



# New Coach Requirements

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Do I have to take the Foundations of Coaching test? Do the new coach requirements apply to me?**

The new coach requirements apply to any coach who registered with USA Swimming for the FIRST time after September 1, 1998. A change as of February 4, 2013, requires a new coach to pass the Foundations of Coaching 101 course/test prior to registering as a USA Swimming coach member. A coach must pass the Foundations of Coaching 201 course/test and the Rules and Regulations test prior to registering for the second year of membership.

### **Can I take the courses and tests online?**

The **only** way to take the courses and tests is online. Go to the USA Swimming website ([www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org)). To get started, go to the "Member Resources" tab on the top of any page. From there click Coaches and then on the "Online Testing/Foundations of Coaching" on the menu bar on the left.

### **Can I just take a test without taking the online courses?**

No.

### **Can I take the test on paper and mail it in for grading?**

No.

### **Is there a cost for the courses and test?**

Yes. The cost is \$15 for 101 and \$25 for 201. The Rules and Regulations test is free. The USA Swimming site links to a secure eCommerce site where you sign in and pay.

### **How long are the tests?**

The Foundations 101 test is 25

questions; Foundations 201 is 40 questions. These tests are accessible after you complete the courses. You can go back and look at the material while you answer the questions. The Rules and Regulations test is 30 questions and is based on the USA Swimming Rule Book. 80% is a passing grade on all tests. You will have to repeat any test where you do not score 80%.

### **How do I know if I passed or failed?**

You will receive your score as soon as you finish and submit.

### **What happens if I don't take or fail a test?**

If you fail a test, you will need to retake it. Please note that your next test will be a different computer generated test. You may take the tests as many times as necessary in order to pass each one. You must pass the tests before you can register as a USA Swimming Coach member. You will be allowed to register as a non-athlete member until you pass, but that still means you will not be able to be on deck coaching until you become a coach member. If you are on deck and are not a coach member, you are not covered by insurance and are putting your club at risk.

### **What does LSC stand for?**

Local Swimming Committee.

### **How do I register? Where do I send my USA Swimming Coach registration form?**

You will need to register through your LSC Registration Chair. On the USA Swimming website, go to the "Governance & LSCs" tab and then click on LSC Management/

Committees & Chairs. Your initial point of contact will be the Registration Chair.

### **Should I register before or after I take various tests and background screening?**

USA Swimming suggests that you register as a "**non-athlete member**" initially. Then, as you complete each requirement, it will automatically link in your membership record in the database. When you complete all of the coach requirements, your membership will change to "Coach Member."

### **How can I find the contact information for the Local Swimming Committees (LSCs)?**

You can find the information on the USA Swimming website. On the USA Swimming website, go to the "Governance & LSCs" tab and then click on LSC Websites and Portals where you can choose the appropriate LSC contact person or website.

### **How do I find out which LSC I am in?**

Look at the LSC Map. It's on the USA Swimming website, "Governance & LSCs" tab. Click on "LSC Websites and Portals." If you cannot find your location or are unsure about it, contact the [Member Services Department](#) by calling 719-866-4578. The department will be able to let you know which LSC you are in and who the contact people are for that LSC.

### **I took an online test and passed. What happens now?**

An email will be sent automatically to your LSC Registration Chair. Your records will be updated in the database. Print out the results of your

tests and course completions and keep them for your records.

### **I coached many years ago. Am I still a new coach?**

You may not have to take the Foundations of Coaching courses and tests. If you were a USA Swimming coach member prior to 1998 you will need to give your LSC Membership Chair a copy of your old USA Swimming Coach card (from 1998 or before) and ask to be grandfathered. If you do not have an old coach card, you may contact USA Swimming (call 719-866-4578.) You will need to provide the **exact** year you were a USA Swimming coach member, the LSC you were in at the time, the name you were registered under at the time and your current LSC. We will attempt to locate you in our archives. If we locate you in the archives as a coach prior to 1999, we will contact your current LSC Membership Chair and let him/her know to "grandfather" you in. If we cannot locate you in the archives you will be required to take the new coach test. Also remember, things change and a refresher course might not be a bad idea even if you were a coach many years ago.

### **Who receives the money from the purchase of the *Foundations of Coaching* courses?**

Like most of the programs run by USA Swimming, the new coach education program is designed to break-even or run at a slight loss. When you purchase the courses from USA Swimming, the charges cover the basic costs and investment into up to date coaching resources. Absolutely no royalties are paid to any of persons in the courses. All gave of their time and expertise voluntarily.

### **Which version of the *USA Swimming Rules & Regulations* do I need for the test?**

The Rules and Regulations are updated each May. After the update, the newest rule book is the reference for the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations test.

### **How do I get the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations book?**

As a coach member, USA Swimming will send you a copy of the *Rules and Regulations* free of charge.

Generally, you will receive your copy within three months of registration. The easiest way is to view the *USA Swimming Rules and Regulations* online. Go to the "About" tab on the USA Swimming website and then click on Rules and Regulations. You can also order a rulebook at the "USA Swimming Store" on the website.

### **Will I have to take a test each year now?**

No, there are no additional educational requirements after the Foundations 101-201-Rules and Regulations requirements.

### **Do I have to be a member of ASCA (the American Swimming Coaches Association) too?**

No. ASCA membership is entirely optional. By passing the *Foundations of Coaching* tests you are eligible to become ASCA Level 1 certified (by request only – ASCA does not do this automatically). If you would like more information about becoming a member of ASCA, please call 1-800-356-2722.

### **What if I'd like for the tests to count toward ASCA Level 1 Certification?**

As you begin the tests there is a check box that asks, "Are you also seeking American Swimming Coaches Association certification?" Be sure to check "Yes".

### **Are the USA Swimming *Foundations of Coaching* tests the same as ASCA Level 1?**

Yes. However, ASCA does not require the completion of the Rules and Regulations test that is required for USA Swimming coach membership.

### **I'm not a new coach but I'd like to take the test anyway – am I allowed to do that?**

Yes, any USA Swimming coach member may take the test.

### **I have heard that USA Swimming now requires a background screen**

### **and an Athlete Protection training course. How do I complete those requirements?**

Before someone becomes a coach he or she must successfully pass a background screen and complete Athlete Protection Training. For additional information and to complete your requirements go to the USA Swimming website and click on the Member Resources/Coaches/Becoming a Coach tab.

### **Does USA Swimming require lifeguards during practice?**

USA Swimming does not require lifeguards to be on duty for swim practices or meets. USA Swimming rules require all coach members to be certified in three different areas in order to be coaching on deck: Safety Training for Swim Coaches, CPR and First Aid. If the facility has a requirement for lifeguards to be on duty in order for its insurance to be in effect, then this is a facility regulation. Many states also have laws that require lifeguards to be on deck in certain situations.

### **I need to renew my Safety Training for Swim Coaches (STSC) certification. My local ARC chapter has informed me that a course called Sport Safety Training has replaced STSC. If I take Sport Safety Training instead of STSC, have I met the requirements?**

No! Sport Safety Training does fulfill the First Aid and CPR requirements, but it has not replaced Safety Training for Swim Coaches.

### **I need to renew my Safety Training for Swim Coaches certification. How do I find a class?**

Safety Training for Swim Coaches (STSC) is only offered by the American Red Cross. Contact your local Red Cross chapter. If your area is not offering the course right now, there are several options available: Go to the USA Swimming website Coaches/Online Testing to take the online 25 question STSC test. Upon receipt of an email confirmation that you passed the test, take that email to your local ARC chapter and do one of the following:

- Challenge the water skills portion with a Water Safety Instructor

(WSI), Lifeguard Instructor (LGI) or a Safety Training for Swim Coaches Instructor (STSC I);

- Arranges to take the 4-hour water skills portion with a WSI, LGI, or Safety Training for Swim Coaches Instructor;
- Shows an ARC lifeguard certification to the ARC chapter (which means the coach doesn't have to do the Challenge or the 4-hour water skills portion).

Contact your Local Swimming Committee (LSC) Membership Chair and/or Safety Chair to see if the LSC will offer the course or provide a Red Cross instructor to certify coaches who are challenging the course.

### **Is there a substitute for the Safety Training for Swim Coaches course?**

No. You must pass the STSC written test. Recognized lifeguarding certifications can be used for the water skills portion. Check the USA Swimming website for a list. Click on the Coaches' tab and then on Becoming a Coach/Safety Requirements.

### **My CPR certification has expired and I just have not had time to get it renewed yet. Do I still have USA Swimming insurance while I am on deck coaching?**

No. From an insurance standpoint, you are no longer insured as a coach as of the date that any of your certifications expire. You are immediately considered a non-athlete member who is no longer a coach.

### **Why is it a problem if my certification expires for a short period of time?**

One of the greatest exposures a coach has from a liability standpoint is "improper instruction." For example, a swimmer dives too deep and is severely injured. The coach and club are sued. If the coach does not have current certifications, he/she no longer has coverage for this type of claim. Further, the club's insurance could be in jeopardy if it knew the coach's certification(s) had lapsed.

### **Does only the coach of record need to be 18 years of age or older?**

As of Jan 1, 2011, all coaches must be 18 years of age.

### **How do I know if I am a USA Swimming Coach member?**

After your local registration person has processed your application you will receive a registration card (usually in the mail) that has the year that you are a coach member in the background with your name and address in the foreground. At the

bottom of the card are the words "Is a Valid coach member through (the date)." The date is the first date that: (1) one of the safety certifications expires, (2) the background check expires or (3) December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year (whichever one of the three comes first). If it does not say "coach member" at the bottom of the card and says "non-athlete member" then you need to contact your registration person immediately because you are not registered as a coach member!

### **What is the USA Swimming recommended coach-to-swimmer ratio?**

USA Swimming does not have a coach-to-athlete ratio. It is up to the club's coaching staff to determine the safest ratio. This should be based on several criteria:

- Skill level and age of the athletes in the water.
- Skill level of the coach (years of experience, professional background, etc.).
- Type of facility (size of pool, number of lanes).

### **I still have questions. Who can I call?**

Call the [Club Development Division](#) at USA Swimming: 719-866-4578