

# OXFORD TRIATHLETES - OPEN WATER SWIMMING

## 2010 Guidelines for duty Safety Officer

Please note the following guidelines. They are to ensure the welfare of swimmers and comply with the requirements of the site owner and operator. The Safety Officer does not swim and remains lakeside until all swimmers are out of the water.

- Try to arrive early, and bring with you a **charged mobile phone** to use in the event of any emergency
- Please pre-read and understand the Risk Assessment and the EAP (Emergency Action Plan). You must check if there are any additional hazards on the day. It is your decision as Safety Officer on whether a session can proceed
- At the lakeside you must have your mobile phone. From the plastic safety box you will find air horn, first aid kit, safety flags, loudhailer and binoculars. **Please wear the yellow high viz tabard for easy identification.** A file with copies of EAP, RA, guidelines etc should also be in the box for reference to.
- If on the pontoon, you must wear a lifejacket
- All swimmers **MUST** check in and out with you, before entering the water and immediately on exiting. All swimmers should bring their membership cards and exchange their card for a swim band. Cards should be completed with details of emergency contacts. Note that the lake sessions are strictly for Oxford Tri members only.
- All swimmers must have read, signed and returned the club Open Water Swim Rules with Disclaimer. This need only be done once per season. Make sure any new swimmers read and sign the Open Water Swim Rules and Disclaimer, Cards should be hole punched to show the disclaimer has been given in.
- Collect fees from members who are not 'prepaid'. The PAYG session fee is £3
- You must give or be present at the mandatory pre-swim Health & Safety briefing
- Check for any signs of Blue-Green Algae (BGA) – see below
- In the unlikely event of an incident or emergency, follow the procedures in the EAP
- Check swimmers exchange their swim band for their card **immediately** exiting the lake
- If any injuries sustained complete an Accident Report Form if and notify club officials

### Blue-GreenAlgae

Blue-green algae (BGA) is a cyanobacteria - an organism which has properties of both bacteria and plants. Algae bloom of one variety or another is a common phenomenon in the lakes and rivers of lowland Britain **during mid summer and early autumn**. The hazards to swimmers can be summarised as follows:

- Not all visible algae is BGA. Not all BGA is toxic
- The main danger is from high concentrations of decaying bloom which has a distinct blue-green colour
- Bloom of cyanobacteria may be associated with **unpleasant odours and the offensive appearance** of the shores, especially when scum of the organisms accumulate and decays. This creates an obviously unpleasant environment
- Contact with **toxic scum can cause skin diseases and eye irritation** (much the same as that which many of us regularly get from swimming in chlorinated indoor swimming baths...). Swallowing the scum, or spray containing it, can cause much more severe illness including liver damage. There are no recorded human fatalities caused by it in the course of recreational activities but it can be fatal to animals
- Non-visible BGA dispersed in the water can also be toxic and cause skin and eye irritation. The risk here is lower because of the relatively lower concentration of toxins but it can still cause problems in particular for those wearing wetsuits which can trap the toxic particles against the skin and through swallowing
- Follow the Environment Agency advice and keep well clear of visible bloom. Those with sensitive skins or of poor health should be particularly aware of the risks.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has issued guidelines regarding measures which should be taken in response to a given Cyanobacteria concentration in the water. Only Cyanobacterial scum (concentrations of well over 100,000 cells/ml) calls for 'possible prohibition of swimming and other water contact activities'.

## **Key 2010 contacts**

### **OXFORD TRIATHLETES**

Ian Loades (Chairman) 07545 915319

Phil Richards (Club Coach) 07791 171926

Peter Larbalestier (Duty Safety Officer co-ordinator) 07990 935087

### **DORCHESTER SAILING CLUB CONTACT**

David Wedge, Vice Commodore 07768 717702

### **DIRECTIONS TO VENUE For emergency services.**

Dorchester Sailing Club  
Abingdon Road,  
Dorchester-on-Thames,  
Near Abingdon,  
Oxon  
OX10 7LP

The Club is signposted from the A415 approximately 100 yards from the roundabout where the A415 joins the A4074. From the A415, follow the signs to Dorchester and the club is approximately 300 yards down on the left hand side.