

## USA Swimming Safe Sport Committee Best Practices for Keeping Locker Rooms Safe at Meets

Incidents that put swimmers at risk of physical and emotional harm often take place in the locker room. Therefore, the USA Swimming Safe Sport Committee recommends that meet hosts monitor locker rooms appropriately to ensure that swimmers display acceptable and safe behavior and to protect them from potentially dangerous situations.

Club resources, LSC support, and competition facilities themselves can vary so one size definitely does not fit all. The goal is to ensure that swimmers who use the locker room facilities or changing areas understand appropriate locker room behavior and that the locker room is preserved as a safe zone for all swimmers. With instruction and cooperation, coaches, swimmers, parents, officials, and meet volunteers can all play an important role in keeping locker rooms safe for all.

### Know the rules:

- When planning to host a USA Swimming meet, the Meet Director should review any local ordinances and facility policies and rules that pertain to swimmers, coaches, meet volunteers, and spectators. Any relevant information should be communicated to coaches prior to the meet and should be included in the meet announcement as applicable.
- Locker rooms and changing areas should have signs posted at all entrances indicating that the use of recording devices **including cell phones** is prohibited per USA Swimming rules.
- Meet Referees should instruct Meet Marshals on how and when to monitor locker rooms.
- Coaches should be aware of the locker room facilities available for their swimmers and should instruct swimmers in the safe use of those facilities prior to the meet.
  - Swimmers should be reminded that deck changing is prohibited at all times.
  - Swimmers should not be allowed to spend long periods of time in the locker rooms, before, during, or after the competition.
  - Coaches should monitor their swimmers and investigate any unusual absences.
  - Coaches concerned with any aspect of the locker room facilities or the monitoring plan should instruct their swimmers to arrive dressed to swim and depart without changing into street clothes. Parents should also be informed.
- If swimmers with medical conditions or disabilities have applied for accommodations that affect the locker rooms or changing areas, including the attendance of a personal assistant, the Meet Director should inform the Meet Referee and Meet Marshals of all accommodations granted prior to swimmers arriving at the facilities.

### Limiting Access:

- If at all possible, locker room access should be restricted to swimmers in the meet. A security person, Meet Marshal, or meet volunteer should be positioned outside entrances to direct non-swimmers to other bathroom or locker room facilities. Signs stating the restriction can be used



when a security guard is not available. Parents who wish to assist their swimmers with dressing should be directed to other bathrooms or family locker rooms, if permitted by the facility. If alternate dressing room options are not available, parents who are uncomfortable permitting their children to use the locker room or changing area without parental supervision should consider arriving dressed to swim. Swimmers with documented medical or physical disabilities requiring the attendance of a registered personal assistant should inform the Meet Director by the deadline stated in the meet announcement so that swimmers can be accommodated accordingly.

- If the general public or facility membership has access to the locker rooms during the meet, the Meet Director should coordinate in advance with the facility manager to determine how locker rooms will be monitored for the safety and privacy of both swimmers and public users.
- When the only bathroom facilities are located in the locker rooms, they should be monitored more frequently to ensure no adults are loitering in the locker rooms or behaving in a concerning manner around the swimmers.
- If locker rooms are not available, advise coaches that swimmers will need to arrive dressed to swim or, if the facility is able, consider setting up a well-protected, temporary changing area for swimmers. Consult your states codes and facility rules to ensure that such temporary changing areas comply.

#### Monitoring:

- It is not recommended that adult monitors be stationed inside locker rooms while swimmers are present. Rather periodic walk throughs or sweeps should be conducted by Meet Marshals to ensure that a safe environment and acceptable behavior are maintained. The goals of monitoring are to:
  - Ensure no inappropriate or unsafe behavior is occurring
  - Confirm that only authorized people are in the locker room
  - Check for prohibited use of cameras or other recording devices
  - Discourage swimmers from “hanging out” in the locker room
- A locker room monitoring log should be used to document coverage.
- Whenever possible, sweeps should be conducted by two same gender adults monitoring the locker room of their gender. These adults should be:
  - USA Swimming members or
  - At least one should be a USA Swimming member or
  - If neither is a USA Swimming member, they both should be “known” individuals affiliated with a team or the facility (especially if the facility performs background checks on its employees)
  - In the worst case, if only one adult of each gender is available, they should be USA Swimming members (meet directors, chaperones, coaches, officials)
  - Under no circumstances should a routine sweep be conducted by adults of the opposite sex unless an emergency situation requires it



### Reporting Issues:

- Unsafe conditions should be reported to the Meet Director or facility manager immediately. Swimmers should be removed from hazardous areas as necessary.
- In the case of inappropriate behavior by swimmers, the Meet Marshals should verbally instruct the swimmers to stop. If the behavior does not stop or warrants more serious intervention, one Meet Marshal should stay with the offender(s) while the other adult retrieves the Meet Director, Meet Referee, or the swimmers' coaches to assist with the situation. Under no circumstances should Meet Marshals physically restrain, threaten, or punish swimmers.
- In the case of suspicious behavior by a non-swimmer or unauthorized adult, one Meet Marshal should stay with the swimmers or instruct swimmers to evacuate while the other retrieves the Meet Director, facility manager, or Meet Referee to assist. Under no circumstances should Meet Marshals physically restrain or otherwise put themselves in harm's way when dealing with a suspicious person. Law enforcement should be contacted as deemed necessary.
- Other situations should be handled calmly and with good common sense to ensure the safety of all involved.

Meet management, facility management, and other responsible adults are in charge of keeping swimmers safe at competition facilities. Some situations may not be covered in these best practices and responsible adults are encouraged to respond appropriately as needed. The following resources are available to help inform and guide meet hosts, coaches, and Meet Marshals:

- Your club's Safe Sport Coordinator and Safety Coordinator
- Your LSC's Safe Sport Coordinator and Safety Coordinator
- USA Swimming's Safe Sport Committee
- USA Swimming's Operational Risk Committee
- USA Swimming's Safe Sport program: [usaswimming.org/protect](https://usaswimming.org/protect)

