

May 16, 2011

To: LSC General Chairs
LSC Sanction Chairs
LSC Officials Chairs
LSC Permanent Offices
USA Swimming Member Coaches
Board of Directors

Pursuant to the emergency safety power provisions of Rule 504.8, the USA Swimming Board of Directors, at its meeting held on May 7, 2011, passed the attached Open Water legislation. This legislation has received the approval of a majority of the voting members of the Rules & Regulations Committee, the Safety Education Committee, and our legal counsel. These new rules were precipitated by the recommendations of the Open Water Review Commission chaired by Mr. Richard Pound ("The Pound Commission"), which investigated the circumstances surrounding the death of Fran Crippen, while he was participating in a FINA Open Water World Cup Event.

The additions to our Rules & Regulations, which are attached, include the following:

1. A requirement that for any open water event, the Meet Host shall develop a Safety Plan;
2. Provides that the meet referee or meet director has the ability to independently withdraw the sanction or approval for an open water event if adequate safety precautions are not in effect on the day of the race; and have the authority to independently stop the race at any time if safety becomes a concern;
3. Provides that every open water event shall have an Independent Safety Monitor who has the authority to withdraw the sanction or approval, or to stop the race at any time if adequate safety precautions are not in place;
4. Establishes a maximum and minimum water temperature for open water competitions; and
5. Establishes water quality requirements.

In addition to the changes to our Rules & Regulations, the Board adopted, as part of the USA Swimming Policy Manual, a standardized open water sanction application and established the requirements for a safety plan. This Sanction Application must be completed in order to obtain a sanction or an approval for any open water competition, and must be accompanied by a written safety plan. The standardized sanction application and safety plan requirements are attached.

For those open water competitions that have already obtained a sanction or approval, it is very strongly recommended that a written safety plan be adopted prior to the competition.

The new USA Swimming Rules & Regulations, standardized sanction application, and safety plan requirements are effective immediately. If you have questions concerning the enclosed please contact me.

Daniel W. McAllen

Dan McAllen, Chair
USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee

ITEM 1 Safety Plan

701.2 RULES

- .1 All open water competitions shall be freestyle events.
- .2 The Host Committee shall include in the meet information the policy for abandonment and whether the race will be an "escorted" or "unescorted" swim.
- .3 The Host Committee shall develop a safety plan for the competition in compliance with all requirements included in the published application for sanction of an open water event.

Re-number remaining

No further change

ITEM 2 Meet Director

701.7 THE MEET DIRECTOR

- .1 Shall determine the course for an open water event.
- .2 Shall have the authority to withdraw the sanction on race day if adequate safety precautions are not in place and shall notify all race participants prior to the beginning of the race of the revocation should the race organizer proceed with the competition;
- .3 Shall have the authority to stop a race at any time should conditions change and safety become a concern.

ITEM 3 Safety Monitor

701.8 THE INDEPENDENT SAFETY MONITOR

- .1 Shall be approved by an open water sanction officer and shall be independent of the race organizing committee;
- .2 Shall be present at the race to assure the approved safety plan is implemented;
- .3 Shall assure that adequate safety precautions are in place to deal with race-day conditions;
- .4 Shall have the authority to withdraw the sanction on race day if adequate safety precautions are not in place and shall notify all race participants of the revocation prior to the beginning of the race should the race organizer proceed with the competition;
- .5 Shall have the authority to stop a race at any time should conditions change and safety become a concern.

Re-number remaining sections

ITEM 4 Referee

701.9 THE REFEREE

- .1 Shall ensure that all participants, coaches, and event support personnel are briefed about the course, safety procedures and any site-specific rules applying to the event;

.2 Shall have the authority to withdraw the sanction on race day if adequate safety precautions are not in place and shall notify all race participants of the revocation prior to the beginning of the race should the race organizer proceed with the competition;

.3 Shall have the authority to stop the race or to change the distance and/or race course due to safety concerns or unforeseen circumstances;

Re-number remaining items

ITEM 5 Water & Air Temperature

ARTICLE 702

VENUE STANDARDS

702.2 WATER/AIR TEMPERATURE - The race shall not commence if the following conditions are not satisfied:

.1 The water temperature should ~~shall not be less than~~ be a minimum of 16°C (60.8° F).

.2 For races of 5K and above, the water temperature shall not exceed 31° C (87.8° F).

.3 The air temperature and water temperature when added together shall not be less than 30° C (118° F) nor greater than 63° C (177.4° F).

ITEM 6 Water Quality

702.3 WATER QUALITY

.1 Local municipality water rules shall apply.

.2 If water quality meets the standards of the local testing authority, the water quality will be deemed acceptable unless otherwise determined by the Safety Officer or Independent Safety Monitor.

.3 If an exceptional event such as heavy rain or flooding affects the water quality, the Referee, the Meet Director, or the Independent Safety Monitor shall have the authority to postpone or cancel the race.

Re-number remaining sections

USA SWIMMING

Open Water Sanction Application Checklist



The following documents must be submitted with the application for sanctioning an open water swimming event and submitted 90 days prior to the events starting date. Completing the sanction application does not automatically grant you a sanction. This application will be reviewed and granted or denied within 10 days upon receipt of the application. Failure to include all aspects requested in the application will automatically cause the application to be denied.

- I. Open Water Sanction Application
- II. General Event Information
- III. Race Plan
- IV. Safety Plan
- V. Water Quality Certification
- VI. Emergency Plan
- VII. Contingency Plan

USA SWIMMING

Open Water Sanction Application

Page 1 of 2



BASIC INFORMATION				
Name of Host Club:				
Name of Event:				
Event Location:			Event Date	
City	State	LSC	Zone	
Length of Race(s):				
Age Groups Participating: (circle all that apply) 10&U 11&12 13&14 15-18 Open				

KEY PERSONNEL		
Meet Director(s):		
Cell Phone: () -	Home Phone: () -	E-mail:
Meet Referee:	E-mail:	
Safety Referee:	E-mail:	
<i>If using multiple waves or separate gender races</i>		
Additional Referees:		
Assistant Referees:		

ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL	
Name of medical personnel on site :	Qualifications:
Open water experience of medical personnel:	
Additional medical personnel: (qualifications)	
Will medical personnel be located on the course? Yes No	
Safety experience level of first responders on the course: (eg. ARC Lifeguards, USLA, YMCA, ect.)	
Name of closest medical facility:	
Type of medical facility: (eg. urgent care, hospital)	
Distance to closest medical facility:	Approximate transport time:



USA SWIMMING

Open Water Sanction Application

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RACE DAY CONDITIONS	
Expected air temperature:	Expected water temperature:
Type of body of water: (circle one) Lake Ocean River Pond Other:	
Water type: (circle one) Salt water Fresh Water	Course: (circle one) Closed course Open course
<i>If open course, please indicate the entity used to control the traffic while swimmers are on the course.</i>	
Expected conditions for the athletes: (eg. marine life, tides, currents, underwater hazards)	

USA SWIMMING

Open Water Sanction Application Checklist Guidebook

Page 1 of 2



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Open Water Sanction Application Checklist Guidebook
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General Event Information

Should include the following (but not limited to):

- Name of Event
- Facility name and address
- Meet Director's Name, Phone & E-mail (if available)
- Length of Races
- Entry Procedures
- Entry Chair's Name, Address, Phone, E-mail
- Warm-Up Times (if applicable)
- Awards / Scoring (if applicable)
- Additional Facility information (restricted areas, costs associated with event location, etc)

Please ensure that all references are to USA Swimming and not USS or United States Swimming.

See Exhibit A for an example.

Race Plan

This plan should include a statement describing the event. This will help in preparing the basis for developing the other plans that support the event. Please include a Google Earth Map (or similar) of the course outline, with all points of interest (eg. buoy markers, placement of safety personnel and craft, start/finish, feeding stations, medical personnel location, direction of the course.)

See Exhibit B for an example.

Safety Plan

This plan is the Who/What/Where/When/How of safety. What organization is providing water safety? Are they full time safety personnel? Are they water rescued certified. How many will be in place and where will they be located? What number and kind of safety craft will be on hand? If you will be requesting less than the required minimum number of safety craft, you will need to specifically address why within this plan. An example of this applying would be when the course is small enough to view all the swimmers with less boats. The extra boats would simply be getting in each other's way and not efficient in providing safety. What kind of communication will be used for boat to boat and from boat to shore? Example: Radios will be the primary communication, if the radios break down cell phones will become the primary form of communication. What is the maximum number of athletes allowed on the course? What would safety changes would occur should you allow more than your maximum number? What will be done to deal with the various conditions (marine life, tides, currents, air temp, water temp etc.)?

Keep in mind:

- ✓ Flags must be used for all safety crafts regardless of if they have radios. This will be the emergency signal for all on the course.
- ✓ There must be 1 safety craft for every 20 swimmers. The official's boat cannot double as a safety craft.
- ✓ You must include within the plan how you will handle the following:
 - Identifying a distressed swimmer within 10 seconds.
 - Initiating a response within 20 seconds.
 - Rendering immediate resuscitation.

- Transporting victim to a medical facility.

A sanction will not be granted unless the applicant can verify a response time for rendering immediate first aid within one minute.

- ✓ -Each motorized safety craft must have a radio in order to communicate to the race officials and medical personnel on shore. Radios should include two channels dedicated to 1) race officials and 2) medical staff.
- ✓ There must be a plan to tag the swimmers going into the water and tagging the swimmers when they come out.
- ✓ A Technical Meeting must be held within 24 hours of the start of the race. A USA Swimming member representative must be present during this meeting for each athlete. If the athlete is not represented, the swimmer must not be allowed to enter the race. The Race Director may elect to provide a personal briefing which includes everything covered in the Technical Meeting. Additionally, a briefing will be conducted just prior to the start of the race. All swimmers MUST be present for this meeting or they will not be allowed to compete.
- ✓ If the event is a 5K or less, no feeding station is required. If the race is 5k to a 10K, one feeding station is required. If the event is 10k or more, and the event is unescorted, there must be a feeding station every 2k.
- ✓ It is highly recommended the big can buoys be used for major areas along the course. This will help with sighting and lessen the chance of a swimmer wondering off course.
- ✓ All participants must be observed at all times during the race. The Safety Plan should account for the number of athletes entered, the course layout, and the anticipated spreading of the athletes throughout the course.
- ✓ Safety Responders should be qualified individuals that would be able to render the initial and appropriate First Aid to an ailing athlete.
- ✓ For races 10K or less, it is not permitted to have personal escort crafts on the course. This can confuse the safety personnel and can jeopardize, rather than help the athletes.
- ✓ Jet Skis may not be used as safety crafts unless they are equipped with sleds in order to transport an athlete to shore. The use of Jet Skies may be used for other functions, just not safety.

See Exhibit C for an example.

Water Quality Certification

A water quality certificate of the body water where the race will take place ensuring the water is suitable for public use is required for a sanction to be granted. Whatever entity is responsible for testing waterways in the local area will be able to provide this information. Should the body of water used for the event not have a current certification on file and/or not currently tested, a independent test will need to be done for this application and with an additional test taken the week prior to the start of the event.

See Exhibit D for an example.

Emergency Plan

This plan will detail the emergency response procedures for a swimmer in distress. *Every vessel on the course is a potential first responder. The plan should include procedures for responding to the swimmer and the evacuation procedures in order to get the swimmer to shore for extensive medical treatment. The plan should include who will be on shore to immediately treat the athlete and how they will be transported to an emergency facility. The plan should include a procedure for a missing athlete. The plan should include procedures for abandoning the race, weather cancelation, etc. The plan should include signals or sirens which will indicate the immediate evacuation of the race course. The plan should include how the Race Director will ensure that all have been evacuated and accounted for.

See Exhibit E for an example.

Revised 5-16-11 SRL

2. Water conditions change to an extreme situation.
3. Original Safety Plan called for four boats when only three are available-change course from 2k course to a 1k loop. Cannot provide enough boats-cancel the race.
4. Same issue for safety personnel as with boats.
5. Alternate locations for feeding stations.
6. Alternate locations for the start and finish areas.
7. Alternate plan for a buoy blow out.
8. Event plan valid for planned number of competitors +20% (example). What changes would be required if the overage exceeds that amount.

See Exhibit F for an example.

Contingency Plan

Please attach a Contingency Plan. It is understood that no one can predict what will happen weeks from now however; this application is requesting a plan for "what if". What will the process be if things do not go as planned? This plan reduces the "doing it on the fly" attitude prevalent at many OW races. It can also help reduce making decisions that will help the race but hurt the athletes.

*Hypothetical examples that would be uniquely evaluated for a given venue /event:

1. Water temperature below / above the required temperature.
2. Water conditions change to an extreme situation.
3. Original Safety Plan called for four boats when only three are available-change course from 2k course to a 1k loop. Cannot provide enough boats-cancel the race.
4. Same issue for safety personnel as with boats.
5. Alternate locations for feeding stations.
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8. Event plan valid for planned number of competitors +20% (example). What changes would be required if the overage exceeds that amount.

See Exhibit F for an example.

USA SWIMMING

Open Water Sanction Application Checklist Guidebook



Exhibit A

General Event Information

USA Swimming 2015 Open Water National Championships Event Technical & Entry Information

Required Entry Form Categories

- USA Swimming Open Water National Championships Entry Form - 2015
- USA Swimming Open Water National Championships Event Technical & Entry Information
- USA Swimming Open Water National Championships Event Technical & Entry Information
- USA Swimming Open Water National Championships Event Technical & Entry Information
- USA Swimming Open Water National Championships Event Technical & Entry Information

Event Information

Event Name	2015 Open Water National Championships
Event Location	USA Swimming Open Water National Championships
Event Dates	USA Swimming Open Water National Championships
Event Times	USA Swimming Open Water National Championships

USA Swimming Open Water National Championships

Event Information

Event Name: 2015 Open Water National Championships
Event Location: USA Swimming Open Water National Championships
Event Dates: USA Swimming Open Water National Championships
Event Times: USA Swimming Open Water National Championships

Entry Form Categories

USA Swimming Open Water National Championships

USA Swimming Open Water National Championships

Event Information

Event Name: 2015 Open Water National Championships
Event Location: USA Swimming Open Water National Championships
Event Dates: USA Swimming Open Water National Championships
Event Times: USA Swimming Open Water National Championships

Entry Form Categories

USA Swimming Open Water National Championships

USA Swimming Open Water Rules

Rules:

Swimmer:

- All swimmers must be a member of USA Swimming or an eligible age group member.
- Swimmers must wear USA Swimming sanctioned swimwear.

Coach:

- Coaches must be a member of USA Swimming or an eligible age group member.
- Coaches must wear USA Swimming sanctioned swimwear.

USA Swimming Open Water Rules

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Coach:

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- Coaches must wear USA Swimming sanctioned swimwear.

Exhibit B

Race Plan

City of Fort Lauderdale and Fort Lauderdale Aquatics will serve as the hosts for the 2011 USA Swimming Open Water 5K/10K Championship and World Championship Team Trials. The races will be conducted on June 10, 2011 – Male and Female 10k and June 12, 2011 – Male and Female 5k. The races will be conducted in the Atlantic Ocean on Fort Lauderdale Beach. Pre-race staging and post-race recovery will be at the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Complex, less than 200m from the start/finish area. Pre-race training available at the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Complex. Doping control at the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Complex. Water safety will be provided by the City of Fort Lauderdale Ocean Rescue - FLOR. Officiating by a select group of Nationally certified open water officials supplemented by Florida Gold Coast Swimming local officials.



Exhibit C

Safety Plan

Safety Plan:

1. Emergency Services provided by Fort Lauderdale Ocean Rescue (FLOR). FLOR is a United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) certified agency.
2. On-Course - FLOR maintains designated EMT's at TWR's: #'s 5, 7, 9, 11.
3. FLOR employs AED's at each of these towers and on all four supervisory beach vehicles.
4. All FLOR Guard Towers and supervisory beach vehicles are equipped with Basic Life Support (BLS) gear.
5. Guards will be on-duty at 9:30am at all towers.
6. All Life Guard Towers, Supervisory vehicles and on-water safety personnel communicate via the City Police/Fire/Rescue radio network.
7. There are two ACLS Vehicle garages on the island. ACLS vehicles are dispatched as needed directly to the tower requesting emergency services. Estimated response time is 5 minutes to all tower locations.
8. There will be two Personal Watercraft on-course manned by FLOR personnel.
9. There will be two FLOR personnel on rescue boards on course.
10. There will be four FLOR personnel dispatched with the Referee vessels on course.
11. All Swimmers must remain within 50m from shore.
 - a. Race Operations will be manned by:
 - i. Race Director
 - ii. Administrative Referee
 - iii. FLOR Representative – with radio
12. The race is held within the Ft. Lauderdale public swimming area protected by Fort Lauderdale Ocean Rescue and within the boundary of the City Ordinance.
13. A paramedic vehicle manned by two EMT's will be on site during the race.

Communications Plan:

1. Primary - There will be two separate radio networks using two different frequency plans. The radios are not interchangeable. Communication across radio networks will be coordinated through Race Operations.
 - a. USA Swimming VHF radios:
 - i. Race Director
 - ii. Race Operations
 - iii. Race Referees
 - iv. Safety Officer
 - v. Course Officer
 - vi. Spare vessels
 - vii. Feed Station Referee
 - viii. Administrative Referee
 - ix. Turn Judges
 - b. Fort Lauderdale – Police/Fire-Rescue Radio Net
 - i. Race Operations
 - ii. Life Guard Towers
 - iii. FLOR Supervisors Vehicles
 - iv. On-Water Guards on PWC
 - v. Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue
2. Secondary: Cellular Telephones will be used as a backup communications link. The following positions will be issued a phone number listing:
 - a. Race Director
 - b. Meet Referee

- c. Safety Officer
- d. Race Referees
- e. Course Officer
- vi. FLOR Chief

Exhibit D

Water Quality Certification

Exhibit E

Emergency Plan

Emergency Action Plan:

1. Swimmer in Distress:
 - a. FLOR will activate their water rescue protocols.
 - b. Swimmers withdrawing from the race must report to the nearest lifeguard tower for identification. Lifeguard will radio race-control with the competitor number and direct the swimmer to return to the start area.
 - c. A First Aid tent will be maintained on the beach in the Start/Finish area manned by the paramedics. While at the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Complex, First Aid will be provided by Aquatics Complex personnel.
 - d. Swimmers needing emergency medical care will be administered to by FLOR or the paramedics at the finish.
 - e. Swimmers requiring evacuation via ambulance will be transported to Broward General Hospital – Level 1 Trauma Center – 4 miles from course center. Transit time @ 7-10 minutes.
2. Missing Swimmer
 - a. All swimmers will be issued a "Race Ticket" with their competitor number during the registration process. This "Ticket" will be collected as the swimmers enter the water.
 - b. All swimmers will be required to provide a personal cell phone contact and a coach/handler cell phone contact at registration.
 - c. All swimmers will be videotaped during the final inspection/accounting prior to the start.
 - d. If a swimmer is reported missing and last seen in the water: FLOR will activate their underwater search and recovery protocol. Concurrently, meet operations will attempt contact with the coach/handler and swimmer via cell phone. Meet Operations will also review the start list, withdrawal list, site race tickets, and view the pre-race video tape to confirm the swimmer actually started the race. All swimmers are reminded before the race start that they must report to the nearest lifeguard if they withdraw from the race. All swimmers who depart from the water will be identified by their race number.

Exhibit F

Contingency Plan

Parameters for Abandoning the Race:

1. Any one of the following individuals are empowered to independently order the race abandoned due to unsafe course or other conditions.
 - a. Meet Referee – Ron Van Poole
 - b. Safety Officer – Sid Cassidy
 - c. Water Safety Supervisor - FLOR Chief – Breck Ballew
2. If the race is to be abandoned, Race Control will relay via radio to all vessels to signal abandonment. Simultaneously, the FLOR Chief will signal via FLOR radio net to signal abandonment.
 - a. The abandonment signals will be:
 - i. From Officials Boats – 5 short blasts followed by one long blast.
 - ii. From the Lifeguards – 5 short blasts of the whistle followed by one long blast.
 - b. Swimmer actions are to:
 - i. Discontinue swimming
 - ii. Look for directions from the Officials or water safety personnel
 - iii. Once safe on the beach, proceed to the start/fish area and check-in.

Contingency Plan:

1. Due to venue restrictions (50m from shore), it is unlikely any change to the shape of the course will be possible.
2. If weather conditions require, the directions of swim (CW/CCW) and the location of the start/finish structure may be changed.
3. If the race is abandoned, it will be postponed until later the same day. If the race must be abandoned for the entire day, the race will be held the following day.

- Transporting victim to a medical facility.
- ***A sanction will not be granted unless the applicant can verify a response time for rendering immediate first aid within one minute.***
- ✓ -Each motorized safety craft must have a radio in order to communicate to the race officials and medical personnel on shore. Radios should include two channels dedicated to 1) race officials and 2) medical staff.
- ✓ There must be a plan to tag the swimmers going into the water and tagging the swimmers when they come out.
- ✓ A Technical Meeting must be held within 24 hours of the start of the race. A USA Swimming member representative must be present during this meeting for each athlete. If the athlete is not represented, the swimmer must not be allowed to enter the race. The Race Director may elect to provide a personal briefing which includes everything covered in the Technical Meeting. Additionally, a briefing will be conducted just prior to the start of the race. All swimmers MUST be present for this meeting or they will not be allowed to compete.
- ✓ If the event is a 5K or less, no feeding station is required. If the race is 5k to a 10K, one feeding station is required. If the event is 10k or more, and the event is unescorted, there must be a feeding station every 2k.
- ✓ It is highly recommended the big can buoys be used for major areas along the course. This will help with sighting and lessen the chance of a swimmer wondering off course.
- ✓ All participants must be observed at all times during the race. The Safety Plan should account for the number of athletes entered, the course layout, and the anticipated spreading of the athletes throughout the course.
- ✓ Safety Responders should be qualified individuals that would be able to render the initial and appropriate First Aid to an ailing athlete.
- ✓ For races 10K or less, it is not permitted to have personal escort crafts on the course. This can confuse the safety personnel and can jeopardize, rather than help the athletes.
- ✓ Jet Skis may not be used as safety crafts unless they are equipped with sleds in order to transport an athlete to shore. The use of Jet Skies may be used for other functions, just not safety.

See Exhibit C for an example.

Water Quality Certification

A water quality certificate of the body water where the race will take place ensuring the water is suitable for public use is required for a sanction to be granted. Whatever entity is responsible for testing waterways in the local area will be able to provide this information. Should the body of water used for the event not have a current certification on file and/or not currently tested, a independent test will need to be done for this application and with an additional test taken the week prior to the start of the event.

See Exhibit D for an example.

Emergency Plan

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See Exhibit E for an example.

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Safety Plan

Safety Plan:

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3. FLOR employs AED's at each of these towers and on all four supervisory beach vehicles.
4. All FLOR Guard Towers and supervisory beach vehicles are equipped with Basic Life Support (BLS) gear.
5. Guards will be on-duty at 9:30am at all towers.
6. All Life Guard Towers, Supervisory vehicles and on-water safety personnel communicate via the City Police/Fire/Rescue radio network.
7. There are two ACLS Vehicle garages on the island. ACLS vehicles are dispatched as needed directly to the tower requesting emergency services. Estimated response time is 5 minutes to all tower locations.
8. There will be two Personal Watercraft on-course manned by FLOR personnel.
9. There will be two FLOR personnel on rescue boards on course.
10. There will be four FLOR personnel dispatched with the Referee vessels on course.
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Communications Plan:

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 - a. USA Swimming VHF radios:
 - i. Race Director
 - ii. Race Operations
 - iii. Race Referees
 - iv. Safety Officer
 - v. Course Officer
 - vi. Spare vessels
 - vii. Feed Station Referee
 - viii. Administrative Referee
 - ix. Turn Judges
 - b. Fort Lauderdale – Police/Fire-Rescue Radio Net
 - i. Race Operations
 - ii. Life Guard Towers
 - iii. FLOR Supervisors Vehicles
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 - v. Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue
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 - b. Meet Referee