

# Whistle Start

## CLARIFICATION

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Early interpretations of the whistles by the referee have created some confusion among LSCs as to what is appropriate. Initially, it was stated that 3 short whistles were to be used which is also shown in the Starters Training Video. It has been brought to the Officials Committee's attention that this is a direct conflict with current communication procedures utilized by lifeguards in facilities that have American Red Cross trained staffs. As stated on page 97 in the AMERICAN RED CROSS - LIFEGUARDING TODAY manual:

### *COMMUNICATION*

*When you recognize an emergency is occurring, you need to communicate the situation to your safety team. You communicate with other lifeguards and staff with special signals.*

*Every facility has a communication system that all staff must use. Systems vary depending on the type of facility and the number of staff. The signals used also vary among facilities, although certain signals are common. Signals must be simple, clear, and easily understood. Methods of communication include -*

***The whistle.*** *Use the whistle sparingly and only when needed. The following are examples of whistle signals:*

***To get the attention of a swimmer - One short blast.***

***To get the attention of another staff member - Two short blasts.***

### ***TO ACTIVATE THE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN -***

#### ***THREE SHORT BLASTS***

***To clear the water - One long blast***

The Starters Training Video is going to be revised and the procedure correctly explained and demonstrated. The Officials Committee is asking that the SHORT SERIES OF WHISTLES (as stated in the rule book) be implemented so that the Red Cross plan is not jeopardized. In order to do so, use the following guidelines:

1. use a minimum of 4 or 5 short whistles (or chirps). This should only be loud enough to get all lanes in the next heat's attention in preparation for their swim.

2. The suggested procedure is to use the tongue on the end of the whistle as you exhale to create the short pause between each whistle in the series.

3. The Long whistle will still be used to step the next heat up/in and alert the venue that a race is about to start.

The committee feels that this protocol will achieve our goal of consistency and cooperation between USA Swimming and the American Red Cross.

**Note: When arriving at the meet, the meet referee should coordinate safety protocols and procedures with the facility director.**