



# Observer Instructions Manual

(Rev. 2017-1)

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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for acting as an observer for SBCSA-sanctioned swims. Your help allows us to provide a quality experience to our swimmers. Following is a description of the responsibilities (including paperwork and communications) you will need to be aware of related to your role as an observer for one of our swims. For the swim year 2017, Dave Van Mouwerik is the Observation Committee Chairperson, and he will oversee assignments of observers to swimmers.

**The SBCSA website has a password protected portal which provides observer information:**

**<http://santabarbarachannelswim.org/observers/portal/>**

**Username = observer**

**Password = social8**

The observer portal includes this document, support waiver forms, swim logs, a listing of observer stipends, a list of our 2017 sanctioned marathon swims, and various contact information for the SBCSA Board and the SBCSA observers. There is also a zip file of all the documents that are found in the 2017 SBCSA Observer Notebook, which can be downloaded and printed.

## PRE-SWIM

1. You will receive an electronic copy of the swimmer's application by email for each of the swims that you have volunteered to observe. The application will include much pertinent information about the swim, and will include the swimmer's name and contact information, as well as the names of the swimmer's support crew, insofar as SBCSA knows this information.
2. If for any reason you are unable to observe the swim that you signed up for, please contact Dave Van Mouwerik and work with him to get another observer to take your place ([davevm@att.net](mailto:davevm@att.net), 805-550-7271).
3. Note that our most frequent swim is from Anacapa to the mainland. Because this is a shorter swim (12.2 miles), only one observer is required, and that observer is considered a Primary Observer. For virtually all other SBCSA-sanctioned swims, two observers are required. In this case one will be designated as Primary Observer, the other one as Secondary Observer.
4. As a Primary Observer, it is your responsibility to be proactive in communicating with, and establishing a relationship with, your swimmer. Contact your swimmer as soon as you get the application, and establish yourself as the primary contact representing SBCSA, and clarify to them that you are the "go-to" person for their swim. Be sure they have your contact information and that they can reach you via phone and email, if they so desire. Also, when applicable, be sure to share all information with the Secondary Observer. Note that it is the Primary Observer who is responsible for providing log sheets and support waivers to the SBCSA after the swim.
5. The swimmer's capabilities will have already been vetted in the swim application process. Nonetheless, it is a good idea for the observer to establish a connection with their swimmer and to learn first-hand what their training program is like, and how confident they seem. Before



swim day, the observer should already have formed an educated opinion of the skill, mentality, and preparedness of their swimmer, and of the swimmer's support crew.

6. Ensure that the location of the boat is understood by everyone, and that the date and time of departure is agreed upon by all participants.
7. Regarding the swimmer's support crew, it is important that your swimmer has designated one of their support crew as the "crew chief". It is also important that you remind the swimmer, beforehand, that it is not the observer's responsibility to act as support crew or crew chief to the swimmer.
8. Note that there is a waiver to be signed by everyone on the support boat (swimmer, support crew, and friends— the boat captain and crew are excluded from this).
  - a. The swim applicant has been provided this waiver as part of the application process, and then (s)he is to provide it to all members of his support crew well in advance of the swim. All support persons must have the opportunity to read the waiver prior to the swim date. In your communications with your swimmer, remind them to ensure that every member of the support crew actually reads the waiver. You should clarify to the swimmer that all support persons will be required to sign this form when they get on the boat on the day of the swim. (If they refuse to sign the form, they will not be allowed to come on board the boat.)
  - b. As an observer, you will need to bring the waiver along on your observations. Copies of it are found in the Observer Notebook; additional copies of the form can be downloaded from the observer portal at the SBCSA website. In the application process, solo and relay swimmers will have already signed the waiver. But on the boat immediately prior to the swim, you will need to have support people (kayakers, feeders, crew chiefs, spouses, and friends) all sign and date this form. Then when you turn in your paperwork to Jane Cairns after the swim, you will include these waivers, along with the swim logs. Please note that this form has room for seven support people to identify themselves and sign.
9. Be familiar with the SBCSA website, and refer the swimmer to pertinent information at the website—do your best to answer any questions that they have about their upcoming swim. If you have questions, you can contact any board member for further information.
10. Be sure you have log sheets for the swim. Copies are found in the Observer Notebook; additionally they can be downloaded from the observer portal at the SBCSA website.
11. Be sure to inform yourself about current conditions on the ocean. See this link -- <http://santabarbarachannelswim.org/conditions> .

## SWIM

1. Regarding the Observer Kit, see information under MISCELLANEOUS→Observer Kit starting on page 9 of this document. You should be in touch with board member Theo Schmeeckle to ensure you have the kit prior to the swim you are observing.



2. Inside the observer kit is the SPOT unit—this is the GPS-like device that allows the swimmer’s location to be tracked on a Google map during the swim. It is in a plastic travel bag, and has extra batteries and laminated instructions with it (instructions are also in the appendix of the Observer Notebook). Follow the instructions to ensure the unit is working for the swim.
3. Fill out the official log sheet during the swim, making an entry at least every 30 minutes. (And more frequently is better.) The log contains such information as names of swimmer and support people and boat pilot, official time, any incidents, times, tides, method of feeding, stroke per minute counts, air and water temperatures, and other pertinent details.
4. When the swim is complete, enter the time, down to hours:minutes:seconds, on the log sheet.

## POST-SWIM

1. Upon returning to the harbor...
  - a. Whether successful or not, immediately notify Evan Morrison ([evan@marathonswimmers.org](mailto:evan@marathonswimmers.org), 415-890-3866) of results (phone, text, or email).
  - b. Your message should include swimmer’s name, unofficial time, and any other pertinent details. If the swim was abandoned, include the elapsed time at abandonment, and a reason (e.g. hypothermia, conditions, etc.)
2. Within a week, send the original log (be sure to sign and initial all pages), as well as the support waivers that you had signed on the boat, to Jane Cairns via USPS mail.
3. Be sure that Jane has your mailing address—you will receive a check from SBCSA within 6 weeks of the swim, to reimburse you for your efforts, based on the agreed-upon fees that SBCSA pays its observers.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Observers

Observer contact information can be found at the observer portal on the SBCSA website.

### Board of Directors

Contact information for the board of directors can be found at the observer portal on the SBCSA website.

### Jane Cairns’ mailing address

Send log sheets and support waiver forms to Jane Cairns at the following address:



Jane Cairns  
5094 Cathedral Oaks Rd.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93111

## OF PILOT BOATS

Note that it is the swimmer, not the observer, who has the primary relationship with the pilot boat. The swimmer has hired the boat, and the observer is simply on board to perform the SBCSA's role of authenticating the swim for the record book.

As the observer, you should ask the swimmer for the location of the pilot boat, and for the departure time. For longer swims (e.g. swims other than from Anacapa Island) that may involve a night-time departure, be sure that everyone is aware of the date of the swim. (For example, if a long swim is identified as occurring on September 21, does that mean the departure from the harbor is on September 20 or on September 21?)

There are several possible harbors that pilot boats supporting SBCSA swims may be docked at. For northern swims, this could include Ventura Harbor, Channel Islands Harbor, and the Santa Barbara Harbor.



Map Showing Ventura Harbor and Channel Islands Harbor



**Map of the Santa Barbara Harbor**

For swims further south, it is most likely that the pilot boats will originate out of the San Pedro Harbor, at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Landing.



**Map of the 22nd Street Landing**



## **REFERENCES TO “SWIM RULES AND LOGISTICAL GUIDELINES”**

Tab 2 of the 2017 Observer Notebook includes the current SBCSA swim rules and various logistical guidelines.

- Section I clarifies that SBCSA recognizes two categories of swim formats: Category A is a traditional Marathon Swim, and Category B is an Assisted Swim.
- Section II: Part A will be read aloud by the observer in its entirety prior to any swim attempt. Remaining parts (B through F) will be read aloud as applicable.
- Section III provides clarification on swimwear and devices worn by swimmers.
- Section IV contains administrative and logistical information; items C and D are important for observers to know.



## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CCSF AND SBCSA RULES

1. With SBCSA swims, it is not always possible for the swimmer to start or end his swim by reaching a position above the water line. Think of Doctor's Cove and the beaches on the mainland where most Catalina swims end—the swimmer can easily stand above the water line.
  - a. For an SBCSA swim, if conditions dictate, it is acceptable for a swimmer to start or end his swim at a cliff face of an island.
  - b. A swim, then, might start when a swimmer is immersed in the water and touches the cliff face, and then the timing of the swim starts exactly when the swimmer releases contact with the cliff face.
  - c. Swim would end when swimmer touches the cliff face of an island.
2. The swimmer may be escorted by one or more support swimmers. For SBCSA swims, the maximum duration of a support swim session is two hours at a time, at which point the support swimmer must exit the water for at least fifteen minutes before re-entering the water. CCSF is more restrictive.
3. SBCSA requires that the swimmer may not intentionally draft off either the escort boat or the support swimmer; CCSF rules remain silent about this.
4. SBCSA requires that for any part of the swim that occurs after sunset or before sunrise, the swimmer must wear sufficient illumination (glow sticks or LED lights) to be visible from the boat. CCSF rules remain silent regarding this.
5. SBCSA identifies allowed swimwear in their Rules in Section III. CCSF defers to FINA rules.
6. SBCSA does not allow swim caps with chin straps; CCSF does not prohibit these.
7. SBCSA requires that, if the swimmer utilizes an electronic shark deterrent, the device may not trail off the swimmer. Anklet or watch-style devices are acceptable. CCSF is silent on this matter.
8. SBCSA allows relays to consist of between 2 and 6 swimmers; CCSF allows 6 person relays only.
9. SBCSA recommends relay legs to be 60 minutes in length, but allows legs to be as short as 30 minutes; CCSF requires 60 minute legs.
10. SBCSA requires a non-swimming crew leader for relay swims; CCSF has no such rule.
11. SBCSA has an Assisted swim division, meaning the swimmer will adhere to all of the SBCSA rules, but is permitted to wear neoprene and/or increased-coverage swimwear. CCSF does not recognize these swims.



## **SUGGESTED CHECKLIST OF ITEMS FOR OBSERVERS TO BRING ALONG**

Stopwatch (Maybe a second stop watch as well)

Regular watch

Warm clothing

Hat

Sunscreen

Swim suit and goggles

Observer notebook

Swim logs

Waiver forms for support persons

Clipboard

Pen or pencil

Food and water

Extra glow sticks

Safety pins

Sunglasses

Binoculars

Towel

Thermometer

Dramamine

Flashlight

Extra batteries

Carabiners

Nylon cord

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Observer Kit**

The SBCSA has put together two identical observer kits to increase the safety and the level of support of our marathon swimmers. The kits are stored at the home of board member Theo Schmeackle in Ventura. Observers will coordinate with Theo to get the observer kit prior to a swim, and to return it to him after a swim. (In some instances, when there are back-to-back swims using the same pilot boat, the kit may remain on the pilot boat.)

Theo's contact information:

1180 Azalea Way

Apt. 106

Ventura, CA 93004

[tschmeackle@gmail.com](mailto:tschmeackle@gmail.com)

805-827-2296

The observer kit is comprised of the following items:



### **SAFETY**

Zoll AED and operation booklet  
First aid kit with CPR mask  
Man-O-War Sting First Aid Kit  
Space blankets  
Heat packs  
Oral thermometer and tip covers  
Rescue tube  
Throw rope  
Latex-free first aid gloves

### **LOGISTICS**

Inventory list of contents of observer kit  
SPOT unit (see further description below)  
Bullhorn  
Extra batteries (for SPOT and Bullhorn)  
Nylon rope  
Twine  
Plastic zip ties  
Duct tape

*Clipboard, pen, forms (log sheets, rules, support waivers, observer instruction document)*

*Water thermometer*

*Writing utensil*

*Safety pins*

*Extra glow sticks*

*Stop watch*

Note that the italicized items above are the responsibility of the observer to bring along him/herself. While these items are in the observer kit, under normal conditions they are not to be used. If you end up using some of these items, such that they must be replaced, then you must notify Theo of this at the end of the swim.

Also note that there are some items that should be pulled out of the kit at the start of the swim, to be readily available in an emergency. Those items include:

- Rescue tube
- Bullhorn
- Throw bag
- SPOT unit

### **SPOT Units**

SBCSA owns two SPOT units, so that we can provide our swimmers (and their family and friends) with a link to a site that will track the swimmer's position every 10 minutes, and display it on a map. The unit (along with extra batteries and a laminated instruction sheet) will be kept with the observer kits mentioned above.



### **Waiver and Release of Liability**

Every Observer must sign the waiver and release of liability. If the Observer signs the form at a pre-season training session then they do not have to sign the form each time they perform an observation for the SBCSA.

### **Observer remuneration**

Please visit the observer portal on the SBCSA website for a spreadsheet depicting the observer stipends for various swims.