

OXFORD TRIATHLON CLUB - OPEN WATER SWIMMING

Duty Safety Officers Guidelines – 2011

Introduction

- The following guidelines are intended to ensure the safety of swimmers and to comply with the requirements of the site owner and operator.
- Each Oxford Triathlon Club open-water swim session will be supervised by 2 Duty Safety Officers. The Duty Safety Officers do not enter the water and remain at the lakeside from before any swimmer enters the water until all swimmers are out of the water.
- The roster of Duty Safety Officers will be organised by the Swim Safety Coordinator. If the roles of Duty Safety Officers cannot be filled then the swim session will be cancelled.

General

- Priorities:
 - The first and overriding priority of the Safety Officers is the safety of swimmers from Oxford Tri.
 - The second priority is to coordinate Oxford Tri activities with those of Dorchester Sailing Club.
 - The third priority is to allow Oxford Tri members to complete their swimming training.
- Before each session, the Duty Safety Officers are to read and understand the Risk Assessment (RA) and the Emergency Action Plan (EAP).
- Each Duty Safety Officer should have a mobile phone on them with sufficient charge and credit to use in the event of any emergency.
- Open-water training sessions are strictly for Oxford Tri members only. All swimmers must have read, signed and returned the club Open Water Disclaimer for the season before they enter the water. Membership cards should be hole-punched to show that the disclaimer has been given in.
- A pre-swim safety briefing is mandatory for all participants.
- Wetsuits must be worn by all swimmers, whatever the water temperature. This is to provide additional buoyancy in the event of trouble. Water temperature restrictions are given below.
- If any injuries are sustained an Accident Report Form must be completed and club officials notified.

Procedure

- The Duty Safety Officers should:
 - Arrive early (approximately 15 minutes before the session start time).
 - If necessary, open the gate to the lake and open the clubhouse (separate instructions issued). The combinations on the gate padlock and clubhouse key-safe are to be scrambled after they have been opened.
 - Check the contents of the Safety Box (kept in the disabled toilet in the Clubhouse; see checklist at the end of this document). Take it to the lakeside, and set up the carousel for the wrist-bands. Measure the temperature of the lake and record it on the "Session Summary" form from the safety box. The following temperature restrictions are in force:

Water Temperature	Restrictions
< 11° C	No swimming
11° C	Maximum distance 500 m (1 circuit)
12° C	Maximum distance 1000 m (2 circuits)
13° C	Maximum distance 2000 m (4 circuits)
14 - 22° C	No restrictions
> 22° C	Maximum distance 1500 m (3 circuits)

- Wear the high-visibility tabards from the Safety Box.
- Assess whether there are any additional hazards on the day that make the planned session unsafe. Factors to take into consideration are listed at the end of these guidelines. It is the Duty Safety Officers' decision as to whether a session proceed as planned, is altered or cancelled.
- Liaise with any other lake users.
- Before the swimmers enter the water, the Duty Safety Officers should:
 - Collect fees from members who are not 'prepaid'. The PAYG session fee is £3.
 - Make sure that all swimmers are assembled, can hear and are paying attention.
 - Check that everyone has read, signed and handed in a 2011 Disclaimer and that their membership card has had a hole punched in it.
 - Explain that there is no 'on water' safety cover and that if anyone is not a competent swimmer they should not enter the water.

- Encourage swimmers to swim in groups with those of similar ability.
- Check if there are:
 - = Any novice open-water swimmers. Ask for volunteers to buddy them and ask them to stay behind after the brief.
 - = Any swimmers who have not taken part in an open water swim with Oxford Tri before. Ask them to stay behind after the brief.
 - = Any qualified lifeguards or First Aiders present.
- Check if anyone has any relevant medical conditions or injuries.
- Give the safety brief, in accordance with the “Safety Brief - 2011”.
- Allow the swimmers who are not novices/new to the club to enter the water under the supervision of the 2nd Duty Safety Officer.
- Check whether swimmers new to the club have any questions about any aspects of the swim. Allow them to enter the water under the supervision of the 2nd Duty Safety Officer.
- Brief novice open-water swimmers to swim with their buddies to the nearest buoy and back to check that they are comfortable in the water. Once this is successfully completed, allow them to continue swimming with their buddies.
- Repeat the above procedure for any late comers.
- It is essential that the Duty Safety Officers maintain strict control over recording who is in the water. One of the Duty Safety Officers should:
 - Remove all the swim-bands from the “laundry drier”.
 - Issue swim bands to swimmers in exchange for immediately before they enter the water. Issue bands with whistles first. The swimmer then pegs their membership card to the “laundry drier”. If a swimmer has forgotten their membership card, but can be vouched for by another member, then some other form of identification can be used but an emergency contact number must be attached to this.
 - Monitor numbers of people on the pontoon (maximum 4, due to stability issues).
- While swimmers are in the water:
 - One of the Duty Safety Officers should be watching the lake at all times. If on the pontoon a lifejacket must be worn. Binoculars are supplied and should be used.
 - The other Duty Safety Officer should record the number of swimmers on the “Session Summary” form from the safety box. The form should be left in the box on completion.

- In the event of an incident or emergency, the procedures in the EAP are to be followed.
- As swimmers exit the water, check that they are well and that they exchange their swim band for their membership card.
- At the end of the session or once all swimmers are believed clear of the water, double-check that:
 - No swimmers can be seen in the lake.
 - There are no membership cards left.
 - Return the Safety Box to the clubhouse.
 - If appropriate, lock up the clubhouse and gate.

Key contacts:

OXFORD TRI

Stephen Slay (Chairman) 07843 205364

Noe Orozco (Club Coach) 07984 720193

Charlie Wilson (Duty Safety Officer co-ordinator) 07880 654113

DORCHESTER SAILING CLUB

Patrick Fleming, Commodore 07733 026906

David Wedge, Vice Commodore 07768 717702

DIRECTIONS TO VENUE

Dorchester Sailing Club
Abingdon Road,
Dorchester-on-Thames,
Near Abingdon,
Oxfordshire
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.

HAZARDS

- The risks associated with swimming in Dorchester Lake have been assessed (see the RA on the Oxford Tri website) and it has been concluded that it is safe for swimming in normal circumstances.
- Abnormal circumstances may make the lake temporarily unsafe for swimming. The Duty Safety Officers are to check for the following hazards. If any of these are present, the session is to be cancelled until this no longer applies:
 - Water temperature below 11° C.
 - Fog or mist so that swimmers 10 metres past the furthest end of the day's route could not be clearly seen. This might be overcome by shortening the route. If conditions change during the session, sound the hooter, recall all the swimmers, re-brief them as to the new route, let the session continue and monitor the conditions closely. If in any doubt, remember that your first and overriding priority is the safety of the swimmers and cancel the session.
 - Wind that generates waves so that swimmers 10 metres past the furthest end of the day's route could not be clearly seen. This might be overcome by shortening the route. If conditions change during the session, sound the hooter, recall all the swimmers, re-brief them as to the new route, let the session continue and monitor the conditions closely. If in any doubt, remember that your first and overriding priority is the safety of the swimmers and cancel the session.
 - Boating on the lake unless the safety boat can be contacted and a separation zone agreed. Remember that your second priority is coordination with Dorchester Sailing Club.
 - Blue-Green Algae (BGA). Algal 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 main danger to swimmers is from high concentrations of decaying bloom which has a distinct blue-green colour. The signs of this are unpleasant odours and the appearance of scum on water and the lake-shores. Contact with toxic scum can cause skin diseases and eye irritation, swallowing it, more serious illness.

SAFETY BOX CONTENTS

Air-horn and spare gas cylinder

First Aid Kit

Safety flags

Loud-hailer

Binoculars

High-visibility tabards

A file with copies of EAP, RA, Safety Briefing Instructions, Session Summary Forms and Accident Reporting Forms

Wrist-bands