



Volunteering 101

Competitive swimming is a unique sport—not only because of the lifetime benefits to the swimmer, including physical fitness, improved self-esteem, low injury rate, to name a few—but because it takes many parent volunteers to run swim meets. In no other sport can so many parents take such an active role. You don't have to just sit on the sidelines and watch; you can get down on the deck and participate by volunteering. Parent volunteers are absolutely essential for all Carolina Aquatics swim meets!

“So, what types of volunteers are needed for most swim meets?”

Timer: Typically this position requires the most volunteers, and it is the simplest position. Each lane at a pool typically requires 2-3 timers per lane to ensure accurate timing. Timers use stopwatches and automatic buttons to record times for the swimmers participating in the meet.

Head Timer: The Head Timer supervises the timers in each lane and assists the timers if there is a timing malfunction.

Relief Timer: Acts as a backup for the timers. If a timer needs a break or needs to step away from the pool deck for a break, a relief timer can fill in.

Security/Safety Marshal/Deck Security: Marshals are responsible for monitoring the behavior of swimmers on the pool deck to ensure the safety of every swimmer in the pool. You are basically an extra set of eyes for lifeguards and meet management.

Runner: Runners do a variety of jobs including posting results, collecting timer sheets, transporting documents between meet workers, etc. They work closely with the meet director.

Hospitality: Most swim meets provide snacks, drinks, and food at swim meets for coaches and officials working at the meet for a long period of time. Hospitality workers are similar

to concessions workers, but only prepare food for coaches and officials working at a swim meet.

None of these positions require previous experience!

Official: Officials are the folks stationed around the deck to ensure that the competition runs smoothly and according to USA Swimming rules. These volunteers have undergone training, have worked as apprentice officials, have taken comprehensive rules tests, and have undergone evaluation by an experienced official before being certified by SC and USA Swimming. In addition, they are required to pass criminal background checks and to take athlete protection courses prior to stepping on deck. It sounds complicated, but it's really not, and it's an especially rewarding volunteer role. Contact a coach for more information.

Meet Director: The meet directors are the volunteers behind the scenes who do all of the work to get a meet sanctioned and off the ground! The Meet Director is the organizer who directs the efforts of the people running the meet. Experience is necessary and can happen at any of our meets. We are always looking for helpers!

The Meet Director, Meet Referee, Volunteer Coordinator, and facility management work together to ensure compliance with the USA Swimming Code of Conduct and Athlete Protection.

“How do I get involved as a volunteer?”

Many clubs have a Volunteer Coordinator who will be happy to answer your questions and assist. If you don't know who this is, contact your child's coach. Swim meets require a considerable number of parent volunteers. The smallest meets may have 150 or fewer swimmers and require 30-40 volunteers to run; larger meets will need even more parents. Pick a position and provide a helping hand!

At Carolina Aquatics, we are fortunate to have many veteran families that have “been around the block” and have a great deal of information regarding volunteer positions at swim meets. Reach out and ask questions!

To help make our team hosted meets run smoothly and successfully, Carolina Aquatics has an inservice requirement for each family. It simply asks each family to provide one family member volunteer for each session in which their swimmer(s) participate.