



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: [Team Rocket Tri Club](#)
Name of Event: [Swim Hobbs Island](#)
Event Location: [Ditto Landing](#)
City: [Huntsville](#) State: [AL](#) LMSC: [SE](#)
Event Dates: [9/18/2022](#) End Date
Length of Swim(s): [1, 2, and 5 mile open water swim race](#)
Dual Sanctioned with USA-Swimming: [Yes](#)

Key Event Personnel

Event Director: [Ali Meeks](#) Phone: [206-779-9425](#) E-mail: swimhobbsisland@gmail.com
Referee: [tba](#) Phone: [000-000-0000](#) E-mail: [Click to enter e-mail address](#)
Certified Safety Director: [Helen Naylor](#) Phone: [615.414.6072](#) E-mail: helen.naylor@vumc.org

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

Tentative date: [9/18/2022](#) Time: [7:00 am](#)
Tentative agenda: [Boat and swimmer safety, weather protocols](#)

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

Tentative date: [9/18/2022](#) Time: [7:45 am](#)
Tentative agenda: [Swimmer safety, weather protocols](#)

Course & Event Conditions

The Course

Body of water: [River](#) Water type: [Fresh Water](#) Water depth from: [0](#) to: [50](#)

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: How to contact during event:

Expected water conditions for the swimmers: (marine life, tides, currents, underwater hazards): [This race is held in the Wheeler Reservoir of the Tennessee River. Flows are regulated by Tennessee Valley Authority, and we request a flow reduction prior to race day. Typical flows are around 15,000 to 20,000 cubic feet per second. Half the swim is upstream from the start, and half is downstream back to the start. Water temperatures are moderate \(75-83 degrees F\). No aquatic life hazards or underwater hazards are expected.](#)

How is the course marked?

- Turn buoy(s): Height(s) [6 feet](#) Color(s) [Yellow](#) Shape(s) [Triangular](#)
- Guide buoy(s): Height(s) [6 feet](#) Color(s) [Red/orange](#) Shape(s) [round](#)
- Approximate Distance between Guide buoys: [500 m](#)

Number of Feeding Stations: 0

Type of structure(s) used as feeding station(s): [n/a](#)

Number of people the structure(s) can safely hold: [n/a](#)

Water & Air Temperatures

Expected air temp range: [75-85](#) Expected water temp range: [75-83](#) Wetsuits: [Optional. for 1 and 2 mile swimmers but prohibited for 5 mile swimmers, and prohibited for everyone if water temps exceed 78. For this reason the category on this form we have chosen is: 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.

[Ditto Landing](#), where the race is held, is a commercial marina with typical swimming and boating activity. We check with them for any anticipated fuel related concerns.

Our stretch of the TN River (River Mile [RM] [333ish](#)) has EPA designated (desired) uses of Public Water Supply and Fish and Wildlife (line 11 on page 10 of Appendix D in the [AL 2016 303\(d\) list doc](#)), and the stretch 5 miles upstream (line 10) also includes the designated use of Swimming. Even though swimming isn't specified as a designated use in our stretch, the only 303(d) listing for our stretch is for nutrients, which shouldn't be a concern for swimmer health. There are no fish consumption advisories from Alabama Public Health for our stretch and the closest stretches have no restrictions for all species (see page 16 of [the AL Public Health 2017 Fish Advisories report](#)). In the event of heavy rain or flooding we will adhere to municipal, state, and federal requirements.

Event Safety

Medical Personnel

Lead medical personnel (emergency trained) on site: [Huntsville-Madison County Rescue Squad, EMT-P](#)

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? [More than 7](#)

First Responders/Lifeguards & Monitors

Indicate the qualifications of the first responders: Equivalent water certified first responder

Number on course: [5+](#) Number on land: [2](#)

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. [Rescue Squad vehicles and vessels.](#)

Ambulance/Emergency Transportation & Nearby Medical Facilities

Ambulance(s) onsite: [Rescue Squad vehicles](#) On Call: [Rescue Squad 256-536-2720](#)

Have you spoken with local emergency response agency regarding potential emergencies? [Yes](#)

Closest medical facility: [Huntsville Hospital, 9000 Bailey Cove Rd SE](#) Phone: [256-428-4900](#)

Type of medical facility (urgent care, hospital, etc.): [hospital](#)

Distance to closest medical facility: [5-10 miles](#) Approximate transport time: [10-15 mins](#)

Watercraft

Motorized Watercraft:

- Owned/operated by government agencies (Coast Guard, police, fire & rescue, etc.): [2-4](#)
- Owned/operated by volunteers or hired individuals: [1-2](#)

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: [n/a](#)
- With impeller motor (jet ski, jet boat): [n/a](#)
- Anchored from start to finish: [1](#)

Allocation of Watercraft:

- Safety Watercraft:

- 1st Responders: Motorized: 2 Non-motorized: 0
- 2nd Responders: Motorized: 2 Non-motorized: 0
- Watercraft for race officials: Motorized: 1 Non-motorized: 0
- Watercraft for race supervision: Motorized: 1 Non-motorized: 0
- Watercraft for feeding stations: Motorized: 2 Non-motorized: 0
- Watercraft for escorted events: Motorized: n/a Non-motorized: 18-20 kayak flotilla for 1 and 2 mile races, plus personal kayakers for 5-milers
- Other event watercraft: none

Emergency Signal Flag Color for all watercraft: red

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: Permanent marker.

Describe method of electronic identification of swimmer (Recommended): none

Describe different bright cap colors for various divisions (Recommended): various bright colors

Describe method of accounting for all swimmers before, during and after swim(s): Every swimmer is assigned a number. This number is written with indelible marker on swimmer caps and on swimmer shoulders the day of the event. We use an Ipad timing app with these numbers/names loaded to time and account for swimmers starting, DNS (did-not-start), and finishing. It is called WebScorer. We have a race official standing at the race start checking in swimmers as they enter the water using this app. The app is used by the timing team to check in finishers as they finish. Also, we run a concurrent on-paper backup to check swimmers in when they pick up their finisher's shirt in the t-shirt tent, which is located in a chute that the swimmers must pass through after finishing. This paper list is compared to the Webscorer version intermittently and at race completion. If there were to be an inconsistency in finishers between these two methods, then the steps described under the Missing Swimmer Plan (See Swimmer Management, below) would be undertaken.

Describe method of accounting for swimmers who do not finish: Webscorer timing application as described above.

Warm-up/Warm-down Safety Plan

Describe safety plan for warm-up/warm-down, include number and location of lifeguards and designated watercraft. No warmup or warmdown

Swimmer Management

Maximum number of swimmers on course at a time: 200

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? [We do not allow day of race entries.](#)

How will you deploy the safety staff and crafts distributed to supervise this event to ensure swift recognition, rescue, and treatment of any swimmer? [Kayaks notify rescue vessels.](#)

How will you deploy the safety staff to maximize rapid response to a troubled swimmer? [Rescue squad handles their own on-water deployment, but bases their deployment on closest vessel, and uses radio contact to do so.](#)

How will you alter the event if insufficient safety personnel/craft are available on the day of the swim(s)? [We do not plan to run the event if insufficient personnel are not available, and we would know this prior to event day.](#)

Describe your missing swimmer plan: (See also “Swimmer Counting and Accountability section above). [When/if swimmers quit the race and are picked up by event boats, their race numbers/names are called into event staff at the finish where this information is recorded into the timing app and the paper backup. If the last swimmer reaches the finish and there appears to be a missing swimmer, we would first confirm that swimmer is missing by checking with the kayak coordinator, and calling the swimmer and swimmer contact cell phones and checking with other race staff to be sure the swimmer is still unaccounted for. If at this point the swimmer continues to be unaccounted for, we would mobilize Rescue Squad to their search and rescue capabilities.](#)

Severe Weather Plan

Is a lightning detector or weather radio available on site? [No, but we have a designated onshore weather watcher who coordinates with the National Weather Service for notifications if lightning or other weather is in the area. Therefore we have marked the answer to this as: No](#)

Describe your plan for severe weather or natural disaster: [See attached Inclement Weather plan \(the provided plan is from 2021 but we will update phone numbers for 2022.](#)

Describe your course and site evacuation plan, including accounting for all swimmers and other participants: [See attached Inclement Weather plan.](#)

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.

General Information

- 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: [Communicate water temperatures ahead of time and on race day.](#)

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: [Communicate water temperatures ahead of time and on race day.](#)

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: [n/a](#)

Specify what extra listed items you will provide: [Rescue Squad is available onsite.](#)

Comment on how you will be prepared to care for multiple medical issues: [n/a](#)

If the water temperature is below 72° F, will you be prepared to deal with cold water medical issues: [Yes, Rescue Squad is present to deal with this unlikely scenario, but this is highly unlikely given the time of year and typical water temperatures.](#)

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!

General Information

- 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.
- 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: [1](#).

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: [3](#), [4](#), [5](#).

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: [1](#), [7](#)

Specify what extra listed items you will need to provide: [We already do have cold beverages available before and afterward along with ice and shade tents. Ice cream is our post-race food as well, which is convenient.](#)

Comment on how you will be prepared to care for multiple medical issues: [Rescue Squad has on-call staff available in this case.](#)

If the water temperature is above 82° F, will you be prepared to deal with heat-related medical issues:
[Yes.](#)

(YELLOW HIGHLIGHTED AREAS WILL BE UPDATED WITH PHONE NUMBERS FOR 2022 ONCE STAFFING IS FINALIZED)

Swim Hobbs Island Inclement Weather Plan

Prepared by: Ali Meeks 206.779.9425, please note this is area code two-zero-six)

1. COMMUNICATION PLAN:

- This plan will be shared pre-race via email and phone call with the race committee, kayak coordinator, US Coast Guard Auxiliary (USCG-A), and Huntsville/Madison County Rescue Squad (HSV Rescue).
- This plan will be read and discussed with vessel captains and passengers at the 7am vessel briefing at Ditto Landing.
- All swimmers and kayakers will be read this plan during the race briefing, and will be reminded that race cancellation without refund is always a possibility.

2. RACE START PLAN:

- The race plan is to start the 5-mile race at 8:30 am and the 2 mile race no later than 8:45 and the 1 mile race no later than 9:00. However, the race will not be started unless the radar (via WeatherBug or WHNT app) indicates at least a 3.5 hour window storm-free. If this window is not available at 8:00 am, a 25-minute delay will be implemented and then re-evaluated at its conclusion. There will be two such delays and then the race will be cancelled. Only two delays are planned because Ditto Harbor is closed from 7:45-8:45 am for kayaker and boater safety.

3. EVACUATION PLAN:

- John Butterfield (256-656-5438) will be the designated land-based weather watcher and will be using WeatherBug or WHNT weather apps to systematically check the radar at scheduled 15 minute intervals. If cells are building and/or moving toward the area, Mr. Butterfield will notify the Race Director Ali Meeks at 206-779-9425.
- The specified mass evacuation radius that Mr. Butterfield will use for storm cell tracks or lightning activity is 20 miles. This means that if there is activity appearing as expected on the storm radar (WeatherBug app or WHNT weather app), or lightning activity is occurring within this 20-mile radius (WeatherBug app Spark Lightning indicator), this evacuation plan will be implemented.
- The RDs will inform HSV Rescue Vessels primary contact Chris Martin 256-759-0226; and USCG-Aux Dawson Mabry 256-651-7244 via walkie-talkie radio and/or cell phone, who will communicate with the other powered vessels to pick up swimmers.
- A group text will be sent out to all 5-mile kayakers that the evacuation plan is activated.
- Kayaks will paddle to the swim exit (same as swim entrance), and once vessels have transported swimmers, powered vessels will return to retrieve kayakers.
- Because storms may be unpredictable, each powered vessel captain is expected to use best professional judgment as to whether it is safe to come back to port after swimmers and kayakers are loaded or whether they should shelter in place on shore.
- It is extremely unlikely that a mass evacuation of 1 and 2 milers will be necessary because the race will not be started unless a very large storm-free time window is anticipated, and these swimmers should be complete within one to two hours. However, in event an evacuation is needed, the protocol will be the same as above, including the group text to all kayakers.

4. SHELTER IN PLACE PLAN:

- In the unlikely event that a swimmer/kayaker becomes subject to a fast-moving unanticipated storm, they shall go to shore and seek cover under low-growing vegetation/not tall trees.

- 5-mile kayakers shall call their emergency numbers on their laminated lanyard cards to notify race staff that they are sheltered in place (Cards read: IN CASE OF EMERGENCY PLEASE CALL: Kayak Coordinator Troy Ballard 423-987-8188. This is the kayakers' direct connection to both land-based and water based assistance. Mr. Ballard will notify the RDs if one such call is received, and RDs will notify evacuation vessels.
- If kayakers cannot reach a person at these phone numbers, they may text and will receive a response as soon as possible.

5. SHORE CHECK-IN PLAN:

- If the evacuation plan is activated, kayakers and swimmers will check in at the campground covered pavilion where check-in staff with rosters will be present to ensure that all participants are accounted for.