



CERTIFICATION / RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

INTRODUCTION & PHILOSOPHY

Minnesota Swimming seeks to foster an attitude of volunteerism and camaraderie among its officials. An official's role, at all certification levels, is to provide a good experience for the athletes so they will want to continue in the sport. Many sports rely on volunteer coaches and pay the officials. Swimming is different because the coaches are often paid while the officials volunteer in order to give the athletes the opportunity to compete on an even playing field. Minnesota Swimming encourages all officials to volunteer as often as possible at meets, whether for the entire meet, a session, or a few events.

OVERVIEW OF CERTIFICATIONS

USA Swimming requires the use of certified meet officials when conducting swim meets. USA Swimming has established minimum standards for certifying meet officials. The Minnesota Swimming¹ Officials' Committee is charged with establishing certification criteria and administering the certification process.

Minnesota Swimming certifies meet officials in the following positions:

Deck Officials

ST	Stroke and Turn
SR	Starter
DR	Deck Referee
CJ	Chief Judge
MR	Meet Referee

Administrative Officials

AO	Administrative Official
AR	Administrative Referee

Additionally, each certification has three levels at the Minnesota LSC level:

AP – Apprenticeship (after completing online exam and becoming a member of USA Swimming)

L1 – Not approved to fill appointed positions. Has completed apprenticeship but has not attended a position-specific clinic or has requested not to be included in a list of officials which may be recruited to serve in that position.

L2- Approved to fill the appointed position at duals, tris, quads, and small to medium sized invitationals.

L3 – Approved to fill the appointed position at all meets including State Championships, large invitationals, and prelim/finals meets.

Assignments

USA Swimming and Minnesota Swimming rely primarily upon dedicated and generous volunteer officials to conduct competitions. The vast majority of officials volunteer either on the day of competition (or when possible, by communicating the availability to volunteer prior to the competition).

Minnesota Swimming does not assign officials to meets for L2 meets. For L2 meets, the host club is responsible for filling the positions of Deck Referee, Starter, and Administrative Official/Administrative Referee, subject to approval of the Officials' Committee Chair or the Chair's designee. Minnesota Swimming does assign officials for L3 meets, which are prelim/final, MAC, MRC, and State Championship meets. Officials at the L3 level are eligible to serve in that capacity at any meet in the LSC. Officials at the L2 level are eligible to volunteer in that capacity in all meets. Only L3 officials may serve in the position of Meet

¹ USA Swimming is the “national” governing body. There are also “local” governing bodies. These “local” governing bodies are referred to as “Local Swim Committees” or “LSCs”. Minnesota Swimming Inc. (MNSI) is the LSC for its designated territory which also includes a portion of western Wisconsin.

Referee, assigned Administrative Referee/Official, assigned Deck Referee, and assigned Starter at State Championships, MRCs, MACs, large invitationals, and prelim/finals meets.

Officials on Deck

- Stroke and turn “ST” officials are not “assigned”. ST officials typically report to the Meet Referee, or their designee one hour prior to the competition (while the athletes are warming up). All volunteer ST officials are welcome.
- At least one Starter “SR” must be present for the competition. That SR is considered to be an “assigned” position. Other SR officials may volunteer to assist at the discretion of the assigned SR and Meet Referee.
- At least one Administrative Official/Administrative Referee “AO/AR” must be present for the competition. That AO/AR is considered to be an “assigned” position. Other AO/AR officials may volunteer to assist at the discretion of the assigned AO/AR.
- At least one Referee “DR/MR” must be present for the competition. That DR/MR is considered to be an “assigned” position. Other DR/MR officials may volunteer to assist at the discretion of the assigned DR/MR.
- In many cases, the Meet Referee will also serve as the Deck Referee, Starter, or Administrative Official for a three-person leadership team of officials; however, at larger meets the position will be separated and the team of officials will consist of four or more individuals. A key attribute of these positions is being flexible and willing to work at many positions on the deck based upon the needs of the meet and the officiating team.
- In the case of Championship meets (and a few unique invitationals) there may also be a Chief Judge “CJ” as part of the officiating team. CJ officials may also volunteer to assist at the discretion of the lead CJ and Meet Referee.

NOTE: If in doubt, assume that your help is needed and will be appreciated. Do not wait to be “assigned” to officiate at a meet. There is a standing invitation to all volunteer officials for all meets. It is almost impossible to have too many officials. As volunteers, every individual helps.

Continual Training Policy:

Stroke and turn officials are required to officiate 8 sessions per year and attend a Minnesota Swimming Officials’ clinic every two years. All other Officials are required to officiate 10 sessions per year and attend a Minnesota Swimming Officials’ clinic every two years. No more than 2 sessions may count from organizations outside of USA Swimming that use FINA rules may count towards the session requirement (i.e. NCAA, YMCA, Meets outside the U.S. Note that high school swimming does not use FINA rules). As an alternative to clinic attendance, an official may receive an evaluation for N2/N3 certification each year to remain certified. If an official fails to meet the required number of sessions in a year, the policy for MNSI Officials Returning After a Prolonged Absence will apply.

Regular clinics will be offered electronically for Stroke and Turn, Starter, Chief Judge, Deck Referee, and Administrative Official/Referee certified officials. Attendance at any clinic for

which you are certified or eligible to be certified satisfies the clinic requirement for certification. Asynchronous attendance will be permitted only for officials with an extenuating circumstance and with the advance permission of the Officials' Chair. Additionally, attendance at a clinic offered by another LSC will satisfy this requirement if approved by the Officials' Committee Chair. The above requirements may be waived on an individual basis by the Officials' Committee Chair. Teaching at a clinic also satisfies this requirement.

Minnesota Swimming Official's Uniform:

In order to have a professional appearance on deck, the uniform consists of a white, collared shirt (i.e., polo shirt), black walking shorts/pants/skirts and predominately black shoes. Athletic/gym shorts, sweatpants, and leggings are not permitted. A tucked in shirt is preferred. Pink polo shirts in lieu of white polo shirts are encouraged on Sundays or with permission of the meet referee. This uniform may be altered by the meet referee with concurrence of the host team such as requiring long pants/skirt and a blue oxford style shirt for finals session of senior championship meets or to suit weather conditions.

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Certification Levels: MNSI Officials will be certified at various levels to reflect their relative experience. Officials will be designated as AP (apprentice) officials after completion of their position exam and during their apprenticeship. Officials will be designated as L1 officials upon completion of their apprenticeship, but prior to attending a clinic. Officials will be designated as L2 officials upon completion of the apprenticeship, attending a clinic, and approval of the Officials' Committee Chair or the Chair's designee. Officials who through their experience, skills, and professionalism demonstrate the ability to work at the highest level meets within the LSC will be designated L3 officials upon request and evaluation by the Officials' Committee Chair or the Chair's designee.

L2 meets include intrasquad meets, dual meets, and most invitational meets. L3 meets include meets where chase starts are used, prelim/final meets, championship meets (MAC, MRC, Age Group State, and Senior State), and any other meets designated as L3 by the Officials' Committee Chair. L3 officials will be used for the Meet Ref, Head Deck Ref, Head Starter, Lead Chief Judge and Head Administrative Official for L3 meets while all L3 and L2 officials are eligible to volunteer to serve at the direction of the Head officials in each area.

PLEASE NOTE: The training requirements for advancement listed below are minimum standards only. Completion of the minimum standards does not guarantee automatic advancement to a higher-level certification. Training requirements should be tracked using the appropriate training log or apprenticeship form from the Minnesota Swimming website and transmitting the form to the Chair of the Officials' Committee when all the training requirements are met.

General Requirements for certification as an L2 at any position; *(duties include learning USA Swimming stroke and turn rules, the official interpretations of those rules and how to apply the rules in a swim meet.)*

- Be at 18 years old for stroke and turn, starter, chief judge, and administrative official positions; be at least 21 years old for administrative referee, deck referee, and meet referee positions.
- Be a Non-athlete member of USA Swimming (check the official's box on the registration form).
- Pass USA Swimming background check and take the online Athlete Protection Training (APT).
- Complete concussion training (required by the state of Minnesota) and provide the certificate of completion to the MNSI Office. (Instructions listed on the MNSI website in the Officials section)
- Obtain official's MNSI uniform, as required above, or as designated by the Meet Referee.
- Attend a MNSI Officials' clinic. An official may be certified as an L1 official prior to clinic attendance but must attend a clinic within six months of certification.

- Complete the appropriate Apprenticeship Form and transmit to the Officials' Committee Chair.
- Tracking of sessions for certification and recertification purposes will be obtained from the USA Swimming Officials Tracking System (OTS). The system is updated after each meet by the Meet Referee. It is mandatory to have your officiating record in OTS. You may use the honor system and add your worked meets to the "add other meets section" in OTS if your record is not added by the meet referee.

Modifications to Officials certifications will be reviewed and approved by the Officials' Committee Chair before advancement / change takes effect. Upon approval the Officials Committee Chairperson will update the Officials LSC Certification in OTS.

Stroke and Turn (ST)

Duties include the observation of swimming competition to ensure the technical rules of USA Swimming are followed.

Level 2

- Meet all general requirements for certification (must be 18 years old).
- Pass USA Online Swimming Timer and Stroke and Turn officials' tests with a score of 80% or better.
- Apprentice with two different meet referees at meets hosted by two different teams for a minimum of 5 sessions and complete and return an Apprenticeship Form to the Officials' Committee Chair or the Chair's designee.
- During the 5th session as an apprentice, pass evaluation by the assigned Meet Referee or their designee. During evaluation the candidate will initiate calls to be verified by the referee or designee.
- Transmit the training log to the Officials' Committee Chair.

Re-certification (required every two years unless obtaining a higher certification):

- Meet all general requirements for L2 certification.
- Officiate for a minimum of 8 sessions each year and attend a clinic every two years.

Level 3

- Holds level 2 stroke and turn certification.
- Has officiated as a stroke and turn judge for a minimum of 10 sessions since certification at meets hosted by at least three different teams at three different facilities.
- Has officiated at least 5 sessions at MNSI championship meets or prelim/final meets (MAC, MRC, State Meets, in-season prelim final meets) since certification.
- Has at least one stroke and turn specific mentoring or teaching session listed in OTS.

Re-certification (required every two years unless obtaining a higher certification):

- Meet all general requirements for L2 and L3 certification.

Starter (SR)

Duties include ensuring the fair and equitable start of races.

Level 2

- Meet all general requirements for certification (must be 18 years old).
- Pass USA Swimming Online Starter test with a score of 80% or better.
- **Before training for Starter certification can begin**, the official must have officiated as a Certified Stroke & Turn for a minimum of 12 months and 10 sessions.
- Apprentice as a Starter for a minimum of 5 sessions under the supervision of at least two different Starters and Meet Referees at meets hosted by at least two different teams. At least one session must include swimmers age 12 and under and at least one session must include swimmers age 13 and over.
- During the 5th session as an apprentice, pass evaluation by the assigned Meet Referee after showing proficiency in the required skills to be a Starter.
- Transmit the training log to the Officials' Committee Chair.

Re-certification (required every two years unless obtaining a higher certification):

- Meet all general requirements for certification.
- Officiate for a minimum of 10 sessions each year and attend a clinic every two years. At least 5 of the sessions must be as a Starter or higher.

Level 3

- Holds level 2 Starter certification.
- Holds level 3 Stroke and Turn certification.
- Has officiated as a Starter for a minimum of 10 sessions since certification, at meets hosted by at least three different teams at three different facilities.
- Has officiated at least 5 sessions at MNSI championship meets or prelim/final meets as a starter since certification.
- Has at least one Starter specific mentoring or teaching opportunity listed in OTS.

Re-certification (required every two years unless obtaining a higher certification):

- Meet all general requirements for L2 and L3 starter certification.

Chief Judge (CJ)

The Chief Judge serves at the direction of the Meet Referee as a peer to the Deck Referee. The duties include management of the Stroke and Turn Judges, the investigation and recommendation of disqualifications for acceptance or rejection to the deck referee, and to manage equipment which may be needed during the session. Note that chief judges are generally only used at MNSI championship meets; compared to other positions, fewer opportunities for advancement are available for interested chief judges.

Level 2

- Meet all general requirements for certification (must be 18 years old).
- Pass USA Swimming online referee tests.
- **Before training for Chief Judge certification can begin**, official must have officiated as a Stroke and Turn judge for a minimum of 1 year to include 10 sessions under the supervision of at least two different Meet Referees.

- Apprentice as a Chief Judge for a minimum of 4 sessions under the supervision of at least two different Meet Referees at meets hosted by at least two different teams.
- Pass evaluation by an assigned Meet Referee, or if designated by the assigned Meet Referee, the Head Chief Judge:
- Meet all general requirements for certification.
- Officiate as a Chief Judge for a minimum of 10 sessions or attend a clinic in the calendar year.
- Transmit the training log to the Officials' Committee Chair.

Recertification (required every two years unless obtaining a higher certification):

- Meet all general requirements for Chief Judge certification AND
- Officiate for a minimum of 10 sessions each year and attend a clinic every two years. At least 5 of the sessions must be as a Chief Judge or higher.

Level 3

- Holds level 2 Chief Judge.
- Holds level 3 Stroke and Turn Judge certification.
- Has officiated as a chief judge for a minimum of 5 sessions since certification at meets hosted by at least three different teams at three different facilities.
- Has at least one Chief Judge specific mentoring or teaching opportunity listed in OTS.

Recertification (required every two years unless obtaining a higher certification):

- Meet all general requirements for L2 and L3 Chief Judge certification AND
- Officiate a minimum of six sessions at MNSI L3 meets or higher.

Deck Referee (DR)

Duties include the observation of all aspects of the competition. The deck referee ensures that all athletes are present for each heat and will observe the start of each race while he/she is on duty and confirm any false starts. The deck referee will also receive any information concerning disqualifications and accept or reject the disqualification.

Level 2

- Meet all general requirements for certification (must be 21 years old).
- Pass USA Swimming online referee tests.
- **Before training for Deck Referee certification** can begin, official must have officiated as a Certified Starter for a minimum of 1 year to include 10 sessions under the supervision of at least two different Meet Referees.
- Apprentice as a Deck Referee for a minimum of 5 sessions under the supervision of at least two different Meet Referees at meets hosted by at least two different teams.
- Complete three evaluation sessions with at least three different meet referees, including one session at an away meet.
- Transmit the training log to the Officials' Committee Chair.

Re-certification (required every two years unless obtaining a higher certification):

- Meet all general requirements for certification.

- Officiate as for a minimum of 10 sessions each year and attend a clinic every two years. At least 5 of the sessions must be as a deck referee or higher.

Level 3

- Holds 2 Deck Referee certification.
- Holds level 3 Stroke and Turn Judge and Starter certification.
- Has officiated as a Deck Referee for a minimum of 10 sessions since certification, at meets hosted by at least four different teams at four different facilities.
- Has officiated at least 5 sessions at MNSI championship meets or prelim/final meets as a Deck Referee since certification.
- Has at least one Deck Referee specific mentoring or teaching opportunity listed in OTS.

Recertification (required every two years unless obtaining a higher certification):

- Meet all general requirements for L2 and L3 Deck Referee certification.
- Officiate a minimum of 6 sessions at MNSI L3 meets or higher.

Meet Referee (MR)

Duties include the overall supervision of the swimming competition at meets. The Meet Referee will delegate job duties as required and make any decisions concerning the competition. Meet referees are expected to be the most committed, knowledgeable, and experienced officials in MNSI. The duties of a Meet Referee require the ability to maintain respect of coaches, officials, volunteers, fans, and athletes at all times; to remain credible, patient, and able to manage difficult situations and challenges; and the ability to call on their knowledge and experience to manage the meet and all or its components from the preparation stage through completion.

Level 2

- Meet all general requirements for certification (must be 21 years old).
- Pass USA Swimming Online referee tests.
- Be familiar with the positions of Automatic Timing Equipment Operator, Announcer, Timer, Meet Marshall and Administrative Official procedures. Must have a strong working knowledge of administrative protocols and the administrative official/referee positions.
- **Before training as a certified Meet Referee** can begin, official must have officiated as a Deck Referee for a minimum of one year to include 12 sessions at meets hosted by at least four different teams, including at least four sessions at L3 meets.
- Apprentice as a Meet Referee for a minimum of two complete meets under the supervision of at least two different Meet Referees.
- Must have a working knowledge of OTS.
- Pass evaluation by a Meet Referee and Admin Referee or two Meet Referees.
- Complete and transmit the Meet Referee Application to the Officials' Committee Chair.

Re-certification (required every two years unless obtaining a higher certification):

- Meet all general requirements for certification.

- Officiate for a minimum of 10 sessions and attend Meet Referee clinics and events required by the Officials' Chair.

Level 3

- Meet all general requirements for certification (must be 21 years old).
- **Before training for Meet Referee-L3** can begin, official must have officiated as a certified Meet Referee (Timed Finals Meets) for a minimum of 2 years and 20 sessions.
- Must have a strong working knowledge of administrative protocols and the administrative official/referee positions and be familiar with Heats & Finals administrative procedures.
- Officiate as an apprentice Meet Referee at L3 Meets for a minimum of two complete meets, at least one of which must be a prelim/final meet, under the supervision of at least two different Meet Referees.
- Must have a working knowledge of OTS.
- Has at least one Meet Referee specific mentoring or teaching opportunity listed in OTS.
- Pass evaluation by two L3 Meet Referees.

Re-certification (required every two years unless obtaining a higher certification):

- Meet all general requirements for certification.
- Officiate as a Meet Referee for a minimum of 6 sessions and officiate a minimum of 6 sessions at MNSI L3 meets or higher.

Administrative Officials & Administrative Referees

Duties include all aspects of administrative procedures, including pre-meet problem resolution, Clerk of Course, result generation and timing reconciliation. This includes knowledge of the Hy-Tek Meet Manager Program as well as Colorado, DakTronic, and SST timing systems.

Level 2 Administrative Official (Timed Finals):

Meet all general requirements for certification. (Must be 18 years old)

- Pass USA Swimming and Admin Official tests with a score of 80% or better.
- Apprentice with two different Admin Referees or Admin Officials for a minimum of 6 sessions at meets hosted by at least two different teams.
- Pass evaluation by an L3 Administrative Official or L3 Administrative Referee as listed in the training log.

Re-certification (required every two years unless obtaining a higher certification):

- Meet all general requirements for certification.
- Officiate as an Administrative Official for a minimum of 5 sessions in the calendar year.

Level 3 Administrative Official (Heats & Finals):

- Meet all general requirements for certification (must be 21 years old).
- Must have officiated as an L2 Administrative Official for a minimum of two years and 10 sessions.

- Apprentice with a L3 Admin Referee or Admin Official for a minimum of 2 Prelim/Finals meets.
- Pass evaluation by an L3 Admin Referee or Admin Official or an L3 Meet Referee or an official holding the N2 or N3 rank as an Admin Referee or Admin Official.
- Has at least one Administrative Referee/Official specific mentoring or teaching opportunity listed in OTS.

Re-certification (required every two years unless obtaining a higher certification):

- Meet all general requirements for certification.
- Work as an Admin Referee or Admin Official for a minimum of 6 sessions and 1 L3 meet in the calendar year.

Level 2 Administrative Referee (Timed Finals):

- Meet all general requirements for certification (must be 21 years old).
- Pass the USA Swimming Online Administrative Referee test with a score of 80% or better.
- Apprentice with two different Admin Referees or Admin Officials for a minimum of 5 sessions at meets hosted by at least two different teams.
- Must be certified as a Deck Referee.
- Pass an evaluation by an Admin Referee or Meet referee.

Re-certification (required every two years unless obtaining a higher certification):

- Meet all general requirements for certification.
- Officiate as an Admin Referee or Admin official for a minimum of 5 sessions or attend a clinic in the calendar year.

Level 3 Administrative Referee (Heats & Finals):

- Meet all general requirements for certification (must be 21 years old).
- Must have officiated as an L2 Administrative Referee for a minimum of two years and 10 sessions.
- Apprentice with a L3 Administrative Referee for a minimum of 2 Prelim/Finals meets.
- Pass evaluation by an L3 Admin Referee or an L3 Meet Referee.
- Has at least one Administrative Referee/Official specific mentoring or teaching opportunity listed in OTS.

Re-certification (required every two years unless obtaining a higher certification):

- Meet all general requirements for certification.
- Officiate as an Admin Referee, Admin Official, or Meet Referee for a minimum of 6 sessions and 1 L3 meet in the calendar year.

MNSI Officials Returning After a Prolonged Absence:

PLEASE NOTE: The training requirements listed below for officials returning from a prolonged absence are minimum standards only. Completion of the minimum standards does not guarantee automatic promotion to a certification level previously held by the official.

Less Than Two Years:

- Official must take the USA-S test for the highest level the official was previously certified.
- If official was a certified Deck Ref/Starter or higher, official should work as an apprentice at the highest certification level previously held for at least one meet.
- Pass evaluation by Meet Referee.

Three or More Years:

- Official must take all USA-S tests starting with Stroke & Turn up to the level the official was previously certified.
- Official should work as an apprentice starting with Stroke & Turn up to the level of certification previously held for at least one meet.
- Pass evaluation by Meet Referee.

Non-MNSI Officials Training:

PLEASE NOTE: The training requirements listed below for officials changing their membership from other LSCs. Completion of the minimum standards does not guarantee automatic promotion to a certification level previously held by official.

Certification from Another LSC:

Officials moving to Minnesota and wishing to continue working as a swimming official within MNSI will be able to be certified up to Deck Referee (depending on where they were in their previous LSC) after working at least one meet and pass evaluation by a Meet Referee.

Certification from Another Organization:

An official from another organization (YMCA, High School, NCAA, etc.) seeking certification as an official in MNSI shall follow the standard certification requirements outlined above.