

What is an official?

An official is usually a parent/relative of a swimmer who helps out on the pool deck during a swim meet. Parents in most official positions have taken a course through Swimming Canada or Swim Alberta and have completed mentor shifts with experienced officials. Each and every position is necessary for running a successful meet and parents progressing through the different levels helps ensure we can host meets at our pools. Being on deck brings you closer to the action and excitement and is often the best seat for watching your own kids complete.

What are the different types of officials?

Safety Marshal: The safety marshals are present on deck during the warm up sessions and are responsible for the safety of the warm up and ensure all warm up procedures are followed. The safety marshal wears a bright reflective vest to ensure they are easily identified. The safety marshal reports any warm up infractions to the referee and any injuries to the lifeguard(s) and meet manager. Safety marshals must complete the [Safety Marshall](#) course online prior to being on deck.

Event Marshal: The event marshals are responsible for ensuring the swimmers are organized in their respective heats and lanes PRIOR to their race. In a development level meet (with newer/younger swimmers), this job is one of the most important jobs to keep the meet running on time and ensure the kids don't miss their races. At the higher level meets there is usually not an event marshal with swimmers responsible to get themselves to the block on time. There is no course for event marshal but volunteers need to be comfortable talking to the kids and not afraid to yell!

Timekeeper: As the name suggests, the timekeeper obtains and records the time for the swimmer in their lane. At our meets this is typically with a semi-automatic Dolphin system (watch starts automatically with the starter & timekeeper stops the watch when the swimmer touches). At other meets the timer uses a plunger for a touchpad system and occasionally a stopwatch. With a stopwatch or semiautomatic system there are usually 3 timers in a lane, one to record the time, one to take splits (when swimmer swims more than 2 laps) and the 3rd as a backup. You must complete the online [Introduction to Officiating \(Timekeeper\)](#) course and complete 2 shadow sessions before becoming certified as a timer.

Chief Timekeeper : The chief timer ensures all lanes have timers, and working stopwatches and will cover for a timer if needed. The chief timer starts a stopwatch with every race and will take the final time for the heat winner or for another swimmer in the case of a watch malfunction. The chief timer may give the officials briefing to the timekeepers and ensures all timekeepers are doing their duties. The chief timekeeper is usually an experienced timer/official . You must complete the online [Chief Timekeeper](#) course and complete 2 shadow sessions before becoming certified as chief timekeeper

Starter: The starter is responsible for sending the swimmers off the block and making sure each swimmer leaves on time. The referee whistles to indicate the swimmers should get on the blocks and then once swimmers are on the block the starter says “take your marks” and then presses the button to signal the start of the race. The starter is usually an experienced official who is confident speaking into a microphone . There is a self-directed online course for [Starter](#) and an official must complete two shadow shifts before being qualified as a starter.

Inspector of Turns: First part of the “stroke & turn judge”. Stands at one of the ends of the pool and observes swimmers during the start, end and turns ensuring they follow all the rules. If a swimmer violates the rules, then the inspector of turns creates a disqualification slip which is given to the referee. The Inspector of Turns and Judge of Strokes may rotate positions on deck during a session at the discretion of the referee.

Judge of Stroke: The second part of a “stroke and turn judge”. The judge walks along the long edge of the pool and observe swimmer’s “style” of stroke to ensure proper technique. If a swimmer violates the rules for the “stroke” a disqualification slip is written similar to above. The [Judge of Stroke & Inspector of Turns course](#) is available as a self-directed learning online course. Completion of the course must be reported to [Swim Alberta](#) and two shadow shifts must be done before becoming certified as a Stroke and Turn judge. Officials usually train in this position after a year of timing.

Clerk of Course: The clerk of course works with the meet manager and head coach to “set up the meet” including entering all the events into a meet file where coaches download their swimmers and events for the meet usually a month prior to the meet. The Clerk of course accepts all the entries and is responsible for “seeding” the meet into heats and lanes based on entry times and is responsible to ensure all swimmers and events are entered correctly prior to the meet. The clerk of course takes any scratches/ no shows during the meet and when the meet is over ensures all the times are submitted to Swimming Canada so they are officially recorded. The clerk of course must be available for all sessions of a swim meet and also works before and after the meet. There is an online course for [Clerk of course](#) and an official must complete two shadow shifts prior to being certified.

Recorder/Scorer: The recorder / scorer is responsible for ensuring the appropriate finish time is entered for each swimmer for each race using a swimming software program (HY-tech meet manager) . The recorder / scorer determines placing for each event and posts the results and prints labels for awards. The recorder/scorer works with the Clerk of Course and/ or Chief Finish Judge during the meet. There is a self directed online course for [Recorder/Scorer](#). This course is usually taken in conjunction with the CFJ/CJE course below.

Chief Finish Judge (CFJ) : The CFJ is responsible for ensuring ACCURATE results are assigned to every swimmer in every event. The CFJ should watch the finish of every race and view the operations of the timing system. If there is a time discrepancy between timers it is the CFJ’s job to determine the most accurate time for the swimmer. The CFJ works with the Clerk of Course and or Recorder/ Scorer during the meet. In a meet with electronic timing system, the CFJ is

referred to the Chief Judge of Electronics (CJE). There is a self-directed online course for [CFJ/CJE](#) and 2 shadow shifts must be completed before an official is fully qualified.

Meet Manager: The meet manager is responsible for planning and organizing every aspect of the meet and making sure it runs smoothly from set up to clean up. The meet manager organizes the dates/pool space with the head coach, creates the meet package and registers the meet with Swimming Canada/Swim Alberta months in advance. The meet manager communicates with the volunteer coordinator and officials coordinator to make sure all the volunteer positions are filled. The meet manager meets with the coaches at the start of the meet laying out expectations/ any changes from the meet package and is on deck for the entire meet to deal with any issues that arise. The meet manager is usually an experienced official . There is an online self-directed course for [Meet manager](#) and an official must complete two shadow shifts before becoming certified. This is a position that is mainly “on the job learning” as every meet runs differently.

Referee: The most important job at a swim meet, the referee has full control of the meet. The referee is responsible for enforcing the rules and confirming the pool is set up appropriately for the meet as well as reviewing/approving all disqualifications and settling any disputes with the coaches. The referee is present for ALL races and is responsible for the initiation of a race. The referee blows a long whistle blast to indicate the swimmers should get on the blocks (or in the pool for backstroke start) and then turns the race over to the starter. Becoming a referee usually takes many years of officiating as the referee must have experience in ALL of the above jobs. The referee is the most experienced official on deck.