



Swim Across America - San Francisco

Swimmer Information

2019 ★

We thank you for your participation in the San Francisco Bay Area's 14th Annual Charity Swim! 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 28th, when you jump from the *SF Spirit* just inside the Golden Gate Bridge to start your swim to Yacht Harbor Beach, you will share in a memorable and inspiring SAA experience.

Most importantly, SAA's #1 priority is to provide you with a safe swim.

To accomplish this task, we request that you assist the organizers, pilots, rowers, kayakers, Swim Angels, and volunteers by closely reading the following instructions.

Proper Preparation

We hope you were able to join one of the Open Water Swim training courses offered on our website.

Review the course map on the SAA - San Francisco webpage to determine whether you are better suited to swim the .75 Mile Swim or the 1.75 Mile Swim based on your training and comfortability in open water, especially if you are under the age of 16 or newer to open water swimming.

If you would like to change the course you wish to swim, please immediately email Co-Director Susan Helmrich (susan@swimacrossamerica.org).

WETSUITS ARE MANDATORY.

Should you not want to wear a wetsuit for any reason, you **MUST** get approval from our Co-Event / Safety Director, Anthony W. DuComb (anthony@swimacrossamerica.org). Only those cleared by Mr. DuComb will be allowed to swim without a wetsuit.

Event Day Information★

Event Day Timeline
4:30 am: Volunteers Arrive at Little Marina Green
5:00 am: Swimmer Registration Opens! (Closes at 6:15 am)
5:15 am - 6:45 am: Swimmers will load onto Cable Car Shuttles to be transported from Little Marina Green to Pier 3.
6:30 am: The last shuttle will depart from Little Marina Green
7:00 am: Latest time for swimmers to board the <i>San Francisco Spirit</i>
7:00 am: Kayakers at Yacht Harbor arrive and prepare for Mandatory Safety Briefing **Pilots and Kayakers departing from Aquatic Park should arrive by 6:30 am
7:15 am: The <i>San Francisco Spirit</i> will depart from Pier 3
7:30 am: Safety briefing for all swimmers, followed by sharing of stories and the Flower Ceremony which occurs before jump.
8:45 - 9:00 am: 1.75 mile swimmers jump from the <i>San Francisco Spirit</i>
9:15 - 9:30 am: .75 mile swimmers jump from the <i>San Francisco Spirit</i>
10:30 am: Awards ceremony and event celebration begins
12:00 pm: Wrap-up and pick up

It is advisable that you arrive at Little Marina Green closer to 5:00 am, as we have 350 participants registering and the last shuttle will leave at 6:45 am. The *SF Spirit* will depart promptly at 7:15 am! So, give yourself plenty of time on the morning of the 28th to park, register/check-in, get body marked, secure your timing chip, be transported via Cable Car over to the *SF Spirit* located at Pier 3, get your tattoos and flowers, have a cup of coffee or snack, and relax!

Review course maps once you board, and pay close attention to the safety briefing.

Why We Swim!

Remember why you are swimming **and** for whom you are swimming. Relax and have fun. This is a swim, not a race. Remember too, that the flower ceremony will be 15 minutes before the jump, where all participants take a moment to remember WHY WE SWIM.

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 the area, but consider car-pooling or taking a taxi/Uber. Parking Little Marina Green will be limited to kayakers and volunteers.

What to Bring

There will be a secure Bag Drop at Little Marina Green available after you check-in. 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.

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 two side doors on the main deck of the vessel. Jump height is approximately 5 feet. 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.

The .75 Mile swimmers will jump appx 25-30 minutes after the 1.75 Mile swimmers.

Swimming Direction

Follow the instructions given in the swimmer safety meeting.

Highlights to remember:

- You will first head in an easterly direction for a few minutes after the jump.
- Follow the lead *Baykeeper* boat that will have a brightly colored buoy on its deck.
- There will be kayaks, SUPs, and rowers surrounding you, with power boats and jet skis around the outer ring, creating a swim lane for you.

DO NOT SWIM TOWARD 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.

After some minutes, your pilots will adjust your swim more southeasterly, keeping the large copper dome of the Palace of Fine Arts in your line of vision.

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 a directional sailboat.

Always listen and obey the pilots escorting you. Do not dispute their directions.

Safety

Out on the water, we have power boats, zodiacs, kayaks, SUPs, rowboats, SFPD jet skis, Swim Angels, and Olympians, all who will all surround you and escort you to Yacht Harbor Beach. There also will be EMS personnel on the water, and a fully staffed Ambulance and First Aid Station on land.

Should you require any assistance at all, or if you see another swimmer who may be in need of assistance during the swim, waive your arm or cap in the air to alert help.

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 come to assist you. If you are directed to hold onto a kayak or SUP, always attach yourself to the front or rear of the craft, DO NOT grab onto the side of the kayak/SUP!

Once you are attached to a craft, a decision can be made whether to reposition you or otherwise pull you from the event. Again, PLEASE 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.

**Swim Across America reserves the right to remove or move a swimmer's position along the course via approved safety methods and personnel as determined appropriate, or make any other operational changes thereof. All swimmers must follow the directions of SAA personnel. Noncompliance may endanger the participant or others, and may make the participant ineligible to participate in future Swim Across America events.*

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 ON CRISSY FIELD, PLEASE WALK THE LAST YARDS TO THE FINISH/CHECK OUT CHUTE.**

You will then pick up your towel and share in congratulations for a memorable day of making waves to fight cancer! As you walk back up to the SAA Village, you will receive your t-shirt. Enjoy brunch and celebration!

Communication

Important! Please follow us on social media to get weather-related event changes.

Any updates leading up to the event will be posted on the SAA - San Francisco [website](#), [Facebook page](#) and [Instagram page](#). Be sure to follow us if you are not doing so already. Additionally, in the event of a cancellation due to extreme weather or unexpected circumstances, an email will be sent out to all participants as quickly as possible. Additional event information is available on our website but is not updated as rapidly as on our social media feeds.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather (rain, fog, wind, currents, choppy water) for the safety of all the swim may be modified, shortened, or cancelled at the sole discretion of the Safety Director. There will, however, be no refunds to participants.

SAA Policies

Please visit www.swimacrossamerica.org/regulations to review SAA Policies.

Fins, snorkels, and mp3 players are NOT allowed for this swim.

Thank you for your commitment to making an impact in the fight against cancer. We look forward to making waves with you on Saturday!

Anthony W. DuComb
Co-Event and Safety Director