

Swimming/Natation Canada Open Water Training Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a framework for regulated practice swims and to provide a mechanism whereby the development of Open Water swimming can be pursued in safety. It is incumbent on the coach to ensure these guidelines are followed.

Section I

General

- 1) During a normal training session in an open water swimming area, participants must interrupt their training session when they or their coach considers their health to pose a hindrance or a risk to the normal pursuit of their sport or if it could have disastrous consequences on their physical well-being.
- 2) A participant must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or other doping substance.
- 3) A participant must be able to swim 1 km in a swimming pool comfortably within a 40 minute time limit before participating in an open water training session.
- 4) At the beginning of all training programs, the coach must review the safety rules pertaining to the sport of swimming and all risks inherent to the practice of open water swimming as per the following:
 - i. Participants must be made aware that they swim at their own risk
 - ii. Swims will be cancelled if Lifeguards deem the water or weather conditions unsafe.
 - iii. All swimmers must swim within the designated practice area.
 - iv. Swimmers must take measures to maximize their safety;
 - a. Brightly coloured neoprene or silicone caps must be worn
 - b. All swimmers should have warm head gear and clothing available for use after practise
 - c. Swimmers should be instructed to swim in training groups.
 - v. All swimmers must be made aware of the risks of hypothermia and exhaustion associated with open water swimming.
 - vi. All swimmers are asked to make the coach aware as to any medical conditions they have along with any medications used.
 - vii. All swimmers must sign in, and sign out of the practice session

Section II

A training session in an open water swimming area

- 1) The coach must take into account the temperature of the water when planning the duration of the training session. When water is below 16 C, a training session should be no longer than one hour.
- 2) When wind velocity surpasses 25km/hr, the coach must choose a course that is protected from the wind or must cancel the training session. The visibility must be no less than one km from shore.
- 3) All training sessions that are organized by a club must be supervised by a coach/lifeguard and must be held within a safety perimeter in which the coach or lifeguard can constantly see the swimmers and intervene rapidly.
- 4) A safety craft must be anchored along the circuit and must contain all material considered essential under the rules and regulations for small crafts.
- 5) When the circuit follows a shoreline that is not accessible from the shore, a craft with at least one person on board and with all necessary lifesaving equipment must follow the swimmers. The driver of the craft must hold at least a craft operator's license and be at least 17 years of age; furthermore, the craft must contain all lifesaving material considered essential under the rules and regulations for small crafts.
- 6) Participants must clear the training area as soon as the coach or the certified lifeguard on duty gives an evacuation order. The training session cannot proceed until one of these two persons allows it; otherwise, the training session will be postponed. In the case of a beach where a lifeguard is on duty, this person holds the utmost authority above all others. When the coach also holds a lifeguard certification and the beach is not supervised by a lifeguard on duty, the coach has the final authority to decide to pursue the training session or not.