



Open Water Safety Plan

Application Instructions

- Before applying for a USMS open water sanction, event hosts must review their event information and safety plans with their LMSC Sanctioning Officer. Upon approval from the LMSC Sanctioning Officer, the event host is then ready to apply for sanction.
- When applying for a USMS open water sanction, event hosts are required to submit their safety plan for review and approval by the Open Water Compliance Coordinator (OWCC) ON THIS APPLICATION through the online sanction process. We welcome additional supporting information—after all, many event hosts have developed extensive safety plans over years of hosting events—but everyone must submit this completed application to ensure that all pertinent points are covered in safety planning.
- Using a Google Earth map or equivalent, event hosts are also required to upload a map of the venue and course with the safety plan application. Maps must include locations of start & finish, guide & turn buoys, feeding stations, safety craft, lifeguards/first responders, on-site medical care, and evacuation points.
- In the best scenario, the Safety Director should assist the event host in the developing the event safety plan. If the Safety Director did not take part in developing of the safety plan (usually in the case of appointment after the sanction request or in the case of a substantially unchanged safety plan developed over years of experience), the event host must give the Safety Director a copy of the approved safety plan.
- Upon request, USMS OWCC David Miner will send you a copy of the approved safety plan. Contact David at openwateradvisor@usmastersswimming.org or 941-545-9709.

Open Water Safety Plan Application

Event Information

General Information

Name of Host: Iowa Swimming Inc.
Name of Event: Iowa Open Water Championships
Event Location: Easter Lake Park, 2830 Easter Lake Drive
City: Des Moines State: IA LMSC: IAMA
Event Dates: 6/29/2026 through 6/29/2026
Length of Swim(s): 1.25K, 2.5K, and 5.0K
Dual Sanctioned with USA-Swimming: Yes

Key Event Personnel

Event Director: Scott Weinheimer Phone: 319-321-9816 E-mail: meetdirector@nsstotters.com
Referee: Mike Repko Phone: 817-739-8675 E-mail: repko@yahoo.com
Certified Safety Director: John Shenberger Phone: 708-921-1157 E-mail: johnshenberger@comcast.net

Pre-Race Safety Meeting (required): all officials & safety personnel must attend

Tentative date: 6/29/2026 Time: 6:30am

Tentative agenda: Officials will meet to discuss meet event, course lay-out, assignments, safety protocols, and other event items. Please note our full safety plan is attached for your benefit.

Pre-Race Swimmer Meeting (required): all officials & swimmers must attend to participate in race

Tentative date: 6/29/2026 Time: Will occur approximately 15 minutes before send-off. The estimated Mandatory Swimmer Meeting time is 12:45 with a 1pm start.

Tentative agenda: Meet Referee will go over course lay-out, including start and finish protocol for each of the 3 distances. Safety issues and need for assistance while swimming will also be discussed. The Information Sheet has more details on the event that will be shared with swimmers.

Course & Event Conditions

The Course

Body of water: Lake Water type: Fresh Water Water depth from: 7' to: 35'

Course: Closed-only event watercraft allowed

If open course, indicate the agency used to control the traffic while swimmers are on the course.

Agency name: Iowa Swimming Inc. How to contact during event: TBD

Expected water conditions for the swimmers: (marine life, tides, currents, underwater hazards): Water temperature should be 78-80 degrees. There are no known water issues that will affect swimmers.

How is the course marked?

- Turn buoy(s): Height(s) We are still working buoy detail Color(s) Enter text Shape(s) Enter text
- Guide buoy(s): Height(s) Enter text Color(s) Enter text Shape(s) Enter text
- Approximate Distance between Guide buoys: Enter distance

Number of Feeding Stations: 0

Type of structure(s) used as feeding station(s): Not applicable

Number of people the structure(s) can safely hold: Not applicable

Water & Air Temperatures

Expected air temp range: 80 Expected water temp range: 80

Wetsuits: Optional

USMS Water Temperature Index for sanctioned open water events:

- Below 57°F (Very Cold) – heat retaining swimwear and a Thermal Plan for Cold Water Swims is **REQUIRED**
- 57°F-60°F (Cold) - heat-retaining swimwear is required or a Thermal Plan for Cold Water Swims is **REQUIRED**
- 60°F-66°F (Quite cool) - Thermal Plan for Cold Water Swims is **RECOMMENDED**
- 66°F-72°F (Fairly cool) - Thermal Plan for Cold Water Swims is **ENCOURAGED**
- 72°F-78°F (Cool) - No Thermal Plan required
- 78°F-82°F (Optimal) - Heat-retaining swimwear & neoprene caps are not permitted above 78°F.
- 82°F-85°F (Warm) - Thermal Plan for Warm Water Swims is **RECOMMENDED**
- 85°F-87.8°F (Very warm) - Thermal Plan for Warm Water Swims is **REQUIRED**
- 87.8°F-95°F (Hot) - Sanctioned open water swims cannot be held
- Over 95°F (Extremely hot) - Any swimming is ill-advised

USMS Water Temperature Measurement Procedure: Using an accurate thermometer, the event host should take three to five measurements at various places on the course—12 to 18 inches below the water surface and no closer to the shore than 25 meters (if possible)—within one hour before the start of an open water swim. The host should average these measurements, post and/or announce the resulting average temperature at least 30 minutes before the start of the swim, and announce it during the pre-race staff safety and swimmers’ meetings.

Water Quality

It is recommended that one week before the event, check water quality. If results returned are inconsistent with the local governing body’s standards, notify swimmers who participated in the event of any known exposures post-race. If an exceptional event such as heavy rain or flooding affects the water quality, the Event Director, Referee, or Safety Director shall have the authority to postpone or cancel the race. It is recommended to take and retain water samples on race day and retain for reference.

The State does monthly water tests that start in mid-May. We will monitor these tests. We will also take water samples during the month before the event. The number of samples to be taken is still being defined

Event Safety

Medical Personnel

Lead medical personnel (emergency trained) on site: Josh Wiebel – Lieutenant Fire Department, City of Des Moines, IA, [Qualification](#)

Experience in sporting events (Marathon, Triathlon, Open water swim, etc.): Yes

Will medical personnel be located on the course? Yes

The number of medical personnel will be dependent on the course layout, number of swimmers in the water, expected conditions, etc. How many medical personnel do you plan to have on site? 4

First Responders/Lifeguards & Monitors

Indicate the qualifications of the first responders: ARC Lifeguards

Number on course: 6

Number on land: 4

Indicate their location on the Race Plan Map.

Onsite Medical Care & Facilities

Describe onsite set up for medical care, such as medical treatment tent, heating/cooling tent or facility. etc., and indicate locations on the Race Plan Map. There will be an EMS Rescue Boat on the course. An ambulance will be stationed in a parking lot adjacent to the beach.

Ambulance/Emergency Transportation & Nearby Medical Facilities

Ambulance(s) onsite: Yes, no need for phone number On Call: N/A

Have you spoken with local emergency response agency regarding potential emergencies? Yes

Closest medical facility: Iowa Methodist Medical Center

Phone: 515-241-6212

Type of medical facility (urgent care, hospital, etc.): Hospital

Distance to closest medical facility: 2-5 miles Approximate transport time: 15

Watercraft

Motorized Watercraft:

- Owned/operated by government agencies (Coast Guard, police, fire & rescue, etc.): 1
- Owned/operated by volunteers or hired individuals: 5

Will all motorized watercraft with a propeller owned/operated by volunteers or hired individuals be equipped either with a propeller guard or a swimmer monitor? Yes

Other motorized watercraft:

- With propellers fore of the rudder: 5
- With impeller motor (jet ski, jet boat): 0
- Anchored from start to finish: 0

Allocation of Watercraft:

- Safety Watercraft:
 - 1st Responders: Motorized: 1 Non-motorized: 6
 - 2nd Responders: Motorized: 0 Non-motorized: 0
- Watercraft for race officials: Motorized: 4 Non-motorized: 4
- Watercraft for race supervision: Motorized: 0 Non-motorized: 0
- Watercraft for feeding stations: Motorized: 0 Non-motorized: 0

- Watercraft for escorted events: Motorized: 0 Non-motorized: 0
- Other event watercraft: None

Emergency Signal Flag Color for all watercraft: We will use whistles, not flags.

Communications

Primary method between event officials: Radio Secondary method: Cell Phone

Primary method between medical personnel, first responders & safety craft: Radio (separate channel from Meet Officials)

Secondary method: Cell Phone

Swimmer Counting & Accountability

Describe method of swimmer body numbering: We will use a Sharpee pen.

Describe method of electronic identification of swimmer (Recommended): We will have leg monitors where swimmers will need to cross an activating pad and finish crossing that same activation pad.

Describe different bright cap colors for various divisions (Recommended): We are recommending that swimmers bring their own brightly colored swim caps.

Describe method of accounting for all swimmers before, during and after swim(s): Swimmers will have a leg monitor attached to them. They will walk across the pad by name so we know who's in the race. At each turn, the Turn Judge will have a counter and count the number of swimmers based on the swimmer number entered in each race. This will be confirmed via radio to the Meet Referee for monitoring purposes. Swimmers will be required to swim up the chute and walk across the activation pad as they finish the race. Officials will be available before and after the race to monitor any swimmer who needs additional care.

Describe method of accounting for swimmers who do not finish: An alert will be given to all officials, EMS, and lifeguards if the swimmer count at any turn is not what it should be. EMS and lifeguards will have primary responsibility to search for an unaccounted swimmer in the swim area before the last count was taken. Any swimmer who is not in distress but cannot finish the race will be managed by the closest official and lifeguards. It will depend on the area where the distressed swimmer is as to how the distressed swimmer is returned to the start/finish beach. Any medical issues will be addressed by EMS or the lifeguards, as appropriate.

Warm-up/Warm-down Safety Plan

Describe safety plan for warm-up/warm-down, include number and location of lifeguards and designated watercraft. The beach area outside the start/finish area will be where swimmers can warm-up or warm-down. This area is shallow and allow for swimmers to stand if necessary. The beach lifeguards have primary responsibility for monitoring swimmers in the water.

Swimmer Management

Maximum number of swimmers on course at a time: We will be able to accommodate up to 100 swimmers in the water at any one time.

If more swimmers show up on the day of the swim(s), how will you adjust the safety plan to accommodate the increased number of entries? Same day race registration is not allowed for this event.

How will you deploy the safety staff and crafts distributed to supervise this event to ensure swift recognition, rescue, and treatment of any swimmer? Responses will depend on the circumstances. Our information sheet describes safety responses to various events.

How will you deploy the safety staff to maximize rapid response to a troubled swimmer? As soon as a distressed swimmer is recognized, the primary response will include radio contact to the appropriate official or safety staff to address the distressed swimmer issue.

How will you alter the event if insufficient safety personnel/craft are available on the day of the swim(s)? Our independent safety official will be responsible for ensuring appropriate safety staff and equipment is available to support the event. His decision will be final.

Describe your missing swimmer plan: See above.

Severe Weather Plan

Is a lightning detector or weather radio available on site? Yes

Describe your plan for severe weather or natural disaster: See the Abandonment Plan in our Information Sheet.

Describe your course and site evacuation plan, including accounting for all swimmers and other participants: See the Abandonment Plan in our Information Sheet. We will know how many swimmers are in the water and who they are if the Abandonment Plan is initiated. The course is a loop with officials and safety personnel monitoring swimmers. Those officials and safety personnel will be in contact via radios accounting for all swimmers.

Thermal Plan for Cold Water Swims

General Information

Thermal Plan for Cold Water Swims: USMS Rules for Open Water Swims state:

302.2.2A (1) A swim shall not begin if the water temperature is less than 60° F. (15.6° C.), unless heat-retaining swimwear is required of all swimmers or a USMS-approved thermal plan is in place.

302.2.2A (2) A swim in which heat retaining swimwear is required of all swimmers shall not begin if the water temperature is less than 57° F. (13.9° C.), unless a USMS-approved thermal plan is in place.

Remember that the average masters swimmer does little or no acclimatization to cold water, so even a small drop in water temperature—especially in the colder ranges—dramatically increases the odds of thermal issues: Cold Shock Response, Cold Incapacitation, Hypothermia, and Circum-rescue Collapse). Be Prepared!

- If your swim course has a remote chance of water temperature less than 60° F., you are **REQUIRED** to complete the thermal plan below, showing your specific commitment to increased swimmer preparation before the event, reduced swimmer exposure during the event, and maximize mitigation & treatment of thermal issues during & after the event.

- If your swim course has a chance of water temperature between 60° F & 66° F., a thermal plan is **RECOMMENDED**.

- If your swim course has a chance of water temperature between 66° F & 72° F., a thermal plan is **ENCOURAGED**.

How will you assist swimmer preparation before the event:

The following methods are among the ways you can do this:

1. Emphasize & stress on entry information of possible cold water swim conditions.

2. Require prior cold water swim experience.
3. Require swimmer cold water preparation plan.
4. Refuse entry if swimmer is not acclimated to cold water swimming.

What method(s) of swimmer preparation will you take: It is highly unlikely that water temperatures will be cold water conditions. It's a shallow water enclosed reservoir. In the unlikely event there are cold water conditions, the Meet Referee will address the issue at the Mandatory Swimmer Meeting and consider all suggested items as part of the evaluation of any swimmer inability to participate.

What action will you take to reduce swimmer exposure to thermal issues:

The following methods are among the ways you can do this:

1. Cancel the swim(s).
2. Shorten swim(s) or institute/shorten time limits.
3. Encourage wetsuits for all swimmers.
4. Require wetsuits for all swimmers.

Explain your plan of action: It will be at the discretion of the Meet Official and Independent Safety Director whether the swim will occur in this condition. If the event is to continue, all items recommended will be considered for the safety of the swimmers.

What extra medical care will you provide to mitigate & treat symptoms of thermal issues:

The following methods are among the ways you can do this:

1. Bring in more emergency trained medical personnel and/or ambulances.
2. Bring in more volunteers to assist medical personnel.
3. Bring in more emergency craft and first responders on the course.
4. Increase warm beverages before the swim and at feeding stations.
5. Have special procedures (different than normal) for removing swimmers from the water & venue.
6. Increase warm beverages after the swim.
7. Increase thermal treatment gear (blankets, hot water bottles, etc.)
8. Make warm showers available on-site.
9. Make warming facilities (buildings, tents, vehicles, etc.) available on-site.
10. Other:

Specify what extra listed items you will provide: The list provided is a good recommendation. No other items are apparent at this time.

Comment on how you will be prepared to care for multiple medical issues: We have ample safety personnel on site to address multiple medical issues at the same time. EMS has radio contact with other emergency agencies outside the event if something catastrophic occurs requiring multiple emergency support staff or vehicles, including ambulances.

If the water temperature is below 72° F, will you be prepared to deal with cold water medical issues: Yes

Thermal Plan for Warm Water Swims

General Information

Thermal Plan for Warm Water Swims: USMS Rule 302.2.2A(3) for Open Water Swims states:

“A swim of 5K or greater shall not begin if the water temperature exceeds 29.45° C. (85°F.). A swim of less than 5K shall not begin if the water temperature exceeds 31° C. (87.8°F.).”

Remember that the average masters swimmer does little or no acclimatization to warm water, so even a small increase in water temperature—especially in the warmer ranges—dramatically increases the odds of thermal issues: Dehydration, Heat Stroke, and Hyperthermia. Be Prepared!

- If your swim course has a chance of water temperature from 85° F to 87.8° F, you are **REQUIRED** to complete the thermal plan below, showing your specific commitment to increased swimmer preparation before the event, reduced swimmer exposure during the event, and maximize mitigation & treatment of thermal issues during & after the event.

General Information

- If your swim course has a chance of water temperature between 82° F & 85° F., a thermal plan is **RECOMMENDED**.

How will you assist swimmer preparation before the event:

The following methods are among the ways you can do this:

1. Emphasize & stress on entry information of possible warm water swim conditions.
2. Require prior warm water swim experience.
3. Require swimmer warm water preparation plan.

What method(s) of swimmer preparation will you take: Warm water swimming will be managed similar to the cold water plan described above. Again, all suggested recommendations are items we will consider given the circumstances that may be present at our event.

What action will you take to reduce swimmer, official, and staff exposure to heat-related issues:

The following methods are among the ways you can do this:

1. Cancel the swim(s).
2. Shorten swim(s) or institute/shorten time limits.
3. Remind all participants to stay well hydrated.
4. Remind swimmers to select appropriate pace.
5. Make swim caps optional or use Lycra swim caps.

Explain your plan of action: Same answer as given above. These recommended items are all considerations given the circumstances that may be present at our event.

What extra medical care will you provide to mitigate & treat symptoms of heat-related issues:

The following methods are among the ways you can do this:

1. Bring in more emergency trained medical personnel and/or ambulances.
2. Bring in more volunteers to assist medical personnel.
3. Bring in more emergency craft and first responders on the course.
4. Increase cool beverages before, during and after the swim (for swimmers and staff, including extra cool beverages on watercraft and feeding stations)
5. Increase heat exhaustion and heat stroke treatment gear (iced water, ice chips, cold water bottles, misting tents/fans, etc.)
6. Make cool showers available on-site.
7. Make shade and cooling facilities (buildings, tents, etc.) available on-site.
8. Other: [Specify](#)

Specify what extra listed items you will need to provide: The list provided is a good recommendation. No other items are apparent at this time.

Comment on how you will be prepared to care for multiple medical issues: As with the cold water response, we have ample safety personnel on site to address multiple medical issues at the same time. EMS has radio contact with other emergency agencies outside the event if something catastrophic occurs requiring multiple emergency support staff or vehicles, including ambulances.

If the water temperature is above 82° F, will you be prepared to deal with heat-related medical issues:

Yes