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 new coach must 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). To get started, go to the "Member Resources" tab on the top of any page. From there click Coaches and then on the "Online Learning/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 be a USA Swimming Coach member. If you are on deck coaching 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? How do I find out which LSC I am in? Where do I send my USA Swimming non-athlete registration form? You will need to register through your LSC Registration Chair. Go to www.usaswimming.org/lscmap to determine your LSC, then scroll down below the map to the link to your LSC’s website. On most LSC websites, you can print the non-athlete application form and mail it with your payment to the address printed on the form. The registration form requires that you choose one: Official, Coach, Other. Choose Coach. If you are unsure about your LSC, contact the Member Services Department by calling 719-866-4578.

Should I register before or after I take various tests and background screening? USA Swimming suggests that you register as a Coach first. (see previous question.) Then, as you complete each requirement, it will automatically link to your membership record in the database. When you complete all of the coach requirements, your LSC will mail your Coach membership card to you.

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 courses/tests. Also remember, things change and a refresher course might not be a bad idea.
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.

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 courses anyway – am I allowed to do that?
Yes, any USA Swimming coach member may take the courses.

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 www.usaswimming.org/coachmember.

Does USA Swimming require lifeguards during practice?
USA Swimming does not require lifeguards to be on duty for swim practices or meets. 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 has not replaced Safety Training for Swim Coaches and does not meet the USA Swimming coach membership requirement.

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. Go to www.usaswimming.org/STSC and click on “Frequently Asked Questions” at the top of the screen for specific information on how to fulfill this requirement.

Is there a substitute for the Safety Training for Swim Coaches course?
STSC is a two-part course – there is an online course and test, as well as a water skills session. You must pass the online course and test. However, recognized lifeguarding certifications can be used for the water skills portion. Check the USA Swimming website for a list of acceptable lifeguard certifications at www.usaswimming.org/coachmember.

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 (date).” The date is the first date that: (1) one of the safety certifications expires, (2) the background check expires or (3) December 31st 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!
You can also check your certification dates and membership status on your Deck Pass account.

I still have questions. Who can I call?
Call the Club Development Division at USA Swimming: 719-866-4578