

Open Water Safety Officer (OWSO) Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the OWSO

As OWSO it is your responsibility to have all the safety equipment checked and ready for the swim session. Open the gate for members attending for the swim and ensure all members conform to the rules of the lake.

We ask for each member to do one OWSO session per season. This allows us to provide a safe OW experience for all members and if we cannot guarantee this, we are at risk of losing the use of the water.

Please take this role seriously and if you are unable to meet your commitment, please arrange a swap with another member in plenty of time, update the rota, and inform the club.

Adverse weather

- If there is any lightning in the lake area 30 minutes prior to the session, **it must be called off.**
- If there is any lightning during the session, swimmers must exit the lake as soon as possible and the session will come to an end and must not be re-started.
- If there is thunder or high winds, then please use your judgement as to whether it is safe for people to swim, whether you will be heard if you need to attract swimmers' attention, whether you will be visible and whether you are confident that you will be able to see all the swimmers at all times. **If you are in doubt, call off the session.** It is much better that people have to miss one session than to risk death or injury. **You are responsible for the session and it is your call whether or not you are comfortable that you can keep swimmers safe.**

On arrival at the lake site

You will need to gain access to the lake via the personnel side gate (if you're in a car, just stop in front of the gate):



Enter the code **1972** on the padlock (the second number ('9') is sticky so you might have to fiddle with it a bit, but it will eventually move):



Once you have opened the gate, put the padlock back on it.

You will need to walk round the the back of the building to the left of the gate:



Against the wall, you will find 2 boxes stacked on top of each other:



The top one contains all the stuff you'll need - **please re-pack neatly at the end of the session:**



In the equipment box is the lockbox containing the fob for the gate:



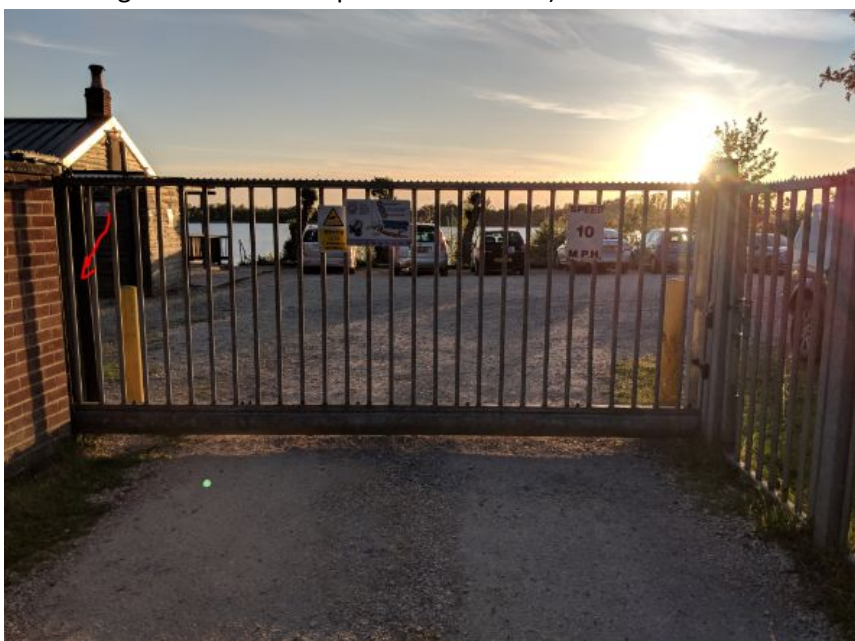
Enter the code **1974** and then pull down on the black switch on the left to open the box:



If you drove to the lake, you can now go back and get your car by using the fob to open the gate:



There is also a fob point on the inside at the side of the main gate, which can be used to let people in (other side of the gate to which this picture was taken)



Take the swim buoys, equipment box containing the life jackets, siren, etc. and the band board to the table area at the front of the club house.

If the Clubhouse is locked, then you will need the fob to open it:



Checklist

1. Ensure you have a fully charged mobile phone so that emergency calls can be made if necessary.
2. Be at the lake 20 minutes before the session is due to start to ensure you have enough time to set up, for swimmers to change and for the briefing to be given prior to the session start time.
3. Test that the siren is working (if not replace the batteries in the safety box). If you use the last of the batteries from the box please inform a committee member or coach immediately.
4. Ensure that all swimmers sign in, put their membership cards on the band board, take a band and put on a blown up swim buoy.
5. Ensure all membership cards have an emergency contact (ICE) number.
6. Cross-check the membership cards on the board with the names in the book to ensure that they match.
7. Once all swimmers have changed, put on the life vest (red or yellow, choose the right size for you) and ensure it is correctly fastened.
8. You will then need to provide the safety brief.

The safety brief and session

9. You must identify any hazards that could affect the swimmers (boats on the water, moored boats or slip hazards).

10. Any session plan will also be discussed by the coach at this time.
11. If it is a free swim session then you should confirm the route.
12. Ensure all swimmers are aware to turn on their back and raise a hand if in trouble.
13. ALL SWIM BUOY's AVAILABLE SHOULD BE USED, with weaker/less experienced swimmers taking preference if there's not enough for everyone.
14. Ensure the swimmers are IN THE WATER by the session start time.
15. After the safety brief has been completed all swimmers and the OWSO will make their way to the jetty. The OWSO will carry the board to the lake entry point, so that bands can be replaced as soon as swimmers exit the water. The OWSO should have the loudhailer/siren, binoculars and mobile phone with them at all times
16. The OWSO will, once everyone is in the water, check all swimmers are settled and set the swimmers off on the warm-up loop. Once all swimmers are back it is the duty of OWSO to check everyone is happy with no problems, the swimmers can then be set off for the swim session.

Late Arrivals

17. In the event that a swimmer arrives late it is your responsibility to ensure they are briefed in line with the safety briefing. Your decision should be final as to whether a late swimmer can be allowed to enter the water.
18. If they arrive during the briefing, ask them to remain until the end of the briefing before changing. Ensure that you are confident that they have all the relevant information and allow them to set off on the warm up lap with the others. If you feel they have missed too much, or all, of the briefing, then the latercomers will have to wait until the other swimmers have completed their warm up loop and set off on the main loop before you provide the latecomers with the briefing and set them off on their warm up loop etc. **You have equal responsibility to take time ensuring the late comers are happy as you do the other swimmers.**

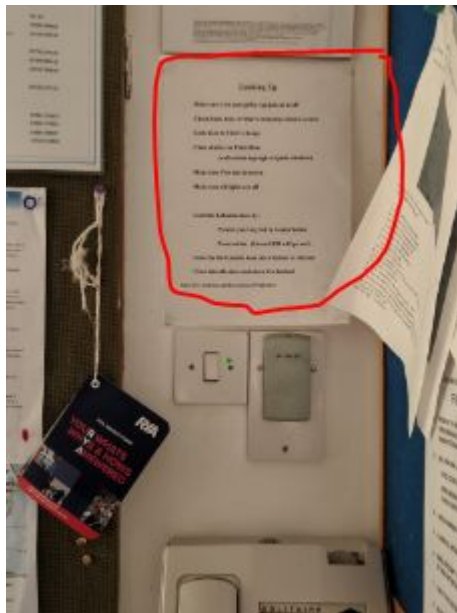
During the swim

19. The OWSO should constantly observe the swimmers using the binoculars and use the loudhailer to communicate with the swimmers if they are off course or use the siren to gain the attention of other swimmers and direct the closest swimmer with a swim buoy to the swimmer in trouble.

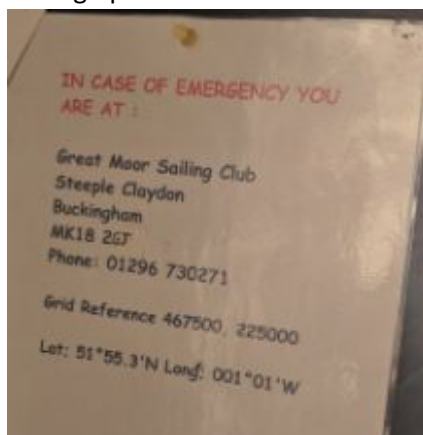
End of session

20. Give the swimmers enough warning that the session is coming to an end so that EVERYONE IS OUT OF THE WATER BY THE SESSION END TIME. Once all swimmers have exited the water, all the cards should be replaced by bands again on the board (if not check that the swimmer is out of the water). Take the board back up to the top decking area.
21. All swimmers should deflate the swim buoys and ensure all belts are fastened to prevent loss, and place them in the Ikea bag.
22. It is your responsibility as OWSO to wait for **all** swimmers to leave the venue.

23. Once all swimmers have left, please ensure clubhouse is locked and secure (if sailing club members are present please check that they are happy to lock up) the instructions for the locking of the clubhouse are on the wall to the right as you enter the clubhouse:



23. If you need any emergency help, contact information is on the blue board to the right of this locking up information:



Exiting the Lake Site

24. Return all the equipment, swim buoys, and band board to the box at behind the clubhouse.
25. Exit the site with your car with key fob.
26. Re-enter the site through the personnel gate and put the fob back in the lockbox, ensuring that you shuffle the code.
27. Exit the site through the personnel gate, ensuring that you lock it with the padlock behind you and shuffle the code.