OpenWater Safety Plan Application

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 Minor will send you a copy of the approved safety plan. Contact David at openwateradvisor@usmastersswimming.org or (828) 506-4943 .

Open Water Safety Plan Application

Event Information

General Information

Name of Host: Chattanooga Open Water Swimmers
Name of Event: Swim the Suck
Event Location: Tennessee River Mile 453.3 - 443.1
City: Chattanooga State: TN LMSC: SE
Event Dates: 10/04/2025
Length of Swim(s): 10.25 Miles
Dual Sanctioned with USA-Swimming: No

Key Event Personnel

Event Director: Karah Nazor Phone: 423-488-3143 E-mail: karahnazor@gmail.com
Co-director on Day of Race on Water: Buck Meyer, Phone: 423-464-6146 E-mail: mousecreek@gmail.com
Referee: Phone: E-mail:
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: 10.3.25 Time: 6pm.
Tentative agenda: On the day before the event, race officials, power boat pilots and race directors and organizers will discuss swimmer and pilot briefing details that will be given afterwards to the swimmers and pilots via powerpoint presentation at the Friday night briefing. Race director will hand out lists of all 125 kayakers and their assigned swimmers with the athlete numbers. (kayakers will wear a bib). The list will have all of the swimmers, kayakers and motor boat pilot's phone numbers and emergency contact phone numbers, and medical information for each participant. The dinner briefing/presentation gives an overview of course, safety information, meet up buoy assignments, information for pilots, motor boat pilots phone numbers, plan for inclement weather, what to do in case of hypothermic swimmers, etc. We will discuss the morning timeline and last minute details to be given to pilots and swimmers on race morning. We will discuss weather and contingency plans. We will discuss swimmer evacuation plans in case of emergency or hypothermia. We will discuss any special needs of swimmers if medical conditions exist.

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

Tentative date: 10.3.25 Time: 6pm.

Tentative agenda: Dinner presentation gives an overview of course, safety information, meet up buoy assignment, information for pilots, motor boat pilots phone numbers, plan for inclement weather, what to do in case of hypothermic swimmer, etc.

Course & Event Conditions

The Course

Body of water: River Water type: Fresh Water Water depth from: from 5 ft to: 100 ft
Course: Open - non-event watercraft allowed near swim course
If open course, indicate the agency used to control the traffic while swimmers are on the course.
Agency name: USCG How to contact during event: RadioChannel 16 USCG MSD Nashville 220 Great Circle Road, Suite 148 Nashville, TN 37228 Phone: 615-736-5421 Fax: 615-736-7315
Expected water conditions for the swimmers: (marine life, tides, currents, underwater hazards): Some downstream current, some down trees underwater, possibility of snakes and turtles.

How is the course marked?

- Turn buoy(s): Height(s) Enter text Color(s) Enter text Shape(s) Enter text
- Guide buoy(s): Height(s) 5 Color(s) orange Shape(s) can
- Every 0.25 miles for channel maker green can buoys and ~ every 2.5 miles for orange buoys. The course is marked with green can buoys along the right side of the river that mark the channel and are permanently placed in the river by the USCG. The USCG approves this event every year. We state that swimmers are to remain to the left of these marker buoys and on the left shore. Additionally, we will place large 4 ft orange open water swim buoys every 2.5 miles or so and at the finish line. Swimmers will touch a large orange buoy for the official finish.

Number of Feeding Stations: Each of our 115-125 swimmers (depending on if any drop out) will have a designated pilot on a kayak or sup that provides nutrition, safety, and navigational escort. We always have extra kayakers we call floaters. Type of structure(s) used as feeding station(s): NA
Number of people the structure(s) can safely hold: NA

Water & Air Temperatures

Expected air temp range: 50-80 Expected water temp range: 68-76 Wetsuits: Not allowed

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 the 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.

We will employ TenneSea (http://www.caribbean-sea.org/) for doing a water quality test (e coli) 1 week before the race and three days before the race.

Event Safety

Medical Personnel

Lead medical personnel (emergency trained) on site: We will have an ambulance/EMT services at the start from 9:00-11:30 and at the finish from 11:30-5:00.
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. There will be qualified lifeguards on the water until everyone has finished and EMTs/paramedics at the race start site (Suck Creek Boat launch)/finish (TN River Gardens) at the times noted above.
How many medical personnel do you plan to have on site? 2

First Responders/Lifeguards & Monitors

Indicate the qualifications of the first responders: ARC Lifeguards
Number on course: 2 Number on land: 1
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. Two ambulances (Pucket EMS) will be hired for this event. One will be present at the start from 9:00-11:30. Any swimmers that have an emergency during this time will be picked up by power boat and taken to the ambulance at the starting line. There will be another ambulance at the finish line from noon-5:00. Then as the majority of swimmers are half way through the swim and finishing, an ambulance will be present at the race finish. In an emergency, swimmers will be driven to EMTs at the start or finish and taken to the emergency room if needed – Memorial Hospital or Erlanger Hospital.

Ambulance/Emergency Transportation & Nearby Medical Facilities

Ambulance(s) onsite: 2 ambulances from Puckett EMS On Call: Logan Ratcliff
Chattanooga C-Shift Supervisor
Operations Manager | Puckett EMS Mobile: 423-598-8898, (423)-284-6952 | Office: 678-504-1702
Email:loganratcliff@puckettems.com

Have you spoken with a local emergency response agency regarding potential emergencies? Yes
Closest medical facility: Memorial Hospital or Erlanger Hospital Phone: 911or (423) 778-7000
Type of medical facility (urgent care, hospital, etc.): Urgent care and hospital
Distance to closest medical facility: 5-10 miles Approximate transport time: 20 mins

Watercraft

Motorized Watercraft:

- Owned/operated by government agencies (Coast Guard, police, fire & rescue, etc.): we do not request any
- Owned/operated by volunteers or hired individuals:3

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: 3
- With impeller motor (jet ski, jet boat): 0
- Anchored from start to finish: 0

Allocation of Watercraft:

- Safety Watercraft:
  - 1st Responders: Motorized: na Non-motorized: na
  - 2nd Responders: Motorized: **na** Non-motorized: **na**
- Watercraft for race officials: Motorized: 1 Non-motorized: na
- Watercraft for race supervision: Motorized: 2 Non-motorized: 130 kayaks
- Watercraft for feeding stations: Motorized: na Non-motorized: 130 kayaks (same as above)
- Watercraft for escorted events: Motorized: na Non-motorized: Number
- Other event watercraft: na

Emergency Signal Flag Color for all watercraft: orange

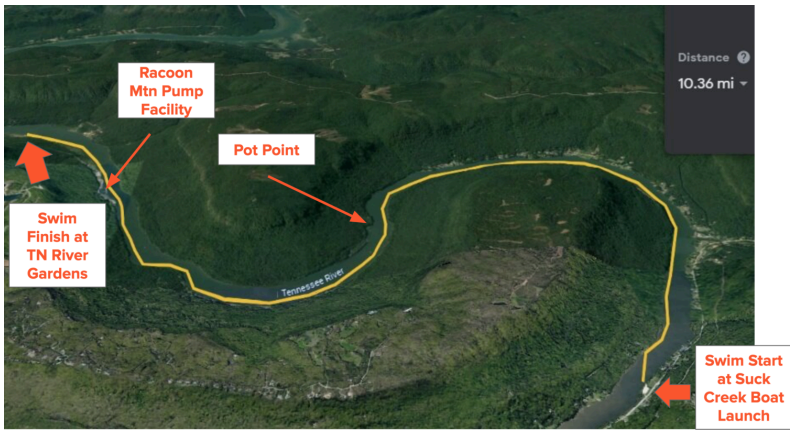
Communications

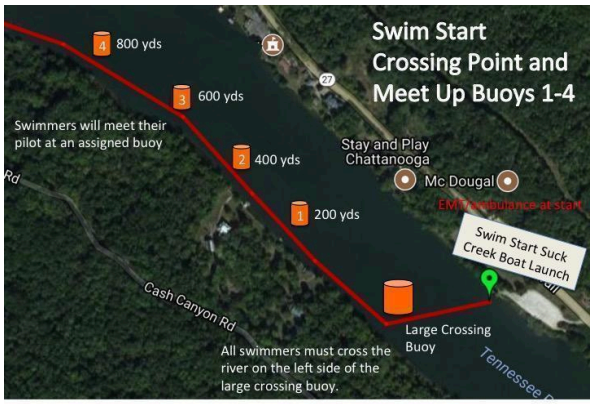
Primary method between event officials: Radio. Secondary method: Cell Phone
Primary method between medical personnel, first responders & safety craft: Cell Phone
Secondary method: Radio

Swimmer Counting & Accountability

Describe method of swimmer body numbering: Swim caps are numbered. Swimmers will be marked with a sharpie with their racer number on both upper arms. Since every swimmer has a kayaker, each kayaker will wear a bib (Swimmer number) on the back of their PFD for easy identification of swimmers.

Describe method of electronic identification of swimmer (Recommended): na
Describe different bright cap colors for various divisions (Recommended): We will have 4 different color caps which correspond with one of the four meet up buoy at the start of the race. The swimmers are divided into four equal groups based on their last name.
Describe method of accounting for all swimmers before, during and after swim(s): check in and then manually count before enter water and check off list at end at official timing tent
Describe method of accounting for swimmers who do not finish: Upon pulling themselves, a kayaker calls a motor boat to pick the swimmer up and take them to the finish line where the swimmer or pilot reports to the timers at the official Timing Tent that they did not complete the race. Race Directors call the swimmer, their pilot, or emergency contacts if needed.





Warm-up/Warm-down Safety Plan

Describe safety plan for warm-up/warm-down, include number and location of lifeguards and designated watercraft. For warm up, swimmers swim up and down hugging the shore at the boat launch. For warm down, there is a long stretch of river on the river left that is adequate for warm down. Kayakers will accompany their swimmers should they want to warm up or down.

Swimmer Management

Maximum number of swimmers on course at a time: 125

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? No on-site registration allowed day of 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? Each motor boat will have a lifeguard. Boats are assigned roles to either stay near the front with the lead swimmers, stay in the middle of the pack, and one to run sweep. They patrol back and forth. As they pass kayak pilots, they check in with them to see if there are any needs or how the swimmer is doing.

How will you deploy the safety staff to maximize rapid response to a troubled swimmer? Whichever boat is closest to the swimmer will go pick them up. Kayak pilots should call the motor boats in case of an emergency. The boat can then determine if the swimmer or pilot needs to be taken to an ambulance at the start or finish line.

Emergencies Motor boats will be given a first aid kit on the boat and blankets in case there are cold swimmers. Hypothermia is a risk even with water temps from 68-72. Several of our swimmers are older athletes. Motor boat pilots, EMTS, and the timers will be provided the lists of names of each swimmer and each pilot with their race number. Both the swimmer and the pilot's emergency contacts and any medical conditions of the swimmers and pilot will be on that list. Kayak pilots will be given the phone numbers of all motor boat pilots. There will be an ambulance at the suck creek launch from 9-11am and one at the finish line (TN River Gardens) from 11:00am-5:00pm. If there is an emergency motor boats will transport the swimmer to one of these site.

How will you alter the event if insufficient safety personnel/craft are available on the day of the swim(s)? This event is very safe with a 1:1 swimmer:pilot ratio and at least 3 boats. We would cancel the race if all motor boats failed to show up.

Describe your missing swimmer plan: Check with timing to see if all swimmers are accounted for. If they are not, alert the motor boat pilots to start a search on the water. Call the swimmer (sometimes they are in their car), call their pilot, and then call the swimmer's emergency contact. Leave voicemails and texts. Kayakers

should plan to have their phone on their person charged and in a dry proof case or dry bag in case of emergency.

Severe Weather Plan

Is a lightning detector or weather radio available on site? Yes
Describe your plan for severe weather or natural disaster

Severe Weather Plan for Open Water Swimming
In case of lightning or other severe weather, the motor boats patrolling the course will announce to swimmers and pilots with a bullhorn and long whistle blasts to clear the course. The kayakers will alert their swimmer and others nearby with a long whistle blast to clear the course.

To Clear the Course
All swimmers and kayakers will immediately exit the water on the immediate left side of the river where it is possible to climb out and wait on land.

Swimmers and kayakers will wait at that location for 30 minutes. If there is no lightning detected for 30 minutes, the race directors will decide whether or not to resume the race. The motor boats will communicate the time that all swimmers shall enter the river to swim again. Maximum amount of time willing to wait = 1 hour

River Evacuation Plan
If lightning is detected within 30 minutes, the race directors may decide to cancel the race at which point all swimmers and kayakers will need to be transported via motor boat to the finish line.

Cell Phone Communication
Each kayaker shall be provided with a list of the race director's phone numbers and motor boat pilots' phone numbers in case they need assistance. Likewise, all motor boats will have the pilot's cell phone numbers. Kayakers should plan to have their phone on their person charged and in a dry proof case or dry bag in case of emergency.

Describe your course and site evacuation plan, including accounting for all swimmers and other participants: : All swimmers and kayakers to exit the water on the river left and wait on land. As swimmers exit boats at the finish line the timers will check off their numbers.

Thermal Plan for Cold Water Swims

NA

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 the swimmer is not acclimated to cold water swimming.

What method(s) of swimmer preparation will you take: Click here to enter text.

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: Click here to enter text.

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

Specify what extra listed items you will provide: Click here to enter text.

Comment on how you will be prepared to care for multiple medical issues: Click here to enter text.

If the water temperature is below 72° F, will you be prepared to deal with cold water medical issues: yes. All boats have warm blankets and hypothermia blankets. Persons can warm up in the ambulance at the finish line. EMTS have been prepared for this situation for this event. People can be driven to the hospital in case of an emergency.

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. - 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: Click here to enter text.

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: Click here to enter text.

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: Click here to enter text.

Comment on how you will be prepared to care for multiple medical issues: Click here to enter text.

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