



Travel Policy Guidelines and Recommendations

Introduction

As part of USA Swimming's enhanced athlete protection efforts, USA Swimming rules now require clubs and Local Swimming Committees (LSCs) to have published policies for team travel. Team Travel is defined as overnight travel to a swim meet or other team activity that is planned and supervised by the club or LSC. Club and LSC travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.

This document has been developed by USA Swimming's Club Development Committee to provide a tool that clubs and LSCs can use to create a customized set of travel policies that reflect the type of travel that is typical for that club or LSC. It provides a compilation of required and recommended policies as well as a bullet-point list of other policies used by clubs with experience conducting team travel.

The deadline that has been established for clubs and LSCs to adopt a set of travel policies is **December 31, 2010**. If a club or LSC chooses not to, or is unable to create a written and approved set of travel policies by that deadline, Sections 1 and 2 of the enclosed Model Travel Policies will become the default travel policies for that team or LSC. Once a customized set of policies is developed and approved by your club or LSC, the default policies will no longer apply. Each member club and LSC has the responsibility for approval and implementation of a set of travel policies by **December 31, 2010**. Please direct any questions you might have regarding the travel policy requirement to athleteprotection@usaswimming.org.

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How to Use this Document

Travel Policies

As outlined in the "Contents" the segment on travel policies is divided into three parts. The first section provides specific policies that are required by USA Swimming rules. **The policies in Section 1 must be included in the travel policies developed by clubs and LSCs.**

The second section provides a selection of recommended travel policies. The first four policies are travel-related USA Swimming Best Practice Guidelines for Athlete Protection that are strongly recommended. The remaining items in this section are specific policies suggested by the Club Development Committee. In developing their travel policies, clubs and LSCs can choose to include and/or disregard any of the policies in Section 2. They may also modify these policies to address their preferences and specific needs. **The policies in Section 2 are not required, but they are recommended.**

The third section under travel policies is entitled "Other Policies to Consider." This bullet-point list provides examples of additional policies used by some clubs and LSCs. It may include policies that clubs and LSCs choose to add or modify. The list may also spark ideas for other policies. **The policies provided in Section 3 are optional.**

Code of Conduct

Although USA Swimming Rules require clubs and LSCs to develop travel policies only, **the Club Development Committee strongly recommends that clubs and LSCs also develop a general Code of Conduct that supplements the travel policies.** Behavior that is inappropriate and unwanted on travel trips would likely be inappropriate and unwanted at any time a team member is participating in practice, swim meets, and other team activities.

The Club Development Committee also strongly recommends that the USA Swimming Code of Conduct be part of the club or LSC Code of Conduct. A provision of the club or LSC Code of Conduct should reference the USA Swimming Code of Conduct. This practice will help ensure that USA Swimming members are familiar with the USA Swimming Code of Conduct. It is available on the web site in *About → Rules & Regulations*

Related Documents

In developing this document, the Club Development Committee determined that it would be helpful to supplement Team Travel Policies and Codes of Conduct with other supporting documents. The Committee will provide the following related documents and post them in the "Sample Club Documents" section of the USA Swimming website as they become available. This section can be found at *Member Resources → Swim Clubs → Business & Administration*.

- 1) Other Travel Policy Considerations
- 2) General Swim Meet Policies
- 3) Medical Consent / Authorization to Treat Form
- 4) Medical Background Information Form
- 5) Chaperone Policies / Duties / Procedures
- 6) Permission to Participate Form
- 7) Waiver or Indemnification Form
- 8) Sample Travel Policies from other clubs

Team Travel Policies

Section 1 - USA Swimming Required Policies

Club and LSC travel policies must include these policies. These items are Code of Conduct stipulations in the USA Swimming Rulebook.

- a) Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club. (305.5.D)
- b) Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check. (305.5.B)
- c) Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete). (305.5.A)
- d) When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have his/her parents' (or legal guardian's) written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach. (305.5C)

Section 2 - Recommended Policies

These policies are recommended; they are not required. They may also be modified to address specific preferences or needs. Items a) through d) are travel-related recommendations taken directly from USA Swimming's Best Practice Guidelines for Athlete Protection.

- a) During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and open and observable environments should be maintained.
 - b) Athletes should not ride in a coach's vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete, unless prior parental permission is obtained.
 - c) During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes they shall be of the same gender and should be a similar age. Where athletes are age 13 & Over, chaperones and/or team managers would ideally stay in nearby rooms. When athletes are age 12 & Under, chaperones and/or team managers may stay with athletes. Where chaperones/team managers are staying in a room with athletes, they should be the same gender as the athlete and written consent should be given by athlete's parents (or legal guardian).
 - d) When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, at the competition the coach and athlete should attempt to establish a "buddy" club to associate with during the competition and when away from the venue.
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- e) To ensure the propriety of the athletes and to protect the staff, there will be no male athletes in female athlete's rooms and no female athletes in male athlete's rooms (unless the other athlete is a sibling or spouse of that particular athlete).
 - f) A copy of the Club Code of Conduct must be signed by the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian.
 - g) Team or LSC officials should obtain a signed Liability Release and/or Indemnification Form for each athlete.
 - h) Team or LSC officials should carry a signed Medical Consent or Authorization to Treat Form for each athlete.
 - i) Curfews shall be established by the team or LSC staff each day of the trip.
 - j) Team members and staff traveling with the team will attend all team functions including meetings, practices, meals, meet sessions, etc. unless otherwise excused or instructed by the head coach or his/her designee.
 - k) The directions & decisions of coaches/chaperones are final.
 - l) Swimmers are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Swimmers are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, a restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.
 - m) When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc. swimmers will stay in groups of no less than three persons. 12 & Under athletes will be accompanied by a chaperone.
 - n) The Head Coach or his/her designee shall make a written report of travel policy or code of conduct violations to the appropriate club (LSC) leadership and the parent or legal guardian of any affected minor athlete.

Section 3 - Other Policies to Consider

The following, organized by topic, is a bullet-point list of additional travel policies to consider. Teams and LSCs may want to utilize some of these policies based on their individual preferences and needs. A list of sample policies entitled "Other Travel Policy Considerations" is available on the USA Swimming website in the "Sample Club Documents Section" which can be found at *Member Resources* → *Swim Clubs* → *Business & Administration*.

Safety

- a) Additional guidelines to be established as needed by the coaches
- b) Supervised team room provided for relaxation and recreation
- c) Respect the privacy of each other
- d) Only use hotel rooms with interior entrances.
- e) Must wear seat belts and remain seated in vehicles.

Behavior

- f) Be quiet and respect the rights of teammates and others in hotel
- g) Be prompt and on time
- h) Develop cell phone usage guidelines
- i) Develop computer use guidelines including social media
- j) Respect travel vehicles
- k) Establish travel dress code
- l) Use appropriate behavior in public facilities.
- m) Establish two different curfews – in own rooms and lights out
- n) Must stay in assigned hotel room
- o) Needs and well being of the team come first

Financial

- p) No room service without permission
- q) Swimmers responsible for all incidental charges
- r) Swimmers responsible for any damages or thievery at hotel
- s) Must participate in contracted group meals
- t) Communicate travel reimbursement information and policies

General

- u) Establish trip eligibility requirements
- v) Establish age guidelines for travel trips
- w) Parent(s) responsible for getting swimmer(s) to stated departure point
- x) Requirements for families to attend "Team Travel Meets"

Code of Conduct / Honor Code

The Club Development Committee strongly encourages teams and LSCs to create a Code of Conduct or Honor Code as a companion document to the team travel policies.

Required:

- a. All team members, team staff, and parents of minors are apprised in writing of this Code of Conduct and the attached USA Swimming Code of Conduct. A signature on this document constitutes unconditional agreement to comply with the stipulations of both documents.

Recommended:

- a. Team members will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrators, teammates, fellow competitors and the public at all times.
- b. Team members and staff will refrain from any illegal or inappropriate behavior that would detract from a positive image of the team or be detrimental to its performance objectives.
- c. The possession or use of alcohol or tobacco products by any athlete is prohibited.
- d. The possession, use, or sale/distribution of any controlled or illegal substance or any form of weapon is strictly forbidden.
- e. No "deck" changes are permitted. Athletes are expected to use available change facilities.
- f. Team members are reminded that when competing in meets, traveling on trips, and attending other meet-related functions, they are representing both themselves and the _____ program. Athlete behavior must positively reflect the high standards of the club (or LSC).

For consideration:

- a. Failure to comply with the Honor Code as set forth in this document may result in disciplinary action. Such discipline may include, but may not be limited to:
 - i. Dismissal from the trip and immediate return home at the athlete's expense
 - ii. Disqualification from one or more events, or all events of competition
 - iii. Disqualification from future team travel meets
 - iv. Financial penalties
 - v. Dismissal from the team
 - vi. Proceedings for a LSC or USA Swimming Board of Review
- b. Swimmers are to refrain from inappropriate physical contact at team activities and events.
- c. Swimmers are to refrain from use of inappropriate language.