



LEN

OPEN WATER SAFETY  
REGULATIONS

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## **1. GENERAL CONCEPTS**

1.1 These regulations shall apply to all open water events of a distance of 5km or greater organized by LEN, sanctioned by LEN, or over which LEN has technical control ("Covered Competitions"). These regulations shall augment the LEN Open Water Swimming Rules and Regulations and shall augment and supersede as applicable, the existing regulations established for specific events (e.g., LEN Cup and European Championships Senior/Juniors).

### **1.2 Critical elements of these regulations include:**

- Submission of a site-specific safety plan compliant with these regulations as part of the event approval process;
- Approval of that safety plan by a LEN TOWSC Safety Representative as a condition of event approval;
- Appointment of a LEN Safety Delegate who is independent of the Host Member Federation and Organizing Committee ("HMF/OC") to ensure that the approved safety plan and the requirements of these regulations are implemented on race day;
- Authority vested in any one of the LEN Safety Delegate, the HMF/OC Safety Officer, or the Chief Referee to postpone, cancel, or modify an event where safety conditions warrant;
- Careful accounting for all swimmers before, during and after the race to ensure that all swimmers starting the race are accounted for at the time they withdraw or finish the race;
- All swimmers must be observed during the race so that there is immediate recognition when a swimmer is struggling or loses consciousness;
- There must be immediate rescue available when a swimmer is in distress; and
- There must be immediate resuscitation available to address medical emergencies.

## **2. SUBMISSION OF A SAFETY PLAN TO LEN**

2.1 For all Covered Competitions, the HMF/OC for the competition shall submit a site-specific safety plan to LEN for LEN's approval. That safety plan shall comply with all requirements of these regulations.

2.2 Each safety plan shall be reviewed by the LEN TOWSC Safety Representative, who shall approve, modify, or reject the submitted safety plan.

2.3 No Covered Competition subject to these regulations shall be sanctioned or approved by LEN without an approved safety plan in place.

2.4 Any change to an approved safety plan requested up until five days before the race must be approved by the LEN TOWSC Safety Representative as provided in Article 2.2 above. Changes to an approved safety plan necessitated by circumstances beyond the control of the HMF/OC requested within five days of the race, or otherwise required to protect participant safety, may be approved by the LEN Safety Delegate appointed by LEN for the race.

### **3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAFETY PLAN AT THE COMPETITION**

3.1 Concurrently with the awarding of an event, LEN shall appoint a LEN Safety Delegate for each Covered Competition. The LEN Safety Delegate shall be independent of the HMF/OC. The LEN Safety Delegate shall be generally responsible for all matters pertaining to the safety of the competition participants and shall be specifically responsible for ensuring that the approved safety plan and these regulations are followed during the competition.

3.2 The HMF/OC shall appoint an HMF/OC Safety Officer with experience in open water safety and an HMF/OC Safety Committee responsible for organizing and implementing all safety aspects of the competition. The HMF/OC Safety Committee shall include certified local lifeguards with experience in open bodies of water who shall be involved in safety during the competition.

3.3 The LEN Safety Delegate shall inspect the competition venue and meet with the HMF/OC Safety Delegate and Safety Committee at least three days prior to the scheduled start of the competition to ensure that the safety plan remains adequate to address the conditions at the competition venue and that all actions necessary to implement the approved safety plan have been taken.

3.4 The LEN Safety Delegate shall have authority to modify, postpone, or cancel the competition whenever the approved safety plan is not being implemented or as otherwise required to protect the safety of participants. The HMF/OC Safety Officer and the Chief Referee of the race may advise the LEN Safety Delegate on the modification, postponement or cancellation of the competition.

### **4. SPECIFIC SAFETY PLANS AND RACE SAFETY IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

Each safety plan required by these regulations shall include the following minimum requirements. The implementation of these requirements is mandatory for each Covered Competition.

#### **4.1 Technical Meeting**

(a) Athlete representatives must attend the Technical Meeting. If a swimmer or the swimmer's representative is unable to attend the Technical Meeting, the swimmer must attend a special safety briefing in order to participate in the race.

(b) Safety topics that shall be included in the Technical Meeting include:

- explanation of the course layout and hazards
- tides, currents or other water conditions
- marine life
- weather conditions
- water temperature
- water quality conditions
- description of the method by which the Safety Committee will monitor swimmers
- location of safety craft
- description of medical support onsite and availability of hospital care

- signal for help—float on back and raise hand for assistance
- evacuation plan for clearing the race course, including description of related visual and audible signals

(c) A short pre-race safety briefing, mandatory for all swimmers, shall be held immediately prior to the race.

#### 4.2 Monitoring and Rescue of Swimmers

(a) Each swimmer shall be under the direct observation of at least one HMF/OC Safety Committee member or Referee at all times during the race. The configuration of the course will determine where Safety Committee observers are positioned to observe swimmers. For example, in an open race course with no physical restraints, and depending on the size of the field, it is ideal to have an escort craft with a designated observer assigned to assure that each swimmer is monitored. However, in a competition conducted in a narrow rowing basin, it would be impractical to have individual escort craft on the race course, rather, HMF/OC Safety Committee observers may be able to follow the swimmers by walking along the shore. In other circumstances, it may be desirable to organize the HMF/OC Safety Committee observers by zone. Whenever possible, given the layout of the race course, HMF/OC Safety Committee observer craft (boats or kayaks) should guarantee that all swimmers separated from the lead group or lead swimmer can be followed directly by a safety boat or kayak. The safety craft must follow the swimmer or group of swimmers at a reasonable distance so as to allow immediate intervention if a safety action is required.

(b) There must be sufficient safety craft or escort craft located on the course to immediately recognize when a swimmer is in distress and to initiate an immediate rescue response after observation or notification that a swimmer's rescue is required. In most course configurations, there should also be stationary safety craft located every 400 meters along the course, with a CPR- and life support-trained responder on board. To accomplish this, there must be sufficient designated rescue landing points along the course and sufficient CPR- and life support-trained personnel in proximity to each swimmer or group of swimmers.

#### 4.3 Safety Communication

(a) The LEN Safety Delegate and the HMF/OC Safety Officer must have instant two-way communication access with: each other; all members of the HMF/OC Safety Committee assigned to observe swimmers; all safety craft; personnel on each feeding platform; the HMF/OC Chief Medical Officer; the Chief Referee; and other course officials. The line of command shall be as follows: the LEN Safety Delegate deals directly with the HMF/OC Safety officer and the HMF/OC Safety Officer deals directly and shall have the absolute power to mobilize all lifeguards and medical personnel when required.

(b) Safety Committee members assigned to monitor swimmers must also be able to instantly communicate with all safety craft.

(c) Two-way radios or other communication equipment with one channel or number reserved for emergencies are required, and a backup system shall also be available.

#### 4.4 Accounting for Swimmers

(a) Each swimmer shall have his or her race number marked clearly on his or her body. The Clerk of the Course is responsible for the accountability of all competitors from the start of the race until the last competitor has safely completed the race. As swimmers withdraw from or finish the race, the Clerk of the Course shall check off each swimmer from the list of swimmers who started the race.

(b) No swimmer shall exit the race—through withdrawal, disqualification, completion, or otherwise—without checking in with the Clerk of the Course.

(c) All swimmers should wear when available whatever electronic tracking technology may be required as part of the approved safety plan.

#### 4.5 Feeding Stations

(a) For Covered Competitions greater than five kilometers, a floating or stationary feeding station should be available at least every 2.5 kilometers.

#### 4.6 Local Suitability Certificate, Including Water Quality

(a) The course shall be in water that is subject to only minor currents or tides and shall be free of hazardous obstacles, pollutants, and dangerous marine life.

(b) A certificate of suitability for the use of the venue shall be issued by the appropriate local health and safety authorities. In general, the certification must relate to water purity and to physical safety from other considerations. The certificate provided in connection with plan approval shall be updated within seventy-two hours of the day of the race.

#### 4.7 Water Temperature

(a) The water temperature shall be measured within 30 minutes before the start of the race and must be a minimum of 16°C and a maximum of 31°C. The water temperature shall be certified by the LEN Safety Delegate and the HMF/OC Safety Officer as measured in the middle of the course, at a depth of 40 centimeters.

(b) The water temperature shall be monitored as provided above at one-hour intervals during the race. If the water temperature drops below 16°C or exceeds 31°C at any one of the measuring intervals, the water temperature shall be measured again in 30 minutes and if that measurement is also below 16°C or exceeds 31°C, the race must be stopped.

#### 4.8 Medical Service

(a) The HMF/OC shall appoint as its Chief Medical Officer a physician with experience in providing medical care during endurance events. Other members of the HMF/OC medical team shall include sufficient individuals with emergency medical training (basic life support and CPR) to staff the stationary safety boats and venue medical facility.

(b) The onsite medical facility shall include basic emergency and trauma equipment, AED, and any heating or cooling facilities required by the approved safety plan.

(c) An ambulance shall be available onsite or on call within five minutes of the venue. A back-up ambulance shall also be available onsite or on call within 15 minutes of the venue.

(d) Where the travel time by ambulance between the venue and the nearest hospital with emergency room facilities is longer than one hour, then the safety plan shall require provision for helicopter transport.

#### 4.9 Safety During Training, Pre-Race Warm Up and Post-Race Warm Down

(a) The HMF/OC must provide safety monitoring on the course during established training hours. No swimmer shall be allowed to enter the race course during training without an escort craft. Monitoring of swimmers by HMF/OC Safety Committee observers should also occur during pre-race warm ups and post-race warm downs.

#### 4.10 Course Evacuation Plan

(a) Each safety plan must include a course evacuation plan to quickly get all swimmers and race personnel off the water and to safety in emergency situations.

### 5. NO FINISH REQUIREMENT

5.1 No swimmer shall receive points or prize money for a race that the swimmer does not finish. However, notwithstanding any other rule to the contrary, there shall be no requirement for a swimmer to finish any particular race to which these regulations apply (including those that are a part of the LEN Cup and European Championships Junior/Senior/Youth) in order to receive final point standings or prize money in the series.