



OFFICIALS CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

FOR UTILIZATION BY LOCAL SWIMMING COMMITTEE (LSC) OFFICIALS

The following standards have been established to provide a clear and uniform path for members who wish to become officials at the local level and enable LSCs to develop and conduct programs to recruit, certify, educate, train, and mentor USA Swimming officials and to provide competent and consistent officiation for our athletes. Furthermore, LSCs are required to implement these standards beginning February 1, 2024. Additionally, all LSCs are required to recognize the certified status of visiting and transferring officials from other LSCs.

These standards are being implemented expressly to facilitate the ability of officials to officiate in LSCs other than the one in which they received their certification. Additionally, these standards are intended to:

- Ensure a clear and consistent knowledge of the rules.
- Provide sufficient time in training to assure familiarity with all levels of competition.
- Provide opportunity to work on the deck and advance through the certification process.
- Allow automatic acceptance of officials' certifications between all LSCs.
- Ensure professionalism and teamwork while attending a swim event both on and off the deck.

Any LSC official who holds an LSC certification as of 2/1/2024 will be grandfathered into that certification without additional training.

For the positions of Stroke & Turn Judge and Starter, members who have five (5) plus years of USA Swimming experience as an athlete or coach member need only complete half of the on-deck apprentice requirements provided they show competency in the position, at the discretion of the LSC Officials Chair (LSC OC) or designee. An athlete or coach may not officiate at a session in which they are competing or coaching.

In the event it is believed that an apprentice has not shown the necessary competency in the position after the required training and apprentice sessions, the LSC OC or designee shall provide the apprentice with a written action plan of the steps needed to successfully obtain certification. Written notice shall be provided to the apprentice with two (2) weeks of the last apprentice session (or submission of the appropriate documents to the certifier) and a copy shall be provided to the LSC OC. An apprentice may always request additional training.

Defined Terms

The following terms are specifically defined herein for the exclusive use of the document. Nothing in the Defined Terms section is intended to define any of these terms for any purpose outside of the certification and training of USA Swimming Officials.

Certifier: An official designated by the LSC OC to certify training is complete and who shall record it in Officials Tracking System (OTS).

Clinic: USA Swimming online training clinic with certification test, recorded in OTS. For positions for which USA Swimming online training is not available, current LSC training curricula will be accepted.

Certification: The act of certifying. An official must meet certain requirements to be certified in a particular position.

Qualified Recertification Session: Qualified recertification sessions are sessions officiated by certified officials which count towards the recertification requirements listed in this document. In order for a session to count as a qualified recertification session, it must meet the following criteria: 1) the session must include strokes and/or relays; 2) the session must not be a Time Trial; 3) the session must not contain only freestyle events, even if including both individual freestyle events and freestyle relays; 4) the session must occur at a meet that is either a sanctioned USA Swimming meet, a YMCA meet for which an LSC has issued an approval (as defined in USA Swimming Rule 202.6), or, for no more than 25% of an official's total required qualified recertification sessions, an NCAA National or Conference Championship meet.

Satisfactory Performance: Demonstrates the requisite knowledge of the applicable rules and satisfactorily performs the on-deck protocols and duties for the position. Deficiencies must be provided by LSC OC or designee in writing to the affected official with an action plan to success.

Sessions: Any portion of a meet distinctly separated from other portions by locale, time, or type of competition, i. e., preliminaries and finals, morning and evening, Senior and Age Group, etc. All sessions at sanctioned USA Swimming meets and YMCA meets for which an LSC has issued an approval (as defined in USA Swimming Rule 202.6) shall be recorded in

OTS by the granting LSC OC or their designee. Sessions from other types of meets may be entered into OTS at the discretion of the LSC OC, strictly for tracking purposes.

Trainer: An official designated by the Referee at a meet or LSC OC who has been certified in the position for at least one (1) year. If an official meeting the one (1) year requirement is not on deck, the Referee may select the most experienced certified official(s) to be a trainer(s).

Training Sessions: Training Sessions are sessions which count towards the Education and Training requirements listed in this document. In order for a session to count as a training session, it must meet the following criteria: 1) the session must include strokes and/or relays; 2) the session must not be a Time Trial; 3) the session must not be comprised of only freestyle events, even if including both individual freestyle events and freestyle relays; 4) the session must occur at a meet which is either a Sanctioned USA Swimming Meet or a YMCA meet for which an LSC has issued an approval (as defined in USA Swimming Rule 202.6). An LSC may designate that their LSC Championship meets are expressly excluded as training sessions.

USA Swimming Membership: Completed all USA Swimming member associated requirements before being certified in any position.

Online Testing:

- A certification test with a score of 80% or greater is required.
- A recertification test with a score of 80% or greater is required every three years:

Recertification:

- The Stroke and Turn recertification procedures recertify Stroke & Turn Judge and Chief Judge (if held) LSC certifications.
- The Chief Judge recertification procedures recertify Chief Judge and Stroke & Turn Judge LSC certifications.
- The Starter recertification procedures recertify Starter and Stroke & Turn Judge LSC certifications.
- The Administrative Official recertification procedures recertify Administrative Official LSC certification.
- The Referee recertification procedures recertify Referee, Administrative Official, Starter, Stroke and Turn Judge, and Chief Judge (if held) LSC certifications.

Certification Expirations and Recertification Timelines:

- To remain continuously certified, officials must meet the recertification requirements prior to their certification expiration date.
- The certification expiration date for officials shall be:
 - o The December 31st two years after the year of certification if the certification occurred between January 1st and June 30th of the year of certification.
 - o December 31st three years after the year of certification if the certification occurred between July 1st and December 31st of the year of certification.

TIMER (Minimum Age 11)	
Education & Training	None except pre-meet briefing. Performance monitored by Chief Timer and/or Referee during meet.
Evaluation & Certification	No evaluation or certification required.
Renewal	Based on satisfactory performance.
STROKE & TURN JUNIOR OFFICIAL (Age 16-17) effective 4/17/2026	
Education & Training	Member of USA Swimming. Attend Stroke & Turn clinic training. Pass USA Swimming Stroke & Turn Judge certification test. Apprentice a minimum of four (4) training sessions total over two (2) different meets with a trainer (<i>cannot make a disqualification during those apprentice sessions.</i>) Satisfactory performance.
Evaluation & Certification	Apprenticeship signed off by a certifier. Must complete certification within one (1) year from month of clinic. May officiate at any LSC meet session in which they are not competing.
Recertification	When a Junior Official turns eighteen (18), their Junior Official Stroke & Turn certification will convert to certified Stroke & Turn Judge once the adult membership requirements have been met. Time as a Junior Official Stroke & Turn will convert to the Stroke & Turn Judge renewal cycle.

STROKE & TURN (Minimum Age 18)	
Education & Training:	Member of USA Swimming. Attend Stroke & Turn Judge clinic training. Pass USA Swimming Stroke & Turn Judge certification test. Apprentice a minimum of four (4) training sessions total over two (2) different meets with a trainer (<i>cannot make a disqualification during those apprentice sessions.</i>) Satisfactory performance.
Evaluation & Certification	Apprenticeship signed off by a certifier. Must complete certification within one year from month of clinic. May officiate at any LSC meet.
Recertification every 3 years	Worked a minimum of eight (8) qualified recertification sessions, within a three (3) year period, at a minimum of two (2) different meets in Stroke & Turn Judge or higher capacity. Attend Clinic every three (3) years. Pass USA Swimming recertification test every three (3) years for the highest certification held. Satisfactory performance.
Comment	Once a person is certified as a stroke and turn official, they are encouraged to participate in as many meets as they can to gain experience and knowledge. This will allow those running meets to have greater confidence in their ability to officiate at meets of various levels.

STARTER (Minimum Age 18)	
Education & Training:	Member of USA Swimming. Certified Stroke & Turn Judge for minimum of three (3) months; worked at least four (4) Sessions at a minimum of two (2) meets since Stroke & Turn Judge certification. Attend Starter Clinic training. Pass USA Swimming Starter certification test. Apprentice as Starter for at least four (4) Training Sessions total, over two (2) meets with two (2) trainers. Trainer can be the Deck Referee. Satisfactory performance.
Evaluation & Certification	Apprenticeship signed off by a certifier. Must complete certification within one (1) year from month of clinic. May officiate in any LSC meet.
Recertification every 3 years	Worked eight (8) qualified recertification sessions within a three (3) year period as Starter. Attend Clinic (recommend Starter) every three (3) years. Pass USA Swimming recertification test every three (3) years for the highest certification held. Satisfactory performance.
Comment	Once a person is certified as a starter, they are encouraged to participate in as many meets as they can to gain experience and knowledge. This will allow those running meets to have greater confidence in their ability to officiate at meets of various levels.

ADMINISTRATIVE JUNIOR OFFICIAL (Age 16-17) Effective 4/17/2026	
Education & Training:	Member of USA Swimming. Attend Administrative Official clinic training. Pass USA Administrative Official certification test. Apprentice as an Administrative Official for at least four (4) sessions over two (2) meets with a trainer(s). Satisfactory performance.
Evaluation & Certification	Apprenticeship signed off by a certifier. Must complete certification within one (1) year from month of clinic. May officiate as an assistant Administrative Official, under the direct supervision of an adult certified Administrative Official, at any LSC meet session in which they are not competing.
Recertification every 3 years	When a Junior Official turns eighteen (18), their Junior Administrative Official certification will convert to certified Administrative Official once the adult membership requirements

	have been met. Time as a Junior Administrative Official will convert to the Administrative Official renewal cycle.
Comment	Junior Administrative Officials may not be the sole (or lead) Administrative Official of record. They must have an adult certified Administrative Official supervising.
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL (Minimum Age 18)	
Education & Training:	Member of USA Swimming. Attend Administrative Official clinic training. Pass USA Administrative Official certification test. Apprentice as an Administrative Official for at least four (4) sessions over two (2) meets with a trainer(s). Satisfactory performance.
Evaluation & Certification	Apprenticeship signed off by a certifier. Must complete certification within one (1) year from month of clinic. May officiate in any Administrative Official role at any meet.
Recertification every 3 years	Worked at least eight (8) qualified recertification sessions within a three (3) year period, as an Administrative Official or in a role identified under 102.14.1A-D. Attend Clinic (recommend Administrative Official Clinic) training every three (3) years. Pass USA Swimming Administrative Official recertification test. Satisfactory performance.
Comment	Once a person is certified as an Administrative Official, they are encouraged to participate in as many meets as they can to gain experience and knowledge. This will allow those running meets to have greater confidence in their ability to officiate at meets of various levels.
REFEREE (Minimum Age 19)	
Education & Training	Member of USA Swimming. Certified Stroke & Turn Judge. Certified Administrative Official. Certified Starter. Attend Referee clinic training. Pass USA Swimming Referee certification test. Apprentice as a Referee for at least four (4) sessions total over two (2) meets with two (2) trainers. Satisfactory performance.
Evaluation & Certification	Apprenticeship signed off by a certifier. Must complete certification within one year from month of clinic. May officiate in any Referee role at any meet, except that in meets classified as USA Swimming Championships (as defined by 102.10.5), this certification may not meet the requirements of serving as the required Administrative Referee.
Recertification every 3 years	Worked sixteen (16) qualified recertification sessions, within a three (3) year period, with at least eight (8) qualified recertification sessions in any Referee position. Pass USA Swimming Referee recertification test every three (3) years. Attend Clinic (recommend Referee) every three (3) years. Satisfactory performance.
Comment	Once a person is certified as a Referee, they are encouraged to participate in as many meets as they can to gain experience and knowledge. This will allow those running meets to have greater confidence in their ability to be a referee at meets of various levels.

Optional LSC Certification	
CHIEF JUDGE (Minimum Age 18)	
Education & Training	Must be certified Stroke & Turn Judge Sixteen (16) or more sessions as certified Stroke & Turn Judge. Attend a Chief Judge clinic or briefing of Chief Judge duties. Have read the Chief Judge Professional documents. Apprentice as Chief Judge four (4) training sessions at a minimum of two (2) meets with a trainer(s)
Evaluation & Certification	Apprenticeship signed off by a certifier. May officiate in any LSC meet.
Recertification every 3 years	Work sixteen (16) qualified recertification sessions within a three (3) year period, with at least eight (8) as a Chief Judge or Referee. Pass USA Swimming recertification test every three (3) years for the highest certification held. Satisfactory performance.

Any additional exception and/or addition to these standards must be approved by the USA Swimming Board of Directors and National Officials Committee, who may stipulate appropriate conditions for each exception.