

SWIM ONTARIO

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May 25, 2016

To: Level III, IV & V Ontario Officials

Re: Deck Evaluations

The [May 19 SOOC Bulletin](#) discussed On Deck Evaluations and guidelines for candidates seeking deck evaluations.

As Level III, IV & V officials who are on the frontlines, Swim Ontario and the SOOC wanted to explain our reasoning for these guidelines and help you to determine what to consider for a successful deck evaluation.

At the 2015 Swimming Canada OCRC Officials Symposium, one of the initiatives discussed was the change in volunteerism from 20 years ago. As we know, swim meets require many officials (many more than soccer as an example) and we need to keep new parents motivated to do more than timekeeping and volunteering at the canteen. We know the majority of Level 5 officials across the province do not have active swimmers still in the water and at some point this may not be sustainable. Mentoring and encouraging new-to-competitive-swimming officials plays an important role in their development. Another important role is facilitating the achievements throughout the province.

Swim Ontario and the SOOC want to ensure consistency throughout the province regarding deck evaluations. The recommendation of one or two mentor sessions is a guideline for candidates across the province in every region and every club. Larger regions provide more swim meets for volunteers to get experience at before requesting a deck evaluation. In the smaller regions, a higher number of mandatory sessions worked before becoming eligible for a deck evaluation can become a discouraging barrier for new officials who have a limited number of meets held in their region. In establishing a provincial minimum standard, the requirements of all regions need to be taken into consideration.

As session referees or mentors to Level III session referees you are asked to sign many Officials Certification Cards for deck evaluations. We all want them to succeed and they too want to succeed and keep moving forward. Signing this card indicates that you have observed the candidate or consulted with senior officials that worked closely with the candidate.

When determining if the deck evaluation is successful, as evaluators you must look at

- The competency of the official during the session
- Whether the official has thorough knowledge of the duties and rules of the role being reviewed
- If the official displayed confidence in making decisions

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A successful deck evaluation may occur the very first time the official requests a deck evaluation or may require additional mentoring. An official that comes to the deck with a varied swimming background (such as a coach or was swimmer themselves) may move much more quickly through the deck evaluation process than a parent/official that is completely new to the sport of swimming. Those coming with a background in swimming may already have a solid understanding of the rules and duties and display confidence, with the result that additional mentoring may not be required. Whereas a new to the sport official will likely require that additional deck experience and mentoring. It will be important to assess the individual and their competency during the session. It is okay to not sign a card where more experience and mentoring is required, and it is also okay to sign the card the first time out if the official displays competency and confidence in the role.

We understand that for some this is a different way to look at deck evaluations and it will take some getting used to. At the end of the day, we want to continue moving swimming and officiating forward in Ontario and acknowledge the hard work of our swimming volunteers and parents knowing that volunteerism is changing all the time. We have confidence in the level 4 and 5 officials, across the province, in providing positive mentorship and leadership to our up and coming officials.

If you have any questions on this direction, please feel free to reach out to us directly at officials@swimontario.com.

Suzanne Paulins & Nicole Parent

Chairs - SOOC