

# **Rules and Guidance for the Inclusion of Transgender Swimmers in YMCA Swimming Programs and Competition**

September 2021

## Competition Category

YMCA Swimming follows USA Swimming technical rules for the conduct of its competitions. The [USA Swimming rulebook](#) (Article 302.1) says that an athlete shall state a competition category, male or female, at the time of membership registration. Any athlete wishing to change competition category may do so, following the procedure outlined in the [USA Swimming Policy Manual](#) (17.0 Athlete Inclusion Procedures)

Once an athlete reaches the “Elite” level – Junior National competition and higher – International Olympic Committee rules apply, which are more specific around transitioning/transgender athletes, their hormone levels and surgical changes.

Unless or until an athlete reaches the Junior National level, he or she competes in the competition category identified at the time of registration, which for YMCA is the beginning of the Swimming year (Sept. 1).

While Article 302.1 is not in the “technical rules” section of the USA Swimming Rulebook, it does affect the recognition of times achieved by an athlete, which are linked to the athlete name, birthdate, competition category, age group and team. Therefore, the YMCA follows Article 302.1.

## Swimsuit Exemptions

Both USA Swimming and YMCA Swimming provide for an athlete to request an exemption to the swimwear requirements contained in the [technical rules](#) (Rule 102.8). YMCA-only athletes (those who are not members of USA Swimming and only swim in closed YMCA meets) submit a request to the YMCA Swim Officials Chair. YMCA athletes who are also members of USA Swimming submit the request to the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Chair and when an exemption is granted, it applies to both YMCA and USA Swimming competitions.

## Summary

In order for a YMCA and a YMCA league to be consistent with USA Swimming rules and policies and YMCA inclusion principles, they would permit a swimmer to identify a competition category at the beginning of the YMCA Swimming year (Sept. 1) and that swimmer would then need to compete in that category for the remainder of the year (through Aug. 31). No further medical testing, application or other measures would be needed unless or until the athlete competes in the USA Swimming Jr. National competition or higher. The YMCA and YMCA league will likewise recognize any swimsuit exemption granted by USA Swimming and/or the YMCA Swim Officials Chair for all competitions.