



**Maui Channel Swim  
2026 Safety Plan**

**9.5-mile Channel Crossing Relay  
Friday, August 28st, 2026  
Lanai (Club Lanai Pier) to Ka'anapali (Black Rock) Maui, HI**



# Maui Channel Swim

9.5-Mile Channel Crossing Relay (Lanai to Maui)  
Friday, August 28, 2026 at 8:00 AM

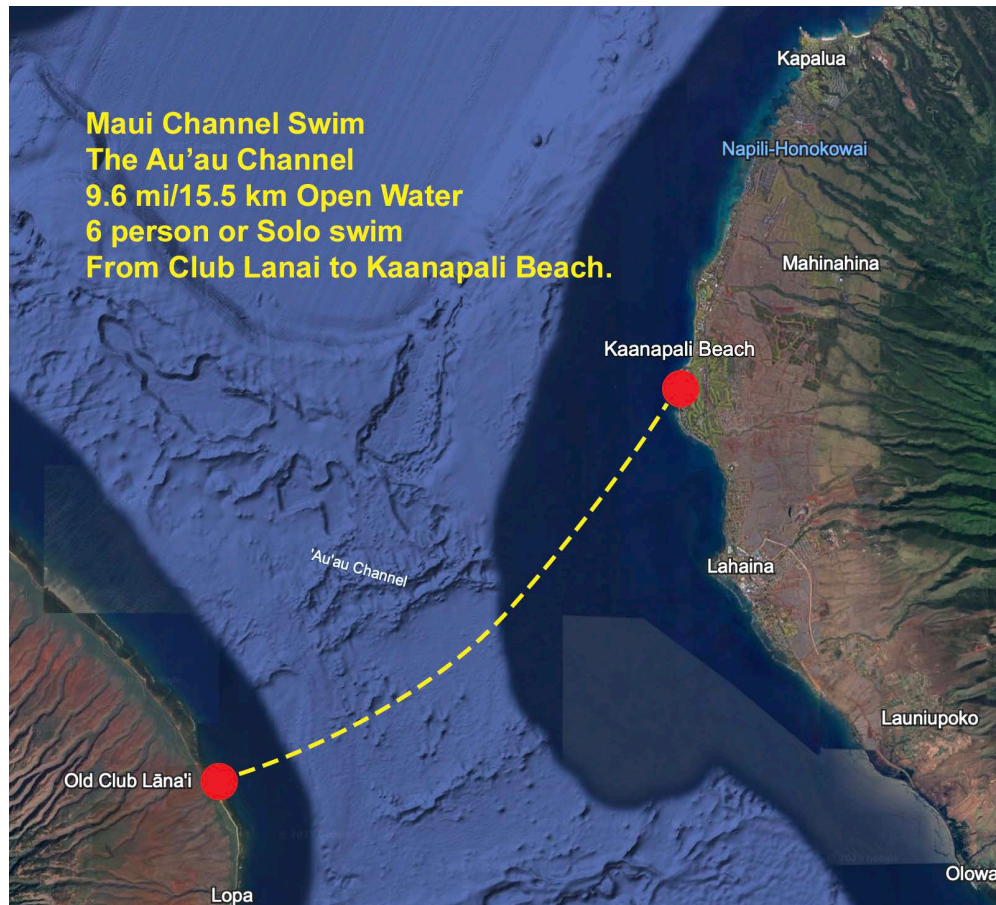




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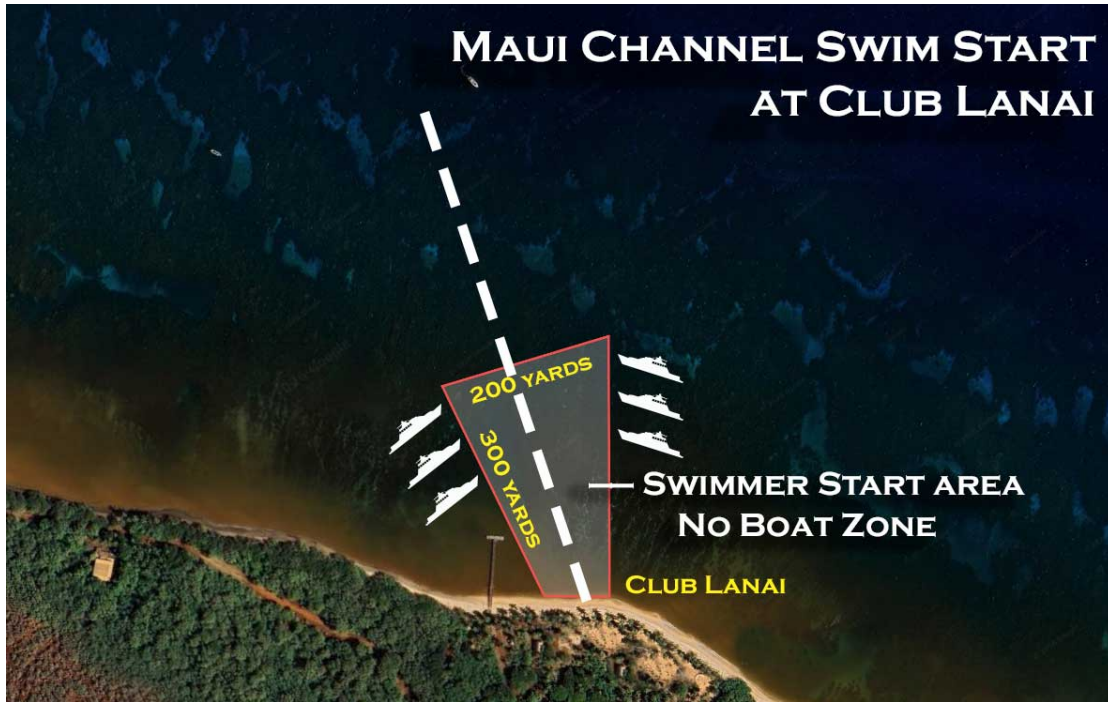
- 9.6 Mile, 15.5 km course
- 3 or 6-person relay or Solo swimmer
- Each relays swimmer swims 30 minutes Once (twice for 3 person relay), then rotates through 10-minute swims until complete or 6 hours have passed.
- Map is for reference. Finish will be in front of the Ka'anapali Beach Resort.



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### Event and Safety Plan

#### Scope and Overview:

This plan describes the safety plan taken by race management to make sure the race meets all the logistics that are in place for ALL members of all teams are safe throughout the race – and that the race is fair.

To do this, in addition to this safety plan, an EXTENSIVE Race “Notice” is prepared with specific information about safety and how each escort boat has the responsibility to be the safety marshals for their swimmers.

#### Race Plan:

- The race is a multi-person (6 or 3) relay or a solo swim from the beach/pier at Club Lanai on Lanai to the beach at Black Rock in Ka’anapali on Maui.
- Each swimmer's first leg is 30 minutes until all swimmers have completed one leg of the race, in the case of a 3-person relay, swimmers cycle through the 30 minutes twice. Succeeding legs are 10 minutes per person, keeping the same swim order, except for the Ka’anapali Beach finish leg. For the final leg, if the swimmer has passed or is close to the final orange buoy and has reached the end of their 30-minute or 10-minute leg, the team captain may elect to have this swimmer complete the race. NO CHANGES, and no boat escort/traffic is allowed inside the final buoy.
- All teams MUST be escorted by a boat, insured, legal to carry passengers with all required safety equipment, with a captain/owner of the boat at the helm (who is the safety officer responsible for all swimmers in the water).
- The boat captain/owner must meet at the captain’s meeting or with the race director before the race for a meeting at an agreed-on location to discuss race safety, responsibilities, logistics and more.
- Each boat must have a basic first aid kit capable of taking care of basic first aid including abrasions, cuts, broken limbs, etc.
- The water is open ocean (saltwater) 9.6 mile/16 km course from Lanai to Maui.
- The first 200m is out a narrow channel in water clarity that varies based on recent swells in murkiness, clearing by 200-400 yards to crystal clear water.
- The middle of the channel water conditions vary depending on winds (not much on tides) from smooth to choppy with small waves, usually building to large swells/seas of 6-10 feet in the center channel. Staying to the “right”/south of the wind line (blocked by West Maui Mountains) makes for much smoother water. The course is designed such that the West Maui Mountains block the prevailing trade winds that build during the morning (causing rougher seas) wrapping around and closing in behind the competitors as they swim to Ka’anapali.
- During the last part of the course (last mile), coming into Black Rock, the swells drop but a north wind and usually a strong northern current create choppy waters which last until about the last 300 yards which is shielded from most wind by Black Rock. The last 300 yards is an unescorted swim in clear water ending in a run up the beach to the finish line of approximately 50 yards.



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### Pre-Race Staging:

- There is a “captain’s meeting” at 5:00 PM, Thursday, August 27<sup>th</sup>. This is a mandatory meeting for all boat captains/owner, and all Team captains; and strongly encouraged for all other team members.
- There’s a pre-race meeting for lead-swimmers only on the beach at 7:45 AM – 15 minutes before race start – below high-water line at Club Lanai. Teams will be counted, and suits inspected, numbers verified on swimmers, and any final instructions given to swimmers.

### Key Personnel:

- Race Co-Director – Michael Ritter 808-298-1743
- Race Co-Director – Brandon Hazlet 808-222-3258
- Officials Boat – Jack Pope (808) 281-7926
- Safety Advisor – Jon Kaneshina (808) 357-5874
- On-course Water Patrol (jet ski) and course monitoring – Harold Teshima (808) 451-6520
- Timer – Race Directors
- Radio VHF 71
- Coast Guard – VHF Channel 16
- Fire-Rescue and Emergency Medical Services call 911. Best access to emergency services may be the Kaanapali Beach Hotel if close to finish, Mala Wharf typically fastest if mid-channel. Other locations depend upon the intentions of the boat captain. Notify Water Patrol on VHF Channel 71 for assistance.

### General Meetings:

5:00pm, Thursday, August 27 at the Airport Beach Pavilion.

Mandatory Team & Boat Captain/owner meeting. Highlight the following:

- For each team, the BOAT CAPTAIN/owner is the SAFETY OFFICER responsible for each team’s safety from when they “pick up swimmer”, through the last swimmer dropped at the beach.
- All Outboard boats are highly recommended to have properly installed propeller guards “prop guards”.
- Each boat must have a basic first aid kit.
- All engine propellers must be disengaged or off when swimmers are within 20 feet of the boat. (Turning off engines risks difficulty restarting resulting in swimmers moving ahead too far from the escort boat).
- There will be jet skis and water patrol boat(s) monitoring VHF Channel 71 to help with relaying issues, locating a swimmer if necessary, transporting someone quickly, and checking for safety issues on boats.
- Race Day (Friday, August 28<sup>th</sup> ~8:00 AM start) 7:00-7:45 AM Club Lanai Pier – Boat Arrival.
- Each Boat checks in by Radio with “lead/officials” boat.
- Depending on availability, there will be a backup boat to take on passengers if their boat becomes disabled or, for any reason, is not seaworthy. However, this is not guaranteed.



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- At the start, boats must leave a 100yd wide channel (patrolled by jet ski) while spotting their swimmers for 20 minutes. (This gives time for swimmers to spread out in space, leaving room for boats without endangering swimmers.)
- The lead off swimmer **MUST** wear a bright color swim cap (provided) with their race number large and very legible. Minimum in height of 3.5" with a minimum of .25" stroke permanent marker. Number shall be visible from both sides of cap (e.g., on the left and right side of cap). The cap will be a bright yellow color.
- If ANY BOAT or TEAM decides to leave the race for whatever reason, they **MUST** notify the Race Officials by radio, VHF 71.
- DLNR has defined an area where boats may enter the beach area to pick up/drop off swimmers for ~100yds SOUTH of a buoy off Black-Rock. **NO SWIMMING** in this area.
- There will be an 2 Orange Tetrahedral buoys 300yds off shore at the finish (approx. 200yds south of Black Rock). Swimmers **MUST** swim between these buoys. 2 more round red buoys will be near shore marking the line where **NO BOATS** may enter ... swimmers must stay in this area.
- At the finish – from the orange tetrahedral buoys to land – 1-2 kayakers or paddleboarders will be available to help escort swimmers to the beach.
- This race is conducted in the open ocean, without immediate access to emergency health care. While every effort will be made to assist getting emergency care to a boat ASAP, boats must be prepared for normal emergencies.
- This race is conducted in the open ocean with all associated hazards:
  - 6-10ft (2-3m) waves with occasional larger waves or sets of waves (swell) in the middle of the channel. These waves will break – especially in windier conditions – near the crest.
  - Intense Tropical Sunlight for 3+ hours (beware and be prepared to deal with sunstroke, heat stroke, heat exhaustion, sunburn, dehydration).
  - Sea-Life: Turtles, Jellyfish, Man-O-War, Dolphins, and Sharks have all been seen during this race various years at various times.
    - Jellyfish (and man-o-war) can be encountered while swimming. It is common on a long swim center channel to have areas where “bits” of jellyfish or man-o-war tentacles (and their nematocysts) can give little stings or “wrap” a piece around an arm, leg, body or face. The pain typically dissipates with time. Do **NOT** rub it (fires off more nematocysts increasing sting). Treatment is similar to “Box Jellyfish” below.
    - **BOX** Jellyfish are a particular hazard – and significantly more painful and dangerous. Peaking 8-10 days after full moon, 2026 a should be out of the Box jellyfish window (Full moon is August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026). (A box jellyfish calendar can be found at <http://www.waikikiaquarium.org/interact/box-jellyfish-calendar/>) While Box jellyfish are most prevalent in south facing shoreline areas, they can be in the open ocean. They normally settle into deep water as the sun rises but some can remain near the surface. “The tentacles of jellies and their relative, the Portuguese man-of-war, are lined with microscopic stinging cells (nematocysts) that are activated by touch or chemical cues. Each cell fires a barbed thread that can penetrate the skin and deliver toxin that causes a burning sensation and, sometimes, more severe reactions. Many lifeguards and doctors



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recommend rinsing the area with warm water or seawater, then applying a paste of unseasoned meat tenderizer and vinegar to the sting—this helps deactivate the toxin. However, sensitivity varies from individual to individual; some may be highly allergic to jellyfish or man-of-war stings or even to the treatment listed here and need physician's care. Use this treatment at your own risk and consult your physician in all cases."

- Sharks. There are many types of sharks. Near shore 4-6' reef sharks (Black Tip, White Tip) are not uncommon usually roaming near the bottom. In the center channel larger (10-20') sharks can be encountered. It is up to the swimmer and captain to determine if and when waters are safe if a shark is encountered. (N.B.; If leaving the water waiting for a shark (or your boat) to leave the area, boats may move parallel to the finish line only or face disqualification).

### **Race Day: (Friday, August 28st ~8:00 AM start)**

7:00-7:45 AM – Club Lanai Pier – Boat Arrival.

- Each Boat Checks in by Radio with "lead/officials" boat.
- 7:30 AM Send lead-off swimmer to beach
- 7:45 AM Non-lead-off swimmers warming up back to boats
- 7:45-8:00 AM Final Instructions to lead swimmers. Check-in number of swimmers. Verify caps and suits meet regulations.

8:00 AM – START (approximately at 8:00 AM)

8:00 AM – FINISH: Every 30 minutes for 6 cycles (3 hours), then every 10 minutes, swimmers have +/-30 second window for relay exchange (TAG).

11:00 AM (estimate) – first relay team completes race.

2:00 PM All relays MUST be completed by this time. Relays failing to do so will be disqualified and their times NOT recorded in race results. Any boat in this situation will be notified by the Finish Line personnel by Radio.

### **Race Finish / Cut Off Times:**

The official end of the race is 2pm. To maintain accountability for swimmers, the list of teams is in the hands of the race officials, and hence they will know which teams have still not completed the course. The race officials will contact the respective escort boats for any teams that has not will be allowed to do so.

The race officials will NOT leave the beach until all teams have been accounted for either by the finishing swimmer checking into the table at the beach, or by race officials personally contacting a team representative, and the team's boat captain. Race officials, team rep and boat captain, will or if captain's intention are to safely escort any swimmer to shore at a time later than the race cutoff time. All 3 entities have to agree. If the team will NOT be finishing at the beach where the check-in table is, the team MUST contact the race officials as state this.

5:00 PM – AWARDS will be given out at dinner after the banquet, location TBD



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### I. Venue Plan:

- The venue is the 'Au'au Channel one way from Lanai to Maui (Club Lanai Pier to Ka'anapali Beach, area fronting Ka'anapali Beach Resort).

### Warm-Up and Start:

- Warm-ups for all swimmers are in the reef area just offshore. Anchored boats and jet skis serve as water patrol for the race.
- A red flag will mark 1-minute to start. A horn and green flag will be sounded and dropped at the start.

### Expected Race Day Environmental Parameters:

- Expected Water Temperature – 77-79F
- Expected Air Temperature – 80-85F
- Sun – Expect mostly clear skies – all participants and officials should wear sunscreen and cover up as much as possible.
- Expected Wind – Probable trade winds LIGHT from the north at the start. Trades build and wrap around West Maui Mountains towards Lahaina as the race continues.
- Sea Life – This is a Hawaii open ocean saltwater close-to-shore environment. Near shore, it is virtually certain that small fish 1” to 18” will be seen by competitors; possibly turtles 2-5 head-to-tail in length.
  - i) It is possible but unlikely that swimmers will see manta rays, eagle rays, eels, or black/white tip reef sharks. (Reef sharks normally only in the reefs.)
  - ii) It is also possible, although unlikely, a boat or boats will encounter tiger sharks in the channel, but they are there.
  - iii) Man-o-war and Box Jellyfish. Man-o-war pieces can accumulate if there are south or southwest (aka Kona) winds. These can be tiny pieces or longer strands that can “wrap”. You’ll feel these like small stings or a line of stings around an arm. If allergic to bee-stings, and you feel any issue with difficulty breathing, flag for help. BOX JELLYFISH are a strong and dangerous jellyfish that show up 10-12 days after full moon and generally head back to deeper waters after sunrise. Some can be “caught” near shore. Waikiki is notorious for large infestations of box jellyfish every month peaking 10-11 days after full moon. Maui occasionally see a few. We will monitor for box jellies.
- Tides on 2/28/26 – Low Tide at 9:06 AM (0.34'); typically northbound currents during "Ebb". High Tide at 3:45 PM (2.25'); typically southbound current during "Flood".
- Water Clarity – dependent on recent swell, wind and rain. Typical clarity is poor within 200yds of Lanai, clear (70-100ft or more) the rest of the way.
- Ocean water quality for the race area is monitored by the State Health Department. No special testing is required.



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### Administration:

- Pre-Race meeting Thursday night, August 27th to discuss all safety and race issues 5:00 PM at the Airport Beach Pavilion, just north of Ka'anapali.
- Pre-Race (morning of swim) inspection of boats before start.
- Pre-Race (morning of swim) meeting with lead-off swimmers on the beach at Club Lanai ... includes Athlete Check, Inspection of swim suits, athletes numbering, and issued swim cap.
- Spectators may observe from any boats at discretion of boat captain as long as sufficient safety material (life jackets) are aboard. The beach at Ka'anapali is open and spectators are welcome to observe finish from there.
- Communication during the race is by radio, VHF 71, all boats should be monitoring throughout the race.

### Facilities:

- Toilets – available at the hotel ... and whatever facilities are available on each team's escort boat.
- Showers – outdoor open showers to rinse.

### Parking:

- Available at the Kaanapali Beach Resort. There is a fee for parking both for hotel guests and visitors.

### Safety During the Race:

- **Boats Independent for safety in the channel**
- Each Team is escorted by an insured boat captained by a captain or owner responsible for the safety of his/her passengers – including having a boat in proper condition to carry passengers with all the required safety equipment; and any passenger beside the boat that is swimming.
- Boat captains are instructed pre-race of their responsibilities, the communication on VHF Channel 71, and if necessary to contact Coast Guard Channel 16.
- In an emergency, boat captains can call 911 by phone or the Coast Guard on VHF Channel 16. (911 can help guide the boat to the quickest/best place to meet Fire-Rescue and Emergency Medical Services if needed). Notify Water Patrol on VHF Channel 71 for assistance.
- Boats can also contact Water Safety jet skis and boat below.

### Water Safety:

- Water Safety patrol service will be provided from approximately 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM (or at the time when race officials officially end the race). There will be 3 water safety jet ski(s) with approved operators (COM Ocean Safety Officers), monitoring.



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VHF Channel 71 with the intention of rendering aid, if necessary, to swimmers and escort boats.

- Prior to, and during the start of the race, only one (1) Water Safety jet ski will be designated to access the near-shore waters of Lanai (only if necessary). Water Safety jet ski will provide the coordination in the start channel protecting swimmers until they are “picked up” by their boats.
- For the channel portion of the race, all Water Safety jet ski(s) will serve to assist escort boats with swimmer accountability and safety.
- At the race finish, only water safety jet ski(s) will be designated to access the near-shore waters of Maui (as needed), with other available water safety resources remaining in the channel to provide service to those race participants that have not finished. At least one water patrol jet ski will be located in the last 200 yds area to assist kayaks if necessary, when boats are in the finish zone.
- In the event of an emergency all water safety resources may be summoned to render aid or provide backfill water patrol coverage at any location of the swim race. Other than in the event of an emergency, and when safe to do so, water safety jet ski will operate at slow no wake whenever near-shore, near swimmers, or as required by law.

### **Finish Kayak Escorts:**

- Kayaks and stand-up paddle boards will be provided from the orange buoys to the beach over the last 300yds of the course where boats are not allowed and while the Water Safety jet skis are monitoring the competitors still out on the course. One jet ski will stay in the same area when boats are there.

### **Course Officials:**

- Course officials including the race director will be on an “officials’ boat” with contact cell:
  - Michael Ritter (808) 298-1743 or via VHF Channel 71
  - Branden Hazlet (808) 222-3258 or via VHF Channel 71;
  - Water Safety Patrol VHF Channel 71.
- Other course officials will also be on this boat or others.
- Finish Timer will be on the beach. Race Referee will be stationed where most effective.



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### Weather Contingencies:

- Most weather conditions will not require cancelling of the race. But they are listed here...
- Strong current – current is typically north to south through the channel getting stronger near shore. Captains and Teams are informed about this and try to anticipate a finish that “flows” into the finish line.
- **Current Rule:**  
For Swimmer Safety, the "Current Rule" will be put into effect, if the current affecting swimmers progress to the finish is faster than the speed of the slowest swimmers in the race.  
This is subjective but should be if current is approx. 2 knots, or a speed equivalent to the slowest swimmer on the course.  
When the "current rule" is in effect, all lateral movement of the swimmer up or down current must be either a parallel neutral distance from the Beach finish or must move the swimmer a farther distance from the finish.  
Regardless of whether the current rule is in effect, if a swimmer is moved laterally up or down current and if that move positions the swimmer closer to the finish upon re-entry into the water, the swimmer or team will not receive a competitive finish time. They will not be disqualified, as they will be allowed to finish and receive a time, however they will not be eligible to be present in the final race standings.
- High Surf – High surf is a rarity and only a dangerous concern near shore. If necessary, the start can be moved away from land. High surf at the finish is even more rare. If surf does exist, the kayak escort will help swimmers time the finish into the beach.
- Murky Waters (from run-off or surf) – the water is often a bit murky for the first 200-300 yards then clears up to the beach at the finish.
- High Winds – if winds reach a point to make chop unsafe for the boats ... or swimmers are unsafe getting in and out of their boats, the boat captain has the right and responsibility to remove his swimmers from the race. If a swimmer is too weak to continue in heavy seas due to high winds, the boat or team captain will bring him/her in.
- Hurricane – The race will be cancelled and evacuated following directions from County officials in case of Hurricane. If a hurricane is passing nearby causing expected strong or unusual currents Ocean Safety considers dangerous, the race may be cancelled or adjusted for safety.
- Tsunami – The race will be cancelled and evacuated following directions from State and County officials in case of Tsunami.
- Lightning or dangerous conditions at sea – the boat captain is responsible for the safety of his passengers and will pull swimmers out of the water and get to safety away from unsafe conditions as best he/she can.



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### Closing the Course:

- Lightning or dangerous conditions during the event – As determined by Race Director, Safety Director and Head Referee the course will be cleared. A “CLEAR THE COURSE” call will be made with a series of 3 long blasts on air horns or whistles, waving of the Yellow Flags as well as announced over all radios from the Command Center. Swimmers will head directly into shore area, and seek immediate shelter, closest to their shore arrival. Immediately as soon as conditions are acceptable, ALL competitors should seek any meet official, and inform them of their safe arrival to shore. All boats are to remain on the course until ALL swimmers have made it to shore or picked up by any of the course, safety and officials boats. Any boat that picks up a swimmer should immediately notify race officials through the Command Center, with the name/number of their athlete. A complete race will be determined by the rules of USA Swimming. If the race is ruled incomplete, the day and time of the restarted race will be determined by the Head Referee, Race Committee and Race Director.

### Course Evacuation Plan: (The following priorities will occur in the order listed below, if the Safety Officer, Meet Referee, or Meet Director becomes aware of any situation requiring abandonment (including inclement weather):

1. Radio Communication to Officials and Safety Personnel on Course.
2. Any Race Official, Boat Captain, Safety Personnel, Water Safety Patrol, etc. should issue 3 loud short blast whistle command, and instruct all swimmers to evacuate the course. If safe and practicable to do so, communicate course evacuation actions or information on VHF Channel 71.
3. Announcer instructs all swimmers, safety personnel, and Officials, to exit the course. If the reason for abandonment is inclement weather, announcer will instruct all athletes, coaches, parents, and meet personnel to go to the shelter, team bus, or vehicles, until inclement weather passes.
4. Everyone will be instructed to go to vehicles, until safe conditions return.