

## Santa Cruz Open Water Weekend Safety Plan / Safety Services

Safety services for the Santa Cruz Open Water Weekend are provided by the Santa Cruz City Beach Lifeguard Service. Under the jurisdiction of the City of Santa Cruz Fire Department, the Service is responsible for water related life safety issues along the Santa Cruz coastline. Elements of the safety services are as follows:

### Staff:

The SCBLS provides a ratio of one lifeguard trained person for every 25 swimmers in the ocean in any open water event, consistent with the standard of practice in the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA). Staff are strategically placed along the course to account for the pier contours and the number of waves in the swim. This is coordinated by the designated 'Ocean Safety' coordinator.

In addition to the assigned in-water guards, the Service maintains one guard in Lifeguard Headquarters, the central communications center and dispatch and a central observation tower for 66% of the race. The service also staffs its primary rescue craft with two senior lifeguards as the primary water rescue evacuation craft. Two mobile four wheel drive units are staffed each with two SCBLS staff.

Two law enforcement personnel, rangers with communications, are assigned to patrol the deck area of the pier to remove fishing lines and other obstacles during the race period.

Staff consists of members of the lifeguard staff, Marine Rescue Unit, and the Junior Lifeguard Program. In addition, the SCBLS is assisted by lifeguards on a volunteer basis from The City of Capitola Beach Lifeguards and from California State Parks.

The SCBLS is assisted on a volunteer basis by rescue boats from California State Parks and the Santa Cruz Port District.

### Training:

All SCBLS lifeguard, Marine Rescue and Junior Lifeguard Staff are trained according to USLA guidelines for open water lifeguards, a 69 hour course meeting all state regulations and USLA national standards. SCBLS is a certified Agency of the United States Lifesaving Association Agency Certification Program as of Fall 1995. Santa Cruz was among the first to complete this program with USLA.

### Medical:

SCBLS is a primary responding agency under the Santa Cruz County 9.1.1

system and will coordinate all Advanced life Support based on these protocols. All lifeguard unit operators are EMT trained and have appropriate equipment. Santa Cruz Fire Department Paramedics and AMR Paramedic Ambulances Services respond at the request of the lifeguard units, if needed, generally in under 5 minutes.

**Equipment:**

Each lifeguard is equipped with a rescue board and a rescue tube meeting USLA standards. In addition, senior staff have some medical equipment attached to the rescue tubes. The vehicles are fully equipped EMT and water rescue units, with equipment suitable to mass rescue and major incident problems. Lifeguard headquarters has additional equipment and showers available for Hypothermia problems.

**Communications:**

All communications are completed using the Lifeguard Services dedicated radio frequency, Lifeguard Gold. Routine communications can be completed through the telephone switchboard at LGHQ and at each lifeguard tower. Boat operations are coordinated on Marine Frequencies 9, 16, or 22 .

**Evacuation or Cancellation:**

Pre-event cancellation will be conducted by phone/email to all registered participants and through press release. In water evacuation or cancellation, or the removal of a swimmer are at the discretion of the Beach Safety Coordinator and the Race Director and will be coordinated by the Lifeguard Headquarters communications center.

Each rescue boat shall have the ability to transport rescued swimmers to the wharf landing for evacuation to Lifeguard Headquarters for medical aid. The City's primary rescue boat will coordinate rescues and can also deliver rescued swimmers to the beach and the vehicle medical units.

**ADENDUM #1**

Timing services will be provided by BUZZWORD PRODUCTIONS and will be using chips with Velcro straps. There will be two different numbering sequences for each of the two races' chips.

Saturday's Roughwater Swim will use a three wave start set off at 3 minute intervals, with 39 years of age being the cut-off point for the first two waves, and under 18 year olds making up the last wave. Competitors in each wave will be spread out along a parallel line to the shore in the vicinity of Lifeguard Tower Two, swim to a buoy set several yards off the end of the

wharf, finishing on the beach on the opposite side of the wharf (under Pacific Masters Swimming's inflatable finish arch). Basically starting and ending on the beach while swimming around the wharf clock-wise.

Sunday's 2.5 Mile Swim will be a one wave start, again starting on the left (East) side of the wharf and swimming to a buoy several hundred yards off the end of the pier, turning right, swimming at a safe distance but roughly a parallel leg along the western side of the wharf to the second buoy, turning left and heading for buoy number three, and turning left again to head for the original first buoy at the end of the pier, where swimmers will turn left this time and finish along the path they started, finishing under the inflated arch on the beach just beyond the original starting line.

Saturday's Roughwater Swim will have the State Lifeguard boat at the start, and the Santa Cruz City Lifeguards' PWC to fend off any misdirected watercraft, as well as numerous lifeguards on paddleboards.

Sunday's Cruz Cruise 2.5 Mile will have the manned PWC and lifeguards on paddleboards. The CC2M's earlier start time also lessens the occurrence of boat traffic.

Water quality testing will be closely monitored by Santa Cruz County, the City of Santa Cruz, and Santa Cruz Masters. We will have access to testing results every two to three days if conditions are approaching un-safe levels. Any un-safe levels are usually confined to limited areas right at the shoreline (in 6" depth), and can easily be avoided. All swimmers will be advised as to existing conditions during the mandatory PRE-RACE INSTRUCTIONS for both swims. "Control" of the water quality is difficult in this environment, as birds are overwhelmingly traced as the culprit, as noted by several testing bodies. "PLEASE DON'T FEED THE BIRDS" signage and public education is probably the best method readily available to us currently in respect to water quality at the Santa Cruz Wharf and surrounding beaches.