the front of the shirt, and the sleeve area. The logos may not contain, or represent the following: alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, VSI member team names or logos, or suggestive/offensive messages. A Meet Shirt provided by USA Swimming, or Virginia Swimming is acceptable. The shirt shall be tucked into the pants, shorts, or skirts, always while on deck.

*Shorts/Pants/Skirts:* These items shall be navy blue in color. Cutoffs of any type are not allowed. Jeans are not appropriate attire for officials on the deck.

*Socks:* Socks, if worn, should be plain white. Manufacturer's logos should be subdued.

*Footwear:* Athletic shoes are preferred. If they are worn, they should be as white as possible, with little or no color and avoiding to the extent possible bold and brightly colored logos and stripes. Sandals are also acceptable; however, it is recommended that any sandals worn should have a heel strap to assist in keeping the sandal securely on the foot.

#### *Attire for finals sessions in championship level meets*

*Shirt:* Powder blue, short sleeve, oxford dress or polo shirt. Additional provisions indicated above for shirts also apply.

*Pants/Skirts:* Navy blue pants (not shorts) or skirts. Jeans are not appropriate attire.

*Socks and Footwear:* As described above.

*Deviations:* Meet Referees at championship meets may establish meet-specific or session-specific dress codes that deviate from the above if he or she deems appropriate. For example, blue polo shirts might be chosen for all the final's sessions, or Hawaiian shirts might be chosen for a particular evening.

## **WORKING CHAMPIONSHIP MEETS**

The athletes work hard to qualify for championship level meets and have an expectation that they will receive championship level officiating. As officials, we must balance this need against the experience of the pool of officials from whom we draw for a given meet and the need to give less experienced officials an opportunity to work higher level meets. Two

factors play a major role in our attempt to balance these needs –

*Experience and competence* - All things being equal, the more experienced official will generally get an assignment over a newly certified official. We recognize though, that experience in terms of number of sessions worked does not always translate to a more competent official. Some individuals with a minimal amount of experience rapidly grasp the nuances of the rules, deck procedures, etc., and in these circumstances, competence is the overriding measure.

*Level of the meet* – Age Group Champs and Senior Champs are our highest level meets and we have the highest expectation of officiating at these meets. To the extent possible, our goal is to utilize a combination of more senior level officials with more junior level officials so that mentorship can take place at all levels of the meet. This is particularly important at the Referee and Administrative Referee levels as experience frequently plays a major role in the decision-making process. Our steppingstone championship level meets (District Champs, Regional Champs, and Summer Awards) provide ideal opportunities for new officials to gain experience in a championship environment.

## **PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Membership in USA Swimming is granted as a privilege, not a right. Any rights, privileges, or positions of authority in VSI are granted or authorized by the USA Swimming *Rules and Regulations* and the VSI bylaws. Officials are expected to always conduct themselves in a professional manner. Section N of the Policies subdivision of the *Policies and Procedures of Virginia Swimming, Inc* defines three categories of deficiencies and procedures for handling those deficiencies. These categories include:

### **PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

This category relates to matters involving deficiencies in the professional qualifications of the official. It relates to the technical aspects of the field of officiating, such as a lack of knowledge of the rules, improper application of the rules, etc.

### **PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT**

This category relates to matters involving misconduct in the performance of the official's professional duties that do not rise



to the level of acts specifically covered by the Code of Conduct (Article 304.3 of the *Rules and Regulations* of USA Swimming).

#### CODE OF CONDUCT

This category involves all acts that fall under Article 304.3.1 through .15 of the *Rules and Regulations* of USA Swimming.

The bylaws stipulate an official's rights if accused of conduct falling into one of these categories and further define how such conduct is to be handled. Depending upon the severity of deficiency/misconduct, an official may be retrained, reassigned, reprimanded, suspended, or de-certified.

#### **VIRGINIA SWIMMING OFFICIALS' MENTORS POLICY**

Purpose - To make use of the experience gained by some of our officials at higher level meets outside the LSC to increase the knowledge base of our officials, promote consistency in our officiating, and improve the conduct of our meets.

Virginia Swimming may provide Officials Mentors at selected regular season meets in each of the LSC's geographical divisions at least once during each season.

Officials Mentors are National Evaluators and selected senior officials with national level meet experience.

The LSC Officials Chair is responsible for coordinating participation of the Officials Mentors.

Officials Mentors will be prepared to:

- Conduct clinics as appropriate
- Work one-on-one with selected officials
- Work with groups of officials
- Observe and provide feedback on situations and resolutions
- Offer advice and suggestions on meet conduct

Virginia Swimming will reimburse the assigned Officials Mentors for travel expenses (hotel room and gas) incurred to support the meets.

To receive travel expenses reimbursement, Officials Mentors shall submit a completed Virginia Swimming Officials Travel Expenses Reimbursement Form to the LSC Officials Chair

for approval NLT 30 days after completion of the meet for which reimbursement is requested. Approval for reimbursement will be granted upon receipt of the completed Officials Mentoring Report.

#### **VIRGINIA SWIMMING OFFICIALS TRAVEL EXPENSES (NATIONAL CERTIFICATION QUALIFYING MEETS OUTSIDE VSI) REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

Purpose - To encourage Virginia Swimming officials to participate in Officials Qualifying Meets outside our LSC to improve the level of officiating within the LSC by:

- Exposing our officials to higher level meets allowing them to interact with officials from other LSCs and to learn/reinforce protocols, rules applications / interpretations, and situation resolution.
- Providing additional opportunities for advancement / sustainment within the National Officials Certification Program.
- Developing / sustaining National Evaluators and Mentors to support advancement and training opportunities at our LSC meets.
- Refer to VSI Policies and Procedures for reimbursement requirements.

#### **VIRGINIA SWIMMING NATIONAL EVALUATORS POLICY**

Purpose - To ensure we have National Evaluators at Officials Qualifying Meets in the LSC so that our officials can have the opportunity to be evaluated for certification / re-certification within the National Officials Certification program.

Virginia Swimming will provide National Evaluators (preferably, at least two) for each approved Officials Qualifying Meet sanctioned and conducted by the LSC.

The LSC Officials Chair is responsible for coordinating participation of the National Evaluators.

National Evaluators will observe the performance of officials who have requested evaluation, provide feedback to those observed, and complete Evaluation Reports as required.

They may also be asked to perform as Officials Mentors for the meet.

Virginia Swimming will reimburse the assigned National Evaluators for travel expenses (coach air fare, hotel room and gas) incurred to support the meet.

To receive travel expenses reimbursement, National Evaluators shall submit a completed Virginia Swimming Officials Travel Expenses Reimbursement Form to the LSC Officials Chair for approval NLT 30 days after completion of the meet for which reimbursement is requested. Approval for reimbursement will be granted upon receipt of the completed Officials Qualifying Meet Report for the meet.

## REVISION HISTORY

### 11 May 2008

- Rearranged some content
- Revised Chief Judge Certification
- Revised Referee Certification
- Revised Administrative Referee Certification
- Added Virginia Swimming Officials Mentors Policy
- Added revised Virginia Swimming Officials Travel Expenses (National Certification Qualifying Meets Outside VSI) Reimbursement Policy
- Added revised Virginia Swimming Officials Travel Expenses (Disability Meets) Reimbursement Policy
- Added Virginia Swimming National Evaluators Policy

### 24 April 2010

- Reflect use of District Officials Chairs rather than Co-Chairs
- Update content to reflect the use of OTS for tracking sessions worked and certification status
- Replaced the use of "N1" with "V1" to reflect the fact that LSC certifications cannot begin with an "N"
- Update requirement that all trainees and officials must be registered non-athlete members of USA-S (requirement for TEO, TJ, REC and Clerk effective 09/2010)

### 20 November 2010

- Change non-athlete membership requirement in USA-S such that it is required for S&T trainees prior to the sixth training walk, and required for all dry deck positions prior to certification
- S&T trainees must pass S&T/Timer test prior to fourth training walk; Starters and dry deck officials must pass any applicable tests prior to the final training session

- Replaced references to "certification cards" with appropriate language referring to the use of OTS for certification

### 15 October 2013

- Replaced Administrative Supervisor with Administrative Official.
- Updated sessions required for recertification.
- Added Olympic Trials to travel reimbursement

### 12 September 2015

- Updated Administrative Official certification and removed Recorder certification.

### 12 September 2018

- **Relocated Virginia Swimming Officials Travel Expenses (National Certification Qualifying Meets Outside VSI) Reimbursement Policy to VSI Policies and Procedures.**
- **Removed V1, V2 designations**
- **Removed Timing Judge references**

### 03 October 2021

- **Added language for entry level positions; S&T, AO and TEO for completing USA-S Membership, USA-S Background Check and Athlete Protection Training Concussion Training and pass applicable test required prior to fourth training walk (1<sup>st</sup> walk in whites).**
- **Removed all references completing the above by the 6<sup>th</sup> walk.**
- **Removed language stating activities cannot be entered for a specific meet. OTS has been modified to allow.**