



## USA SWIMMING COACH SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

USA Swimming initiated the Coaches Safety Curriculum in September 1987. USA Swimming coach members are required to maintain current proof of training in First Aid, CPR and Safety Training for Swim Coaches (STSC).

Local Swimming Committees (LSCs) enforce these requirements largely through the membership function. Justification for the requirements may be found in legislation passed over the years by the USA Swimming House of Delegates. The following passages are found in the 2008 *Rules and Regulations*:

**Article 202.3.3** "...all persons acting in any coaching capacity in a sanctioned event must be coach members of USA Swimming, Inc."

**Article 502.4.3** "All coaches of USA Swimming clubs, including seasonal clubs, shall join USA Swimming as coach members and shall satisfactorily complete safety training and background screening required by USA Swimming."

A list of acceptable First Aid, CPR and STSC courses is attached. **Taking courses that are not on this list will not be acceptable for coach membership.**

**ALL COACH MEMBERS OF USA SWIMMING MUST BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE ABOVE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COACH AND CLUB TO MAINTAIN INSURANCE PROTECTION.**

### Frequently Asked Questions about Safety Requirements

- Q:** Who determines which courses are acceptable?  
**A:** USA Swimming's Safety Education Committee established a list of minimum requirements that they use to determine whether a safety course is acceptable.
- Q:** What are some of the minimum requirements?  
**A:** Every course must be taught in a classroom; online courses are not acceptable. Every course must cover specific topics that are on the committee's requirements list. Every course must end with both a written test and cognitive skills demonstration. These tests must be passed with a minimum grade of 80% in order to pass the course and receive the certification.
- Q:** How can I request that a course be considered by the committee?  
**A:** Send the following materials to Member Services Coordinator, USA Swimming, 1 Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909:
- Student handbook
  - Instructor handbook
  - Copy of written test
  - Outline of skills that must be demonstrated
  - Copy of certification issued (marked 'void')
- The materials will be forwarded to the Safety Education Committee for review. Please allow 3-4 weeks for the process to be completed.
- Q:** I am a Registered Nurse/Surgeon/Doctor/Physician's Assistant/etc. Why isn't my nursing or medical certification/degree acceptable?  
**A:** Not all medical personnel are required to maintain current certifications in first aid and/or CPR. If your certification does require that but your facility/hospital does not offer a course that is on the USA Swimming approved list, take the course and then go to your local ARC chapter to challenge the same course. (See the question above for more information about an ARC Review Challenge.)
- Q:** My CPR certification expires tomorrow but I can't find a class until next month. How will this affect me, my team and my insurance?  
**A:** Failure of a coach to satisfy the safety requirements will be grounds for termination of coach membership status and loss of insurance coverage. There is no grace period; coaches are expected to renew their safety certifications **PRIOR TO** the expiration dates. Clubs that continue to conduct a program with coaches who have failed to maintain current certifications risk termination of membership and loss of insurance coverage. If your expiring certification was issued by the American Red Cross, you can ask your local chapter about a Review Course, which is much quicker. Your certification must be current or have expired within the previous 12 months in order to be eligible for the Review. (Expired certifications are never acceptable for coach membership in USA Swimming.)

- Q:** I just took a course that is not on the approved list, what should I do now?
- A:** The American Red Cross offers a Challenge for first aid and CPR. Contact your local chapter to make arrangements to take the challenge, which involves the written test and skills demonstration only – no classroom work. If you pass the written test and the skills demonstration, you will get the correct certification that you need for coach membership in 30-45 minutes without having to sit through the entire course again. Fees for a challenge vary by chapter.
- Q:** Can a non-athlete volunteer to assist a coach?
- A:** USA Swimming requires that individuals coaching swimmers must be registered coach members. Non-athlete members who volunteer to assist the coach and are not acting in **any** coaching capacity may be allowed on deck at practices. If the non-athlete is acting as a coach, this individual must be registered as a coach member. Non-athlete members must never be left alone on deck with swimmers.

### Things to remember:

- It is the responsibility of the coach to renew all safety certifications in a timely manner.
- There is no interim coaching (grace) period. When individuals apply for coach membership, they must meet all safety requirements to be registered. All safety certifications must remain current throughout the membership period.
- Only courses on the approved list are acceptable for coach membership.
- You jeopardize your USA Swimming insurance, and that of your club, when your safety certifications are not kept current.
- All claims or incidents of bodily injury or property damage must be reported immediately to USA Swimming National Headquarters and Risk Management Services. Use the Report of Occurrence form, which is available at [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org).
- If you don't know the answer to an insurance question, just ask. We are here to lend support – call Carol Burch or Mary Illich at USA Swimming (719-866-4578), or Sandi Blumit at Risk Management Services, Inc. (1-800-777-4930).

### Enforcement in Membership

When individuals apply for coach membership, they must meet all safety and background screening requirements to be registered. They will not be allowed an interim coaching (grace) period. Failure of a coach to satisfy the safety and background screening requirements will be grounds for termination of coach membership status and loss of insurance coverage. (Information on how to obtain a background screen can be found at [www.usaswimming.org/coaches](http://www.usaswimming.org/coaches).)

Clubs must have at least one properly registered coach to register as a USA Swimming club. This does not change the fact that **all** coaches must fulfill the safety requirements. As defined in the rulebook, a club must have at least one coach; group members that do not fulfill this requirement may join only as “organizations.”

### Coaching Assistants

An athlete member of USA Swimming may **assist** a USA Swimming coach. However, it is imperative that the USA Swimming coach member be on deck with the athlete member and maintain “direct line of sight” at all times. If exercising sole supervisory responsibility, the athlete must become a USA Swimming coach member, meeting all of the membership requirements outlined above.

### Enforcement at Practice

Clubs that continue to conduct a program with coaches who have failed to satisfy the requirements risk termination of membership and loss of USA Swimming insurance coverage.

### Enforcement at Meets

Individuals without a current coach membership will not be allowed to participate in any coaching capacity at any LSC/USA Swimming sanctioned competition. This restriction includes being barred from the deck area at all LSC, Zone, Sectional, Junior National, National and International qualifying competitions.

If any individual refuses to comply with these provisions, all athletes on that person's club shall be designated as “Unattached” for the entire competition unless the club has some other USA Swimming coach member present. It shall be the responsibility of the meet referee, or his designee, to enforce these provisions. This “last resort” option of unattaching athletes exists only when the coach does not fulfill the requirements and **refuses** to leave the deck when asked to do so by meet management.

Athletes should not be forced to swim unattached simply because their USA Swimming coach is not able to accompany them to a USA Swimming meet. Instead the athletes should be assigned to another coach, the host team or a designated marshal.

### Membership Application

All safety certificates must be valid on the date of application for membership. Coaches should submit their certificates (or copies, if allowed by LSC policy) of the First Aid, CPR and Safety Training for Swim Coaches courses (front and back) as proof of training. **If an LSC Membership Chair doubts the authenticity of a copy, he/she has the right to request access to the original.** It is the responsibility of the coach to renew all safety certificates in a timely manner.

The First Aid, CPR and STSC expiration dates will appear on the stub of the coach's membership card. The earliest of the expiration dates will also appear in bold letters on the front of the coach membership card. (Example: If CPR expires on May 15, 2009 the following wording will appear on the front of the coach membership card: VALID THROUGH MAY 15, 2009.)

**Waiver for Coaches with Physical Disabilities**

Coaches with physical disabilities who are unable to participate in the skill demonstrations required to pass these courses can apply for a Disability Waiver. For additional information, contact your Local Swimming Committee Membership Chair.

**FIRST YEAR EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR COACHES**

**Article 502.4.5** "All coaches of USA Swimming clubs, including seasonal clubs, who register for the first time as a coach member, shall complete coaches' education required by USA Swimming prior to receiving their coach membership for the second year."

This educational requirement is in addition to the safety and background screening requirements described above. Within 4-6 weeks after the LSC Membership Chair processes the membership application, first year coaches will receive a packet containing information about the educational requirement, an order form for course materials, and information on how to take the test online. Upon successful completion of the online test, the LSC Membership Chair will be notified automatically and the coach's record will be updated to reflect that the requirement has been completed. This must be done prior to registering for the second year of coaching with USA Swimming.