



RETURN TO SWIMMING

Any questions or concerns about the following document can be made to Mark Lancaster, at lacasteraquatics@shaw.ca.

Facility Access and Use

Lane Density

- No more than 4 swimmers per double lane
- Swimmers will maintain physical distancing on the wall by staying in their designated spot, marked by the black line on the bottom and physical markers (cones) on the side of the pool (Appendix A).
- Swimmers will be kept minimally 2m apart while swimming (Appendix A).
- Lanes will be one way, with swimmers swimming directly over the black line (2.5m apart).

Facility Gather Limits

PCS will work with other user groups to adhere to facility gathering limits as set by the facility plan.

Facility congestion points

Entry into the facility:

- Swimmers arrive or wait in their vehicles until 10 minutes before the start of practice.
- When it is time, swimmers gather at the designated entrance according to the facility plan in groups of 4, on assigned spaces, and maintaining a 2m. A coach will lead them into the building,

Deck:

- Swimmers walk directly to an assigned spot on deck where they will leave their bag.
- The deck will be one-way traffic.

Pool Entry:

- In the same group of 4, swimmers will travel to the farthest available double lane and wait on their assigned spot for instruction.
- Cones will help mark separation on the deck behind the blocks.
- When swimmers get out, they will go directly back to their assigned spot.

Exit from the facility:

- Swimmers will be called back to their belongings to maintain separation.
- Swimmers will immediately exit the facility using the exit designated in the facility plan.

Community Focused

- Swimmers will stay within their home club community
- There will be no cross-regional, inter-provincial, or cross-country travel during Phase 2.

Participants

Health of Swimmer's Protocol

- All members must review *Club Illness Policy* (Appendix B).
- Daily monitoring using the BC COVID-19 [Self-Assessment Tool](#).
- There will be a ZERO tolerance stance for 'training while sick'.
- Personal, club or facility supplied hygiene stations where no hand washing station is available (dryland and open water training).

- Swimmers must sign the *Participation Agreement* (Appendix C).
- Swimmers must sign the *Acknowledgment and Assumption of Risk Form* (Appendix D).

Communication

- Policies, procedures, and plans to be available on the club website, and emailed directly to club members.
- Swimmers and Parents will be educated during online virtual training sessions before they can participate in in-person activities.
- Swimmers and Parents will be required to watch the [COLA Swimming Video](#).

Participant Group Considerations

Any person with a medical condition that puts them at a higher risk must identify themselves to the coaching staff (ie diabetes, asthma, auto-immune disease, etc).

Club Programming

For All Training Scenarios

- Workouts will be posted prior to the training activity via Email/text, Google Classroom, Commit Swimming, or within the facility.
- Participants arrive no more than 10 minutes prior to the start of an activity.
- Coach will ensure the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool has been completed.
- If the COVID 19 questionnaire has not been completed, the coach will administer the following check:
 - Do you have any symptoms: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat and/or painful swallowing, stuffy or runny nose, loss of sense of smell or taste, headache, muscle aches, fatigue or loss of appetite?
 - Have you been in contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19?
 - If any participant answers yes to any of the above, they must depart the training session immediately
- Detailed attendance will be recorded by the coach for every training session and retained on file.
- Training groups remain consistent throughout Phase 2.
- Participants bring personal water bottle.
- Use personal equipment only, no sharing.
- The Club may assign certain equipment (med balls, stretch cords etc.) to individuals for use throughout the COVID-19 period, and this equipment must also be not shared.
- Athletes will not touch or handle any facility and club equipment (lane ropes, backstroke ledges etc.).

Pool Training Activities

- Goggles to be worn by all participants.
- Practice start times staggered to account for individuals moving in and out of the facility.
- Coaches to consider PPE if physical distancing may be challenged.

Outdoor Dryland Activities

- Designated participant drop off/pick up area.
- Control group to maintain physical distancing (2m apart).

Open Water Training Activities

PCS is committed to adhering to Swimming Canada's guidelines regarding Open Water training during the current global health crisis.

Coach-led

PCS recognizes that the Swimming Canada Open Water Swimming Safety Guidelines require a designated and experienced NLS certified safety person for open water club swimming and has an appropriate plan for group coached sessions as outlined below and in Appendix E.

- Lead coach of training session has attended Open Water Provincials or above; has reviewed session specific aspects of the SNC OW Swimming Safety Guidelines; and ensure the PCS OW Risk Management / Safety Plan is implemented
- Participants over the age of 11.
- 1:10 ratio of Safety person to swimmer.
- Personal training equipment only, no sharing.
- Site review completed before start of each activity including checking water quality, temperature, visibility, and obstacles.
- Clear workout plan (route) communicated prior to start of activity.

Individual

PCS recognizes that there will be times when athletes wish to train on their own. When PCS is aware of these activities, the organization will ensure that swimmers are familiar with and implement the SNC Open Water Swimming Safety Considerations for Individuals.

- Athletes have read and understood *Swimming Canada's Safety Considerations for Individuals* (Appendix F).

Recognizing that an observer with the ability to assess the overall safety of the activity, monitor the conditions from the shore and call for help if necessary represents a level of safety beyond that available to athletes training completely on their own, when PCS is aware of individual training occurring PCS may have a coach or other suggested observer(s) present.

Emergency Response Strategy

First Aid

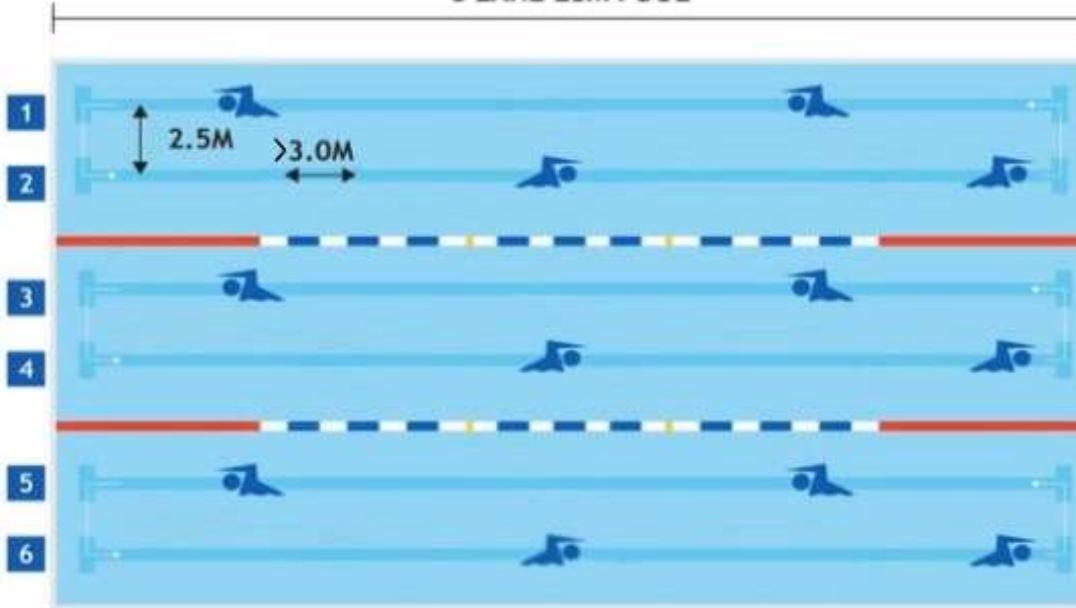
- All coaches required to have a first aid kid for all Open Water and Dryland activities
- Coaches have quick access to emergency contact information

Outbreak Plan

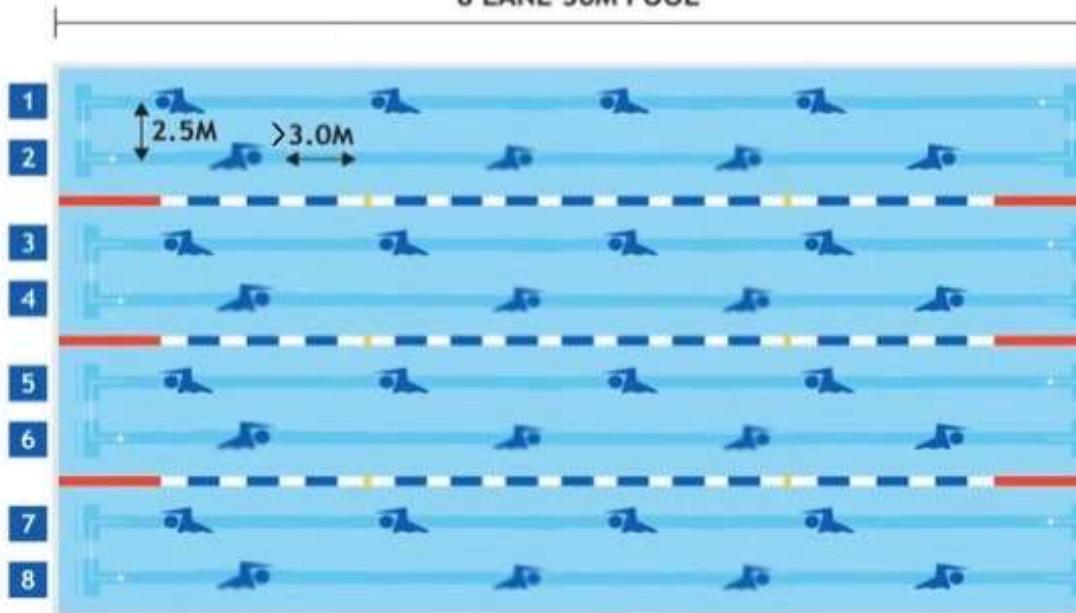
1. Lead coach will immediately notify the General Manager and the President of the PCSPA. The lead coach will modify, restrict, postpone, or cancel workout as necessary.
2. Notify facility administration if any swimmer or coaching staff member reports they are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.
3. Implement the Illness Policy and advise individuals to:
 - a. Self-isolate;
 - b. Monitor symptoms daily, report respiratory illness and not return to activity for at least 14 days following the onset of COVID-19 symptoms;
 - c. Use the COVID-19 self-assessment tool (BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool) to determine if further assessment or testing is needed.
4. In the event of a suspected case or outbreak of influenza-like-illness, immediately report and discuss the suspected outbreak with the Medical Health Officer (or delegate) at your local health authority. Implement your illness Policy and enhanced measures.
5. Should a medical health officer contact the club, cooperate in the contact tracing – ensure attendance sheets are available.

APPENDIX A – Pool Use and Start End Example

6 LANE 25M POOL



8 LANE 50M POOL



APPENDIX B – Club Illness Policy

(next page)

PCS ILLNESS POLICY

In this policy “member” includes an employee, volunteer, participant, or parent/ spectator.

1. **Inform an individual in a position of authority (coach, team manager) immediately if you feel any symptoms of COVID-19** such as fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat and painful swallowing, stuffy or runny nose, loss of sense of smell, headache, muscle aches, fatigue and loss of appetite.
2. **Assessment:**
 - a. Members must respond to a pre-training oral questionnaire before their practice/ activity to attest that they are not feeling any of the COVID 19 symptoms.
 - b. Coaches will visually monitor team members to assess any early warning signs as to the status of their health and to touch base on how they are regarding their personal safety throughout the practice/ activity.
 - c. If members are unsure, please have them use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool or through the COVID-19 BC Support App self-assessment tool.
3. **If a member is feeling sick with COVID-19 symptoms:**
 - a. They should remain at home and contact Health Link BC at 8-1-1.
 - b. If they feel sick and/or are showing symptoms while at practice they should be sent home immediately and have them contact 8-1-1 or a doctor for further guidance.
 - c. NO member may participate in a practice/activity if they are symptomatic.
4. **If a member tests positive for COVID-19:**
 - a. The member will not be permitted to return to practice until they are free of the COVID-19 virus.
 - b. Any member who worked / practiced closely with the infected member will also be removed from club activity for at least 14 days.
 - c. Ensure work / practice area is closed off, cleaned, and disinfected immediately and any surfaces that could have potentially be infected/ touched.
5. **If a member has been tested and is waiting for the results of a COVID-19 test:**
 - a. As with the confirmed case, the member must be removed from the work / practice area.
 - b. The BCCDC advises that any person who has even mild symptoms to stay home and call 8-1-1.
 - c. Other members who may have been exposed will be informed and removed from the work / practice for at least 14 days or until the diagnosis of COVID-19 is ruled out by health authorities.
 - d. The works / practice space will be closed off, cleaned, and disinfected immediately and any other surfaces that could have been potentially infected/ touched.
6. **If a member has come in to contact with someone who is confirmed to have COVID-19:**
 - a. Members must advise their employer/ coach if they reasonably believe they have been exposed to COVID-19.
 - b. Once the contact is confirmed, the member will be removed from the workplace/ practice for at least 14 days or as otherwise directed by public health authorities. Members who may have come into close contact with the member will also be removed from the workplace for at least 14 days.
 - c. The workspace/ activity area will be closed off, cleaned, and disinfected immediately and any other surfaces that could have potentially been infected/touched.
7. **Quarantine or Self-Isolate conditions:**
 - a. Any member has travelled outside of Canada or the province within the last 14 days is not permitted to enter any part of the facility and must quarantine and self-isolate.
 - b. Any member with any symptoms of COVID-19 is not permitted to enter any part of the facility and must quarantine and self-isolate.
 - c. Any member from a household with someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 is not permitted to enter any part of the facility and must quarantine and self-isolate.
 - d. Any member who is quarantined or self-isolating as a result of contact with an infected person or in families who are self-isolating, is not permitted to enter any part of the facility.

APPENDIX C – Participation Agreement

(next page)

PCS Participation Agreement

Application - all athletes, coaches, members, volunteers, participants, and family members of participants while in attendance at Club activities.

All Participants of UVic-Pacific Coast Swimming agree to abide by the following points when entering club facilities and/or participating in club activities.

- I agree to symptom screening checks and will let my club know if I have experienced any of the symptoms in the last 14 days.
- I agree to stay home if feeling sick and remain home for 14 days if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- I agree to sanitize my hands upon entering and exiting the facility, with soap or sanitizer.
- I agree to sanitize the equipment I use throughout my practice with approved cleaning products provided by the club (shared and personal equipment).
- I agree to continue to follow social distancing protocols of staying at least 2 meters away from others.
- I agree to not share any equipment during practice times
- I agree to abide by all of my club's COVID-19 Policies and Guidelines
- I understand that if I do not abide by the aforementioned policies/ guidelines, that I may be asked to leave the club for up to 14 days to help protect myself and others around me.
- I acknowledge that continued abuse of the policies and/or guidelines may result in temporary suspension of my club membership.
- I acknowledge that there are risks associated with entering club facilities and/or participating in club activities, and that the measures taken by the club and participants, including those set out above.

Name: _____

Parent or Guardian Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Participant (if over 18 years of age): _____

Signature of Parent / Guardian (if participant is a minor): _____

APPENDIX D – Acknowledgment and Assumption of Risk Form

(next page)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND ASSUMPTION OF RISKS FORM (FOR ADULT PARTICIPANT AND MINOR PARTICIPANT)

Please read this document carefully

This acknowledgment and assumption of risks form must be signed before participating in any Activity sanctioned or organized by Swimming Natation Canada, Swim BC, or Swim BC Member Clubs

As a participant, or on behalf of a minor participant, in the Activities organized, recognized or sanctioned by Swimming Natation Canada ("SNC"), Swim BC or a Swim BC Member Club ("Club") I hereby acknowledge and agree to the following terms and conditions respecting my/their participation in any Activity.

Introduction

As a participant, or on behalf of a minor participant, in the Activities organized, recognized or sanctioned by SNC, Swim BC or Swim BC Member Clubs, I, the undersigned

_____ (name of adult participant)

OR _____ (name of a parent or legal guardian of a minor participant, 18 years & under),

acting as _____ (parent or legal guardian)

of _____ (name of minor participant, 18 years & under),

hereby acknowledge and agree to the following terms and conditions respecting my/their participation in any Activity.

Definitions

1. "**Activity**" or "**Activities**" means any in-person or virtual activities such as events, training camps, programs, competitions, physical training performed or conducted in water or outside water, recognized, organized or sanctioned by SNC or Swim BC or Swim BC Member Clubs.
2. "**Agreement**" means this Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk.
3. "**Injury or Health-related problem**" means any injury, health-related issue or illness including mental health issues diagnosed by a medical practitioner.
4. "**Members**" means the members listed in Section 3.01 of Swim BC bylaws dated October 10, 2019 or Section 2.1 of SNC's bylaws dated July 29, 2019, as revised.
5. "**Minor**" means the minor participant named in the Introduction.
6. "**Organization**" means collectively, SNC, Swim BC, Swim BC Member club and their respective coaches, directors, officers, committee members, members, employees, volunteers, participants, agents and representatives.
7. "**Registrant**" means a participant and all individuals or entities of SNC including those individuals and associations, incorporated or unincorporated, as described in SNC's *national registration policy, procedures and rules manual* who have met the requirements of registration and the registration has been completely processed and registrants or registered participants of Swim BC or a Member Club.
8. "**Club**" means a Member club that is registered with Swim BC.
9. "**Water**" means any outdoor or indoor pools, artificial or natural water basins used for swimming.

Description of Risks

10. As a participant, or parent or legal guardian of a Minor participant in the sport of swimming and the Activities of the Organization, the undersigned agrees to the following terms and conditions.
11. I am, or the Minor is participating voluntarily in the sport of swimming and the Activities of the Organization. In consideration of my participation or the Minor's participation in the sport of swimming and the Activities of the Organization, I hereby acknowledge that I am aware of and hereby accept the risks, dangers and hazards inherent and associated with or related to the sport of swimming and any Activities of the Organization, including any Injury or Health-related Problem, which can be severe and even fatal. These risks, dangers and hazards may include, but are not limited to, an Injury or Health-related Problem resulting from:

- a. Exertion and stretching of various muscle groups or strenuous cardiovascular activity in or out of water;
 - b. Vigorous physical exertion or physical contact in or out of water;
 - c. Slips or falls due to uneven, slippery or irregular surfaces, including on the pool deck, in dressing rooms or other facilities or rooms at an aquatic venue and at any physical facilities in and around open water venues;
 - d. Failure to properly use any piece of swimming related equipment or the mechanical failure of any piece of equipment;
 - e. Concussions or aggravated related symptoms;
 - f. Spinal cord injuries which may result in permanent paralysis;
 - g. Travel to and from training or competitive events and associated non-competitive events which are an integral part of the Organization's Activities;
 - h. Infectious sources such as COVID-19, as defined by the relevant municipal, provincial or federal health authorities;
 - i. Extreme weather conditions which may result in heatstroke, sunstroke or lightning strikes;
 - j. Unforeseen events.
12. Furthermore, I am aware:
- a. That an Injury or Health-related Problem sustained can be severe and even fatal;
 - b. That I or the Minor may experience anxiety during an Activity of the Organization;
 - c. That the risk of Injury or Health-related Problem is reduced if the rules established for participation are followed; and
 - d. That the risk of Injury or Health-related Problem increases with fatigue.
13. In consideration of the Organization allowing me, or the Minor to participate in Activities, I confirm that I have not been advised by a medical doctor that my or my child's physical condition prevents me or my child from participating in the Organization's Activities.

Medical Assistance

In case of an Injury or Health-related Problem, I authorize the Organization, for myself or the Minor, to obtain all necessary on-site medical assistance for the medical situation, including transportation by ambulance or by other means to a hospital.

Acknowledgement and signature

I have read this Agreement, and by signing it, I understand that it is binding upon myself, my heirs, executors, administrators and representatives. If this Agreement is signed electronically, I, acknowledge and recognize that the electronic signature constitutes my official signature and that I am the person who completed this Agreement.

For a Minor participant or registrant (ie 18 years & Under)

Name of the Minor: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Name of parent or legal guardian (Print): _____

Signature of parent or legal guardian: _____

Signed in (City): _____ Date: _____

For Adult participant or registrant

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Signed in (City): _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E – Open Water Swimming Safety Considerations for Groups

OPEN WATER SWIMMING SAFETY GUIDELINES – Coaching a training group

In light of COVID-19, Swimming Canada has received multiple inquiries regarding coach led open water training with their swimmers. In response to these inquiries, Swimming Canada has created this initial version of our safety guidelines in an accelerated fashion to address the immediate needs of the swimming community. A second version of the guidelines will be prepared in due course.

Open Water training should only be initiated once municipal, provincial and federal regulations permit the resumption of this type of activity. All the overarching health, medical and safety considerations must be adhered to.

Before deciding to take your swimmers off to the lake or other body of water for a workout there are considerations for the safety of everyone that must be examined. The [OPEN WATER SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS for INDIVIDUALS](#) examine many of the safety concerns of open water swimming and must be reviewed as part of the overall risk assessment. Provincial sections may have additional requirements that clubs/coaches must meet.

In order for a club training group to be considered as an approved (insured) activity, a checklist must be completed (sample below). Your provincial section may provide their own checklist to be completed rather than the one shared below. Should a club/coach answer “no” to any of the questions , the club will need to work with their provincial section to determine if open water training can be considered as an approved (insured) activity, with the risks mitigated. If risk mitigation is not possible then coach led open water training should not be undertaken.

1. Does the coach have experience coaching swimmers who have attended any sanctioned provincial open water events, Provincial open water championship, Canadian Junior open water championship, or OW event at higher level, and has the coach attended the open water competition with the swimmers and actively participated in their preparation?
2. Are the swimmers over the age of 11, and have they competed in a sanctioned open water event in their province, a provincial open water championship, Canadian Junior Championship OW event, or event at higher level?
3. Do you have a designated and experienced NLS certified safety person, kayaking alongside or accompanying on the shoreline line? And do you have the necessary # of boats/accompanying safety persons for the # of swimmers you have training, maintaining a 1:10 ratio (safety person to swimmers)? A safety person is NOT a swimmer or coach participating in the training. The individual is designated solely as the safety person for the open water training activity.
4. Have you completed a review of the body of water to be used for training, considering water temperature, safety considerations (water quality, visibility, access points, current and expected water conditions, man-made and natural obstacles)?
5. Is the route the swimmers will be using visible at all times by the coach and/or safety person?
6. Has an emergency action plan (EAP) detailing the chain of command and what happens during and after any emergency, been developed?
7. Have all swimmers and/or parents signed the Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risks form?
8. Has your club board reviewed the checklist, the emergency action plan, and confirmed all items have been completed satisfactorily by signing the checklist and retaining on file? Has your club met any additional provincial section requirements?

SAMPLE OPEN WATER TRAINING CHECKLIST to be kept on file by Club with all waivers.

Question		YES	NOTES
1	Coach Experience – attendance at OW provincial and/or Canadian Juniors or above		
2	Swimmer Experience – min 11 years old, participation in OW event at provincial level and/or Canadian Juniors or above		
3	Safety Person – NLS certified and experienced kayaker on water or on shoreline, ration 1:10 to # of swimmers		
4	Site Review – completed with all specifics documented		
5	Route – viewable with safety person		
6	Emergency Action Plan – completed and documented		
7	Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risks form – for all participants completed and on file		
8	Board Review – completed, documented and on file, provincial requirements met		

Signed by:

Club President:

Date:

Head Coach:

Date:

2020 PCS Lake Swim Risk Management / Safety Plan

Equipment Required:

1 or more Boat / kayak / paddleboard if swimmers will be out of sightline of guard

First Aid Kit

Whistle for guard

Binoculars (optional)

Required lifejackets on boat

Cellular phones for communication (contacts to be checked prior to swimmers entry)

Zones – Refer to Lifeguard Coverage Map

Athletes always in sight of guard

Guard Placement

Lifeguard stationed on beach unless swimmers will be out of sight.

Lifeguard to follow the swimmers in the water on paddleboard / kayak if potential to be out of sight from beach

Emergency Response

- Second responder will be the Coach
- Lifeguard will be responsible for communicating with the Coach, notifying any ambulance or medical needs, and assisting with victim.

Communication

- Communication will be via cellular phones
- Trailing paddleboard lifeguard will also be able to give brief verbal updates as they pass through where the coach may be located.

Preparation

- Lifeguards (if more than one is required) will meet prior to the event to review schedule, zone coverage, procedures, AR, CPR and assisting weak, tired and distressed swimmers.
- Water temperature, air temp predicted weather, duration of workout should be considered

Process (if emergency on water):

First responder (trailer guard on paddleboard/kayak) will blow whistle, signal, remove victim onto paddleboard / boat and assess vitals.

Head Lifeguard will call for any needed emergency ambulance etc as may be required, decide on a safe exit site, assist with victim as needed and coordinate between ambulance, lifeguard and on-site coach.

Notes- Lifeguards will be looking out for potential collisions, recreational swimmers, and other boaters or dangers

APPENDIX F – Open Water Swimming Safety Considerations for Individuals

OPEN WATER SWIMMING SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS for INDIVIDUALS¹

As public pools have closed due to Covid-19, Swimming Natation Canada (SNC) has had multiple inquiries regarding open water swimming. Please be advised that SNC does not regulate, supervise, sanction or recommend training activities by individuals in an open water setting. Any registrant who chooses to swim in an open water setting does so of their own volition and at their own risk. SNC does not assume any liability for injuries or death related to any non-sanctioned open water activity.

Further, all persons are required, at all times, to observe all applicable municipal, provincial and federal regulations that may regulate this type of activity.

Before entering a body of water and heading off for a swim there are many safety considerations to examine to assure your safe return to shore afterwards.

Remember that when swimming anywhere but in a pool there is no wall every 25m or 50m to stop and hang on to, no lane line next to you to reach out for, and no bottom to stand on. There may be waves, currents, weeds, and the water, colder than you are used to.

For those individuals who choose to engage in open water activities, we ask that swimmers please take into account the following considerations as you develop your individual risk assessment:

- **Have you ever swum open water before?** Safety should be of the upmost importance and your experience is an important consideration. If you have never completed an open water swim before, it is recommended to start slowly and ensure you have reviewed and have the answers to all the questions below. A short swim to get the feel of being in a new environment that is completely different from pool swimming would be an important first step. Because there are no pace clocks, walls, or points of reference to know how quickly or slowly you are going, pacing can be a challenge.
- **Do you have any pre-existing health conditions?** Do you have any pre-existing health conditions such as: heart condition; shortness of breath, dizziness, drug or alcohol usage, epilepsy, pregnancy, diabetes etc, and if so, you may want to have your personal medical physician provide guidance on any open water swimming training. Heart attacks are the most common cause of drowning with masters swimming in open water.
- **What is the water quality?** Is there the presence of blue-green algae, has there been run-off from the farmers' fields from recent rains, has there been an environmental spill in the area which may affect water quality? The clarity of the water, as well as physical water contamination should be reviewed. Water quality can be found online for most bodies of water through a variety of online tools and apps.
- Where will you be getting in the water, how will you get in and get out safely? Never dive into unknown waters. A slow entry to the water will allow for gradual acclimation.
- **What is the water temperature?** Below 20C, the use of a wetsuit is strongly recommended. Depending on the individual, a wetsuit may be desired below 25C. The water temperature at the shoreline may be considerably warmer than out in the deeper, faster moving areas of the body of water. Water temperature may also be found for many bodies of water through a variety of online tools and apps.
- **What are the water and weather conditions?** Are there currents, undertow, or debris in which you may become entangled or be injured? It is very difficult to spot rips/undertows unless you know what to look for so this should be a strong consideration dependent on the body of water. Are the swells and waves manageable? Have you reviewed the Beaufort wind scale for current conditions? Are the conditions likely to

¹ "Individuals" means those swimmer(s) choosing to swim/train open water outside of a club training session.

Swimmers participating in a club open water training should follow the OW Safety Guidelines – coaching (coming soon).

change during your swim? Has there been a forecast of storms, lightening, thunder or otherwise, winds, low pressure systems moving through the area, fog? You must be aware of the long- and short-term forecasts. These meteorological events must be considered when evaluating the safety of open water swimming. Other considerations should include the depth of the body of water, blind spots, glare and inlets. You must have a plan in place to deal with any weather/environmental issues that may arise during your swim.

- **What is the traffic on the body of water you are considering?** Are there motorboats, jet-skis, surfboarders, sailboats or other watercraft? Jet-skis are a major hazard and can be deadly to the open water swimmer. You must also be aware of buoy colours for watercraft and any prohibited slips/channels that may be part of the body of water. It will be important to be highly visible, the wearing of a fluorescent bathing cap and using swim buoy are strongly recommended.
- **Who will you be swimming with, will there be other swimmers, will there be a someone with you in a boat, kayak or canoe or watching from the shoreline?** Swimming should **NEVER** be a solo activity. No matter how well you swim, swimming alone is dangerous. Even the strongest swimmers can encounter dangers in the water. The use of a safety buoy is also strongly recommended in all circumstances. When swimming with others, communication is key to keeping everyone safe. Maintain close enough contact to be able to request assistance or provide aid. A “raised arm” protocol should be put into place to alert those watching your swim that you require assistance. The presence of assistance in a watercraft is ultimately the best scenario for open water swimming. If it is motorized, be sure that the propeller is equipped with a prop guard for your safety.
- **Should you require assistance during your swim how will you get it, where will you go?** You should be aware of the surrounding environment and where help is located. Be aware of whether there will be any lifeguards present who might be of assistance.
- **What route will you be swimming?** Considerations of the route you are going to swim once entering the water should take all of the above conditions into account. Is there water safety signage posted? Remaining parallel to the shoreline may be the safest option to find shallow water should a cramp arise, the weather changes, or water conditions not be as desirable as expected. Point to point or crossing a body of water swims may be exhilarating, however safety considerations are more elevated as the distance from shore and help, should it be required, can be greater. Be aware that the short swim across the local lake may be farther than you expect, or what you may normally swim in a daily pool workout without breaks for water and coaching.

Additional Resources:

Lifesaving Society – Safety Standards – Signage Standards

<https://www.lifesaving.ca/cmsUploads/lifesaving/File/Signage-Standard-April-2017.pdf>

Lifesaving Society – Safety Standards – Extreme Weather

<https://www.lifesaving.ca/cmsUploads/lifesaving/File/Extreme-Weather-Lightning-Standard-May2016.pdf>

Red Cross – Open Water Safety Tips <https://www.redcross.ca/training-and-certification/swimmingand-water-safety-tips-and-resources/swimming-boating-and-water-safety-tips/open-water>

Swimming Canada OW Safety Guidelines for member clubs – coaching

https://www.swimming.ca/content/uploads/2020/06/OW-Safety-Guidelines-coaching-2020-05_final_CM.pdf