



Virginia Swimming, Inc.  
Officials Committee  
**RECOMMENDED PRACTICE**



**RADIO PROCEDURE & ETIQUETTE**

## SUMMARY

The use of headsets or radios (hereafter referred to as radios) can improve the efficiency with which communication takes place among deck officials, however, their improper use can lead to problems that would otherwise be avoidable. This document is intended to provide general guidance for the use of radios at VSI sanctioned meets.

## ISSUE

Depending upon staffing levels, the configuration of the pool, and the level of the meet, radios might be used in a variety of different fashions. One typical scenario involves the use of one or more chief judges. The chief judge functions as an intermediary between the stroke & turn judges and the referee. Use of the chief judge allows the stroke & turn officials to remain within their jurisdiction while the chief judge assumes the responsibility for communicating information about the infraction to the referee. An alternative scenario might involve each of the individual stroke & turn officials having a radio and reporting infractions directly to the referee. Although different scenarios will dictate the use of specific procedures, and different meet referees might use different procedures, there are some general guidelines that will govern the use of radios in all instances.

## COMMITTEE DECISION

The Virginia Swimming Officials Committee is publishing this recommended practice to take effect throughout the LSC commencing with the 2002 Long Course season:

### **General Guidelines:**

1. Always assume that an athlete, coach, or parent with another radio is listening to your conversation, and conduct your communication in a professional and responsible manner.
2. Radios are to be used strictly for the efficient administration of a meet.
3. Except in highly unusual situations, starters should not use a radio.

4. Radios should never be used to call attention to a swimmer (i.e. one official should not use the radio to ask other officials to observe a swimmer's stroke, turn, or finish).
5. Radios should never be used to tell jokes or off color stories of any kind.
6. Abusive language or swearing of any kind, in any language, should never be used.
7. Radios should never be used to talk about any coach, swimmer, parent, or volunteer.
8. Communication of situations dealing with meet operations should be limited to those situations in which a "public announcement" would not cause embarrassment or harm.
9. Some radios can be switched to "voice activated" or "VOX" which can lead to the transmission of any audible activity. It is therefore important to make sure that these radios are switched to "manual" mode before they are used.

**Communication of Disqualifications:** It is the responsibility of the meet referee, or the deck referee in the absence of a meet referee, to establish the specific protocol to be used for the communication of potential disqualifications. The protocol should cover:

- (i) how communications should flow from the stroke & turn official to the chief judge (if being used) or deck referee, and from the chief judge to the deck referee;
- (ii) who has the responsibility for writing the disqualification, and
- (iii) how the disqualification report is to be signed by the stroke & turn official, chief judge, and a referee.

Ordinarily, the person approving or disapproving the disqualification and signing the disqualification form should be the deck referee for the event/heat in question. The deck referee should obtain sufficient information to make this decision, usually through the standard three questions that would be used in face-to-face communication directly with a stroke & turn official making a call. When chief judges are being used, it is important that they are either certified referees or stroke & turn officials with sufficient knowledge and experience that they can recommend approval or disapproval in most ordinary circumstances.

A suggested protocol for use with a chief judge is as follows:

- Upon observing a raised hand, the chief judge will: immediately obtain the lane number and report to the referee: "Potential disqualification in lane # \_\_\_\_, turn end,
- Pose the standard three questions [Where were you? What did you see? What rule does that violate?] to the stroke & turn official, and after obtaining the required information, radio the deck referee: "I have a

disqualification in event # \_\_\_\_, heat # \_\_\_\_, lane # \_\_\_\_, for \_\_\_\_\_. I recommend confirmation/ the call not be accepted/consultation.” [Where a chief judge is not used, the recommendation should be omitted]

- Referee: “The disqualification in event # \_\_\_\_, heat # \_\_\_\_, lane # \_\_\_\_ is confirmed/not accepted/I require additional information.”
- If the disqualification is approved, the chief judge completes the Disqualification Report has the stroke & turn official review it for accuracy and sign it, and initials next to the official's signature.
- Depending upon availability of referees or runners, the chief judge will either remain in place or bring the DQ slip to the deck referee for a signature. Deck Referees are responsible for ensuring that DQ slips are correctly completed; however, when Chief Judges complete the slip for the Judge making the call, the Deck Referee may choose under certain circumstances to correct errors rather than dismissing the DQ. Corrections should generally be made on a clean DQ Report to avoid confusion.

Note: ***Extended*** conversations concerning the details of a disqualification should not take place over the radio. If additional information is needed beyond that which can be briefly communicated, the deck referee should have another deck referee step in and should then go confer with the stroke & turn official, or the stroke & turn official or chief judge should come to the deck referee. In any event however, the deck referee must be just as certain in his or her understanding of the call as would be the case in face-to-face discussion before confirming a call.

The Officials Committee welcomes thoughts, comments, concerns, and experiences with this procedure from the VSI officiating and coaching community.

Approved: 9 June 2002