



**Henley Open Water Swimming Club**  
**Code of Conduct**

1<sup>st</sup> July 2011

**1.0 Before Entering Water**

- 1.1 Water Condition: HOWSC to assess water temperature, speed, quality and potential hazards before judging safe access:
  - 1.1.1 Temperature - thermometer checks out of key season (October-April)
  - 1.1.2 Speed - visual assessment and local rowing club/EA websites
  - 1.1.3 Quality - visual assessment and EA warnings
  - 1.1.4 Hazards - Visual hazards (e.g. moored boats), concealed or underwater hazards, hazards related to tide and current, surface hazards (sailing boats, rowing/sculling boats, powered craft), all potential hazards related to weather, current, surface current and tide, all land based entry points that may potentially pose a hazard (e.g. slipways/jetties/pontoons), locks and weir systems, islands and channels, potential changes in the swimmer's condition during swim
- 1.2 Temperature policy: Below 15 degrees no Club member swimming without wetsuit (or exceptional case permission based on known and/or proven experience). Exposure time in cold water limited (at 15 degrees not to exceed 40 minutes reducing by 5 minutes for each degree drop).
- 1.3 Health: No entry under drug/alcohol influence or medication that causes drowsiness. Cuts/broken skin to be covered. Any concerns over health at the time of a swim session should be assessed objectively, with HOWSC maintaining the right to refuse entry to open water for any member that shows symptoms judged to present any possibility of risk.
- 1.4 Before entering water, all swimmers to be registered by HOWSC Safety Officer or a Club Captain and a numbered swim band issued. See items 5.1 and 5.2.
- 1.5 A swim plan will be agreed covering distance, direction and time in water, including any applicable differences based on graded ability levels that will be established and clearly defined.

**2.0 Entering The Water**

- 2.1 Club policy: Wading entry from shallow bank side or ladder where available.
- 2.2 No diving or jumping in untested water - temperature, depth and weed risk to be assessed first.
- 2.3 Swimmers that for any reason are not comfortable on entry should exit water immediately. Each individual is responsible for their own personal risk and well being assessment. If in doubt at any time, get out.

**3.0 Swimming**

- 3.1 Pre-agreed groups to be adhered to in water, with at least visual contact maintained at all times between all swimmers in given group.

- 3.2 Club hats or equally visible alternative to be worn at all times. HOWSC to refuse entry no non compliant swimmers.
- 3.3 **Swimmers to always swim close to bank on their left hand side. This is opposite to standard navigation rules for other river traffic, and reduces risk of craft bearing down unseen on swimmers from behind.**
- 3.4 No swimming in centre of main river channel. However, recommended that swimmers do not hug bank too closely due to obstructions and potential hazards just below the water's surface.
- 3.5 No solo swimming.

#### **4.0 Exit From Swim**

- 4.1 HOWSC Safety Officer or a Club Captain to count all swimmers out and collect numbered bands. Where groups stay in for varying duration, this is to be known before entry to water and the aforementioned club representative complete the counts in and out for each group. This may require multiple representation from the club e.g. Safety Officer plus a Club Captain.
- 4.2 If on completion of a swim any bands checked out are not returned, the swimmer to whom the missing band was allocated should be contacted immediately. If no response is given, the emergency contact should be called, and appropriate emergency services also contacted if neither of the first two points of contact can establish the safety and whereabouts of the swimmer.
- 4.3 Shower facilities are typically not available (unless at selected lake venues), therefore suitable personal provision to be made by each member, especially in colder water temperatures, including sufficient warm dry clothing and a supply of warm water that can be used to rinse body/wetsuit.
- 4.4 Members should ensure they have sufficient food and drink for refuel and rehydration post exercise.

#### **5.0 General**

- 5.1 Contact details for swimmer (member) and minimum x1 emergency contact required as a condition of membership. All swimmers are to complete a register at every swim, with valid emergency and personal contact data, before entering the water.
- 5.2 Responsibility for collating the register sits with the appointed Safety Officer or a Club Captain as present on the day of a swim.



**Henley Open Water Swimming Club**  
**Rules**

1<sup>st</sup> July 2011

**1. Entry standards**

All swimming members must achieve the following standards before membership to the club can be considered;

- 1.1 Swim 400m (pool) front crawl unaided.
- 1.2 Complete an assessed swim\* of no less than 1,000m in open water unaided using breast stroke or front crawl

*\*assessment must be carried out by either the Club Captain , Ladies Captain, Men's Captain or duly appointed Club Coach/Coaches*

**2. Membership**

The total membership of the Club shall be restricted to 50. If however the Committee considers that there is a good reason to amend this limit then the Committee shall put forward appropriate proposals for consideration. The Committee shall have the right to impose (and remove) from time to time any limits on total membership (or any category of membership) of the Club.

**3. Safety**

- 3.1 All swimmers must wear an official club or other high-visibility swimming cap.
- 3.2 All open water swim sessions must be risk assessed in line with the club's Code of Conduct.
- 3.3 This must include, but is not limited to:
  - 3.3.1 Distance of swim and differences for squads/groups where applicable
  - 3.3.2 Visual hazards (e.g. moored boats)
  - 3.3.3 Concealed or underwater hazards
  - 3.3.4 Hazards related to tide and current
  - 3.3.5 Surface hazards (sailing boats, rowing/sculling boats, powered craft)
  - 3.3.6 All potential hazards related to weather, current, surface current and tide
  - 3.3.7 All land based entry points that may potentially pose a hazard (e.g. slipways/jetties/pontoons)
  - 3.3.8 Locks and weir systems
  - 3.3.9 Islands and channels
  - 3.3.10 Potential changes in the swimmer's condition during swim
- 3.4 All open water swim sessions will be graded indicating the level of difficulty involved and reflecting the identified risks.
- 3.5 Open water swim sessions will be graded as follows;
  - 3.5.1 Level 1 - Novice (remain within 100m of entry point, minimal risks involved)
  - 3.5.2 Level 2 - Intermediate (remain within 1,000m of entry point, moderate risks involved)
  - 3.5.3 Level 3 - Advanced (no limit to distance, multiple and varied risks involved)
- 3.6 Club Captains must ensure that all swimming members have demonstrated a proficiency at level 1 and that proficiency is demonstrated at each level in order before moving up to the next level.

- 3.7 It is the safety officer's responsibility to undertake a risk assessment prior to the swim session and ensure that all swimmers are briefed, prior to starting the swim, on all the hazards and dangers involved.
- 3.8 Club Captains will be responsible for the role of Safety Officer where that appointed member is not present or the role is not filled at any given time.