

SWIMMER SAFETY DOCUMENT – SEPTEMBER 17, 2017

SAA-SF BAY AREA SWIM

We thank you for your participation in the San Francisco Bay Swim Across America! You will be joining thousands of other swimmers from across the country that have had the courage and generosity to swim with SAA and **MAKE WAVES TO FIGHT CANCER!**

On September 17th, when you jump from the *San Francisco Spirit* underneath the Golden Gate Bridge to start your swim to Yacht Harbor Beach, you will share in a memorable and inspiring SAA experience.

We will provide you with a safe swim, and request that you assist the organizers, pilots, rowers, kayakers and volunteers by reading closely the following instructions.

Proper Preparation:

Consider taking one of the Open Water Swim training courses offered on our website. Think about whether you are better suited to swim the .75-Mile Swim rather than the 1.75-Mile Swim, especially if you are under the age of 16 or this is your FIRST open water swim in the San Francisco Bay.

Review the swim route on the map on the webpage. **WE ENCOURAGE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU TO WEAR A WETSUIT.** Should you not want to wear a wetsuit for any reason, please clear this decision with our Co-Director in charge of water operations, Anthony DuComb (anthony@swimacrossamerica.org) Only those cleared will be allowed to swim without wetsuit.

Event Day:

Read the detailed Timeline on our website. Give yourself plenty of time on the morning of the 17th to register, get body marked, secure your timing chip, be transported via Cable Car over to the *SF Spirit*, get your tattoos and flowers, have a cup of coffee, and relax!

It is advisable that you arrive at Little Marina Green closer to 5:00 AM, as we have over 300 participants registering and the last shuttle

will leave at 6:30 AM. The boat will depart promptly at 7:15 AM!!

Review the swim route on the maps once you board the boat, and pay close attention to the safety briefing.

Parking:

Little Marina Green is located on Yacht Road in San Francisco at the intersection Marina Blvd, Old Mason Street and Yacht Road. Parking is available in Crissy Field just to the West and on the streets nearby, but consider car-pooling or taking a taxi/Uber.

What to bring:

Bring very little in the way of clothing or other belongings to the boat, as volunteers have to carry the bags of clothing back to registration. Also, leave some warm items of clothing in your bag at Little Marina Green, as you will finish your swim before the swim bags arrive back.

Why we swim!

Remember why you are swimming **and** for whom you are swimming. Relax and have fun. This is not a swim, not a race. Remember too that the flower ceremony will be 15 minutes before the jump.

Safety:

Out on the water for your safety, we have power boats, zodiacs, kayaks, SUPs, rowboats, SFPD jet skis, Swim Angels and Olympians, who will all surround you and escort you safely to Yacht Harbor Beach. There also will be an EMT and Paramedic on the water, as well as a Lifeguard, and a fully staffed Ambulance and First Aid Station on land.

Preparing to jump!

We will conduct a mandatory swimmer safety meeting on the boat. Along with the safety meeting, we will have a presentation from cancer survivors and SAA supporters to

share 'Why I Swim.' Flowers will also be provided for you to throw out from the boat in honor or memory of a loved one. You will be instructed to begin the Flower Ceremony via intercom and should then prepare yourself to swim. You will have about 15 minutes at that point before you swim. There will be a countdown leading up to the blasting of the horn/jump signal on the *SF Spirit*.

The least fast swimmers should jump first, then the medium fast swimmers, and then the fast and fastest swimmers. You should know which group you are in based on the lane that you swim in a pool. If you have a designated Swim Angel, your Angel will jump as close to you as possible.

Entering the water:

You will enter the water from one of the two side doors on the main deck of the vessel. There will be deckhands and SAA volunteers to assist you; **PLEASE do not hesitate at the door when you jump!** The longer the entire jump takes, the more spread out the swimmers will be.

After you hit the water, **IMMEDIATELY** and quickly move away from the boat to make space for others to jump.

There will be one later jump (approximately 25 minutes later) for the .75-Mile swimmers.

Direction you should swim:

Follow the instructions given in the swimmer safety meeting. You will first head in an easterly direction for a few minutes after the jump. There will be kayaks, SUPs, and rowers surrounding you, with power boats and jet skis around the outer ring.

DO NOT SWIM TOWARDS THE SHORE IMMEDIATELY! THERE IS A BACK EDDY and if you swim STRAIGHT to shore, you WILL get caught in the back eddy! Follow the lead boat that will have a bright color buoy on the back.

After some minutes, your pilots will adjust your swim more southeasterly, keeping the large copper dome of the Palace of Fine Arts straight ahead of you.

As you move closer to Yacht Harbor Beach and beyond the reach of the dreaded back eddy, you will be directed to angle your swim more sharply towards the shore where you will see some combination of lights, a swim arch, balloons and even a sail boat.

Always listen and obey the pilots escorting you. These individuals are experienced, with innumerable swims, pilots and other events all around SF Bay and elsewhere. Do not dispute their directions.

What to do if you need help:

If you find yourself tired or confused or otherwise in trouble in the water, stop, roll on your back, and raise your arm. A kayak or other craft will quickly come to assist you and give you safety instructions. If you are directed to hold onto a kayak or SUP always attach yourself to the rear of the craft, never grab onto the side of the kayak/SUP. The power boats and rowboats will have you hold onto the side.

Once you are attached to a craft, a decision can be made whether to reposition you or otherwise pull you from the event. Again, always listen to and follow the directions of your pilot. In the event of a reposition or otherwise, you will be moved onto a motorized support craft.

It is important to note that the pilots have absolute discretion to remove you from the water for safety purposes. There is no shame in being repositioned in the water or pulled by a support craft. It happens to every open water swimmer at one time or another.

WHEN YOU FINISH, MAKE SURE THAT YOU CHECK IN AT THE BEACH!! We MUST account for ALL swimmers and do so by checking your numbers when you cross the timing mat. **IF YOU HIT LAND WEST OF THE ARCH PLEASE WALK THE**

LAST YARDS TO THE FINISH.

You will then pick up your towel and share in congratulations for a memorable day of making waves to fight cancer!

Inclement weather:

In the event of inclement weather, for the safety of all, the swim may be modified, shortened, or cancelled at the discretion of the Safety Director. There will, however, be no refunds to participants.

Thank you.

Anthony DuComb

Co-Event Director