

Safe Sport at Meets: A Resource Guide

This is an information resource intended to assist meet administration in handling any Safe Sport related issue that may come up during a meet. Please feel to add to this guide as you see fit for your meet.

Safe Sport Meet Standard

- The Meet Director, Meet Referee, and Facility Management (if indicated), shall work together to ensure compliance with the USA Swimming Code of Conduct and Athlete Protection Policies during swim meets for the protection of Athletes and Non-Athlete Members of USA Swimming.
- Consultation during the meet may be obtained, if available, with the USA Swimming Safe Sport Office, LSC Safe Sport Chair/Coordinator, LSC General Chair, or the Meet Committee at the venue.

Meet Director: Safe Sport Protocol

Prior to the meet

- Identify Emergency Services and their contact information for the facility (if other than 911):
 - Law enforcement
 - Medical services
 - Address and phone number of the facility
 - Information to be carried by the Meet Director, and Meet Referee.
- Determine responsibility for enforcing USA Swimming Code of Conduct (Article 304) and Athlete Protection Policies (Article 305), such as deck access, camera use, etc.
 - If it is Facility Management:
 - Obtain names and contact information of facility staff for use by Meet Management, Officials and Meet Marshals during the meet.
 - Establish a Chain of Command.
 - If it is Meet Management:
 - Use this guide to develop a plan for handling situations that might occur.
 - Establish a Chain of Command at the meet.
- Confer with the Meet Referee:
 - Discuss how Code of Conduct and Athlete Protection Policy violations will be managed during the meet.
 - Have a clear reporting structure for all members of the Meet staff and volunteers that can be easily communicated to all workers at the meet.

For example:

- Volunteers such as Concessions, Admissions, Meet Management, etc. report to the Meet Director. Timers, Meet Marshals, and Officials report to the Meet Referee.
- Meet Referee and Meet Director shall confer with each other on all reports received.
 - Determine if the Meet Referee or Meet Director will brief Officials, Meet Marshals and Timers on Safe Sport policies and Best Practices.
- Prepare briefing sheets for Meet Marshals, Officials, Timers, Coaches and other Volunteers regarding Safe Sport policies and Best Practices, or use those located in the Safe Sport Handbook.
- Check the USA Swimming “Individuals Permanently Suspended or Ineligible” list for individuals from your area:
 - Individuals permanently suspended or ineligible are allowed to be spectators at a meet and may be in the stands.
 - They cannot be present on deck, coach, or perform any function at the meet requiring USA Swimming Membership, and violators shall be reported to the Meet Director or Meet Referee.

At the meet

- Ensure volunteer & coaches briefing sheets are distributed appropriately.
- Encourage the meet announcer to remind all attendees about Safe Sport policies eg., deck changing, photography, massage, etc.
- Meet Referee, Meet Director, or designee:
 - Brief Meet Marshals prior to each session or change of staff.
 - Participate in Official’s/Timer’s briefings as determined by your pre-meet meetings.
- Meet presence:
 - Be visible and active on deck as much as possible.
 - Be proactive: interact with athletes and coaches regarding rules and policies of the meet.
 - Set an example of positive behavior for all Volunteers of the Meet to emulate.

Remember, the Meet Director and Meet Referee must, together, use common sense and consistent application of USA Swimming Rules and Safe Sport Policies for the protection of all USA Swimming Members, volunteers and spectators of the meet.

Potential issues and how to respond

What if you receive a report that someone in the stands is acting suspiciously?

Go directly to the individual and politely ask them who their swimmer is, and their team affiliation. Determine the purpose of their attendance. If they are taking pictures, ask to see their pictures. Explain that your concern is athlete safety. You have now put the person on notice that they are being watched. If the answers you get are not satisfactory, take the appropriate action, up to and including contacting authorities.

What if you receive a report that there is a suspicious person in the locker room?

Notify facility staff/security if you are in a shared use facility. If the facility does not have its own response procedure, you and another adult and/or facility security should go immediately to the locker room and confront this individual. Make sure all athletes in the locker room are safe and then determine why the individual is in the locker room. If the individual attempts to leave, follow him/her until you have determined there is no further threat and that no further action is necessary. Remember, you are not the police. Any hint that this person should not be in the locker room will likely warrant a call to the authorities.

What if you get a report of a peer to peer incident on deck or in the locker room?

Talk with all athletes involved to determine what has happened. It is important to involve parents/guardians and the coach in any discussions with athletes. Remind all involved of Article

304.3.7 and Article 304.3.8 (D) which addresses bullying and peer to peer abuse.

Safe Sport Briefing Sheet: MEET MARSHALLS

- No cameras (including cell phone cameras) or other recording devices are allowed behind the blocks at any time. If you see a camera you should:
 - Inform the camera user of the policy and request that it be put away.
 - Inform the Meet Director or Facility Manager of the camera use. Do this even if the camera user puts the camera away when asked.
 - Exception: a credentialed, official Meet Photographer identified by the Meet Director, stated in the Meet Announcement and available to all athletes is allowed behind the blocks **after** the start.

- Good sportsmanship is expected at all times.
 - Bullying or taunting is prohibited at all times on deck. Bullying is defined as any severe word, act or gesture directed at someone that a reasonable person believes has the effect of causing harm, the fear of harm or a hostile environment.
Taunting is defined as expressing contempt or ridicule.
 - If you see these behaviors:
 - Stop the behavior immediately.
 - Inform the Meet Director or Meet Referee and let them handle the situation.

- Deck Changing is prohibited you see someone deck changing you should inform the Meet Referee or Meet Director of Club involved.

- Rubdowns and massages are not allowed except by a Licensed Massage Therapist or other certified professional who is not a coach. If you see this behavior you should:
 - Ask to see their Meet Deck Credential or check with the Meet Director.
 - Ask them to leave the deck if they do not have a Deck Credential or if they are not authorized by the Meet Director.
 - Inform the Meet Director or Meet Referee of anyone on deck without authorization.

- Swimmers are not allowed to sit on the lap of any coach or other non-athlete member that is not part of their family. If you see this happening you should:
 - Remind the adult of Article 305.1 of the Athlete Protection Policy and ask them to stop the behavior. Remind the adult that this is a Code of Conduct violation.
 - Inform the Meet Director or Meet Referee of the behavior and those involved.

- Only registered coaches, officials, swimmers and meet volunteers are allowed on deck. If you see someone who does not appear to belong on deck, ask that person why he/she is on deck.



- Non-athlete members such as Coaches and Officials must have a registration card or deck credential. If no identification is produced, escort him/her to the Meet Director to obtain a Deck Credential.
 - If he/she has no reason/right to be on deck, ask him/her to leave and provide an escort off the deck if necessary. Inform the Meet Director or Facility Manager if there is any refusal to leave and/or threatening or belligerent behavior.
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- Remember, you have an active role in keeping the swimmers at this meet safe. You are not on deck to be a parent, a fan or a coach. Be vigilant in keeping your assigned area safe for all athletes, volunteers and non-athlete members of USA Swimming.



Safe Sport Briefing Sheet: TIMERS

You are an Official of the meet.

- Do not text or use cell phones during the meet. Ask the Head Timer for relief if you need to do so.
- No cameras, cell phone cameras, or other recording devices are allowed behind the blocks at any time.
- If you observe camera use behind the blocks, notify the Head Timer or the nearest Official, who will then notify the Deck Referee.

Safe Sport Briefing Sheet: COACHES

Thank you for attending our meet. (HOST CLUB NAME or We) want(s) a successful and safe event for all teams, coaches, and athletes. If you have any questions about the meet please contact us at any time.

Several reminders to ensure everyone can have a great experience at this meet:

- No cameras or other recording devices are allowed behind the blocks. If you are going to be taking video of your swimmers, you must stand on the side or at the turn end of the pool.
- Deck changing is (prohibited/strongly discouraged) at all times. Please help us by having your swimmers use the locker rooms or other designated areas for changing, and support our Meet Marshalls when they remind your swimmers about this rule.
- Rubdowns or massages are not allowed except by a Licensed Massage Therapist or other certified professional, who is not a coach. Any rubdown or massage performed at the venue by a licensed professional must be conducted in open/public locations and must never be done with only the athlete and licensed massage therapist in the room. If you plan to have a Massage Therapist with you at the meet, please inform the Meet Director prior to the meet and discuss an appropriate open/public location for their services.
- Athlete members are not allowed to sit on the laps of coaches and Non-Athlete members who are not family. If you see this, please remind the adult of Article 305.1 of the Athlete Protection Policy. This behavior not only looks inappropriate, but is a violation of the Code of Conduct.
- As we ask all our volunteers and staff, if you see something suspicious or something that makes you uncomfortable involving any athlete at the meet, please report this to the Meet Referee or Meet Director immediately.

Deck Changing: A Guide for LSC Leadership

If a deck changing incident is not resolved during the meet at which it occurs, the Meet Director or Meet Referee should contact the LSC General Chair and/or Safe Sport Chair. The LSC General Chair and Safe Sport Chair together should decide who should speak with the coach. At that point, the following steps should be taken:

1. Obtain information from the Meet Referee and Meet Director as to the situation that occurred, the mentoring steps taken, and the response of the Coach.
2. Review the situation with the General Chair.
3. Determine who will speak with the coach: the General Chair or the Safe Sport Chair.
4. Potential speaking points with the coach:
 - a. This is a rule, a prohibition, which needs to be followed, like any other rule.
 - b. Recognize that it takes time to change behavior, and with athletes, a coach has tremendous influence and respect. If the coach is not supportive of the rule in front of the athlete, it is unlikely that the athlete's behavior or buy-in will change.
 - c. Younger athletes may pattern their behavior after older teammates or idols such as National Team athletes. The older athletes need to serve as an example of appropriate behavior and decorum for the younger athletes.
 - d. In most municipalities, there are laws/statutes against public nudity (if the body is exposed during deck changing).
 - e. This is a Safe Sport/safety issue for the athlete. People in the stands are more likely to observe deck changing (high bleachers, balcony seating, etc.) and with a more unobstructed view, than Officials, Coaches and Meet Marshals on deck. This increases the potential that an image can be taken, which can then be distributed (rapidly), by social media.
 - f. An image on the internet or through social media (sexting) may be out there forever, bringing lasting ramifications for the athlete.
 - g. A compromising picture of an athlete can be used to blackmail or bully an athlete into a more risky and dangerous situation.
 - h. Knowledge of the possibility of observing deck changing may be an enticement for predators to attend meets, particularly outdoor meets or open water meets where there is more access to viewing and moving more freely throughout the venue.
5. Notify the USA Swimming Safe Sport office of initial report to the LSC Safe Sport Officer, and the actions taken.
6. This may be an opportunity to involve the Zone Safe Sport Chair/Coordinator:
 - a. Assist the LSC Safe Sport Chair and provide mentoring if needed
 - b. Communicate with the coach in addition to the LSC Safe Sport Chair, or instead of the LSC Safe Sport Chair.