



Swim Club Guidance Document for Hosting Swim Meets in the Face of Outside Factors: Forest Fires and Weather

Hosting swim meets requires careful planning and organization. However, there are situations where external factors like forest fires and severe weather conditions can pose significant challenges to the successful execution of the event. This guidance document aims to provide swim clubs with a comprehensive set of considerations to manage such situations effectively, including the possibility of cancelling competitions on short notice.

The ASSA Meet Abandonment Policy shall be fully applicable when addressing matters related to the Regional Championships.

1. Pre-Event Planning:
 - a. **Assess Potential Risks:** Understand the potential risks associated with the event's location, such as proximity to forested areas and weather patterns. Consult local authorities, meteorological services, and fire departments for up-to-date information.
 - b. **Communication Strategy:** Develop a communication plan to ensure timely and effective dissemination of information to all stakeholders, including participants, officials, volunteers, and spectators.
 - c. **Safety Protocols:** Establish clear safety protocols for swimmers, officials, and attendees in case of emergencies, including evacuation procedures, designated safe areas, and emergency contact information.
 - d. **Monitoring Systems:** Implement monitoring systems to track weather conditions and receive alerts about potential hazards, such as air quality monitors and weather monitoring services.
2. Monitoring and Evaluation:
 - a. **Regular Weather Monitoring:** Continuously monitor weather forecasts leading up to and during the event. Stay aware of any weather warnings, including thunderstorms, high winds, lightning, or extreme temperatures.
 - b. **Air Quality Monitoring:** Stay informed about air quality levels in the event area, particularly during forest fire seasons. Refer to local air quality agencies or online resources to assess the suitability of hosting the event.
 - i. **Gauging Air Quality:**
 1. **Local Air Quality Agencies:** Identify and connect with local air quality agencies or departments responsible for monitoring air pollution levels in your region. They often provide real-time air quality updates and resources.
 2. **Air Quality Index (AQI):** Familiarize yourself with the Air Quality Index (AQI), a standardized scale that provides information on air pollution levels and associated health risks. The AQI typically ranges from 0 to 500, with higher values indicating worse air quality.
 3. **Online Resources:** Utilize online platforms and websites that provide air quality information. Websites such as AirNow



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(www.airnow.gov) and World Air Quality Index (waqi.info) offer real-time air quality data for various locations worldwide.

4. **Mobile Applications:** Consider using mobile applications available for smartphones that provide air quality information, such as AirVisual, Plume Labs, or BreezoMeter. These apps often offer personalized alerts and notifications based on your location.
5. **Air Quality Monitoring Devices:** Explore the option of using air quality monitoring devices or sensors that can provide real-time air quality data specific to your event location. These devices can measure parameters like particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), ozone (O3), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), and other relevant pollutants.
6. **Colour Code System:** Establish a colour code system to simplify communication and decision-making regarding air quality conditions. For example:
 - a. Green: Good air quality; no significant health risks.
 - b. Yellow: Moderate air quality; potential health risks for sensitive individuals.
 - c. Orange: Unhealthy for sensitive groups; caution advised.
 - d. Red: Unhealthy air quality; potential health risks for all individuals.
 - e. Purple: Very unhealthy air quality; health risks for all individuals.
 - f. Maroon: Hazardous air quality; significant health risks for all individuals.
 - g. Consultation: Seek guidance from the ASSA.
- c. Remember to stay vigilant and regularly monitor air quality leading up to and during the event. Consider a proactive approach by setting air quality thresholds in line with guidelines provided by health agencies or governing bodies. Prioritize the safety and well-being of participants and adjust event plans accordingly if air quality conditions deteriorate.
- d. **Safety Officer:** Designate a safety officer or committee responsible for monitoring weather conditions, air quality, and overall safety throughout the event. Empower them to make informed decisions in consultation with relevant authorities.
- e. **Infrastructure Considerations:**
 - i. **Indoor Venue Option:** If possible, consider hosting the swim meet in an indoor facility, such as an enclosed pool or a covered sports



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- complex. Indoor venues provide better control over environmental factors, including air quality and weather conditions.
- ii. **Air Filtration Systems:** Ensure that indoor venues are equipped with effective air filtration systems to maintain good air quality. Regularly inspect and maintain these systems to ensure they are functioning optimally.
 - iii. **Weather Monitoring Tools:** Install weather monitoring tools, such as weather stations or access to reliable weather services, to track weather conditions accurately. This will help you make informed decisions regarding the event's feasibility and any necessary adjustments.
 - iv. **Emergency Response Equipment:** Have necessary emergency response equipment readily available, including first aid kits, fire extinguishers, AEDs (automated external defibrillators), and emergency communication devices. Train staff and volunteers on how to use this equipment effectively.
 - v. **Evacuation Routes and Safety Areas:** Identify evacuation routes and designated safety areas within the venue in case of emergencies, such as severe weather or fire. Clearly mark these areas and communicate them to all participants, officials, and attendees.
 - vi. **Communication Infrastructure:** Ensure there is a reliable and robust communication infrastructure in place, including phone lines, internet connectivity, and public address systems. This will facilitate effective communication with participants and stakeholders in case of event updates or emergencies.
 - vii. **Shelter or Tent Options:** If hosting the swim meet outdoors, consider having temporary shelters or tents available to provide shade from the sun or protection from inclement weather. These shelters can also serve as designated safe areas during emergencies.
 - viii. **Power Backup:** Arrange for alternative power sources or backup generators to ensure an uninterrupted electricity supply during the event. This will help maintain critical infrastructure and support communication systems in case of power outages.
 - ix. **Accessibility and Facilities:** Ensure that the venue has appropriate accessibility features for participants and attendees with disabilities. Additionally, provide clean restroom facilities, adequate seating, and designated areas for food and beverages.
 - x. **Security Measures:** Implement appropriate security measures, including personnel or security services, to ensure the safety of participants, officials, and attendees. Clearly communicate any security protocols or guidelines to all stakeholders.
 - xi. **Venue Safety Inspections:** Conduct regular safety inspections of the venue before, during, and after the event to identify and address any potential hazards or infrastructure issues promptly.



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By considering these infrastructure-related factors, swim clubs can enhance the safety and comfort of participants and attendees while effectively managing external factors such as weather conditions or forest fires during swim meets.

3. Decision-Making Process:
 - a. Establish Thresholds: Determine specific weather conditions or air quality levels that will trigger a reassessment of the feasibility of conducting the event. Use guidelines provided by local authorities or relevant governing bodies.
 - b. Consult with Experts: Seek advice from local authorities, meteorological services, fire departments, and health agencies to make informed decisions about cancelling or modifying the event.
 - c. Risk vs. Safety: Prioritize the safety and well-being of all participants and attendees over the desire to proceed with the event. Base decisions on a thorough assessment of potential risks and the ability to manage them effectively.

4. Communication and Cancellation:
 - a. Timely Communication: If cancellation becomes necessary, promptly notify the ASSA, after consultation communicate with ASSA Members using multiple communication channels, such as email, text messages, social media, and the club's website. Ensure the cancellation notice is clear, and concise, and provides alternative arrangements, if applicable.
 - b. Refund Policies: Review and communicate the refund policies regarding registration fees in case of event cancellation. Consider providing options for rescheduling or transferring registrations to future events.
 - c. Rescheduling or Postponement: If feasible, explore the possibility of rescheduling the event to a later date or finding an alternative venue. Communicate revised dates or arrangements to all stakeholders accordingly.

Hosting swim meets involves careful planning and consideration of potential external factors that can disrupt the event. By implementing the guidelines outlined in this document, swim clubs can proactively address challenges posed by forest fires and adverse weather conditions. Remember, safety should always be the top priority, and effective communication is essential to ensure the well-being and satisfaction of all participants and stakeholders.

The process of canceling competitions should involve consultation with the ASSA President and Vice President to guarantee appropriate and timely notifications regarding cancellations are provided.

For Qualifying competitions such as the Regional Championships must following the guidance as outlined in the Meet Abandonment Policy.