

Up the Ladder - OSOA

The People Involved

Swimming officials at all levels in Canada are entirely volunteers and are dedicated to the development of the sport of competitive swimming.

The Level I Candidate:

Parents of new swimmers, students, local service club members, master swimmers, any interested parties, and some of the swimmers themselves may become officials.

The Level II and III Candidate:

Those who are interested in moving up the ladder, and increasing their value as an official to their club, as the clubs conduct meets.

The Level IV (Senior) Candidate:

Level IV involves those officials who have worked actively at Level III for at least 1 year and have given every indication of continued participation. As a successful candidate they will become eligible to be the Session Referee for any swim meet planned by their club or Region.

The Level V (Master) Candidate:

Level V officials, who have obtained considerable experience at all levels of meets including national calibre meets and have demonstrated a dedication to continuing active officiating, are eligible for elevation.

The Club Officials' Chairperson (COC)

The OSOA recommends that each club appoint an officials' chairperson. This person should play a major role in both developing and advancing officials within the club. He or she should organize clinics for club parents and other interested parties, and keep records.

The COC has the responsibility to communicate, to the club officials, the availability of regional, provincial, and national clinics and seminars as well as relevant publications concerning rules. The COC also has the responsibility of submitting a copy of the Clinic Certification Form (or facsimile) to the Regional Officials Representative (ROR) as completed, and of notifying the ROR of any officials who have met the requirements for Level II or Level III status (note that Level III status must be confirmed and signed off by the ROR before the Level III pin is presented).

We expect our ever-improving swimmers to perform to their maximum potential. We, in turn, have an obligation to provide them with an adequate number of trained officials so that swim meets can be run efficiently and professionally.

The Regional Officials' Representative (ROR)

Each of the six regions of Ontario has two officials' representatives who are elected by regional Level III, IV and V officials at annual regional meetings. Their responsibilities are shared and include the following:

- monitor clinics within the region;
- co-ordinate evaluations;
- set up senior seminars;
- provide leadership within the regions for presentation of clinics, officiating and on the pool deck;
- maintain regional Official's records;
- evaluate candidates for Senior and Master official status;
- present Level III, IV and V pins to successful candidates;
- motivate, encourage, and recommend candidates to the position of Senior/Master official status;
- attend OSOA meetings, representing their regions;
- promote excellence and consistency in officiating within their regions;
- work with COC's to ensure that club meets are adequately staffed in accordance with *CSW 1.2.1*;
- assist all clubs to conform to the required Club Development Plan in order to host meets;
- have an awareness of the resources available in the region and encourage clubs to appoint COC's and assist them in developing officials;
- make recommendations to the Region's Sanction Officer regarding Sanctions.

It is recommended that the ROR be a member of the region's Board of Directors.

The Ontario Swimming Officials' Association (OSOA)

The following reflect the operations of OSOA:

Terms of Reference

1. This Association is established under the authority of the by-laws of Swim Ontario.
2. There shall be two members from each region plus a representative from Master Swimming.
3. The Association will elect a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary and a Treasurer to serve a term of two years. In the event of a vacancy, an Interim Chairperson will be elected for the remainder of the term. Signing officers will be appointed at this time. Elections are to take place at the OSOA AGM. The President determines its sub-committee structure each term.
 - A quorum at all meetings shall be 50% plus one of the members.
 - The President shall vote only in the case of a tie.
4. The President or delegate shall be the representative from this Association to the Ontario Board of Directors and the National Officials Committee (NOC).
5. The Association will meet at the call of the President but not fewer than three times a year. Meetings at the discretion of the Board may be by teleconference.
6. The purpose of this Association is to promote excellence and consistency in officiating within the Province of Ontario.
7. The Association will be responsible for the evaluation of all applicants for Senior and Master official status (Master status must be ratified/approved by the OSOA Board, then by the NOC Chair).
8. The association will investigate all matters referred to it by the Board of Directors or by the regions and make recommendations to the Board or regions as required.
9. The association will provide leadership for clinics and seminars.
10. The Association has the responsibility for developing and maintenance of educational material. (Powerpoint clinic presentations and corresponding questionnaires).
11. Should there be a conflict between these terms of reference and the By-Laws of the Swim Ontario Board of Directors, the By-Laws of the Board of Swim Ontario will take precedence.
12. Members of the Committee shall be responsible for monitoring and evaluating clinics, seminars and meets.
13. This association will provide the leadership for rule interpretation in conjunction with the National Officials Committee (NOC) and FINA, and may make recommendations on rule changes to the NOC.
14. These terms of reference may be amended by a simple majority of the association.

Requirements for Position on the Board of the Ontario Swimming Officials Association

1. Regional Representatives should be Master Officials; where an interested Master official is not available, a Senior official may serve; in this instance, the Senior official may not be an evaluator.
2. Members must attend the OSOA meetings according to the terms of reference for the OSOA and abide by those terms of reference.

Rationale:

Because the above terms require experience and knowledge, it is mandatory that all OSOA members be able to meet these requirements. All regions have Master Officials; consequently, no region should be represented by less than a Master Official.

N.B. Due to the infrequency of meetings and the workload involved, as well as the importance of regional representation, regional "reps" who are unable to attend an OSOA meeting are encouraged to send a substitute.

The Certification Process

The following summarizes the requirements for completing each official's level:

LEVEL I: RED

Trains you to be a Timer, Marshal and a Safety Marshal. You must be at least 14 years of age in order to:

- Participate in a SNC/OSOA approved clinic (Timekeeper/Marshal/Safety Marshal);
- Answer the appropriate questionnaire.

You will receive your Red pin and an Official's Record Card (Deck Evaluation Card). You need to:

- Obtain two separate deck evaluations for sessions worked as a Timer;
- Keep this card to record other clinics and deck certifications as you progress as an official;
- Gain experience on deck outside of your own pool;
- The candidate's club is responsible for purchase of Red Pin and card. The Club Officials Chair awards the Red Pin and card.

Note: It is required that officials demonstrate competence in a position before requesting a signature for on deck certification of that position. Officials must notify the Referee of a request for evaluation prior to the start of a session. Officials are allowed only one sign-off per position per meet. Sign-offs in different positions are permitted in the same meet.

LEVEL III: WHITE

You must be:

- 16 years of age;
- Certified at Level I.

Then:

- Attend clinics & answer questionnaires in strokes and turns & one other of the Level II/III positions listed; **and**
- Have two (2) on-deck certifications for each of those two positions.

Note: HEAD LANE TIMEKEEPER is included with STROKES AND TURNS; both count as one position.

When complete:

- Submit documentation to your Club Officials Chair.
- The candidate's club is responsible for the purchase of White Pin. The Club Officials Chair awards the White Pin.

LEVEL III: ORANGE

Any official acting as a Referee during a session must have a minimum of Level III certification.

You must be:

- Certified at Level II.

Then:

- Attend **all** clinics and complete questionnaires for **all** of the positions listed under Level II;

Level II Clinics available

- Judge of Stroke/Inspector of Turns/Head Lane Timekeeper
- Clerk of Course
- Chief Timekeeper
- Chief Finish Judge¹
- Chief Judge Electronics¹
- Meet Manager²
- Recorder/Scorer³
- Starter

¹Positions combined; separate signoffs not required, but one must be CFJ; recommended that one signoff be obtained in each position, as basic knowledge of electronics is an asset when moving up the ladder.

²Recommended to manage 1-2 meets with the assistance of an experienced official before performing Meet Manager on your own, and requesting first signoff (2 signoffs required)

³Deck signoff not required, but clinic must be taken.

- Certify in three (3) **additional** positions listed under Level II by obtaining two (2) successful deck evaluations in each position;
- Conduct one (1) clinic under the direction of a Level V official, or at the regional clinics;
- Attend the Referee clinic and answer the questionnaire.

When complete:

- Submit documentation (including log of all meets worked) to and request meeting with your Regional Officials' Representative (usually via your Club Officials Chair).
- The Regional Officials' Representative is responsible for confirming all Level 3 requirements have been met and awarding the Orange Pin. The candidate's region provides Orange Pin.

Note: The awarding of Level III to any official requires that the information of the clinics taken and the deck evaluations on the Officials Card be accepted by both of the RORs before Level III becomes official and the Level III pin and name tag are presented to the official.

NB: It is required that an official moving up the ladder keep a log of all meets and positions worked over the years. Candidates for Level III and above must develop a broad base of experience by officiating at a wide variety of meets at several different pool venues, including double-ended meets.

LEVEL IV: GREEN

A Level IV Official can be the Meet Referee for any Sanctioned Meet in Ontario. To become a Level IV Official you need to be successfully evaluated as a Referee.

At the time of evaluation you must have:

- Served one (1) year as a qualified Level III official, having worked a minimum of five (5) meet sessions as a referee;
- During the period spent as a Level III official, have completed three (3) favourable PTRs in the position of Referee at three different meets, by three (3) different Master Officials;
- Fully completed certification at all Level II / III positions;
- Completed a Referee's clinic within the previous 2 years;
- Conducted at least two (2) clinics at level II within the previous year under the direction of a Level V official, or at regional clinics;
- Attended a Regional Seminar / Clinic.

In preparation:

- Enlist the guidance of your Regional Officials Representative, and arrange to be reviewed as a referee, obtaining PTRs (a complete understanding of the PTR and its role in attaining Level IV is essential: see text box at right).
- Notify the Regional Officials Representative of your desire for evaluation at Senior level, presenting the 3 required, completed PTRs in the position of Referee.

Note: Regional Officials Representative must discuss with the candidate his/her readiness for evaluation; however, the final decision to be evaluated lies with the candidate. Arrangements for evaluation must be made through the Regional Officials

The Personal Training Record (PTR)

The PTR remains an integral part of the evaluation process for all Levels as a record of observation.

It is not an evaluation form.

It may be used, as specified, as often as the official wishes, in order to keep a record of his/her improvement in the position of Referee. It is also used in preparation for evaluation. An explanation of its use as such is included with the description of the requirements for Levels IV and V.

The PTR form can be obtained by following this link:

http://www.swimontario.com/external/uploads/forms/Personal_Training_Record.pdf

Note: The responsibility to obtain completed PTR's lies with the candidate. These must be presented to the Regional Officials Representative with a copy of signed-off certification card before an evaluation can take place.

Representative. **All candidates should note that a successful evaluation is not guaranteed. Success will depend on the candidate being able to demonstrate to the evaluators the knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective referee.**

Evaluation at a pre-arranged meet includes:

- Completion by the candidate of first two sections of the Senior Official [Evaluation Form](#) (web address below; candidate prints and takes to evaluation);
- Evaluation by two Master Officials designated by OSOA, while working two sessions as Referee;
- Attendance at a debriefing with the evaluators;
- Submission of completed/signed Evaluation Form to the Regional Officials Representative, for OSOA approval;
- The Regional Officials' Representative is responsible for awarding the Green Pin. OSOA provides the Green Pin.

Web address for form:

[http://www.swimontario.com/external/uploads/forms/Level_4_\(Senior\)_official_certification_form.doc](http://www.swimontario.com/external/uploads/forms/Level_4_(Senior)_official_certification_form.doc)

Following successful evaluation Level IV, the candidate's name may be placed on the list for future evaluation as Level V, ensuring appropriate practice sessions are provided at away from home meets.

LEVEL V: BLUE

This is the highest level within Canadian pin system. To become a Level V Official you need to be successfully evaluated as a Referee *or* Referee and Starter.

At the time of evaluation you must have:

- Served a minimum of one (1) year as a Senior official at SNC approved meets, officiating at a minimum of five (5) meets approved by the Regional Officials Representative, working three of the following positions: Referee, Starter, Chief Finish Judge or Chief Judge Electronics, Clerk of Course, Meet Manager;
- During the period spent as a Level IV official, have completed three (3) favourable PTRs in the position of Referee at three different meets, by three (3) different Master Officials; one of the meets must be out of region.
- Completed a Referee's clinic within the previous 2 years;
- Conducted at least two (2) clinics at level II;
- Worked a minimum of two sessions at a National level meet.

In preparation:

- Enlist the guidance of your Regional Officials Representative, and arrange to be reviewed as a referee, obtaining PTRs (a complete understanding of the PTR and its role in attaining Level V is essential: see text box at right).
- Notify the Regional Officials Representative of your desire for evaluation at Master level, presenting the 3 required, completed PTRs in the position of Referee.

Note: Regional Officials Representative must discuss with the candidate his/her readiness for evaluation; however, the final decision to be evaluated lies with the candidate. Arrangements for evaluation must be made through the Regional Officials Representative. **All candidates should note that a successful evaluation is not guaranteed. Success will**

The Personal Training Record (PTR)

The PTR remains an integral part of the evaluation process for all Levels as a record of observation.

It is not an evaluation form.

It may be used, as specified, as often as the official wishes, in order to keep a record of his/her improvement in the position of Referee. It is also used in preparation for evaluation. An explanation of its use as such is included with the description of the requirements for Levels IV and V.

The PTR form can be obtained by following this link:

http://www.swimontario.com/external/uploads/forms/Personal_Training_Record.pdf

Note: The responsibility to obtain completed PTR's lies with the candidate. These must be presented to the Regional Officials Representative with a copy of signed-off certification card before an evaluation can take place.

depend on the candidate being able to demonstrate to the evaluators the knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective referee.

Evaluation at a pre-arranged meet includes:

- Completion by the candidate of first two sections of the Master Official [Evaluation Form](#) (web address below; candidate prints and takes to evaluation);
- Evaluation by two Master Officials designated by OSOA, while working two sessions as Referee, *or* one session as a Referee and one session as a Starter.
 - Evaluators must include one out of region evaluator;
- Attendance at a debriefing with the evaluators;
- Submission of completed/signed Evaluation Form to the Regional Officials Representative.
- The Regional Officials' Representative is responsible for awarding the Blue Pin. OSOA provides the Blue Pin.

NOTE: Level V (Master) status must be ratified/approved by the OSOA board, then by the NOC chair.

Web address for form:

[http://www.swimontario.com/external/uploads/forms/Level_5_\(Master\)_official_certification_form.doc](http://www.swimontario.com/external/uploads/forms/Level_5_(Master)_official_certification_form.doc)

NB: In order to remain on the active list, all Level 3 and 4 (Senior) and Level 5 (Master) officials must work a minimum of two sessions at two different meets, and conduct or participate in one officials' clinic within each swimming year.

Up the Ladder to New and Greater Heights

It is necessary to advise the Club Officials Chair (COC) when you have completed the requirements for Level II or III. It is very difficult for the COC to be on top of all elevations to Level II or Level III.

By the time a candidate has completed the requirements for Level III, the motivation to continue should come primarily from the candidate him/herself. The focus should be directed to self-improvement through attendance at regional and provincial seminars, travel afield in the region, the province, and across the country. The candidate should also be active in providing more help to upcoming officials at the local club.

1. The Level III official maintains an active role in officiating at all positions (certification at all positions is mandatory before continuing to Level IV).
2. The candidate is also expected to teach clinics at all levels and to attend regional seminars.
3. Level III candidates are to secure blank PTR's from their COC, Regional Officials Representative, or the [OSOA website](#) for the purpose of completing their requirements as Referee for Senior Official (Level IV) evaluation. The minimum session length for the completion of a PTR is approximately three (3) hours.
4. The Level III candidate should request (in writing) of his/her Regional Officials' Representative that he/she be put on the list for future evaluation.
5. Candidates are encouraged to apply to their Regional Officials Representative for acceptance into the assistance program towards provincial travel for the purpose of gaining experience (Level III/IV Training Program).
6. The Regional Officials Representative, the Meet Manager of the designated meet, and the candidate for evaluation arrange with written confirmation (fax or email is fine), the details of the upcoming evaluation. The location, time, and responsibilities should be determined at this time. Candidates who must travel out of their region must arrange their own travel and accommodation.

7. By the time the candidate is to be evaluated, the OSOA [Certification of Senior Official](#) form must be completed and presented to the evaluators. *Note:* All data requested in the first two sections of the form must be completed before an evaluation can take place. The evaluators will then complete their portion and make recommendations regarding elevation to Level IV.
8. In the case of an unsuccessful evaluation, no documentation is retained by the evaluators.
 - Candidate must wait a minimum of six (6) months, and complete three additional PTRs in the position of Referee, prior to re-applying for evaluation.
9. Successful candidates will be presented with their Level III pin and name badge and Level IV pin at a suitable time and place.
10. Over the next year, Senior officials must have completed three further favourable PTR's for the position of referee at three different meets by three different Master officials, one of which is completed outside of region before seeking evaluation as a Master official. As an apprentice Level V official, the candidate will continue to teach clinics at all positions of officiating, attend regional and provincial seminars, and will travel outside the home region to work at high calibre meets. Candidates shall also work a national level meet.
 - Following successful evaluation Level IV, the candidate's name may be placed on the list for future evaluation as Level V, ensuring appropriate practice sessions are provided at away from home meets.
11. If his/her name is not already on the list for future evaluation, a potential Level V official shall notify (in writing) his/her Regional Officials Representative of his/her desire to be evaluated for Master official. The Regional Officials' Representative will then add the candidate's name to the list of future evaluations. The same procedure is followed for finding a suitable meet and notifying the officials concerned as was done for the candidate observed at Level III (step 6).
12. Prior to the elevation, the candidate must complete the necessary information in the first two sections of the [Certification of Master Official](#) form, and record details of clinics presented and National experience. The Regional Officials' Representative must sign the form, verifying that the required PTRs have been presented. This form, with the required information recorded, is presented to the evaluators prior to the start of the meet.
13. It is the responsibility of the Regional Officials Representative to familiarize the candidate with the evaluation forms and procedures prior to any evaluation for Levels IV and V.
14. The Regional Officials Representative may suggest that a candidate gain further experience before being evaluated. However, the final decision on evaluation lies with the candidate. **All candidates should note that a successful evaluation is not guaranteed. Success will depend on the candidate being able to demonstrate to the evaluators the knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective referee.**

The Documentation & Forms Needed

Online versions of forms required for candidates moving up the officiating ladder are available through the OSOA website

http://www.swimontario.com/index_o.php?id=1673

or, if viewing this document electronically, through direct links below:

Forms relating to officials' development:

[Personal Training Record \(PTR\)](#)

[Starter's assessment form](#)

[Referee's assessment form](#)

[Level III / IV / V Training program application](#)

[Certification of Senior Official](#)

[Certification of Master Official](#)

[All On-line Clinic Documentation](#)

Other documentation:

[Officials' Clinic Certification form \(letter size print\)](#)

[Officials' Clinic Certification form \(legal size print\)](#)

[Disqualification \(DQ\) slip](#)

[Wording for disqualifications](#)

[NOC travel expense form](#)

Incentive Programs For Officials

The Ontario Swimming Officials Association has developed or administers several programs to recognize the dedication and outstanding achievements of officials in the area of officiating.

These programs are designed to encourage and inspire development in the officiating ranks. The following is a list of the current incentive programs:

- Swim Ontario Recognition Awards
- Level III \ IV Training Program
- Level V Assistance (JG Memorial Fund)
- Senior / Master Officials' Seminars
- Elizabeth Collins Ralph Trophy
- NOC Official of the Year

Looking Ahead

Currently, a list of officials throughout the province is being developed through OSOA. It is imperative that a copy of the Officials' Tracking Form be forwarded to the Regional Officials Representative so that the list can be updated continually.

Record keeping lies in the hands of the two Regional Officials Representatives; however, they rely on information provided to them by the Club Officials' Chairperson. The success of this procedure depends upon the following key elements:

- The appointment of a COC in each club.
- The reporting of successful upgrading by each individual candidate to the ROR via the COC.

Note: The awarding of Level III to any official requires that the information of the clinics taken and the deck evaluations on the official's card be accepted by one of the RORs before Level III becomes official and the Level III pin and name tag are presented to the official.

And finally...

Not all situations can be covered on paper. Club Officials Chairs should keep their lines of communication with their Regional Officials Representatives open, and obtain advice or clarifications

when necessary. Should you have comments on the guide, please raise them with the Ontario Swimming Officials Association board of directors through your Regional Officials Representative.

Swimming websites:

www.osoa.ca

www.swimontario.com

www.swimming.ca

www.fina.org

www.mymisc.ca

www.usaswimming.org

OFFICIALS' CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Have a POSITIVE ATTITUDE when going to work at a meet.
2. BE AT THE POOL AND READY TO WORK at least 45 minutes before the session is to begin, particularly if you are doing strokes and turns. The Referee, at this time, will be giving instructions as to any rule changes or interpretations and procedures for the session.
3. REPORT PROMPTLY to the officials' area and sign in. This lets the Referee know that you have arrived. STAY IN THAT AREA. It is frustrating to have a list of people checked off and to find that they have disappeared when the briefing or meet is ready to begin.
4. ACCEPT AN ASSIGNMENT TO OFFICIATE AT A MEET ONLY IF YOU INTEND TO HONOUR THAT COMMITMENT. If, for any reason, you are unable to attend, courtesy demands that you let the person in charge of officials know as soon as possible. NEVER simply be a "no show". The swimmers suffer from your negligence.
5. ACCEPT THE ASSIGNMENT you have been given at the meet. The Meet Manager or Referee has placed you there for a reason. Also, keep in mind that it never hurts for a senior or master official to time a session, or to be the clerk of course, etc. You would be surprised at how "rusty" you have become in the interim! If you find yourself doing the same job for several sessions, a word to the Referee can usually alter the situation.
6. When you arrive at your assigned station for the session, DON'T LEAVE YOUR POST. Timers have been known to change lanes to time their own children and others have left their jobs to watch their sons/daughters compete. BE IN THE RIGHT POSITION to do your job properly.
7. In many cases, you will be officiating at a meet where your son/daughter is competing. It is a great temptation to leave the pool deck when your swimmer is done. Speak to the Referee, preferably BEFORE the session commences to ARRANGE FOR A REPLACEMENT. If you leave the deck in the middle of a session without someone to replace you, you are being unfair to both the swimmers who have not yet competed and your fellow officials who are left to carry the load.
8. KNOW THE RULES THOROUGHLY as they apply to your assigned position. It is NOT a waste of time to glance over the pertinent sections in the rule book prior to the session.
9. Officials and officiating should be as UNOBTRUSIVE and INCONSPICUOUS as possible. Do NOT be overly "officious" in your authority, particularly as it applies to stroke and turn judging and refereeing. Keep in mind that swim meets are held for swimmers: you, as an official, are there to assist them by providing adequate technical supervision for the meet.
10. BE IMPARTIAL. Be careful not to use your position to the advantage or detriment of any swimmer or team. Remember: Officials do NOT COACH NOR CHEER while working.
11. Keep in mind that the DRESS CODE is WHITES, preferably long pants for men and dress slacks or skirts for women.
12. Remember that, at any session, the REFEREE'S DECISION IS FINAL. Do not take offence if your decision is overturned.
13. Do not lecture a coach or debate disqualifications with a swimmer while working the deck. REMAIN COOL AND PROFESSIONAL AT ALL TIMES. REFER ANY QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS THAT COME YOUR WAY TO THE REFEREE.