

Virginia Swimming, Inc.
Minimum Standards for the Certification and Recertification of Officials
Effective Date: October 1, 2003 (Revision #2, October 5, 2005)

PHILOSOPHY

The sport of swimming places a heavy reliance on volunteers to conduct swim meets, and nowhere is this reliance heavier than it is in providing high quality officials at swim meets to achieve the goal of providing fair and equitable competition for our athletes. In order to achieve this goal, minimum standards for the certification and recertification of officials have been set forth by the USA Swimming Officials Committee, and the minimum standards have been adopted by resolution of the USA Swimming Board of Directors. It is the responsibility of the LSCs to meet or exceed these standards in developing their training programs for officials.

VSI certifies officials in wet-deck (Stroke & Turn, Starter, and Referee) and dry-deck (Clerk-of-Course, Timing Equipment Operator, Timing Judge, and Recorder) positions. The requirements for certification and recertification at these positions meet or exceed the minimal requirements as set forth by USA Swimming. The rationale for the VSI requirements sometimes exceeding the USA Swimming requirements is that the USA Swimming requirements are minimal standards, and the VSI Officials Committee has determined that in some cases additional training/education is required to provide the high quality of officiating our swimmers expect and deserve.

The combination of clinic-based education, test taking, and on-the-job training as provided for in the attached requirements are meant to accomplish the following:

- Assure a clear and consistent knowledge of the rules
- Provide sufficient time in training to assure familiarity with all levels of competition
- Provide opportunity to work on the deck and advance through the certification process
- Allow automatic acceptance at the Stroke & Turn level between all LSCs meeting the *USA Swimming Minimum Standards Guidelines*
- Maintain knowledge of the current rules

TRAINING GUIDELINES AND INITIAL CERTIFICATION

- Clinics and clinicians must be approved by the Officials Committee Chairperson, or by the District Officials Chairperson in whose region the clinic will be conducted.
- The apprentice should keep their Club Officials Chair apprised of their progress, and the Club Officials Chair should work with the apprentice to schedule training sessions at upcoming meets.
- In general, training at meets is on a first-come, first-served basis, however, every attempt is made to give as many people as possible an opportunity to train. This may mean that an apprentice will train for one session rather than two, or train at a different position than otherwise expected (Recorder rather than Timing Judge, for example).
- In general, all training sessions must be performed at VSI/USA Swimming sanctioned meets. Approval to train at non-VSI LSC meets requires prior approval of the apprentice's District Officials Chair, or the Officials Committee Chairperson.
- For the purposes of defining level appropriate training sessions, A+ or AA+ meets correspond to an "A" meet in the requirements. B/C, A/BB, A/BB/B/C, B+, and BB+ meets are all considered non-"A" meets.
- LSC Championship Meets (Senior Championship, Age Group Championship and similar meets) may only be used to complete Administrative Referee training under supervision of the assigned Administrative Referee.

- District Championship Meets (A/BB Championship, B/C Championship, Summer Awards) may be used for limited training of apprentices subject to the discretion of the meet referee as follows:
 - Administrative apprentices must have completed at least four (4) training sessions with positive ratings, including the familiarization sessions at other administrative positions. Final sessions and certification may occur if all requirements are met.
 - Stroke & Turn apprentices must have completed at least four (4) training sessions with positive ratings. Final (“white and blue”) sessions may not be accomplished, nor may final certification.
 - Starter apprentices must have completed at least five (5) training sessions with positive ratings. Final sessions and certification may occur if all other requirements are met.
 - Referee apprentices must have completed at least four (4) sessions and have the positive recommendation of their District Officials Chair. Referees may complete administrative referee training.
- Other championship-format meets run by individual host clubs provide additional opportunities for specialized training in the administrative aspects of trials and finals as well as for all other types and forms of training, including initial sessions.
- High School, NCAA, and non-VSI sanctioned or approved YMCA meets are not acceptable for training.
- Up to two sessions of training will be accepted at US Masters Swimming meets, but all final training sessions must be VSI/USA Swimming sanctioned meets.
- The assigned trainer at a session should ordinarily have a minimum of one year of experience in the position being trained. When possible, it is recommended that the apprentice train one or more sessions with a referee, administrative supervisor, or other designated experienced official.
- A session should be a minimum of two hours in length, and of such a nature as to allow for a meaningful training experience for the apprentice (i.e. watching two hours of the 1650 does not constitute a meaningful training experience for a Stroke & Turn apprentice, but would constitute an appropriate training experience for a Starter apprentice in need of a “bell-lap” session). The session Referee should *not* sign-off on a training session of insufficient duration or one lacking in sufficient training experience.
- The apprentice must work the entire session.
- No more than three sessions may be worked as a trainee at a meet and no more than two sessions may be worked in one day
- While many, if not most apprentices, will complete their training in the minimal number of suggested training sessions, some apprentices will require more than the minimum number of sessions. This may reflect the fact that some sessions may not provide a meaningful training or evaluation experience, or it may reflect the fact that some individuals may require more than the average amount of training before certification. In all cases, the intent is ensure that certified officials are capable of providing “fair and equitable” conditions of competition for the athletes, and to ensure that the officials have achieved an appropriate level of competency at their level of certification.
- For those apprentices requiring USA Swimming non-athlete membership, a current USA Swimming membership cards must be visibly displayed while on deck.
- Any applicable test will preferably be completed and passed prior to the beginning of the on-deck apprenticeship. To accommodate those individuals taking a clinic at a meet and wishing to immediately begin on-deck training, the test may initially be deferred. In no case, may the final training session(s) take place until the applicable test has been passed.

- Training for all positions must be completed within one year of the initial clinic or orientation date.
- Provisionally certified officials may not train for higher level positions (Starter, Referee, or Administrative Supervisor).
- Certification is not complete until the apprentice's District Official Chair "signs-off" on the training. This can frequently occur at a meet, but it may also require the apprentice to mail their completed training card to the District Officials Chair, along with their existing certification card if already certified at one or more additional positions. The District Officials Chair will issue a certification card or update the existing certification card upon the satisfactory completion of all the training requirements for the position. District Officials Chairs should not issue the final certification for apprentices not in their region, even if they observed the final training session, except in consultation with the apprentice's home District Officials Chair.
- Certification is on a calendar year basis and runs from January 1 to December 31. Officials certifying prior to October 1 will be certified through the end of the calendar year; officials certifying after October 1 will be certified through the end of the next calendar year. When initialing the certification card, the District Officials Chair may wish to indicate the initial certification date to aid in the recertification process.
- The District Officials Chair is responsible for ensuring that the VSI Officials Database is updated with the current certification information, and changes to the certification information can only come from the District Officials Chairs or the Officials Committee Chairperson. Changes to personal information (phone number, address, email) may come from the Club Officials Chairs or the individual officials.

RECERTIFICATION

It is important to note that certification is for a defined period of time, does *not* automatically renew, and is self-initiated by the individual official. Recertification is based on working a minimal number of sessions over the certification period, attendance at pre-session briefings, and in some cases, continuing education. Only sessions worked at USA Swimming sanctioned/approved/observed meets or USMS sanctioned/recognized meets may be counted towards the session requirement. NCAA, high school (unless working as a Starter, Referee or Stroke & Turn Judge observer at an Observed meet), non-VSI sanctioned or approved YMCA, and recreational/summer league meets do not meet the requirement.

Certification is on an annual basis and expires on December 31 of each year. The recertification period for the upcoming year will commence on October 1 and end on December 31, with renewed certification extending to December 31 of the following year. Officials may recertify at any time during the recertification period, as long as they have fulfilled the recertification requirements. The certification of those officials not recertifying during this time period will be suspended, and those officials will not be allowed to officiate unless and until they recertify.

Recertification requirements are based on the highest position for which recertification is sought. Unless requested otherwise by the official, Referees will automatically be recertified at Starter, Stroke & Turn Judge, and Timing Judge (if already certified). Starters will automatically be recertified at Stroke & Turn. Administrative Supervisors will automatically be recertified as Timing Judges. Only the administrative positions have cumulative recertification requirements.

It is *recommended* that all Referees not currently certified as Timing Judges, seek such certification.

The recertification of all officials except Referees will be handled through their respective District Officials Chairperson. Club Officials Chairpersons should monitor the progress of recertification of their club officials, collect the needed documentation (including the original or copies of current certification cards and required test if not done on-line) of all non-Referee officials not certifying by December 1, and mail or deliver them to the District Officials Chairperson. The District Officials Chairperson will then issue new certification cards which will be returned to the Club Officials Chairperson for distribution. Referees should send their recertification material directly to the Officials Committee Chairperson.

Officials not meeting the recertification requirements will be provisionally recertified for one year, with this status indicated on the certification card. Depending upon the circumstances, provisional recertification may require retraining which may include, but is not limited to: (i) clinic attendance; (ii) passing the respective recertification test, (iii) passing the full version of the respective certification test; and/or (iv) observation by a designated trainer with positive recommendation for provisional certification. Officials not meeting the recertification requirements for two consecutive years will ordinarily not be recertified. Request for waiver to this policy must be made in writing to the Officials Committee Chairperson.

CERTIFICATION LEVELS

LSC: Officials are trained and certified by the Local Swim Committee, in this case, VSI. Each LSC establishes its own criteria for certification and recertification, and it is expected to minimally adhere to the National guidelines.

NATIONAL CERTIFICATION: National Certification is obtained by working at LSC Senior Championship Meets, Zone meets, or other such meets approved for such certification. Requirements for certification include: (i) current USA Swimming member; (ii) be certified at the LSC level for at least one year in the position for which certification is requested; (iii) work a minimum of three sessions at the meet in the position for which certification is requested and attend the corresponding officials briefings; and (iv) pay the required fee.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP CERTIFICATION: National Championship Certification is obtained by working at upper level USA Swimming meets including Nationals, the Speedo Champions Series (new certifications from assigned positions only: recertifications from any position), Disability Championships, the World Cup, U.S. Open, and USMS Nationals. Requirements for certification include: (i) current USA Swimming member; (ii) hold National Certification for at least one year in the position for which certification is requested; (iii) work a minimum of four sessions at the meet in the position for which certification is requested and attend the corresponding officials briefings.

SPECIAL NOTE: National and/or National Championship Certifications do *not* replace or supercede the VSI certifications. This means, for example, that if an official's VSI Certification expires at the end of 2003 and the official's National Certification expires at the end of 2004, the National Certification will lapse at the end of 2003 if the VSI Certification is not renewed.

Timer (Minimum Age 11)		
Initial Education & Training	On-the-Job Training & Initial Certification	Recertification
<p><i>USA-S Membership:</i> None required.</p> <p><i>Test:</i> Timer.</p>	Attend pre-meet briefing.	Based on satisfactory performance.

Stroke & Turn (Minimum Age 18)		
Initial Education & Training	On-the-Job Training & Initial Certification	Recertification
<p><i>USA-S Membership:</i> Required before beginning on-deck apprenticeship.</p> <p><i>Previous Certifications:</i> Timer.</p> <p><i>Clinic:</i> VSI-approved training clinic required.</p> <p><i>Test:</i> Must pass Stroke & Turn Judge test with a minimal passing grade of 80% or better.</p>	<p>Complete a minimum of five sessions of training at VSI-sanctioned swim meets and achieve mastery (4 rating) in each of the assessment areas listed on the training card. No more than two sessions may be worked at “A” meets.</p> <p>Upon satisfactory completion of the five initial training sessions, work an additional three sessions in “white & blue” and make the calls under the observation of the assigned Trainer. Only one of these sessions may be at an “A” meet. At least one of the first two of these walks and the third walk must be satisfactorily completed (all satisfactory assessments listed on the training card) in order for the Referee to recommend certification.</p> <p>No training may occur at Age Group or Senior Championship meets.</p> <p>The District Officials Chairperson will issue a certification card upon the satisfactory completion of all the training requirements.</p>	<p>Work a minimum of six sessions during the previous year.</p> <p>Based on continuing USA Swimming membership and satisfactory performance.</p>

Relay Take-Off Judge (Minimum Age 19)		
Initial Education & Training	On-the-Job Training & Initial Certification	Recertification
Must be certified as a Stroke & Turn Judge or higher.	Considered part of Stroke & Turn Judge certification.	Recertify as a Stroke & Turn official or higher.

Chief Judge (Minimum Age 19)		
Initial Education & Training	On-the-Job Training & Initial Certification	Recertification
Must be certified as a Stroke & Turn Judge or higher.	<p>Considered part of Stroke & Turn Judge certification.</p> <p>Must have a minimum of one year of experience as a Stroke & Turn Judge.</p>	Recertify as a Stroke & Turn official or higher.

Starter (Minimum Age 19)		
Initial Education & Training	On-the-Job Training & Initial Certification	Recertification
<p><i>USA-S Membership:</i> Required.</p> <p><i>Previous Certifications:</i> Certified as a Stroke & Turn Judge for a minimum of one year, with satisfactory performance during that time.</p> <p><i>Clinic:</i> VSI-approved training clinic required.</p> <p><i>Test:</i> Must pass Starter test with a minimal passing grade of 80% or better.</p>	<p>Complete a minimum of six sessions of training at VSI-sanctioned swim meets with positive recommendations from the Trainer and Meet Referee. Sessions must include a variety of meet classifications and at least one session must include 500 Y events or longer. A minimum of one session must be worked at a B/C meet.</p> <p>Prior to one of the first six training sessions, do a complete set-up and check of the starting equipment.</p> <p>Upon satisfactory completion of the six initial training sessions, work an additional session as the primary Starter, under the observation of an assigned Trainer. Receive positive recommendations from the Trainer and Referee.</p> <p>No training may occur at Age Group or Senior Championship meets.</p> <p>The District Officials Chairperson will issue a certification card upon the satisfactory completion of all the training requirements.</p>	<p>Work a minimum of eight sessions per year, four of which must be at Starter or a higher capacity.</p> <p>Based on continuing USA Swimming membership and satisfactory evaluation.</p>

Referee (Minimum Age 21)		
Initial Education & Training	On-the-Job Training & Initial Certification	Recertification
<p><i>USA-S Membership:</i> Required.</p> <p><i>Previous Certifications:</i> Certified as a Starter for a minimum of one year, with satisfactory performance during that time. Certified as a Timing Judge (may be obtained concurrently with Referee certification but must be obtained before Referee certification will be issued).</p> <p><i>Other:</i> Training for Referee is only by invitation of the Officials Committee Chairperson.</p> <p><i>Clinic:</i> By arrangement with the Officials Committee Chairperson</p> <p><i>Test:</i> Must pass Referee test with a minimal passing grade of 90% or better. Must take and pass with a minimal grade of 80%, all other tests for which the candidate does not have current certification.</p>	<p>Complete a minimum of eight sessions of training at VSI-sanctioned meets with positive recommendations from the Meet Referee. Sessions must include a variety of meet classifications and age groups. A minimum of one session must be worked at a B/C meet.</p> <p>The Referee apprentice should be given and assume increasing levels of responsibility over the course of his/her training, such that by the last non-administrative session worked, the apprentice is working as the primary Referee, under the observation of a certified Referee. Receive positive recommendations from at least two different Referees.</p> <p>Work one familiarization session at Clerk-of-Course.</p> <p>At least two sessions must be worked as an Administrative Referee at the trials session of a VSI Championship meet or an equivalent trials/finals meet approved by the Officials Committee Chair.</p> <p>The Officials Committee Chairperson is the sole certifying authority for Referees. Based on the reports of the Referee Trainers as well as personal observation(s), he/she will decide when and if an individual is ready to be certified as a Referee.</p>	<p>Work a minimum of eight sessions per year, at least two of which must be at Referee.</p> <p>Attend Swimposium or Referee Clinic every two years, or pass recertification tests at the end of even numbered years.</p> <p>Based on continuing USA Swimming membership and satisfactory evaluation by the Officials Committee Chair or their designee.</p> <p><i>Recommendation:</i> Obtain Timing Judge Certification if not already certified; alternatively work a refresher session at Timing Judge.</p>

Timing Equipment Operator (Minimum Age 18)		
Initial Education & Training	On-the-Job Training & Initial Certification	Recertification
<p><i>USA-S Membership:</i> Recommended, but not required.</p> <p><i>Previous Certifications:</i> Timer.</p> <p><i>Clinic:</i> VSI-approved training clinic preferred. By prior arrangement, a one-hour orientation session prior to first training session is acceptable.</p> <p><i>Test:</i> Timer.</p>	<p>Complete a minimum of four sessions of training at VSI-sanctioned swim meets working under the direction of a certified Timing Equipment Operator.</p> <p>Prior to one of the training sessions, perform a complete set-up (including a manual set-up) and check-out of the timing system.</p> <p>Work one session each as a Timing Judge trainee and a Recorder trainee.</p> <p>Upon satisfactory completion of the initial training sessions, work an additional session as the primary Timing Equipment Operator, under the observation of an assigned Timing Equipment Operator. Receive positive recommendations from the Trainer and Referee.</p> <p>The District Officials Chairperson will issue a certification card upon the satisfactory completion of all the training requirements.</p>	<p>Work a minimum of four sessions per year. If certified in multiple administrative positions, work two or more sessions in each additional certified position.</p> <p>Based on satisfactory performance.</p>

Timing Judge (Minimum Age 18)		
Initial Education & Training	On-the-Job Training & Initial Certification	Recertification
<p><i>USA-S Membership:</i> Recommended, but not required.</p> <p><i>Previous Certifications:</i> Timer.</p> <p><i>Clinic:</i> VSI-approved training clinic preferred. By prior arrangement, a one-hour orientation session prior to first training session is acceptable.</p> <p><i>Test:</i> Timer. Must pass Timing Judge test with a minimal passing grade of 80% or better.</p>	<p>Complete a minimum of three sessions of training at VSI-sanctioned swim meets working under the direction of a certified Timing Judge.</p> <p>Work one session each as a Timing Equipment Operator and a Recorder trainee.</p> <p>Upon satisfactory completion of the initial training sessions, work an additional session as the primary Timing Judge, under the observation of an assigned Timing Judge. Receive positive recommendations from the Trainer and Referee.</p> <p>The District Officials Chairperson will issue a certification card upon the satisfactory completion of all the training requirements.</p>	<p>Work a minimum of four sessions per year. If certified in multiple administrative positions, work two or more sessions in each position certified (four minimum for Timing Equipment Operator).</p> <p>Based on satisfactory performance.</p>

Recorder (Minimum Age 18)		
Initial Education & Training	On-the-Job Training & Initial Certification	Recertification
<p><i>USA-S Membership:</i> Recommended, but not required.</p> <p><i>Previous Certifications:</i> Timer.</p> <p><i>Clinic:</i> VSI-approved training clinic preferred. By prior arrangement, a one-hour orientation session prior to first training session is acceptable.</p> <p><i>Test:</i> Timer.</p>	<p>Complete a minimum of three sessions of training at VSI-sanctioned swim meets working under the direction of a certified Recorder.</p> <p>Work one session each as a Timing Equipment Operator and a Timing Judge trainee.</p> <p>Upon satisfactory completion of the initial training sessions, work an additional session as the primary Recorder, under the observation of an assigned Recorder. Receive positive recommendations from the Trainer and Referee.</p> <p>The District Officials Chair will issue a certification card upon the satisfactory completion of all the training requirements.</p>	<p><i>Minimum Number of Sessions:</i> Work a minimum of four sessions per year. If certified in multiple administrative positions, work two or more sessions in each position certified (four minimum for Timing Equipment Operator).</p> <p>Based on satisfactory performance.</p>

Administrative Supervisor (Minimum Age 21)		
Initial Education & Training	On-the-Job Training & Initial Certification	Recertification
<p><i>USA-S Membership:</i> Recommended, but not required.</p> <p><i>Previous Certifications:</i> Timing Equipment Operator, Timing Judge, Recorder</p>	<p>No formal training requirements exist for this position, but normally the Administrative Supervisor will be recognized as an expert in all three administrative positions, and will also exhibit the leadership qualities needed to help ensure that the administrative officials function as a cohesive whole.</p>	<p><i>Minimum Number of Sessions:</i> Work a minimum of eight sessions including two each of Timing Judge and Recorder, and four sessions of Timing Equipment Operator. Sessions worked as an assigned Administrative Supervisor may be counted in place of the above sessions.</p> <p>Based on satisfactory performance.</p>

Clerk-of-Course (Minimum Age 18)		
Initial Education & Training	On-the-Job Training & Initial Certification	Recertification
<p><i>USA-S Membership:</i> Recommended, but not required.</p> <p><i>Previous Certifications:</i> None.</p> <p><i>Clinic:</i> VSI-approved training clinic preferred. By prior arrangement, a 1-hour orientation session prior to first training session is acceptable.</p> <p><i>Test:</i> Timer. Must pass Clerk-of-Course test with a minimal passing grade of 80% or better.</p>	<p>Complete a minimum of two sessions of training at VSI-sanctioned swim meets working under the direction of a certified Clerk-of-Course.</p> <p>Upon satisfactory completion of the two initial training sessions, work an additional session in which you will act as the primary Clerk-of-Course, under the observation of an assigned Clerk-of-Course. Receive positive recommendations from the Trainer and Referee.</p> <p>The District Officials Chair will issue a certification card upon the satisfactory completion of all the training requirements.</p>	<p><i>Minimum Number of Sessions:</i> Work a minimum of four sessions per year.</p> <p>Based on satisfactory performance.</p>