

Safety Guidelines

for Junior Triathlon Club sessions

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JUNIORS (UNDER 18) TRAINING IN ADULT SESSIONS

The following are best practice guidelines for Triathlon Ireland (TI) junior club sessions. They are intended to provide structure and safety information to clubs. These safety guidelines should be used for all sessions with or without a coach. Specific guidelines for all types of junior sessions are included below.

Note that the instructions relating to **junior sessions** outlined below are in all cases mandatory. Junior refers to anyone under 18 years of age.

These procedures were submitted and approved by the Safeguarding Committee and CEO. All previous procedures are superseded by this version with effect from April 2021.

Any issues arising from the transition between previous procedures and these shall be determined by the CEO, in consultation, where such issues are material, with the board.

This document may be amended from time to time by Triathlon Ireland. The definitive text of this document in force from time to time is the version contained on the TI internal server. Any printed text or electronic copy held elsewhere is only a snapshot of the text at the time it is printed, copied or downloaded.

safeguarding

Any coach/leader/club volunteer working with athletes under the age of 18 on a regular and continuous basis, must undertake the following:

- Garda Vetting/Access NI through Triathlon Ireland - prior to beginning the role.
- Signed Code of conduct – Form 8/ Form 10 - prior to beginning the role.
- Attended Safeguard 1 course/ Safeguarding Children and Young People in Sport - within 3 months of beginning the role.

When holding a session that includes participants under the age of 18, those participants are the coach's/ session leader's responsibility from when the session commences until the appropriate person collects them at the end of the session. Young participants are expected to remain

in the session from beginning to end unless they have made prior arrangements to be picked up early. Clubs should have sign in and sign out sheets/online sign in for sessions.

To help with maintaining adult to junior ratios clubs might need to consider appropriate helpers such as parents and/or assistant coaches. Appropriate helpers who are assisting regularly will need to undergo the safeguarding steps above.

If a participant has to leave early or is being collected by someone other than the parent/guardian, the parent/guardian must advise the coach/ session leader of the details of the arrangement including who will be collecting the individual and when.

Clubs must complete the Safeguarding tab of the risk assessment document as part of the overall safety risk assessment for junior sessions.

A coach/leader should consider the environment/activity/support/ participant numbers when working with juniors. These areas may have to be adapted to create safe and effective sessions. The coach/session leader, when coaching, should adopt positions where they take an appropriate balance between being able to observe and feedback to participants, whilst maintaining a safe environment. Where there is a conflict between these two elements, safety should take precedence. Sessions should be child centred and pitched at an appropriate level. Juniors should be included in the planning and where possible clubs should complete a junior consultation where junior athletes can input about how their sessions are run.

Parent / Guardian Consent

Participants under the age of 18 must provide the club with a [Parental Consent Form \(Form 11\)](#) annually. Any participant failing to submit a form at the start of the year signed by a parent or guardian should not be allowed to participate in the session. The Club Children's Officer should collect and retain appropriate details

regarding each participant including name, emergency contact and specific health requirements or medical conditions of the participants, preferably using a registration form or consent Form 11. The information should be stored securely and appropriately by the Club Children's Officer ensuring confidentiality of information is

maintained. Personal and medical information should only be disclosed to those necessary and where it is in the best interest of the child. In some cases, it may be necessary to talk directly with the participant and/or parent/guardian before the session.

planning a session overview

The following planning and safety information is applicable to all coached and uncoached junior sessions including, but not limited to, track, pool, turbo, open road, and open water.

SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT: This should identify whether there are any potential risks to the juniors at any stage before, during, or after the session. For example, this should inform who takes and assists at the session and what the supervision ratios are, as well as any mitigating factors to be taken into account to ensure juniors are not exposed to risk of harm.

GENERAL SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT: Check that equipment and venue are safe and suitable for participants and activities planned.

DYNAMIC RISK ASSESSMENT: Effective risk assessment is not just about planning in advance but also managing dynamically while sessions are in progress. For example changeable weather conditions while in open water.

PARTICIPANT SCREENING: Check that activities are appropriate to the capabilities and health and fitness of participants.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN (EAP): Have a plan of what to do in case of an emergency, which includes ensuring a means of raising an alarm, adequate access for emergency services, means of evacuation and register of attendees in case of evacuation. Key to this is individuals understanding their role in the EAP.

FIRST AID PROVISION: Access to a trained first aider and first aid equipment.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY: Ensure everyone involved in the planning and delivery of the session knows the emergency procedures.

REVIEW SESSIONS AND RECORD ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS: Have a process for improving the system based on experience. Any safeguarding incidents recorded should be reported as appropriate to the Club Children's Officer, TI National Children's Officer or the Statutory Authorities as per the [TI Recognising and Reporting Safeguarding Concerns Policy](#).

Running a Session

WHO CAN RUN A SESSION? One person or a group of people should take charge of organising and facilitating a session. Where there is no coach this may fall to the committee, a TRI Leader or another club member. The session leader does not have to be a coach but must have completed the safeguarding requirements outlined in this document (Garda Vetting/Access NI, attend Safeguard training, sign a code of conduct). If not a coach the session must be held in an enclosed area - open road or open water sessions are not permitted without a coach.

Any safeguard qualified club member can organise and facilitate a junior session with an appropriate ratio of leaders to juniors, in an enclosed area, but may not coach if they are not a qualified coach (see supervision ratios). The club has overall responsibility for session safety and should appoint and approve the session leader. The session leader should do everything possible to make the session safe through the use of the risk assessment and emergency action plan. The session leader should; send out pre-session information to parents/guardians, including safety and

logistical information, manage session registration and hold emergency contact and medical information for those taking part securely in case of emergency.

ROLES:

SESSION LEADER/FACILITATOR: This person can set up a session, complete the safety documentation and provide session details from a session plan prepared by a coach.

TRI LEADER: This person can set up a session, complete the safety documentation and provide session details from a session plan prepared by a coach. A Tri Leader can lead parts of the session for example warm up and cool down under the supervision of a coach. See full Tri Leader remit below.

COACH: This person can set up a session, complete the safety documentation and deliver a session plan either prepared by themselves or another coach. A coach can give feedback and coaching tips throughout the session. See full coach remit below.

All of the above are responsible for safeguarding requirements at a session and completing any necessary accident or incident report forms.

risk assessments

Safeguarding Risk Assessment

A safeguarding risk assessment should look at all areas where harm could come to a child or vulnerable person while taking part in club activities. This should be complete in consultation with the Club Children's Officer. Some areas to be considered should include:

- Changing room supervision.
- Public access to the training area.
- Appropriately qualified junior helpers - safe recruitment.
- Incorrect communication leading to late collection.
- Possibility of unauthorised photography.
- Possibility of a coach left alone with a junior or juniors in the case of an emergency.
- Coach/leader:junior ratios.

Please see a template in the risk assessment download below.

Safety Risk Assessment

The coach/Tri leader/session leader should create a [risk assessment](#) for all venues/locations and club sessions which should be reviewed and updated regularly, particularly in the event of an incident. If there is no qualified coach in the club this should be completed by those leading sessions in consultation with the club committee.

This should take into account the venue, different participant ages and ability levels, weather, first aid availability and equipment to be used. By undertaking a risk assessment, the club is able to demonstrate that they have considered the risks and taken reasonable steps to manage them. A good risk assessment drives action – it doesn't avoid risk. The risk assessment must be specific to the venue and the activity and should be informed by site visits

It is neither possible nor necessary to ensure that sessions are entirely risk free. The focus should be to identify

the main hazards and the controls that can be put in place to either eliminate the risk of these hazards or, if this is not possible, manage it to an acceptable level. Only control measures which will actually be implemented should be included. It is sensible and appropriate to create a risk assessment once for a given venue and share this document between all coaches delivering sessions or those facilitating sessions. If the activity is to take place again the risk assessment should be reviewed prior to each session and should be assessed dynamically during a session.

When operating in a managed facility, the risk assessments should take into account, and adhere to, venue specific normal operating procedures (NOP). In the vast majority of cases, the coaches risk assessment will be a 'slimmed down' version of the venue NOP and only cover aspects which are relevant to the coach, athletes and the coached session content. Where an employer, manager of a facility or

organiser's policy or actions cause an unsafe coaching environment then the coach should raise this issue with that individual and seek to resolve the issue prior to the session. If it cannot be resolved satisfactorily then the coach should consider cancelling the session on safety grounds.

Risk assessments should be reviewed and updated following: Any incident or near miss (i.e. when an accident could have occurred, but by luck it didn't); Any updates from the venue, e.g. revision of venue NOP; On an annual basis as a minimum, which in turn should prompt a conversation with the venue to assess any changes.

See Risk Assessment [download here](#). Please note the risks outlined in the risk assessment document are not exhaustive and risks will differ for each venue.

Recording the Findings

The risk assessment should be recorded and for each potential hazard it should identify:

- The level of risk.
- Who is responsible for implementing each control.
- Who it may affect.
- Residual Risk.
- The control measures.

If the residual risk is still not acceptable a session should not go ahead.

emergency action plan

The coach/leader/session facilitator should create an EAP for all venues and sessions (detailing what actions the coach and participants will take to maintain participant safety and welfare in the case of an incident occurring) which should be accessible to all coaches. The EAP should be reviewed and updated regularly, particularly in the event of an incident. Everyone involved should be clear on their role in the EAP. If a club is using the same locations/venues for numerous sessions the same EAP can be used, however, the 'designated lead' (an individual who takes the lead in the case of an emergency) should be noted on the session sign in documents.

Managed facilities should have their own EAP and procedures which the coach should be familiar with. The coach should also have their own EAP, which will work in conjunction with the facility EAP, but in most cases will be a condensed version that covers all information relevant to the coach and athletes, and will usually detail how to assist venue staff in ensuring safety. For non-managed facilities the coach will need

to cover actions to be taken in a number of possible situations. This plan should be in sufficient detail that it describes a step by step process of what to do in an emergency. Examples of such emergencies include:

- Major Injuries (potentially life threatening).
- Need for evacuation (e.g. fire, structural failure).
- Minor Injuries.
- For outdoor venues some or all of the following may also be required:
 - Missing persons.
 - Adverse weather conditions.

The EAP should provide sufficient details to both contact and direct emergency services to the venue and on how emergency first aid will be provided.

coaching junior sessions

Coaching/Tri Leader Insurance

Triathlon Ireland provides professional indemnity cover for Coaches and Tri Leaders who have been trained and qualified by Triathlon Ireland. For Triathlon Ireland coaching insurance to be valid, coaches must hold a minimum of a training licence. A coach will

only be covered for the activities they have been trained to deliver. Junior Coaches/Leaders must have completed all the requirements to obtain their certificate and keep their safeguarding requirements (Garda vetting/Access NI, Safeguard course, signed code of conduct) up to date.

Junior Open Water and Open Road sessions cannot be run without either:

A Level 2 coach OR a Level 1 coach who has completed the open water/open road CPD. It is recommended that Level 2 coaches also complete this CPD.

Coaching Remits for Junior Sessions

(please see adult session document for adult sessions)

TRI LEADER

In an ideal scenario a Tri Leader is supported by a club coach. However this isn't always possible. The Tri Leader remit covers the following:

- Can organise, facilitate, and lead any adult session. This means they can set up a session, complete the safety documentation, manage sign in, send out session information, and give the group information on safety and the session plan.
- Can organise, facilitate, and lead a junior session in an enclosed area (this does not include open road or open water). This means they can set up a session, complete the safety documentation, manage sign in, send out session information and give the group information on safety and the session plan. A Tri Leader must be supported by other Tri Leaders or Junior Assistants to ensure ratios are met for junior sessions.
- Can assist a Level 1 or 2 coach.
- Cannot take part in a junior session while leading.

LEVEL 1 COACH

- Can plan and deliver group sessions in enclosed areas for juniors. This means they can coach during the sessions. Enclosed areas refers to pools, running tracks, parks, car parks, sports halls.
- Can plan and deliver a junior open water session once the TI open water workshop has been completed and sufficient support is in place.
- Can plan and deliver a junior (age 15 by 31ST Dec) open road session once the Cycling Ireland 'Ride Leader' or TI equivalent module has been completed.
- Cannot take part in a session while coaching.

LEVEL 2 COACH

- Can plan and deliver group and individual sessions including open water and open road for adults and juniors.
- Can coach during all sessions.
- Cannot take part in a session while coaching.

It is strongly recommended by TI that a coach should not take part in the session as a participant, unless this is unavoidable. Coaching requires observation and feedback and a continual awareness of the bigger picture in terms of dynamic risk assessment, all these elements are significantly compromised by the coach taking part in a session.

Coaching Ratios

It is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that the group is adequately supervised. The coaching ratios outlined in this document provide a maximum child number : minimum coach/leader/club volunteer ratio to ensure a safe coaching session and provide meaningful coaching to any participant who is having difficulties.

Coaches must only coach the number of juniors they feel confident and competent to deal with, within the recommendations. Younger children, beginners and those with disabilities or special needs, for example, may require extra supervision. A coach should not take a dual role during a session, for example coach and lifeguard. The ratios below are for coaching during a session and not safeguarding/supervision

requirement ratios. An experienced coach may be able to facilitate a larger session (within the required ratio limits) in an enclosed area such as track or turbo sessions if the group is working from a session plan. The number of participants will depend on a range of factors including: safety cover, the environment, level of experience of participants, the coaches' experience and additional training. Coaches can be assisted by other coaches and leaders in order to increase the number of participants permitted in the session.

When coaching, the coach should adopt positions where they take an appropriate balance between being able to observe and feedback to participants, whilst maintaining a safe environment. Where there is a conflict

between these two elements, safety should take precedence.

Regardless of group size, it is recommended that when coaching young athletes, there are a sufficient number of responsible adults present at all times to ensure an adequate level of supervision. This is important for safeguarding reasons so that one coach is not alone with the junior athletes and means that in an emergency one adult can go for help or deal with the emergency.

It is good practice to have a clear and accurate record of everyone involved in the delivery of the session. This will ensure the coach is able to identify who attended a particular session should an issue be raised at a later date.

Junior Sessions Coaching Ratios

JUNIOR ASSISTANT <small>Adult who has completed 3 safeguarding steps</small>	TRI LEADER	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2
POOL BASED SWIMMING SESSION (lifeguard present)			
1:6 <small>Not covered to lead, can assist</small>	1:6	1:8	1:16
OPEN WATER SWIM SESSIONS (lifeguard and first aider present)			
1:4 <small>Not covered to lead, can assist</small>	1:4 <small>Not covered to lead, can assist</small>	1:6 <small>Once open water CPD completed</small>	1:8 <small>Ideally should complete open water CPD</small>
CYCLING ENCLOSED AREA for example; park, turbo sessions (no traffic)			
1:6 <small>Not covered to lead, can assist</small>	1:8	1:8	1:14
CYCLING OPEN ROAD (age 15 by the 31ST Dec)			
1:4 <small>Not covered to lead, can assist</small>	1:4 <small>Not covered to lead, can assist</small>	1:6 <small>Once Open Road CPD completed</small>	1:8 <small>Ideally should complete open road CPD</small>
RUNNING ENCLOSED AREA			
1:6 <small>Not covered to lead, can assist</small>	1:10 <small>Not covered to lead, can assist</small>	1:15	1:20
RUNNING OPEN ROAD			
1:4 <small>Not covered to lead, can assist</small>	1:4	1:6	1:8

*These coaching ratios are guidelines and although a Level 2 coach has the option to coach larger groups the supervision ratios are mandatory for juniors. Level 2 coaches should be supported by Level 1 coaches, TRI Leaders and Junior Assistants to achieve these ratios. Group sizes should be reflective of the experience and ability level of coaches, Tri Leaders and Junior Assistants.

Example Scenarios

CLOSED ROAD CYCLING CIRCUIT: 20 Children. It would make sense to split this group of 20 into two smaller groups and have two coaches cover the session with additional assistance for safeguarding requirements. A Level 1 may be able to take a smaller group and a Level 2 manage a larger group. For both cycling sessions above, it may make sense to have an experienced rider follow each group around the circuit, so they can observe any issues and report back to the coach or be able to raise an alarm should anything untoward happen.

SWIMMING POOL: 3 lanes, 24 participants. A pool session covered by a Level 2 and Level 1 coach, with 3 lanes. Level 2 is responsible for 2 lanes and Level 1 for one lane. Provided lifeguard ratios (usually 1:25) are not exceeded then the session can be considered safe, especially if the Level 2 coach takes 16 athletes and the Level 1 takes 8 athletes. If on occasion the Level

2 coach is replaced by a competent Level 1 coach and a Tri Leader this could still be safe, as the lifeguard manages the majority of the safety aspects. The coaches should focus on ensuring safety, and then may provide some coaching. Their ability to manage a high-quality session may not be as high as if the Level 2 were present, however it is safe and allows the session to continue.

SWIMMING POOL: Whole pool, 30+ participants. Safe options would include two Level 2 coaches, or a Level 2 and two or more Level 1 coaches. However, most pools have a lifeguard ratio of 1:25, so a second lifeguard may be required for safety purposes. Consider the balance of experience of the coaches. An experienced Level 2 should be confident in this situation, but a newly qualified Level 2 who is leading a session with two Level 1 coaches and 30+ swimmers may find it harder to manage the safety aspects and two other coaches whilst also delivering sessions themselves.

Junior Session Supervision Ratios

Ensure adequate Adult /Child Ratios: Good practice dictates that a leader should ensure that more than one adult is present. This will help to ensure the safety of the children as well as protect adults. The coaching ratios allow for meaningful coaching and for coaches to focus safely on that group. Supervision ratios are for overall supervision of juniors for safety and safeguarding purposes.

ADULT / CHILD RATIOS

- Will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants and any special needs of the group, a general guide is 1:8 for under 12 years of age and 1:10 for over 12 years of age.
- There should be at least one adult of each gender with mixed parties.

ENVIRONMENT

- Away trips will need higher rates of supervision and these should be checked out with the governing body or organiser, children and young people should be supervised at all times. See the TI travel and supervision policy.
- Avoid adults being left alone with young participants, if a leader needs to talk separately to a participant this should be done in an open environment, in view of others.
- Respect the privacy of young people while changing, leaders may only need to enter changing rooms where the participants are very young or require special assistance.

- When necessary, leaders should supervise in pairs or seek assistance, it is the safety and welfare of the participants that is of paramount importance.
- Leaders should not be left alone with young people at the end of a training session. Clearly state times for start and finish of training and/or competitions.
- If late collections occur leaders should remain in pairs until participants have left.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to make arrangements for the collection of young people, it should be made clear that the club is responsible for only club activities.
- If a child suffers an injury or accident the parents/guardians should be informed.

open water sessions

Compared to a swimming pool there are a much greater number of challenges associated with open water swimming. The option to sign in for 3 “Try-out” sessions prior to joining a club does not apply to open water sessions for this reason.

The below guidance provides a framework for effective safety planning. It is intended to help establish new swimming venues as well as review safety management at existing venues.

Planning a Session Overview

AGE: The minimum age for open water sessions is 8 years old, however, not all 8 year olds will have the confidence or ability to begin open water sessions and so coaches/leaders should be aware that they may need to adapt and tailor sessions depending on the group.

PREPARATORY POOL SESSIONS: All juniors should attend a minimum of 3 club pool sessions first. This is at the discretion of the club/coach who may feel an individual needs further pool sessions prior to progressing. These sessions should be used to assess ability level and practice and prepare for open water.

It is the coach’s responsibility to ensure that junior athletes attain specific competencies prior to moving to open water. Once in open water focus should be on acclimatising and practicing competencies learned in the pool. The competencies document should be kept on file for junior athletes so club coaches can track progression. See sample template [Competencies Document Template](#).

JUNIOR SWIM COMPETENCIES – POOL TO OPEN WATER PROGRESSION:

- Swimming in straight line;
- Breathing;
- Swimming in a group;
- Sighting;
- Swimming with swim buoy;
- Safety protocol if they get into difficulty;
- Swim distance - should equate to their age appropriate race distance.

OTHER AREAS TO CONSIDER:

- Putting on a wetsuit;
- Dealing with the cold;

- Adapting or changing stroke from the pool to open water;
- Dealing with anxiety and panic;
- Building confidence and being relaxed in the water.

GUIDELINES FOR JUNIOR PARTICIPANTS:

The club should create guidelines for junior participants and parents/guardians. These can be sent out prior to the session or posted on the club forum. These could include:

- Location and time of session and for collection – The club should ask parents to stay for the session particularly if additional supervision or spotters are necessary.
- Access to completed Risk Assessment and Emergency Action Plans if requested.
- What ability level the session is suitable for and what to expect in an open water session for beginners.
- The ratio of coaches/leaders to juniors expected.
- Structure of the session if working from a session plan.
- Who will be leading/facilitating/coaching the session.
- What safety support will be present.
- Rules for the session, for example wetsuits are required, club membership is compulsory, and how they must sign in and out.
- Participants who have relevant medical conditions must be willing to provide medical information, via Form 11 to the individual running the session which must be stored confidentially but accessible at training session in case of emergency.
- Participants must provide an emergency contact.

NOTE: Both relevant medical information and emergency contact information can be collected at the start of the year and updated when necessary.

ON THE DAY:

- The Coach/Appointed Assistant/Session Leader/Childrens Officer should ensure everyone in attendance has provided medical information and emergency contact via the Form 11.
- Water temperature: Minimum of 11 Degrees Celsius for the session to go ahead. Maximum swim distances can be completed when the temperature is 13 Degrees or above. Wetsuits compulsory when less than 14 Degrees.
- The coach/leader should provide sign in sheets/digital sign on option in advance.
- Juniors should swim parallel to the shore within their depth and should be able to see the shore at all times. If the juniors cannot stand in the water then flotation buoys should be used. Additional use of flotation buoys is at the discretion of the club as it may be deemed necessary for juniors to use them at all times depending on location and conditions.
- Ratios: (leaders/coaches: juniors) in the water.
- Tailor the safety briefing to the age of the group including the protocol for if they or someone else needs assistance.
- Spotter on shore with Hi-Viz, whistle and phone. Add additional Spotters where necessary. Consider if one spotter needs to leave urgently or call for emergency assistance.
- Safety craft. It may be useful to have some flotation aids attached to the craft which can be thrown out. **RATIO OF SAFETY CRAFT TO PARTICIPANTS IS 1:10.**
- Clubs could provide or ask that juniors wear a specific colour swim hat so they are easy to spot.
- Radio or other communication methods for example, [Zello](#).
- Briefing of safety crew and participants.
- The Leader/coach should ensure that everyone knows their role in the event of an emergency.
- If possible clubs should try and operate a buddy system for beginners to open water swimming or use swim buoys.
- Give the group a clear direction of where to enter and exit the water, what direction to swim, and any tidal or safety information relevant to that area.
- Protocol if they or someone else needs assistance.
- All Participants should be counted in and out of the water.
- Lifeguard and first aider present.

Risk Assessment

Coach/Leader should prepare a risk assessment for the open water venue. In ROI, seek advice from the local authority, who have [Water Safety Development Officers](#), as they may have a risk assessment

document completed by [Water Safety Ireland](#). In NI, [DAERA](#) provides bathing water quality profiles. This will provide information for the club risk assessment. The local authority development officer will also be able

to offer local knowledge of the swim area. Seek to link up with other users of the open water venue in order to share knowledge or pool resources.

Safety Considerations and Control Measures

The following are some safety considerations and control measures for the open water risk assessment.

This list is not exhaustive.

SWIM COURSE

COURSE SHAPE: Is the swim course easy to follow? The simpler the course the less likely it is for swimmers to become disorientated and go off course. Straight line, rectangular, triangular and circular courses are generally easiest to follow. Out and back courses appear straightforward but consider arrangements to ensure that swimmers swimming in opposite directions are effectively segregated and cannot swim into each other.

ALTERNATE ROUTE: Is there another option or are there shorter options for less experienced swimmers?

Young and inexperienced juniors should swim parallel to the shore within their depth and should be able to see the shore at all times. If the juniors cannot stand in the water then flotation buoys should be used. Additional use of flotation buoys is at the discretion of the club as it may be deemed necessary for juniors to use them at all times depending on location and conditions.

OBSTRUCTIONS: Are there any obvious hazards that can affect the swimming such as debris, overhead branches, fast currents or rips?

SIZE: Is the area of water sufficient in size and of suitable depth to accommodate the activity? What is the maximum number of swimmers that can be in the water at any time? Are there other users to consider?

ACCESS AND EGRESS: Can swimmers enter and exit the water safely and easily?

MONITORING SWIMMERS: Is it easy to account for the number of swimmers entering and exiting the water? Is there a plan/system to sign everyone in and out of the water? For example car keys or ID cards left with someone on the shore which must be collected on egress from the water. This will make it quick and easy to identify a missing individual.

Clubs could provide or ask that juniors wear a specific colour swim hat so they are easy to spot.

OTHER USERS: Is there exclusive use of the water (and therefore fewer restrictions on course design) or are there other water users/activities that need to be considered? Where other

activities are taking place at the same time is it possible to take steps to provide a safe swimming area? Can you share resources such as lifeguards with other users?

ACCLIMATISATION AREA: Is there a defined area where swimmers can safely acclimatise to the water

temperature prior to undertaking their swim to minimise the impact of cold shock? This area does not need to be large and only needs to be deep enough for swimmers to fully immerse their body and put their faces in the water. Ideally swimmers should be able to wade into this area if possible.

Safety Cover Levels and Positioning

Given the differing types of water and prevailing conditions, applying generic standards to the level of safety cover required based on course design, swim distance or ratio of safety units to swimmers is not appropriate. However, the following points provide an initial basis for identifying cover levels and positioning before considering other factors which may indicate a need to potentially increase or decrease those levels:

- SH2OUT's recommended guidance is that a swimmer in distress can be reached within 1 minute and returned to shore within 3 minutes if required.
- 1 human powered safety craft per 10 junior swimmers.
- 1 powered craft per 50 swimmers.
- Swimmers are no more than 50 metres from safety cover.

Where there is a marked scaling up of risk (e.g. non-wetsuit swims, long distance swims, high percentage of novice/inexperienced swimmers, tides and currents) the water safety arrangements should take this into consideration and, most likely, increase the level of resources.

Example: In an open sea swim with mixed ability swimmers, some of whom may not be wearing wetsuits, it may be appropriate to increase the safety resources and reduce the distance between safety craft and swimmers. Conversely, for a swim taking place in the closed environment of a dock with experienced swimmers and easy/quick access to land based support around the course it may be appropriate to reduce the level of safety craft (while maintaining ratio requirements). The most effective cover in the majority of, if not all, circumstances is likely to be provided by:

A mix of water-based and land-based safety cover. Land-based cover focusing on the swimmer entry and exit points and possible "spotter" support around the course. Water-based safety cover to provide supervision around the course. A combination of engine-powered and human-powered craft on the water.

For each swim the safety cover should be organised, resourced and competent to provide effective supervision in the prevailing conditions. When assessing the level and positioning of safety cover some key questions should be considered:

- How will we know if a swimmer gets into difficulty at any point on the course?
- How will we ensure that swimmers all follow the correct course?
- If anyone gets into difficulty how can we provide support quickly to prevent the situation from worsening?
- If a swimmer sinks can the safety cover get to them?
- If there is a serious incident how will we recover the swimmer(s) to land quickly?
- If a safety craft is dealing with an incident will there be sufficient cover to maintain appropriately competent cover for the remaining swimmers still in the water?
- If other activities are taking place on the water at the same time as swimming how will we ensure that other water users are aware that swimmers are in the water and where they will be swimming?
- Do we have the correct ratios of craft to swimmers?
- What communication method will be used?

SAFETY PERSONNEL

- Coaches.
- Lifeguard.
- First aider.
- Spotters.
- Kayakers/paddleboarder.
- Motorised craft operators.

A coach should NOT provide a dual role of coach and safety personnel. They can act as an additional safety person, but only over and above the minimum requirements.

COMPETENCIES

Anyone undertaking a safety role should be:

- Skilled and knowledgeable in the environment they are operating in. It is essential that all operators of safety craft, whether powered or not, have an appropriate level of experience, are well briefed and drilled and mindful of how they approach swimmers. Being approached by powered craft in particular, can be an intimidating experience for a swimmer.
- Physically fit to undertake their role and be able to self-rescue if necessary.
- Appropriately clothed and equipped, including food and drink, for the prevailing conditions.
- Able to use their equipment and the equipment available at the facility correctly and safely.
- Trained/briefed in the safety procedures applicable to their role; and

- Able to communicate for assistance.

There are a number of principles that underpin effective safety cover, including the ability to:

- Maintain constant and proactive surveillance of all swimmers over the whole course (NOTE: Consideration should be given to the length of duty spells as fatigue compromises both concentration and performance. In difficult conditions, e.g. cold, wet weather the duty spells may need to be shortened).
- Guide and interact with swimmers.
- Raise the alarm and communicate with others.
- Identify and respond quickly to a swimmer getting into difficulty and provide initial support to prevent the situation from worsening (as a guideline the initial support should aim to reach the swimmer within one minute).
- Recover an unconscious casualty and transfer them to land-based support. The quicker this can happen the greater the probability of a successful outcome.

- Maintain a designated swimming area and minimise the potential for interaction with other water users.

- Identify swimmers: a) in the event of an incident if their particular needs may influence the safety response; or b) to highlight swimmers that may require support at the swim exit point.

Best practice safe supervision is about having sufficient cover to spot and come to the aid of someone who appears to be getting into difficulty before it becomes an emergency, i.e. that they should be proactive, rather than just wait for an alarm to be raised and respond to that alarm.

MONITORING SWIMMERS

The ability to account for all swimmers is fundamental to the safety arrangements. As a minimum this should include a method of accurately counting swimmers into the water at the start of the swim and back out again at the end. However, accounting for swimmers should also include the ability to quickly identify:

- Any swimmers who are removed from the water into a safety boat.

- Any swimmers who retire from the swim and leave the water at any point other than the recognised end point.

For swimmers who may require closer supervision (e.g. medical issue, first-time, very nervous) the use of a specifically coloured swim hat can provide a discreet method of identifying them to the safety cover.

COMMUNICATION

Effective and efficient communication underpins a coordinated, timely and appropriate response to incidents. The communication plan should include both land-based and water-based safety cover and a back-up system in the event of the primary method of communication failing. The nature of the environment and activity is likely to limit the effectiveness and/or suitability of mobile telephones and the use of radios may not be practical or affordable. The use of visual signals and audible signals e.g. whistle can be particularly effective for rapid communication and identifying the location of an incident. Apps such as Zello can be useful here also.

Medical Support and Equipment

All open water swimming activities should have plans to deal with incidents requiring medical intervention. Basic First Aid support should be available as a minimum but where the risks increase e.g. with greater numbers of swimmers, increased swim distances or reduced water temperatures more extensive medical support should be considered. Identifying the appropriate level of medical support should be based on a similar assessment of the risks used to determine the level of safety support, ideally with the input of someone with a medical background and an understanding of the risks of open water swimming.

SAFETY CRAFT

When identifying appropriate safety craft it is important to understand that whilst there are various engine-powered and human-powered craft available not all are suitable for use as safety craft and that each type may be appropriate in certain situations but not in others.

In broad terms: Powered craft are best suited to recover casualties from the water and transport them as quickly as

possible to the point of transfer to the land-based support. (NOTE: A minimum of two people are required – one to drive and one to recover and support casualty). Human-powered craft are more suited to guiding and closely interacting with swimmers and providing initial support to casualties up to the point of transfer to the powered support craft. In both cases the competency of the operator is as important as the suitability of the craft. Similarly, any land-based safety support must be competent and appropriately equipped to fulfil their function. It is important that any craft performing a safety role is not given additional duties that compromise their primary function. Other areas to consider:

- Is there access for a sufficient number of suitable safety boats and paddle craft?
- If appropriate safety craft are not available at the venue where can they be sourced? Does the venue impose any restrictions on craft that need to be taken into account?
- Does the course design eliminate or minimise the need for powered safety craft to cross the swim line? If powered

craft do need to cross the swim line what arrangements can be put in place to manage the crossings safely?

- Craft access and egress. Is there a dedicated emergency landing point where casualties can be transferred to the land-based support? It is recommended that the emergency landing point is located away from where swimmers enter or exit the water.
- Is the safety support personnel competent to provide effective cover in the prevailing conditions?
- Check for evidence of experience and competence.

If the ability to provide effective safety cover as detailed in the session safety plan/risk assessment is compromised swimming should be cancelled or suspended until the conditions improve and/or appropriate resources are available e.g. mist or fog reducing visibility, safety boat breakdown.

Managing Swimmers

PRE-SWIM PREPARATION

Helping swimmers to prepare properly for the demands of an open water swim before they enter the water can make a significant contribution to their safety as well as their enjoyment. This is particularly important for swimmers who may never have experienced open water swimming before. If providing written information it should be kept as clear and simple as possible.

Pre-swim safety briefing – ideally at a location where they can clearly see the swim course. The swim should not commence until the safety briefing has taken place. Things to include in the briefing include:

- Weather conditions;
- A description of the course route,regroup locations and tide conditions;
- Water temperature;
- Number and type of safety craft;
- Any information about jellyfish/seals;
- The action swimmers should take if they get into difficulty;
- Encourage those that are nervous or new to open water swimming to start slowly if they are unsure of their swimming ability relative to others.

The briefing should be tailored to the age of the group using questioning to ensure understanding.

MINIMISING STRESS

Research into open water swimming-related fatalities around the world has identified Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD), rather than drowning, as the likely cause of death in the majority of cases. One possible mechanism of SCD in open water swimming, referred to as Autonomic Conflict (AC), suggests that anxiety, stress, anger and over-competitiveness combined with water entering the nose and throat and a requirement for breath holding may produce a fatal arrhythmia in susceptible people. Whilst it is not possible to completely mitigate feelings of anxiety and stress experienced by individual swimmers there are some practical steps that can be taken to reduce them. These include but are not limited to:

- Acclimatisation: giving all swimmers the opportunity to acclimatise to the water temperature and regulate their breathing in a defined area before swimming.

- Controlling the group size: limiting the number of swimmers entering the water at any one time to prevent overcrowding, reduces stress on nervous swimmers in particular and enabling the safety team to reach swimmers more easily if necessary.
- Providing sufficient space: to prevent overcrowding so that swimmers can find clear water more easily.
- Separating groups: reducing the likelihood of faster swimmers swimming into and over slower swimmers.
- Increasing the number of safety craft at the start of the swim where stress levels, confusion and turbulent water are likely to be at their greatest.
- Buddy system. Clubs could introduce a buddy system for new swimmers by pairing them up with an experienced swimmer who is familiar with the swim route.
- Clubs can ask new members or weaker swimmers to use a personal swim buoy for safety and so they can be easily identified.

Data collated from the Great Swim series (UK), referenced by British Triathlon has identified that the greatest number of interactions with swimmers (from simply giving reassurance to removing swimmers from the water) occur in the first 400 metres of the swim. The vast majority are stress/confidence related.

WETSUITS

Wetsuits provide insulation against the cold, improving cold water tolerance and extending the time a swimmer is able to remain (comfortably) in the water. They also increase buoyancy so that, even when static, swimmers float. These two qualities can help reduce some risks to swimmers but it is important that wetsuits fit well and are designed for swimming, as poorly fitting wetsuits can impair swimming ability potentially creating other issues.

Poorly fitting wetsuits can be a common source of stress and anxiety, particularly for swimmers who are new to open water swimming. If wetsuits are too tight they can restrict movement and breathing to a point where the swimmer may unzip the suit for relief causing it to flood with water. If they are not tight enough they will also flood with water. In both these cases drag is increased making swimming far more difficult as well as compromising the insulating properties of the wetsuit. Also, it is not uncommon for inexperienced open water swimmers to

put their wetsuit on back to front creating similar problems. Basic wetsuit checks prior to swimmers entering the water can help identify potential problems before issues arise. The main things to check are:

- That the wetsuit fits snugly – particularly around the neck where a good seal helps prevent excess water entering the suit.
- There is a comfortable fit from crotch to shoulder so that arm reach and flexibility are not restricted.
- For full body suits: Correct length in arm and legs without excess material being gathered up that will increase drag.

It is also worth highlighting to inexperienced open water swimmers that a well-fitting wetsuit may feel tight and restrictive when dry but they will feel more comfortable once wet and that they should not unzip/try to remove their wetsuit in the water.

DISABILITY SWIMMING

The course design for disabled swimming need not differ from the club's usual course. The main considerations should be on the entry and exit arrangements bearing in mind the needs of:

- Wheelchair users;
- Swimmers with prosthetic limbs;
- Swimmers who require crutches;
- Visually impaired swimmers.

Entering the water should be done in a safe and controlled area, ideally from a slipway or pontoon that provides an even, consistent surface and enters into deep water. The area should be wide enough to accommodate the swimmer and their helper(s). The requirements at the swim exit are similar in terms of the underfoot conditions and width but the mechanics of swimmers exiting the water varies depending on the nature of the disability, as well as the individual. Ideally, only trained water handlers should be used at the swim exit, particularly for swimmers who require lifting from the water – personal handlers who have no experience or training should not be used to avoid injury to either themselves or their swimmer. The best way to plan for an individual's needs is to ask them what they have done previously or how they would like to approach it and combine this with experienced water handlers.

Water Quality

Water quality should be tested regularly to ensure it remains safe and suitable for swimming. Whilst water quality at open water sites can be influenced by a number of different factors the most likely cause of ill-health amongst swimmers is from microbial contamination. As water quality testing can only provide a snapshot of what is present at the time of testing it is preferable to build a profile by testing regularly to help identify if there is an underlying problem. Further advice and guidance should be sought, initially from the local authority before starting open water swimming as they should be able to give guidance on the frequency of the testing.

Testing of water quality should include tests for acidity (pH), evidence of blue-green algae and other water-borne pathogens. In a managed facility, testing should be carried out by the facility on a regular basis, the coach should clarify this is the case and that checks have been done. In a non-managed facility, the coach/club may need to organise testing. Coaches should be aware of external factors, such as heavy rain which for example may wash farm chemicals/waste off into a lake and may affect water quality or visibility. Issues such as algae are more common later in the summer or after periods of warm/dry weather. Whilst water quality tests provide an indication of the suitability of a venue for open water swimming they do not mean that there is a complete absence of potential pathogens. It should be noted that there is always a risk when swimming in open water. There are simple practices that triathletes should be advised to adopt to minimise risk of infections further:

- Cover all cuts and abrasions, however minor, with plasters or other appropriate medical barriers. You should not consider swimming if you have deep cuts.
- Wash hands in fresh water before eating after you have swum.
- Take a full shower at the earliest opportunity and also wash out any kit used.
- Try NOT to ingest any water whilst swimming.
- Report any ill symptoms experienced after an open water swim to a doctor, as soon as possible, stating that you have participated in an open water swimming session/event. The speed of response to any water borne infection is important. Often

the symptoms presented are flu like and this can delay diagnosis and treatment.

WATER TEMPERATURE

Both high and low water temperatures can put significant stress on swimmers putting their health at risk. Training sessions may not be as physically demanding as race situations, and athletes may cool more in training than race scenarios. In training sessions elapsed time in the water should be considered in conjunction with water temperature, in a similar way that distance and temperature are considered for races.

Minimum of 11 Degrees Celsius. Maximum swim distances can be completed when the temperature is 13 Degrees or above. Wetsuits are compulsory when less than 14 Degrees. For junior athletes, when the water temperature is between 11°C and 13°C then the swim distance should be reduced.

Factors Affecting Water Temperature:

- Most large open bodies of water will often have large variances in water temperature - warm in the shallows, cold in deeper water.
- Air temperature - water will not heat up as quickly as land, and can have huge variances e.g. 25°C air temp with 7° water temp.
- Sea temperature does not rise until late summer, often still being very cold into May and June.
- Other weather factors such as wind and rain can have a significant impact on participant comfort levels.

COLD WATER. In cold water there is a common misconception that Hypothermia (when the core body temperature falls below 35°C from a normal near-constant of 36.5°C to 37.5°C) is the major risk. In reality the bigger risk to swimmers are effects of physiological changes that occur to the body prior to the onset of hypothermia which include:

COLD SHOCK. Swimmers can experience a cold shock response for about a minute after entering the water. Rapid skin cooling leads to a gasp reflex and possible hyperventilation. Panic can exacerbate the situation and potentially cause someone to drown by breathing water into the lungs if the head goes underwater or if the swimmer faints

through prolonged hyperventilation. Another cold shock response is that the blood vessels narrow (vasoconstriction) to preserve heat in the body core and protect the major organs. As a result the heart has to work much harder to pump the same volume of blood around the body. For swimmers with an underlying heart problem this additional workload can cause the heart to go into cardiac arrest.

PERIPHERAL COOLING

Vasoconstriction, described above, decreases blood flow to the limbs. As a result the limbs begin to cool affecting the ability of the nerves and muscles to function as well as normal which ultimately leads to a loss of controlled and coordinated movement and the ability for the swimmer to maintain an airway by keeping their head above water (known as swim failure).

Cold water tolerance in individuals varies depending on a number of factors including:

- Age
- Body physiology
- Health
- Ability to generate body heat.

Swimmers can improve their cold water tolerance by regularly swimming in cold water.

WARM WATER. Hyperthermia is an elevated body temperature which occurs when the body produces or absorbs more heat than it can dissipate, leading to heat stroke and unconsciousness. Given the climate, problems associated with cold water swimming are generally perceived to be the more significant risk when swimming in Ireland. However, the use of wetsuits can increase the risk of hyperthermia, particularly when the air temperature is warm and swimmers stand around for prolonged periods in zipped up wetsuits waiting to swim.

To help mitigate the risks posed to swimmers by water temperature and weather conditions consider:

ACCLIMATISATION. Encouraging swimmers to acclimatise to the water temperature.

SWIMMER ASSESSMENT. Having well-briefed safety personnel that are able to recognise the signs of a swimmer getting into difficulty.

Emergency Action Plan

Key actions from the risk assessment should be used to inform and develop the Normal Operating Procedures and the Emergency Action Plan for open water sessions

In the event of an emergency it is essential to ensure the response is coordinated to optimise the likelihood of a successful outcome. Things to consider and ideally rehearse might include:

- How will the land-based support team be made aware of the incident and the potential seriousness?
- Where will the casualty be taken to by the safety boat – is there a dedicated landing point close to medical facilities with sufficient working space for the land-based support to operate?
- Who will direct/coordinate the transfer from the safety boat to the land?
- Who will transfer the casualty from the boat to the land and how will they do it?
- Who will transfer the casualty to the medical facility and what route will be taken?
- Who will contact the emergency services for further support?

SUGGESTED CLUB OPEN WATER SESSION RULES

The following list is a suggested list of recommendations to be given at club based coached session, this is non-exhaustive but is included as a guide to the type of provisions that should be made:

- No entry into the water will be allowed until all safety arrangements are in place and the Safety Officer/Session Leader/Coach has indicated that it is safe to do so.
- Wetsuits must be worn always, except in unusually warm conditions, e.g. optional between water temperatures of 20-24 degrees in training sessions. Note this band is higher than race scenarios and the coach should always consider the safety element of wearing a wetsuit.
- Brightly coloured swim hats must be worn by swimmers.
- Swimmers will use a defined course set by the Session Leader/Coach – using landmarks where buoys etc. are not available.
- Swimmers are to swim parallel to the bank/shore where possible.

- Safety cover will be provided at all sessions and this will not be below the required minimum standard identified in the venue risk assessment.
- Before every session a pre-swim briefing will be given. This will provide clear guidance on the session, the group structure, the course to be swum, and information on what to do if a swimmer experiences difficulty.
- Sessions will not stray into water space used for other activities.
- All sessions will finish at the allotted time.

Coaching Guidance

A coach should not take part in their own sessions; however, as coach you should consider the best place to coach from:

- From bank/shore;
- From a pontoon;
- In a boat or canoe (only if they are competent, a coach who cannot control the boat or canoe can become a hazard themselves);

- In the water - this would only happen where the water is shallow around the bank and the swimmers have to walk out to be able to swim. The coach should position where they can stand up comfortably, i.e. no more than waist deep.

When selecting a position to coach from, the coach must always consider their own safety and that of the participants. A coach should consider how they will observe their athletes and control the

group, if they are at distance from the coach this will be challenging, and the risks to the athletes will increase.

POST SESSION

Record any incidents and review risk assessment and emergency action plans if necessary.

Ask for feedback from attendees regarding how they think the session went and if they felt safe.

Useful Water Safety Contacts

- [Water Safety Ireland](#)
- [Water Safety Ireland local contacts](#)
- [waterlevel.ie](#)
- [Local Authority Water Safety Development Officers](#)
- [Lifeguarded beach directory](#)
- [Lifeguard Awards](#)
- [Royal National Lifeboat Institution](#)
- [Irish Coast Guard](#)
- [Canoeing Ireland - Rescue award](#)
- [NI Direct – bathing water quality](#)
- [Waterways Ireland](#)
- [Daera - NI Maps](#)

open road cycle session

Age: 15 years old by the 31ST of December

Closed Road Preparatory Sessions

These sessions should cover:

- Basic open road skills and etiquette: cycling in a group, road safety, getting your bottle, signalling, cornering, getting on and out of cleats, how to approach a roundabout as a group
- How to change a tube.
- Equipment required.
- Appropriate hand signals that the club uses.
- M-Checks (bike safety check).
- Appropriate bike skills.
- What the protocols are if someone gets lost/injured.

Equipment

Any bikes used within a coached session should be fit for the purpose of the session. For example, this may mean that a bike that is acceptable for a slow-moving skills session in a playground may not be suitable for a closed road session with larger groups moving at speed.

Within competitive triathlon, helmets are a mandatory requirement. Triathlon Ireland qualified coaches should,

within reason, insist upon the wearing of helmets within coached sessions. The only possible exception may be when the wearing of a cycle helmet may not be compatible with a disability requirement or for religious or faith reasons. In these occasions the cyclist may be permitted to participate but the ultimate decision will rest with the coach who conducts the session and be based on a risk assessment for that session. Helmets should be:

- Undamaged and in good condition.
- Correct size for the rider.
- An appropriate quality standard.
- Worn correctly, namely, the right way around, covering the forehead, shouldn't move around on the head, it should not be possible to move the chin strap over the chin.

Risk Assessment

Areas to consider:

- Avoiding busy roads, or areas where other events are taking place.
- Giving plenty of warning to horse riders, and reducing speed and passing wide of horses.
- Avoiding riding in large groups (greater than 8), where necessary split larger groups into smaller groups, each with a leader, and ensure sufficient gaps between groups to allow other vehicles to overtake safely.
- Seek to give feedback to riders in a safe static situation, e.g. pull off the main carriageway into a car park or lay-by where the risk of injury or accident is significantly reduced, and participants and coach can give full attention to each other and the coaching points without having to overly consider safety implications.
- Support needed to ensure all groups are visible at all times, which is why it's advisable to have a second coach or experienced athlete following the group.
- Pace to be controlled at all times and within limits of the cyclist's capabilities.
- As with all sessions group control and emergency procedures should be in place along with Emergency First Aid provision.
- The coach also needs to consider logistics and safety of moving the group from a start/meeting position to the training area. This can be effectively managed as a non-coached group ride out to the training location, however, juniors must be accompanied by coaches/leaders.
- Sessions should be cancelled if the weather is poor, road conditions have changed adversely (e.g. excessive mud, flooding or ice), traffic on the route is heavier than expected.
- Have an appropriate plan in place in case of session cancellation.
- Industrial estates outside of normal working hours are usually a good option for sessions of this nature.
- Country lanes can have limited traffic but should be carefully reviewed. Issues include vehicles travelling faster than expected, limited passing places, farm traffic, livestock & mud on road.

Guidelines for Participants

The club should create guidelines for participants in these sessions to be sent out prior to sessions. These include:

- Location and time for collection – The club should ask parents to stay for the session particularly if additional supervision is necessary.
- Completed Risk Assessment and Emergency Action Plans.
- Route plan for the session.
- Which coach is taking the session.
- What ability level the session is suitable for.
- Structure of the session if working from a session plan.
- Rules for the session, for example attendees must carry water, wear hi viz, etc.
- Participants must be willing to provide relevant medical info via the Form 11 to the individual running the session which must be stored confidentially but accessible at training sessions.
- Participants must provide an emergency contact.
- Ratios of leaders to juniors - there must be enough safeguard qualified leaders to cover the group if for example a junior gets a puncture and needs to stop. Two people must stay with the junior. If this is not possible the whole group should stop and wait.

ON THE DAY:

- The Session Leader/Tri Leader/Coach should ensure everyone in attendance has provided medical information and an emergency contact.
- Bike safety checks performed by each person prior to beginning.
- Coach/Leader should carry a phone.
- The Coach/Leader should provide sign in sheets/digital sign on option in advance.
- If possible, have a support car.
- The Sport Ireland Safesport app allows parents to track the coach's phone so can see where the group is at any stage.

uncoached junior sessions

Junior Sessions in Enclosed Areas

These can be led by a TRI Leader or other club member (safeguard qualified) using a session plan from a coach. These include:

- Track training.
- Park sessions.
- Turbo sessions.
- Park or car park sessions.
- Pool sessions. In a pool setting a lifeguard must be present at all times.
- Completed Risk Assessment and Emergency Action Plans.
- The ratio of coaches/leaders to juniors expected.
- Who is coaching/leading the session.
- What ability level the session is suitable for.
- Structure of the session if working from a session plan.
- Rules for the session, for example, Form 11's must be completed (including medical information), parent/guardian must be present, juniors must wear high viz.

SAFETY

Create a [Risk Assessment](#) and [Emergency Action Plan](#).

Collect and store all consent forms – Form 11.

PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES

Session information should be sent out prior to the session. This should include:

- Location and time for collection – The club should ask parents to stay for

the session particularly if additional supervision is necessary.

- Completed Risk Assessment and Emergency Action Plans.
- The ratio of coaches/leaders to juniors expected.
- Who is coaching/leading the session.
- What ability level the session is suitable for.
- Structure of the session if working from a session plan.
- Rules for the session, for example, Form 11's must be completed (including medical information), parent/guardian must be present, juniors must wear high viz.

ON THE DAY

- The Coach/Leader should ensure everyone in attendance has provided medical information and emergency contact via the Form 11.
- The Coach/Leader should provide sign in sheets/digital sign on option in advance.
- Lifeguard present if pool session.
- Juniors should never be out of sight

on a bike or run session.

- Ability levels assessed and catered for.
- Sufficient ratios for supervision.

Clubs with no Coach have the following options for running open water/open road sessions for juniors:

- Run a set number of open water/road sessions during the year only and request a TI Development Officer/Coach to be present.
- Link up with another club who has qualified coaches for these sessions.
- Find a coach in your area to facilitate these sessions, check 'Find a coach' on the TI website. Please contact TI first (safeguarding@triathlonireland.com) to ensure your chosen coach has safeguarding requirements complete.
- If a club member has alternative qualifications which may be appropriate, for example, a Cycling Ireland or Swim Ireland qualification, please check with TI by emailing coaching@triathlonireland.com to check if this individual can facilitate junior sessions.

juniors (under 18) training in adult sessions

Junior athletes can take part in adult sessions as long as the athlete is capable of completing the session or a modified version of the session. Distances and intensity should be appropriate to age and ability.

SAFEGUARDING

Any Coach/Leader/Volunteer working with athletes under the age of 18 on a regular and continuous basis, must undertake the following prior to beginning this role.

- [Garda Vetting/Access NI](#) through Triathlon Ireland.
- Signed Code of conduct – [Form 8/ Form 10](#).
- Attended Safeguard 1 course/ Safeguarding Children and Young People in Sport.

The following should also be considered.

- The coaches are happy to coach children in a mixed environment, they are properly qualified and have had the necessary safeguarding checks carried out.
- That the adult participants are happy for children over the age of 14 to take part in the session. This change will affect the dynamics of the session.
- If the club is not a junior club this will change the type of club from adult to junior/adult. The club will then need to meet the requirements for a junior club including appointing a club Children's Officer. [Further details here](#). TI can support with this set up.
- Parents are happy to provide informed consent for their child to take part in the session.
- Clubs must complete the Safeguarding tab of the risk assessment document as part of the overall risk assessment for sessions which include juniors.

Either a parent/guardian or someone acting in locus parentis should attend sessions and take responsibility for the junior as soon as the session is over. This person should either take part (eg. cycle) or be on the side lines. Absent Parent Consent Form ([Form 11a](#)) should be submitted to the club children's officer if the parent/guardian is giving responsibility to another adult for their child during the session.

After a few sessions the situation should be reviewed in consultation with the children's officer, the child, the parent/guardian and coach to ensure everyone is satisfied with the arrangement. The needs of the child are paramount and any decisions should be in the best interests of the child. The process may differ from club to club and TI will consult with clubs where necessary.

USEFUL CONTACTS

- [Local Authorities ROI](#)
- [Local Sports Partnerships ROI](#)
- [Local Councils NI](#)

POLICIES

- [Triathlon Ireland Safeguarding Policy documents](#)
- [Garda Vetting/Access NI application steps](#)

GLOSSARY

- TI** - Triathlon Ireland
- RA** - Risk Assessment
- EAP** - Emergency Action Plan
- NOP** - Normal Operating Procedure
- CPD** - Continued Professional Development

FORMS

- [Safety and Safeguarding Risk Assessment](#)
- [Garda Vetting Form](#)
- [Access NI Form](#)
- [Parental Consent Form 11](#)
- [Absent Parent Form 11a](#)
- [Junior Accident/Incident Report Form](#)
- [Adult Accident/Incident Report Form](#)
- [Coaches/Leaders Code of Conduct - **New Coach Leader: Form 8**](#)
- [Coaches/Leaders Code of Conduct - Existing Coach Leader: **Form 10** - Submitted annually](#)