

U.S. Masters Swimming

USMS Annual Meeting

The USMS annual meeting, held annually in the fall, is where much of the business of Masters swimming takes place. Delegates come from all across the nation and from many backgrounds, and include swim coaches, aquatic administrators, and swimmers of all ages, abilities, and vocations.

Each LMSC is entitled to send one delegate. LMSCs having more than 300 members can send a second delegate and are entitled to an additional delegate for each additional 500 registered members. The number of members from either the current or immediately previous year, whichever is larger, is used to determine this delegate allotment. In addition, members of the USMS Executive Committee receive automatic delegate status, as do the chairs of each USMS standing, board, and ad hoc committees, past presidents, zone chairs, and all members of selected standing committees.

Around 250 Masters swimmers from throughout the country are given official delegate status, collectively forming the House of Delegates. The House of Delegates is charged with maintaining the competition rules and the bylaws, electing the Executive Committee, and adopting the annual budget. Delegates assist the Executive Committee in carrying out the work of USMS, both during the annual meeting and throughout the year, through their service in the various standing and ad hoc committees.

Annual Meeting Delegates: Selection, Term, and Reimbursement

Selecting delegates to attend the annual meeting is the responsibility of each LMSC. Selection procedures vary, perhaps done by the general membership or by an executive board, at a specially convened meeting or at a regular meeting. Specific guidelines may be incorporated into LMSC policies, or candidates may be selected by affirmative response to a simple motion. Sometimes, assembling a qualified delegation is challenging because of LMSC size and available funding (LMSC and personal). More often, however, the challenge is in narrowing the field from many qualified volunteers. In this case, one technique is to draft an application form on which candidates itemize their service to the LMSC, service to USMS, and reasons for wanting to attend the annual meeting. The electorate can then use these forms as a guide in choosing the best-qualified delegates.

A delegate serves no set term. Some delegates attend one annual meeting and others serve for years. Committee memberships coincide with the Executive Committee's biennial term of office (which begins in every odd-numbered year). Delegates indicate to the USMS president which committees they are interested in joining, and the president appoints committee chairs and works with them to make committee assignments. Determining factors include members' interests and strengths, number of committees one could actively serve, geographic dispersion, and any limitations imposed by code requirements. LMSCs typically ask their delegates who have no committee memberships to observe those committee meetings not otherwise attended by delegates who do have committee responsibilities.

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Annual meeting expenses include the annual meeting registration fee, lodging, transportation, and meals to and from the annual meeting. Personal ground transport during the annual meeting is seldom needed, as the business at hand well consumes the available time (hence the convenience of a hotel with convention facilities). Buses are typically provided for the early morning workouts! Pre- and post-annual meeting side trips are the responsibility of those delegates who choose to take them.

Delegates who receive automatic delegate status by virtue of serving in USMS leadership positions get a portion of their expenses reimbursed by USMS (per the [*Financial Policies and Operating Guidelines*](#), these are the Members of the Board, Chairs of Standing, Board, and Ad Hoc Committees, Zone Chairs (or approved replacements)). LMSCs typically subsidize the annual meeting costs for their remaining delegates. Again, standing policy may dictate the exact process and proportion, or the LMSC board may determine specifics each year by motion. Smaller LMSCs may be subsidized by their zone to promote better representation among all 51 LMSCs. Out-of-pocket expenses not reimbursed may be tax deductible since USMS and the LMSC are registered as non-profit organizations (but consult IRS Publication 526 and your tax advisor).

Changing USMS Rules and Regulations

Process Overview

In order to ensure that the rules and regulations governing USMS are in alignment with our mission, reflective of the current environment, and are clear to our members, USMS considers changes to the *USMS Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition* on an annual basis. The annual cycle of considering proposed changes originates with proposals from USMS members. Pursuant to article 601.2 of the current USMS code of regulations, changes to rules and regulations may be proposed by any Local Masters Swimming Committee (LMSC), a standing committee of the House of Delegates, the Board of Directors, or the Executive Committee. Members are encouraged to submit ideas for proposals to one or more of these bodies for consideration.

All proposed changes must be submitted by **June 10** to be considered by the House of Delegates at the Annual Meeting. Early submissions are highly encouraged.

- Proposed changes to **Part 1: Swimming Rules or the Glossary** must be submitted to the Chair of the USMS Rules Committee.
- Proposed changes to **Part 3: Open Water and Long Distance Swimming Rules or the Glossary** must be submitted to the Chair of the Long Distance Swimming Committee.
- Proposed changes to the **Organizing Principles, Glossary, Part 2, Part 4, Part 5, or Part 6** must be submitted to the chair of the Legislation Committee.
 - Proposed changes to the geographic boundaries for Zones and LMSCs in **Part 5** must be submitted by an LMSC to the chair of the Legislation Committee.

The committee of jurisdiction will consider all proposals which are properly submitted. The committee may or may not make further amendments to any proposal. Each committee will then submit all proposals to the House of Delegates with a recommendation for or against adoption. The House of Delegates may adopt proposals recommended by the committee of jurisdiction by a simple majority vote. The House of Delegates may also adopt proposals which are not recommended by the committee of jurisdiction by a two-thirds majority vote.

Proposed changes may be submitted after the deadline by the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, or standing committees of the House of Delegates if the committee of jurisdiction recommends the proposal for adoption by a two-thirds vote and the proposal is available for submission to the House of Delegates prior to the annual meeting. All other submissions after the deadline must be deemed an emergency by the committee of jurisdiction, a positive recommendation from the committee of jurisdiction, and a nine-tenths vote of the House of Delegates for adoption.

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Summary of Jurisdiction by Committee

Legislation Committee	Preamble Mission Statement Goals and Objectives Glossary Part 2 (Administrative Regulations) Part 4 (Athletes' Rights) Part 5 (Organization and bylaws, Zone and LMSC Boundaries) Part 6 (Amendment Procedures)
Rules Committee	Glossary Part 1 (Swimming Rules)
Long Distance Committee	Glossary Part 3 (Long Distance Swimming Rules)

The Executive Committee has jurisdiction to consider proposed changes to all other sections of the code.

If a proposed change would require modification of multiple articles with more than one committee of jurisdiction, the proposal may be submitted as a package for consideration. A two-thirds vote of each committee is required to agree that the proposal will be submitted as a package to the House of Delegates.

Instructions for Submitting Proposed Amendments to the USMS Rule Book

Proposed changes must be submitted in a format that shows the current language of the rule or regulation and the precise language that would be added and/or deleted. The committees of jurisdiction are responsible for ensuring that proposed changes to the current style and organization of the rule book. The committees also work to ensure that the language of any proposed change is clear, reflects the intent of the proposal, and does not conflict with other sections of the rule book. The committee may need to consider additional sections of the rule book which may also need changes for consistency if a specific proposal is adopted. For these reasons, early submissions are highly encouraged so the committee may work with proposers on format, language, and style prior to committee consideration.

The preferred format for receipt of proposed changes is a Microsoft® Word document using “track changes”. A template is available from the chair of the committee of jurisdiction. Other formats are acceptable. The following guidelines must be followed regardless of format:

- The current rule book reference number and title (article, section, and subsection) must be shown.
- List the affected page numbers of the current rule book.
- List the LMSC or standing committee submitting the proposal. An authorized representative of the LMSC or standing committee must confirm that the proposed change was approved.
- The format of all proposed changes must show the section as it will read if adopted, with any changes in language underlined (if new) and struck through (if deleted).
- Please indicate the article number of the proposed change.
- Provide a brief description of the rationale for the proposed change.
- List all references to the article and section number referenced elsewhere in the rule book.

Examples of Proposed Rules Changes and Preferred Format

Step 1 – Cut and Paste the relevant rule into a Microsoft Word Document, including the article number and header:

Article 103.4 Rules Committee page 17 Modify

103.4 Reporting of Officials and Meet Personnel

All officials and meet personnel accepting an invitation to work at a swim meet should arrive promptly and report immediately to the meet director or meet referee.

Step 2 – Turn on the “Track Changes” feature in Microsoft Word and make your proposed changes, or show your changes with strike-through (for deletions) and underline (for additions) formatting:

103.4 Reporting of Officials and Meet Personnel

All officials ~~and meet personnel~~ accepting an invitation to work at a swim meet should arrive promptly and report immediately to the ~~meet director or~~ meet referee. All other meet personnel should report directly to the meet director or volunteer coordinator.

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Tip: Ensure that the “View” settings are set to show “All Markup”

Step 3 – Provide a concise rationale for your proposed change:

Rationale: To clarify roles and responsibilities for volunteers arriving at a swim meet. To avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

So, your submission will look like the following:

Article 103.4 Rules Committee page 17 Modify

103.4 Reporting of Officials and Meet Personnel

All officials ~~and meet personnel~~ accepting an invitation to work at a swim meet should arrive promptly and report immediately to the ~~meet director or~~ meet referee. All other meet personnel should report directly to the meet director or volunteer coordinator.

Rationale: To clarify roles and responsibilities for volunteers arriving at a swim meet. To avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

Deadline for submitting proposals is no later than June 10:

- Submit proposed changes to Part 1 (Swimming Rules and the Glossary) to:
USMS Rules Committee Chair - Rules@usmastersswimming.org
- Submit proposed changes to Part 3 (Long Distance Swimming Rules and the Glossary) to:
USMS Long Distance Committee Chair - LongDistance@usmastersswimming.org
- Submit proposed changes to the code (Preamble, Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives, Parts 2, 4, 5, and 6, and the Glossary) to:
USMS Legislation Committee Chair - Legislation@usmastersswimming.org

[USMS Committees & Assignments](#) can be found on the USMS web site.