

British Triathlon

Coaching Guidelines

Site: [British Triathlon Education & Learning Pathway](#)

Course: Coaching Qualifications

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COACHING AND EDUCATION



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1. Introduction

This document is an electronic version of the British Triathlon Coaching Guidelines, covering safety, remit, roles, insurance & best practice. The guidelines are reviewed and updated each year.

We have moved the guidelines to the learning hub in 2018 so all coaches can easily access these guidelines and search for specific items. **The search function can be found by scrolling to the bottom of the page.**

How To Use These Guidelines

We don't recommend reading this section end to end in one sitting. An approach for coaches could be similar to the plan, deliver, review model for coaching.

- **Planning** - focus on the safety and welfare aspects.
- **Delivery** - ratios and discipline specific sections.
- **Review** - look at the challenges. What do you want to do in the future? Use the search facility for guidance.

Alternatively, you may simply refer to these guidelines when looking at new activities or reviewing current delivery.

Other Formats

A PDF version will be available for all via the [coaching pages](#) on the main website.

If you wish to print the full guidelines, we recommend accessing the PDF as we have edited out any format issues.

You can also print directly/save yourself if you just want a single chapter. Instructions can be found [here](#).

Note: The content is designed to be web-based so you may find some formatting issues in your printed copy.



1.1 Aim and Remit

These guidelines have been developed to promote good practice and coaching that is safe, effective, enjoyable, and appropriately challenging for all triathletes being coached. The aim is to provide coaches with sufficient knowledge and guidance to be able to coach safely in triathlon specific training venues and know the appropriate questions to ask to ensure a venue is operated correctly.

The guidance provided to triathlon coaches covers health and safety issues that should be considered when coaching triathlon-based group sessions or prescribing training programmes. They also assist organisations¹ and coaches in the formulation of relevant health and safety policies.

It should be noted that these guidelines have been created for UK coaching under the governance of British Triathlon. Any coach operating outside the UK must ensure they understand local and legal implications of doing so.

British Triathlon Coach Education provides the skills and guidance of how to operate in specific venues, not the safe management of those venues. This document is **NOT** aimed at venue management and organisers of venues and is **NOT** intended as a guide for setting up and managing venues.

1.2 Health & Safety Executive Guidance (HSE)

The law regarding health and safety is intended to be clear and unambiguous, but because of the nature of sport where different coaches and organisations are in different positions (voluntary, self-employed, employed, facility managers, etc.) there is not a standard answer that fits all cases. However, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides some useful guidance for sports clubs and coached sessions:

- [Guidance for sports clubs](#)
- [FAQs](#)

¹ Organisations in this context include clubs, Local Authority leisure facilities and schools.



Their guidance states that health and safety implementation should be **reasonably practicable**. This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the real risk in terms of money, time, or trouble. Health and safety are not intended to be bureaucratic and a time-consuming paper-based exercise. That said, coaches have a duty of care towards their participants, spectators, and the general public in and around their coaching sessions.

The HSE does state that some accidents in a sporting context (e.g., injuries sustained on the field of play) may be governed by a duty of care and common (civil) law may apply. Until sufficient case law exists it is impossible to state what is and isn't **legally** acceptable. However, this document is written as a guide to what is currently considered best practice by British Triathlon to provide best practice duty of care to athletes, spectators, coaches, and the general public.

1.3 Using These Guidelines

Triathlon coaching has a broad remit with three sports and delivered in a range of environments. The guidelines have been created to support coaches and help them make the decisions and actions to ensure their coaching is safe and effective.

Each coach or organisation that conducts triathlon related activities with groups or provides an individual training programme prescription should produce their own health and safety and risk assessment policies taking these guidelines into account, together with any other specific requirements from their own managers, governors, or local authorities, such as rules on educational visits, staffing, the use of minibuses, etc. Policies should be in writing and all people assisting with the coaching activity must be fully aware of these and how to implement them if necessary.

The nature of coaching and coaching environments is such that often a subjective opinion will need to be adopted, where a considered balanced view of best practice guidance (this document) and common sense is required. Coaches and session organisers should always hold the safety and welfare of participants and others affected by the session in the forefront of their minds when making decisions about session provision.



It should be noted that qualified coaches who do not adhere to the Coaching Guidelines through their action/inaction will be in breach of the [Coaching Code of Practice](#).

This document should be read in conjunction with wider [British Triathlon policies](#) which can be located through the British Triathlon Website or the Learning Hub. These include:

- [Coaching Code of Practice](#).
- Guidance on safeguarding and welfare on [BTF Website](#).
- Guidance on safeguarding and welfare in [Learning Hub](#).
- [BTF Competition Rules](#).

1.4 Insurance

The British Triathlon Federation provides coaching cover for all coaches who have been trained and qualified by British Triathlon. In most instances this is done by holding a home nation coach membership.

For British Triathlon coaching qualifications to be valid, insurance must be obtained and up to-date. All coaches (including those in training) must obtain coaching insurance either through the home country membership or an insurance policy that is equal to or greater than the British Triathlon insurance policy for coaching.

The cover is conditional on a coach following established guidelines for British Triathlon coaches. Guidelines are established within this document, and the necessary points will be raised inside the course resource for each level.

Insurance is also conditional to the level of qualification and training the coach has received and will only be covered to operate within the remit of their training and qualification.

For further details of Insurance Policy, please see the [British Triathlon Membership pages](#) and the [British Triathlon Insurance site](#).

Commercial Coaching

Any coach receiving payment for their services should check the insurance conditions via the above pages to ensure they are covered.



Coaching Other Activities

A coach will only be covered for the activities they have been trained to deliver. Insurance cover for activities will depend on the coach package they hold. The Ultimate coach has been extended to cover wider activities.

1.5 Validity & Summary of Changes

These guidelines are subject to regular review and are updated yearly. Coaches will be informed of the update. A coach should ensure they review this document on a regular basis.

If you have any problems understanding or applying these guidelines to your coaching, please contact your Home Nation Coach Education Department.

Summary of Changes

The following is a list of the key changes to these guidelines. The guidelines were moved to a learning hub format in September 2018.

These have been implemented through direct feedback from coaches, home nation input, input from health & safety consultants, agreement with the British Triathlon coaching team and been subject to confirmation from the insurance provider.

- Update on new qualification & open water guidance (August 2023)
- General review and reissue of PDF version (December **2019**)
- Inclusion of section on [SIPE & cold water shock](#) (December **2019**)
- Added [Section on 1:1 Coaching](#) (December **2019**)
- Minor update on [Disc Brakes](#) (December **2019**)
- Clarification on [Ratios for Level 1 Open Water coaching](#) (December **2019**)
- Update on pool safety provision (2018)
- Update to include new level 2 diploma (2018)
- Clarification on swim teaching/ coaching (2018)
- Updating to include new coach membership information (May 2017)



- New Level 1 qualification remit (2016)
- Rewording of use of cycle facilities (Velodromes) (2016)
- Inclusion of Level 1 coaches to deliver on static cycles (2016)
- Overview of CPD for coaches

Previous Key changes are as listed below:

- Clarity of application of guidelines in coaching.
- Additional guidance when coaching older adults.
- Coaching ratios adjusted, and scenarios given to clarify how to apply.
- Addition of indoor cycling in remit of Level 2 coach.
- Level 2 coaches delivering technical skills within a coaching environment.

1.6 Home Nations

These Guidelines are designed to be used across all home nations and are created in partnership with Triathlon England, Triathlon Scotland, and Welsh Triathlon.

However, each home nation may have some slight variances due to the needs of the sport in that nation. In the event of any specific questions, you should contact your home nation coaching team:

- [Triathlon England](#)
- [Welsh Triathlon](#)
- [Triathlon Scotland](#)



2. Non-Coached Sessions

What defines a coached session?

It is difficult to define exactly what a coached session is, but it will include some or all of the following elements:

- A set objective focusing on technique and/or conditioning.
- A written session plan.
- Safety planning (risk assessment and emergency action plan).
- A coach present who directly supervises the session and provides guidance, direction, and feedback; the coach and assistants will take responsibility for the athletes in the session.
- Clearly defined and explicitly stated as a coached session.

If a group session is organised, which is not coach led, British Triathlon recommends that the club and coaches make it clear that the sessions will not be coached and detail what, if any, supervision is offered, e.g., is there a navigator for the ride. Unlike a lot of sports, many triathlon training sessions may not be coached. These sessions are generally more informal.

Examples of non-coached sessions may include:

- Club rides.
- Chain-gangs.
- Club/park runs.
- Time trials.
- Open swim sessions (pool and open water).

Additional guidance which also details club insurance for activities can be found [here](#), or by contacting your regional manager.



2.1 Guidance for Non-Coached Sessions

The following general guidelines will reflect good practice in these sessions:

- A session leader/navigator (not someone who is acting as a coach) will take responsibility for organising the group. However, this person is not responsible for the health and safety of the group.
- Sessions are advertised in advance clarifying:
 - Date/time/meeting point.
 - Outline of route (possibly online map).
 - Speed/pace of session.
 - Expectation of participants (equipment required/experience and fitness level/etiquette within session).
 - What happens when someone cannot keep up with the group (will someone wait/meeting points on route).
 - At the start of the session, a briefing is given confirming the above.
 - Any coaches taking part clearly state they are not acting in a coaching role.
 - An emergency action plan is available to all, what happens in the event of emergency, including contact mobile numbers.
 - A basic assessment of risk and appropriate mitigation has been considered/actioned.
 - Any person under 18 should be supervised by an adult, who is taking responsibility for their health and safety, i.e., parent or guardian role.
 - No advice should be taken whilst on the move or in a vulnerable position. Guidance and advice may be offered by suitably qualified individuals when stopped and in a safe location to do so.
- A non-proficient rider on a group ride could present a potential danger to other riders and road users. This person should be referred to coached sessions to develop riding skills, before attending non-coached sessions.
- For open water swimming sessions British Triathlon recommends the same guidance on health and safety given in Section 6 is followed, with the only difference being that there is no coach giving instruction.



Clubs or individuals offering 'non-coached' sessions without appropriate safety recommendations may leave themselves open to litigation. Further guidance for clubs can be found [here](#).

2.2 Activators and Leader Courses

A range of courses have been delivered to support clubs delivering non-coached activities, these included the following:

- CTC leading cycle sessions.
- Run leader course.
- Leaders' awards.

These courses are no longer offered and from late 2016 a new suite of activator and leader courses have been developed and released including the following:

- Swim, Bike, Run Leader Award / Triathlon Leader Award.
- Swim, Bike, Run Community Activator Award / Triathlon Community Activator Award.

These courses will cover all the elements of triathlon and allow activities to be led in a safe and effectively way.

Full details of the [Activators courses](#) are accessible via the British Triathlon website.

3. Planning for Safety

As a simple summary based on HSE guidance, the following should always be in place for ALL coached sessions:

- **Risk Assessment:** Check that the equipment and venue are safe and suitable for participants and activities planned.
- **Participant Screening:** Check that activities are appropriate for capabilities and the health and fitness of participants.



- **Emergency Action Plan:** Have a plan of what to do in case of an emergency, which includes ensuring a means of raising an alarm, adequate access for emergency services, means of evacuation and register of attendees in case of evacuation.
- **First Aid Provision:** Access to an adequately trained first aider.
- **Communication strategy:** Ensure everyone involved in the planning and delivery of the session knows the emergency procedures.
- **Dynamic Risk Assessment:** Effective risk assessment is not just about planning in advance but also managing dynamically while sessions are in progress.
- **Record Accidents:** Have a process for improving the system based on experience.

Further information From HSE:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/leisure/common><http://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/leisure/common-issues.htm>

The following pages are relevant to all coaches, irrespective of level of qualification or whether they are coaching groups or individuals.

3.1 Producing a Risk Assessment


HSE Definition:

“A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your club. The law does not expect you to remove all risks, but to protect people by putting in place measures to control those risks.

You are probably already taking steps to protect your employees and others who may be affected by your club activities, but your risk assessment will tell you whether you should be doing more.”

A risk assessment should be carried out for every venue used during coaching sessions and should be re-assessed if a different discipline is being carried out, as the risks may differ. The purpose of a risk assessment is to identify hazards that could cause harm, assess the impact of outcomes that may arise from those hazards being realised and decide on appropriate reasonable measures to eliminate, or control the hazards based on





their likelihood. The content of the coaching session must be planned with due consideration for the ability and age of the triathletes in the group, as well as the venue size and surface conditions.

In most instances, the Lead Coach will have thought about safety requirements and should document their findings through the creation of a risk assessment. By documenting safety procedures, policies and practices, coaches are able to establish a health and safety audit trail. This will support the coach in the event of an incident by demonstrating a responsible and proactive approach to managing safety. It will also provide a written template for the coaches of future sessions, particularly club training sessions where other coaches may organise the training.

When operating in a managed facility, the risk assessments should take account of and adhere to venue specific normal operating procedures (NOP). In the vast majority of cases, the coaches' risk assessment will be a 'slimmed' down version of the venue NOP and only cover aspects which are relevant to the coach, athletes and the coached session content.

Where an employer, manager of a facility or organiser's policy or actions cause an unsafe coaching environment then the coach should raise this issue with that individual and seek to resolve the issue prior to the session. If it cannot be resolved satisfactorily, then the coach should consider cancelling the session on safety grounds.

Template risk assessment documents for a variety of 'standard' coaching venues are available through Coach Education provisions on the Learning Hub online resources page. These examples should be considered only as a starting point and coaches should ensure they fully examine their own environment and put into place appropriate changes and updates.

It is sensible and appropriate to create a risk assessment once for a given venue and share this document between all coaches delivering coached sessions. These documents should then be reviewed and updated following:

- Any incident or near miss (i.e., when an accident could have occurred, but by luck it didn't).
- Any updates from the venue, e.g., revision of venue NOP.



- On an annual basis as a minimum, which in turn should prompt a conversation with the venue to assess any changes.

Risk assessments should be reviewed/implemented prior to each session and should be assessed dynamically during a session.

Safety Provision

In some environments, such as indoor swimming pools and open water venues additional safety provision is required over and above the coaches present. See [Swimming - Pool Section 5](#) & [Open Water Section 6](#) for more detail. When producing a risk assessment, assess whether the coach can adequately provide the function of safe supervision and coaching at the same time. In most cases separate safety cover will be required.

Equipment Checks

Part of any risk assessment should be to check that any equipment used is safe for the activities planned. Coaches can advise athletes to have appropriate equipment and clothing themselves but should also perform some safety checks themselves. The common key items that need to be checked include but aren't limited to:

- Bike Helmets.
- Bikes "M-Check".
- Turbo or static training bikes are stable and appropriately set up, with working moving parts. Check the emergency braking devices where fixed flywheels are used.
- Pool equipment and swim training aids, such as backstroke flags, lane ropes, marker buoys.

3.2 Undertake Participant Screening

Coaches should seek to ensure that participants can undertake the session being delivered and are appropriately fit and well.



- Participants under the age of 18 must provide the coach with a Parental Coaching Consent Form. Any participant failing to submit a form signed by a parent or guardian should not be allowed to participate in the coached session.
- Coaches should collect and retain appropriate details regarding each participant being coached including name, address, and emergency contact. This should preferably be through the use of a registration form or consent form for participants under the age of 18. The information should be stored securely and appropriately ensuring confidentiality of information is maintained, under the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#).
- To facilitate safe participation, coaches should also know about any specific health requirements or medical conditions of the participants. Where possible this information should be sought in advance of the coaching session/training prescription through the completion of a registration form or a coaching consent form. However, it may be necessary to talk directly with the participant and/or parent/guardian before the session.
- As a triathlon coach you are not qualified to give advice on whether an athlete's medical condition prevents them from training. If a participant does not know, they should be referred to a doctor. In most cases a person will know what they should and shouldn't do, and the coach should simply be aware of this.
- Special attention should be given to those with underlying medical conditions, those who have had a significant time as sedentary, or those over 40 years of age, as these groups are the highest risk in terms of medical issues happening during or after training. Caution should be exercised until they have developed some experience within sessions. Common best practice includes new athletes to only undertake 30-50% of main session initially, complete session/sets at a lower intensity, undertake one repetition then rest the next.
- A register of attendance must be completed for every coaching session. This may be used in case of evacuation to ensure all participants are accounted for. When coaching triathletes under 18 years old, each triathlete is to be signed out on the register by a parent/guardian in the presence of the coach. It is recommended these are retained for future reference in line with club policy on data protection and record keeping.
- Some participants may present with a medical condition that in some cases may be linked to disability. If an individual has a condition where participation is in question, they must seek medical advice through their GP prior to



participation, to ensure that the activity will not have a detrimental effect on their health or wellbeing.

- The coach reserves the right to ask for medical consent from a doctor or specialist if they believe the participant presents a condition that could put themselves or others at risk.

Practical Implementation

For one-off coaching sessions it is advisable to make use of [parental consent/participant screening forms](#). A template screening form is available on the Learning Hub. In a club situation, a more suitable approach may be to keep centralised membership records, which contain all the vital information, however this information should be readily accessible in case of emergency and should also be kept in a confidential and secure manner in line with GDPR.

For more information on collecting information click [here](#).

3.3 Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

An EAP detailing what actions the coach and participants will take to maintain participant safety and welfare in the case of an incident occurring should exist and be accessible to all coaches.

Managed facilities should have their own EAP and procedures which the coach should be familiar with. The coach should also have their own EAP, which will work in conjunction with the facility EAP, but in most cases will be a condensed version that covers all information relevant to the coach and athletes and will usually detail how to assist venue staff in ensuring safety.

For non-managed facilities, the coach will need to cover actions to be taken in different types of incidents, ranging from minor to life threatening. This plan should be in sufficient detail that it describes a step-by-step process in detail of what to do in an emergency:

- Major Injuries (potentially life threatening).
- Need for evacuation (e.g., fire, structural failure).
- Minor Injuries.



For outdoor venues, some or all of the following may also be required:

- Missing persons.
- Adverse weather conditions.

The EAP should provide sufficient details to contact and direct emergency services to the venue and how emergency first aid will be provided.

3.4 First Aid Provision

The coach should ensure that themselves and the attendees of sessions have access to appropriate first aid provision.

In a **managed facility**, this is likely to fall under the remit of the facility staff (e.g., lifeguard or duty manager at a leisure centre), however this should not be presumed, and it is important to identify who this individual is.

In a **non-managed facility**, the coach will need to ensure access to a first aider and first aid equipment appropriate to the environment they are working in. The first aider can be a member of the group, helper, parent, facility/duty manager. The coach can also be the first aider; however, this is not a mandatory requirement. In either circumstance, access to an appropriately stocked first aid kit is required. The coach does not need to be first aid qualified, however if they frequently coach on their own in an unmanaged facility, then it is recommended that they have a first aid qualification as this will make ensuring a first aider is present is much easier.

If the coach is acting as first aider, this is an additional reason why it is recommended that they do not take part in the coached session as a participant, as they may be part of an accident, and therefore unable to treat others.

Definition of a first aider: An individual who has attended a recognised course of training. This can be delivered by British Triathlon in partnership with the RLSS, an organisation such as St Johns or may be delivered by employers in house (part of staff training).

For guidance on selecting a first aid training provider please visit the [HSE website](#).



3.5 Communication Strategy

Planning for risks and undertaking safety briefings for athletes and other coaches is clearly a crucial part of safety and welfare management. For those who are responsible for other coaches and the management of a club's health and safety provision it is important that they consider how to communicate and share information with all those involved with the coaching process, which may include other coaches, welfare officer, membership secretary. It is advisable for all those who would be expected to be involved in case of emergency have a practice or drill of intended actions once a year as a minimum to ensure the process works.

Where coaches have learnt from an incident/occurrence at the club/event, where appropriate, they should share the lessons learnt with the British Triathlon organisation. This could help to avoid incidents at other clubs or events.

3.6 Dynamic Safety Management

Risk assessments always require a degree of vigilance and dynamic management. Whoever is responsible for safety must always keep part of their focus on the safety in case situations change. A dynamic assessment of this may be required at the outset of sessions.

A safety briefing should be conducted prior to every coach-led session to ensure that participants and others involved in the coaching session have the relevant health, safety, and emergency information regarding the session. Relevant health and safety information might include:

- An explanation of specific safety issues and hazards of the venue (i.e., identified during the risk assessment).
- An explanation of any specific safety or operational requirements associated with the session or specific activities in the session.
- The purpose of the session (i.e., the goal).
- How to safely perform the discipline specific techniques required for the session.
- A reminder of the session rules/Code of Practice.



- Advise/reminder about the relevant safety and emergency procedures and how to obtain first aid if required.
- When coaching a session that includes participants under the age of 18, those participants are the coach's responsibility from when the session commences until the appropriate person collects them at the end of the session. Young participants are expected to remain in the session from beginning to end unless they have made prior arrangements to be picked up early. It is good practice to have a sign in and sign out sheets for sessions. To help with this process, you might need to consider appropriate helpers such as parents and/or assistant coaches.

The coach should adopt positions when coaching where they take an appropriate balance between being able to observe and feedback to participants, whilst maintaining a safe environment. Where there is a conflict between these two elements, safety should take precedence.

If a participant must leave early or is being collected by someone other than the parent/guardian, the parent/guardian must advise the coach of the details of the arrangement including who will be collecting the individual and when. The coach should also agree departure times and procedures with parents/guardians before the session commences. Generally, this only applies to children leaving the session.

It is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that the group is adequately supervised. The coaching ratios outlined in this document provides a maximum ratio to ensure a safe coaching session. However, coaches must only coach the number of triathletes they feel confident and competent to deal with, within the recommendations. The coach: participant ratio should be sufficient to enable meaningful help to be given to any participant who is having difficulties. Younger children, beginners and those with disabilities or special needs, for example, may require extra supervision.

While the coaching ratios provide a ratio to ensure an effective and safe coaching session, it is recommended that when coaching young athletes, a minimum of two responsible adults (with at least one person holding a valid coaching qualification at an appropriate level) are always present to ensure an adequate level of supervision. This means that in an emergency, one adult can stay with the group while the other can go for help or deal with



the emergency without having to consider supervision of the rest of the group. It can also address any concerns about one-to-one contact with young children.

In some instances, it will be necessary to arrange for additional help during a session. The coach might arrange for another qualified coach to attend the session or ask another responsible individual such as a club official or parent of one of the participants to assist in the session. It is important that anyone enlisted to help in a session is suitably qualified for the role and tasks they are required to undertake. It is good practice to have a clear and accurate record of everyone involved in the delivery of the session. This will ensure the coach is able to identify who attended a session should an issue be raised at a later date that requires this information. This person should be present at the safety briefing held prior to coaching sessions.

It is strongly recommended by the British Triathlon Federation that a coach **should not** take part in the session as a participant, unless this is unavoidable. ***Coaching requires observation and feedback and a continual awareness of the bigger picture in terms of dynamic risk assessment, all these elements are significantly compromised by the coach taking part in a session.***

3.7 Recording Accidents and Injuries

It is essential to record any accidents or injuries that occurred during a session. When documenting the occurrence of an injury or illness the coach should:

- Briefly note it in the relevant box on the session plan.
- Record the full details on an Accident and Illness Record Form or in an accident record book.
- Notify the managed facility Duty Manager as they may need to document the injury also.

Recording these details will help to identify any trends or re-occurring accidents as well as areas that could be addressed to improve safety. This record will be vital in the unlikely event of legal action. A copy of the accident report form should be submitted to the relevant person (e.g., Venue Duty Manager, Club Head Coach or Welfare officer). The coach should always keep a copy for his or her own records.



Triathletes completing individual prescribed training programmes (Level 2 diploma, Level 3 & HPCP coaches only) should record accidents, injuries or illnesses that occur during training on their training diary and inform the coach at the earliest opportunity. The coach should always keep a copy for their own records.

Coaches should deal with each accident, injury, or illness appropriately, which will normally involve a recommendation to cease training or to reduce the training load until the triathlete has recovered from their injury. Where appropriate, the coach should encourage the triathlete to seek medical advice.

In the **event of serious injury or incident** (i.e., something that requires prolonged medical treatment, or there was an incident that could have led to a life-threatening situation) you should also contact the coaching team at British Triathlon or your Home Nation, who will give advice on how to report an incident formally.

You can also do this through our [insurance company](#).

Sporting injuries are NOT Reportable under [RIDDOR](#) (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) if the injury arose out of the normal participation of the activity (e.g. a bike crash, or collision between swimmers). Injuries should be reported if they were due to defective equipment or failings in the organisation and management of an event.

Medical Attention

It is important to note that it is **not** the responsibility of the coach to diagnose or treat any participant with injury or illness. However, they should direct participants to seek appropriate medical attention at the earliest possible opportunity.



3.8 Guidance on stopping a coaching activity

This can be a challenging area for coaches, you can see a person is struggling to complete a rep or skill set, you suggest stopping but they advise they are fine and want to continue. You may also get athletes complaining of injuries or illness, and then advise they are fit to train. It could be that the weather or other factors make a session unsafe, and a coach is under pressure to run a session.

A coach needs to know when to say 'stop' or tell an athlete when not to train. The risk to triathletes is generally low, unlike sports that involve contact or high-force activities. In most cases, they will just fail to get anything from a session, but if allowed to continue it could lead to injury or illness.

We have detailed a real example from a club coach to show how you can deal with this situation:

A club athlete was complaining of chest pains. They were told by the coach to stop and see a GP but wanted to continue anyway. They were prevented from attending sessions until they had seen a GP. It was 'sold' to the athlete in the end by the coach 'if you drop dead – it's my reputation that is also affected, so you need consider the consequences for everyone'.

The result in this case was to modify club membership T&Cs and ensure there was a condition that coaches could stop members training if they thought it was in the member's or others' best interest.

Often individual athletes are prepared to take a risk, but it's the effect on others, e.g., black out whilst riding in a group causing cyclists to crash or road traffic accident, that can be used to persuade athletes to think about outcomes of their actions.

Stopping the session for all, when one person won't adhere to the coach guidance, can create a positive outcome through peer pressure.



Examples of sessions that must be stopped due to safety factors:

- Open water swim sessions could be affected by a variety of factors e.g., water quality, other users, wildlife, and weather.
- Bike sessions (road based) increase in normal users, road surface, weather.

The coach ideally should be aware of any additional factors (e.g., change in weather) before the session starts and make the call to cancel/stop the session. A coach should never be pressured to run a session where they feel safety is compromised.

If participants chose to ignore advice and wish to swim/bike/run in a public area at their own risk, the coach should still not deliver the session and advise the coached session is cancelled and make a record. If this is an area hired for coaching, the coach should not allow any activity to take place.

3.9 Working with 1:1 Athletes

A coach who is prescribing 1:1 coaching (within their remit) is taking responsibility for the overall training program and can have a significant positive or detrimental effect upon an athlete's health and welfare. For this reason, the coach must have a detailed understanding of the athlete's general health and be up to date with any current injuries or illness. The long-term health of the athlete takes precedence over any short-term performance gains. Coaches should therefore err on the side of caution and only operate within their training and knowledge. If in doubt, it is best to get the athlete to seek qualified medical help and confirmation of what is appropriate.

It is advisable for coaches to enter some form of coaching contract from the outset. This should clearly state the requirements upon the athlete for reporting injuries and illness to the coach and to follow subsequent advice.

A common issue for 1:1 Coaches is when an athlete does not adhere to coach guidance or training when ill or injured, often training when injured or doing more training than prescribed. Coaches may not be physically present and therefore it is harder to influence this situation.



If after discussion with the athlete the situation remains the same and the coach believes the athlete is potentially doing harm to themselves, the coach should keep a record of any such discussions and ultimately consider stopping coaching the individual in question. Note that a degree of care should be taken in this area as the issue could be a sign of a mental health condition or disorder. In this case more specialist advice, guidance and support may be needed for the athlete and to support the coach.

Coaches working with under 18's or adults at risk should also ensure they adhere to safeguarding policy and process. More information can be found [here](#) and guidance regarding age of participants for 1:1 coaching [here](#).

4. Remit of Coaching Qualifications

When working with triathletes, it is the responsibility of the coach to be aware of their level of training and of the qualification that they have obtained, in conjunction with their level of experience at a given level or in each environment. For any British Triathlon coaching qualification to be valid, the coach must hold insurance cover equal to or more than that offered by the Home Nations membership. Further details on coaching Insurance can be found in the [British Triathlon website](#).

Coaches should ensure that they are qualified to operate at the level and in the environment where they are coaching. When working in a discipline specific environment, coaches are restricted to coaching in the environment as outlined by their coaching qualification.

British Triathlon regards **a group to be defined as a minimum of 3 or more participants**.

If coaches are unsure about their coaching environments, then they should contact their Home Nation Coaching Department at the earliest opportunity for clarification.



Table 1: Qualification & Role Descriptors for British Triathlon Coaches

Coaching Qualification	Coaches Role	Qualification Description / Notes
Level 1 (Awarded before October 2016)	Prepare for, deliver and review preprepared coaching sessions incorporating basic triathlon techniques. (Assist more qualified coaches delivering aspects of their coaching sessions normally under direct supervision). Coaching groups only.	Level 1 triathlon coaches are first and foremost <u>assistant</u> coaches to more senior coaches. However, where a more senior coach is not present then Level 1 coaches are able to independently conduct pre-prepared swimming, cycling, and running activity sessions either by using Level 1 coaching cards, OR appropriate sessions prepared/reviewed by an appropriately qualified triathlon coach (i.e., Level 2 or Level 3). Level 1 coaches can only deliver 1 in 4 coached sessions independently from a Level 2 or 3 triathlon coach. (I.e., three sessions out of four must be directly supervised by a more qualified coach). Level 1 coaches can coach independently for up to 4 months from certification. This may be relevant in circumstances when a new club is being established or replacing a coach. Scottish Level 1 coaches should confirm remit directly with Triathlon Scotland.
Level 1 (From October 2016)	Prepare, deliver, and review pre-prepared coaching sessions incorporating basic triathlon techniques. Coaching groups only.	The Level 1 qualification was revised in 2016 and will allow a coach to lead and deliver (pre-planned) sessions or prepare basic sessions on their own (reviewed by higher level coach) in a range of club environments (without the need to be directly supervised). Coaches must be at least 16 years of age. Coaches over 18 once qualified can work independently; those under 18 must have supervision.



<p>Foundation Coach</p>	<p>Plan and deliver safe coaching activities under the supervision of a more qualified coach.</p> <p>Coaching groups only.</p>	<p>Session plans must be signed off or prepared by a more qualified triathlon coach including Group Coach, Level 2, Level 2 Diploma, L3 or HPCP.</p> <p>Coaches aged 14-17 years of age must be in the line of sight of more qualified triathlon coach including Group Coach, Level 2, Level 2 Diploma, L3 or HPCP.</p> <p>Coaches aged 18 years and over can work with small groups of participants whilst a more qualified coach is at the same venue delivering from session plans signed off or prepared by a more qualified triathlon coach including Group Coach, Level 2, Level 2 Diploma, L3 or HPCP.</p>
<p>Level 2</p>	<p>Plan, deliver and evaluate coaching sessions incorporating basic and intermediate triathlon techniques.</p> <p>Coaching groups only.</p>	<p>Level 2 triathlon coaches are trained & qualified to plan & deliver a series of structured and progressive sessions incorporating basic and intermediate skills techniques, independently of a higher-level coach.</p>
<p>Group Coach</p>	<p>Independently plan, prepare, deliver, and evaluate coaching sessions, and mentor and oversee fellow coaches.</p> <p>Coaching groups only.</p>	<p>Level 2 triathlon coaches are trained & qualified to plan & deliver a series of structured and progressive sessions incorporating basic and intermediate skills techniques, independently of a higher-level coach.</p>



<p>Level 2 Diploma (From 2018)</p>	<p>Plan, deliver and review individual coaching programmes.</p>	<p>A new qualification for 2018. This will allow certified Diploma coaches to deliver 1:1 coaching in addition to their level 2 remit.</p>
<p>Level 3/HPCP</p>	<p>Plan, implement, analyse, and revise annual coaching programs for individual triathletes through individualised training prescription.</p> <p>Plan, deliver and review coaching sessions incorporating advanced discipline specific skills, techniques, and tactics. Coaching groups and individuals¹.</p>	<p>Level 3 & HPCP triathlon coaches are qualified to prescribe training programmes to individuals.</p> <p>Level 3 & HPCP coaches are also able to coach the full range of discipline specific skills, techniques, and tactics, as outlined in the coach education course technical syllabus.</p> <p>Training prescription should be based on the triathletes' current and potential performance, needs and aspirations, to achieve specific training/competition goals.</p>

¹See [section on coaching individuals](#).

¹ On a session where a coach has planned a group activity, but less than 3 people turn up, the coach should decide if the session will be effective based on the numbers and either revise or postpone the session. Where less than 3 people regularly attend a coached session, the coach should suspend and review the delivery of the session. A coach who continues to deliver sessions to less than 3 participants will find themselves coaching outside their remit.

4.1 Insurance During Qualification

Trainee coaches will be insured to deliver sessions/training programmes as required to complete their qualification, during their qualification period. Please refer to the qualification criteria or course tutors for further information.



Currently the cover is only in place for coaches to deliver sessions which contribute to the qualification they are undertaking; full coaching remit only applies once certification is confirmed.

Foundation Coach

Trainee Foundation coaches are required to coach 3 sessions for their coaching experience. This coaching must be done under direct supervision of a more qualified triathlon coach including Group Coach, Level 2, Level 2 Diploma, L3 or HPCP.

Level 1

No coaching outside the course is required, any coaching practise must be done under direct supervision of a qualified level 2/ 3 coach.

Level 2

Trainee coaches are required to coach 6 sessions for their practical coaching experience.

Group Coach

Trainee coaches are required to coach 6 sessions for their coaching programme and one individual coaching session.

Level 2 Diploma

To work with one athlete over a 12-week period.

Level 3/HPCP

Due to changes in Level 3 assessment criteria candidates should check in with their home nation or course tutors to confirm requirements.

5. Coaching Ratios and Age Guidelines

These coaching ratios have been established to provide the coach with a maximum ratio to ensure a **safe** and **effective** coaching session. The coaching ratios cover two separate influences, the level required to be safe, and the level required to provide a good level of coaching to athletes. They should be considered in conjunction with other safety ratios and guidance such as lifeguard cover.



Furthermore, these are recommendations, and coaches at the respective coaching level should only coach the number of participants they feel comfortable with. This may also vary depending on the level of age, competency of the group, the coaching environment, and the weather conditions.

Table 2 Recommended coach: participant ratio

Session delivered	Level 1 & Foundation Coach	Level 2 & Group Coach	Level 3 & HPCP
Pool Based Swimming Sessions. E.g., managed local authority pool.	1:10	1:20	1:24
Open Water Swim Sessions.	Assistant role only when directly supervised by senior coach	1:16 ²	1:20
Cycling (small traffic free area) e.g. playground, grass field, car park closed to vehicles.	1:8	1:16	1:20
Cycling (closed road circuits).	1:8	1:16	1:20
Cycling (indoor fixed bike session) e.g., turbo session in sports hall.	1:8 ³ *For L1's post Sep 2016	1:16	1:24
Cycling (public highway).	Assistant role only when directly supervised by senior coach	1:8 ³	1:8 ²
Running sessions.	1:12	1:20	1:24

² Level 2 coaches who commenced their Level 2 course before October 2011 are not qualified to deliver open water sessions unless they have completed an additional open water coaching module. This could be a 1-day BTF open water CPD or the ASA open water qualification.

The number of participants will depend on a range of factors including safety cover, the environment, level of experience of participants, the coaches' experience and additional training. **Refer to [section 6 on Open Water](#).**

³ Level 1 coaches should complete the [Safe Static Cycling Module](#) and deliver according to their wider qualification status.



Strength and conditioning. ⁴	Assistant role only when directly supervised by senior coach	1:16	1:20
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⁴ Coaches must have completed the [Strength and Conditioning Module](#).

5.1 Example Scenarios of Ratios

Swimming Pool – 3 lanes 24 participants

A pool session covered by a Level 2 and Level 1 coach, with 3 lanes. Level 2 is responsible for 2 lanes and Level 1 for one lane. Provided lifeguard ratios (usually 1:25) are not exceeded then the session can be considered safe, especially if the Level 2 coach takes 16 athletes and the Level 1 takes 8 athletes. If on occasion the Level 2 coach is replaced by another Level 1 coach this could still be safe, as the lifeguard manages the majority of the safety aspects. The coaches should focus on ensuring safety, and then may provide some coaching. Their ability to manage a high-quality session may not be as high as if the Level 2 were present, however it is safe and allows the session to continue.

Swimming Pool – Whole pool, 30+ participants

Safe options would include two Level 2 coaches, or a Level 2 and two or more Level 1 coaches. However, most pools have a lifeguard ratio of 1:25, so a second lifeguard may be required for safety purposes. Consider the balance of experience of the coaches. An experienced Level 2 should be confident in this situation, but a newly qualified Level 2 who is leading a session with for two Level 1 coaches and 30-40 swimmers may find it harder to manage the safety aspects and two other coaches whilst also delivering sessions themselves.

Closed Road Cycling Circuit 20 Adults

An experienced Level 2 may be able to cover this session with some additional help, especially if the group is out of sight for a while. A lot may depend upon the experience of the athletes. It would be sensible to reduce numbers for a novice session. The issues are mainly concerned with managing the group(s) so there are no collisions. Collisions are much more likely with novice athletes; however more advanced athletes may also be a risk if they are undertaking a demanding session at speed.



Closed Road Cycling Circuit 20 Children

It would make sense to split this group of 20 into two smaller groups and have two coaches cover the session. A Level 1 may be able to take a smaller group and a Level 2 manage a larger group.

For both cycling sessions above, it may make sense to have an experienced rider follow each group round the circuit, so they can observe any issues and report back to the coach or be able to raise an alarm should anything untoward happen.

Open Road Cycling Coached Session 10 Riders aged 16+

Following the guidance in the cycling section on route selection, for this session it would be advisable to split the group into two and use a small circuit (e.g. Industrial estate at a safe time). There should ideally be two coaches for this session, however if the groups are split into two groups of five, a safe option would be to have a static (non-riding coach) and an experienced rider or lower-level coach to follow each group from behind, for observation and first response in case of emergency.

If your club has a situation that you are unclear of how to apply a ratio please contact [British Triathlon Coaching](#) detailing:

- who the session is for.
- what the session is.
- the environment.
- and where and why you are doing this.

We will then reply with guidance to support you.

5.2 Coaching Children and Adults at risk

The coaching ratios table on the previous page should in several cases be reduced for coaching of children, especially when the level or experience of the children and/or coach is low.



Any coach working with athletes under the age of 18 on a regular basis, must hold a valid Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), or Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) in Scotland and should adhere to the British Triathlon Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy.

A coach should consider the environment/activity/support/numbers when working with this group. All of these areas may have to be adapted to create safe and effective sessions.

Request a DBS or PVG check.

England and Wales coaching@britishtriathlon.org Scotland coaching@triathlonscotland.org

5.3 Coaching Mixed Age Groups

As the minimum age for a sprint distance triathlon is 15; that is, they can take part in a sprint distance event in the year they turn 15 i.e., by the 31 December. Some clubs may wish to allow their more competent over 14s to train within the adult sessions particularly in swim-based sessions. For this to take place a club should carefully consider the following:

- The need to ensure all safeguarding matters are considered.
- The coaches are happy to coach children in a mixed environment, they are properly qualified and have had the necessary DBS / PVG checks carried out.
- That the adult participants are happy for children over the age of 14 to take part in the session. This change will affect the dynamics of the session.
- If the club is not a junior club this will change the type of club from adult to junior/adult. The club will then need to have a trained welfare officer added to the committee.
- Parents are happy and provide informed consent for child to take part in session.

This section is extracted from [club Safeguarding Policy](#). Any questions on this area can be addressed via the Safeguard lead at British Triathlon.



5.4 Coaching and Teaching to Swim

Generally Coaching assumes that we are working with athletes who can already swim; most clubs will have a minimum distance that a person can swim before they can attend sessions, e.g., 100m non-stop.

A challenge for triathlon coaches and clubs is catering for people who lack water confidence or haven't swum in years or even decades. Excluding people based on poor swim capability is not very inclusive and is a barrier to entry into the sport. Therefore, it doesn't make sense to place such a restriction on this type of coaching\teaching.

However, it does demand a different skill set from the coach and requires a coach who understands the needs of individuals, their own skill set and the environment when taking on very novice swimmers.

Working with a small group of novice adult swimmers to build confidence and ability can be achieved by a triathlon coach and may be a keyway into the sport for many people who hadn't considered it an option. A coach should consider the following:

Appropriate Techniques and Training

- Self-reflect on your experience and training, can you offer what they need? For some people the wrong coaching or coach could be worse than having no coach at all, possibly putting them at risk, but more likely putting them off swimming or triathlon.
- Can you undertake additional teaching to support your development in this area, e.g., swim teaching qualifications?
- Working with a group of children, e.g., 5–8-year-olds, would be best served by a qualified swim teacher or swim school.
- For nervous adults consider using the simpler and more basic swim smooth drills and equipment to assist, so they have a simple method of progression and feel safe and supported by using floatation aids for example.





Adaptability of Coached Sessions

- Clear progression in your sessions and ability to adapt if something isn't working will help provide appropriate sessions for mixed abilities.
- Understanding anxiety which is a key issue for novices. It is important coaches don't underestimate this and structure their approach to gradually build confidence and skills with the participants.
- Really understand your athletes, what their strengths are, and where they need to improve. If you aren't sure, get them to complete some kind of 'test' initially, e.g., swim a length, start them in shallow water so if they have overstated their position they don't get into difficulty.
- Positioning. We generally don't recommend a coach is in the water with athletes; but in some cases, this may be appropriate. The coach should consider how they can best deliver the session, and any challenges or issues that may develop, e.g., how they will deal with a person who panics and grabs them. Safeguarding issues should also be considered before getting in the water. The coach should remain in close proximity at all times, until the swimmer's capabilities have improved. The coach should ideally remain in shallow water or near the sides and consider how they can get out quickly to deal with any situation arising.

Athlete Safety and Welfare

- Ensure that there is lifeguard support, and they are aware you are working with novices. Often lifeguards assume a club session means that everyone is a capable swimmer.
- The number of athletes and support you will need. **The less able the swimmers, the lower the ratio should be to the coach.**
- Pool layout and depth. Often you will have a lane, but it may be better, if possible, to stay in shallow areas and use widths initially if capabilities are very low. Alternatively consider just using the shallower end of the lane you have. Ensuring this can also help address anxiety issues.
- Safety cover. In the event of a panic attack, how will you deal with this? Use the lanes next to the wall and have a method of the swimmer grabbing onto a rope



or pole for assistance. Also consider how you will help them with anxiety if they have a panic attack. Dealing effectively with this may increase their chance of persevering with swimming.

We would generally recommend a person who cannot 'swim' i.e., no fundamental ability to swim any stroke and who may require physical support in the water, should be referred to a swim teacher to gain the key competencies of swimming.

It should also be pointed out that triathlon coaches are insured to deliver coaching in the context of triathlon, so if a coach is offering specific 'swim lessons' to 'swimmers' outside a triathlon club with no overall triathlon goal/ event target this will be outside their British Triathlon Membership cover.

6. Coaching Pool Based Swimming Sessions

In addition to standard athlete safety and welfare guidance in previous sections, information specific to swimming environments is detailed in this section.

6.1 Safe Supervision

In 2018, we reviewed pool safety requirements in conjunction with the RLSS. Historically, we have always stated there should be a suitably trained lifeguard present when coaching, and in most facilities, this will always be the case.

We still continue to advise that a coach should not operate in the role of coach and safety cover at the same time - with the exception of those that hold the [NRASTC](#). (National Rescue Award for Swim Teachers & Coaches).

We have identified that safety requirements in the pool environment have evolved, and our guidance has been revised accordingly:

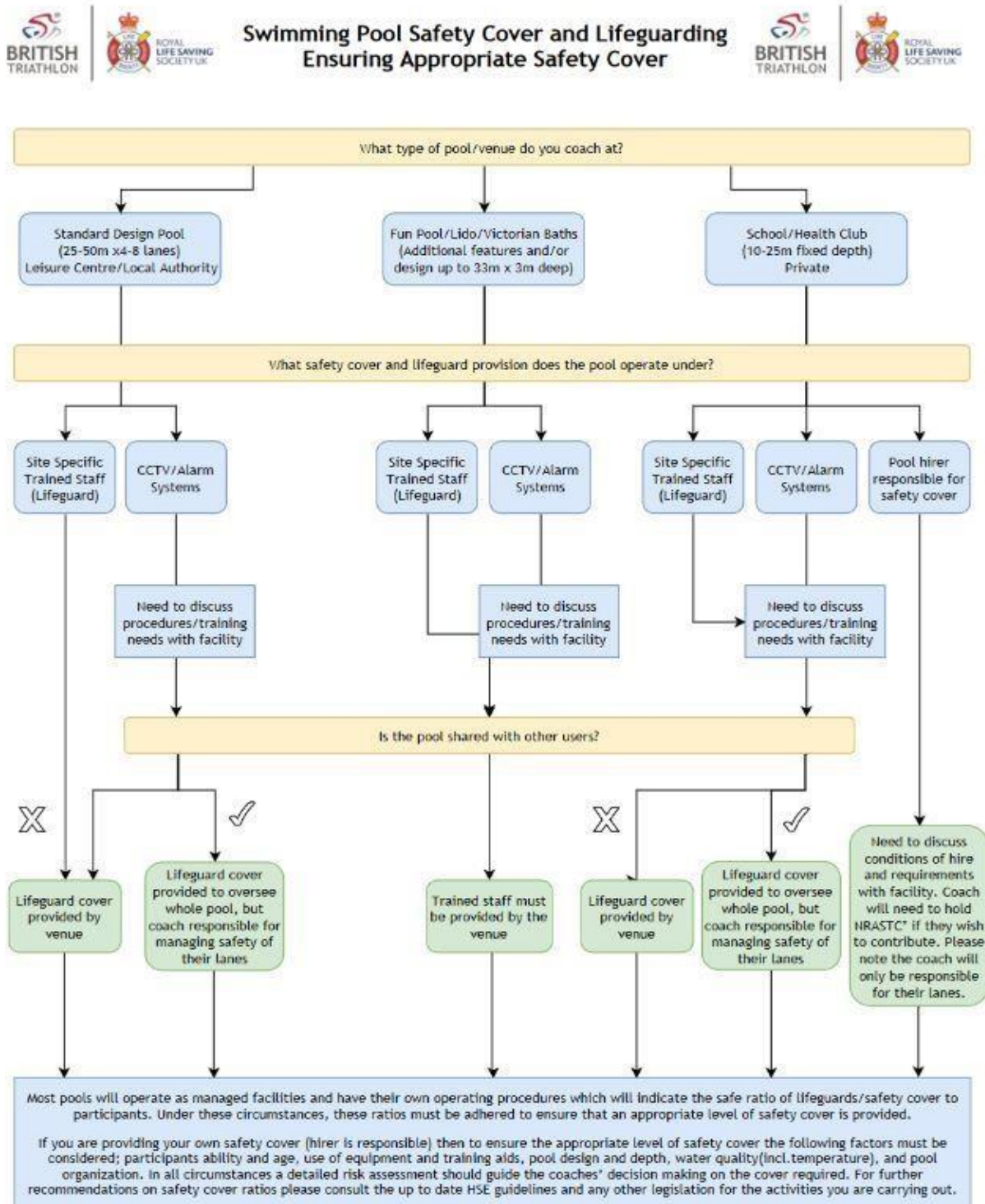




- Safety provision must be considered and reasonable for the activity, participants, and facility.
- It is important to note that the coach is responsible for the safety of their athletes, but how this is covered will better reflect the pool environment they are working in.



We have created a flowchart to help identify what safety cover is required - click on the image to see the full PDF



*National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches (NRASTC) RLSS UK. This qualification allows swim teachers and coaches to work in specific pool environments without the need for additional safety cover. Whilst it does not remove the need for safety cover, for coaches working in private pools (that meet the criteria), it gives a level of safety cover to ensure sessions can be delivered.



6.2 Safety Cover and Lifeguarding

In most managed facilities, a qualified NPLQ 'lifeguard' will be on duty for all sessions, but some pools will operate alternative safety cover. We have defined some of these alternatives:

- **Site specific trained staff.** These will act as lifeguards. Generally, they will hold a first aid qualification and have been trained in rescue methods for the pool they will work at. This is normally for modern pools with uniform depth.
- **CCTV/Alarm systems.** These are often found in health and fitness clubs. There are no staff on poolside, but as above trained staff will react to issues and alarms. Coaches should discuss this with centre staff/ management, and whilst systems may be in place they may not be monitored.
- **Pool hirer takes responsibility for safety.** The hirer must ensure they provide safety cover as outlined in the conditions of hire. A coach should check carefully with the facility operator to understand their requirements. In these situations, it is likely that the Coach will be able to contribute to the safety cover if they hold the National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches (NRASTC) RLSS UK.

6.3 National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches (NRASTC)

This qualification has been designed to allow swim teachers and coaches to work in specific pool environments without the need for additional safety cover. Whilst it does not completely remove the need for safety cover, for coaches working in private pools (that meet the criteria) it gives a level of safety cover to ensure sessions can be delivered.

More details on the qualification can be found on the [RLSS Website](#).

6.4 How a Coach Should Ensure Safety Cover

The coach should start by talking to the venue, they will define the requirements for safety. The coach can then risk assess the venue based on the facility, the activity, and the range of participants.



In general terms, a coach will need more safety provision for larger, mixed ability groups or children and when working in pools that don't have a uniform depth or design.

The coach also needs to consider that their role is to coach, and whilst all coaches need to constantly consider safety, their effectiveness as a coach will be reduced when taking on additional safety roles.

Here are some examples:

- **School/health club pool with CCTV & Alarm single coach working with group of competent swimmers.** The pool is of modern design (easy access), single depth (can stand up in any section) in this situation the risks are low, but the coach should consider is anyone monitoring the CCTV and when the alarm is pressed what help can be expected to help effect a rescue. A coach holding the NRASTC should be able to work in this environment.
- **Coach hiring a Victorian pool (33m up to 3m depth) no safety provision given.**
- **Large mixed ability children's group.** This type of pool needs a site-specific trained person, extracting a person from deep water with a high edge on the pool is challenging. To deliver safely to this pool the coach would need to make sure there is a team of appropriately trained lifeguards available to conduct a rescue.
- **Local Authority pool 25 or 33m – 2 lanes hired; rest of pool open for general users.** This is the usual set up for most club sessions, a lifeguard will cover the whole pool, but the coach is still responsible for ensuring the sessions are safe- e.g., lane discipline and direction. The coach should liaise with the venue on creating risk assessment and emergency action plan, and the lifeguard at the start and finish of each session.

The next section outlines areas which the coach should review, and risk assess.

6.5 Facility Requirements

Most indoor and outdoor swimming pools operate as managed facilities. In these circumstances the venue will have their own operating procedures which will indicate the safe ratio of lifeguards/safety cover to participants.



In these circumstances, venue specific guidance on lifeguarding/safety cover ratios should be adhered to in order that an appropriate level of safety covered is provided. Wherever possible it is advisable to engage with the facility to provide lifeguard/ safety cover.

Where the pool is in *shared use* and clearly divided between coached and recreational swimming activities, the facility must provide appropriate lifeguard/safety cover. Whilst the coach is not responsible for the safety of the wider pool & users, the coach should understand the general safety requirements & responsibilities as they will contribute to creating a safe pool environment.

6.6 Participant's Ability

The factors to be considered include:

- Age of participants.
- Range of their swimmer's ability. This should be known by the coach and each new participant should be checked at the first session, in shallow water (for example get participant to swim a width to demonstrate level of competence).
- The use of flotation aids (e.g., arm bands, this doesn't mean training aids e.g., pull buoys or kickboards) is generally to be avoided unless needed due to disability/injury.
 - This should always be discussed before a session starts.
- Ability of participants to comprehend instructions including their command of the language in which the session is delivered.
- Any physical or learning difficulties.
- Smaller (younger) athletes will lose heat more quickly in colder pools and this should be taken into consideration.

Most clubs will have a minimum distance that a person can swim before they attend club sessions, it is important to note that some people may not be able to do what they have stated, new participants should be observed and guided carefully.



6.7 Equipment and Training Aid Hazards

A range of equipment in swimming can present risks if not used safely, some of the common training aids are listed here:

- **Training fins (flippers)** should be of a soft design, maintaining gaps between swimmers.
- **Paddles** ensure adequate space is given between athletes. Coaches should have a clear outcome for using paddles and should err on the side of caution for those inexperienced in using paddles.
- **Pull buoys and floats** ensure safe storage as can be a trip hazard if on pool side.

Some training aids may not be allowed in certain pools; this should be checked by the coach before starting a session. Coaches should be aware that overuse of above equipment may lead to injury or may lead to reliance on equipment (e.g., pull buoys).

6.8 Pool Specific Risk Assessment Factors

Owners, operators, and occupiers of swimming pools must follow the general duties and responsibilities in the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, Guidance on the Management of Swimming Pools (HSG 179) and the Management of Health and Safety in the Workplace Regulations 1999.

Generally, operators are expected to take all reasonable and practical measures to ensure that their facilities and operations do not cause harm. This will include making sure that staff and anyone hiring the facility knows how to operate safely.

Venue operators are obliged to take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure that coaching activities are conducted safely. They have the overall responsibility for every person on the premises. It is advisable that coaches are familiar with the core principles pertaining to swimming pools so that they are aware of issues before it is too late, as often they may be the first person to observe issues.



Each pool will have unique features that make particular demands on safety. This section highlights important factors.

Pool Design

The suitability of the general design of the pool area for coaching includes:

- Blind spots resulting from the position of features or equipment.
- Glare, reflection, lighting, and noise.
- Access into and around the pool.
- Height of pool walls, deck level pools (water at same level as floor) allow easier access and reduce waves.
- Larger pools (e.g., 50m) that can be split into 2x 25m sections.

Depth

Importance in relation to the ability and height of the participants includes:

- The depth and extent of shallow water areas.
- The extent of deep-water areas.
- The pool floor profile, in particular sudden changes in depth,
- The possibility of being able to segregate the shallow water area (e.g., roping off and using a boom).
- A pool with adjustable depth- usually this will be displayed- but coaches should not assume when working with this type of pool.

Water Quality

The following factors need to be considered:

- Temperature of the pool water (and the air) in respect of comfort. Bear in mind participants' size, age, and physical ability. Ideal operating temperatures for indoor pools are around 27-29 degrees centigrade.
- Clarity of the pool water. Is the bottom of the pool visible?
- Water quality testing. The facility will have its own schedule, but the coach should report any issues as they come up e.g., contaminants, swimmers complaining of poor taste/smell/clarity/minor irritation.



- Any acute reaction to the water e.g., burning eyes or skin/difficulty in breathing should be treated as an emergency.

Coaches should be aware of these issues especially if they are the first users of a pool on a particular day and ensure the relevant tests have been completed before participants enter the water.

Pool Organisation

The arrangement of the coached session must consider:

- Who has the overall responsibility for the pool?
- Is there exclusivity of use?
- Is there shared use with other activities?
- If use is shared what are the implications? (e.g., life guarding responsibilities)
- Pool etiquette/lane direction

Coaches may wish to consider sessions which do not include lane ropes to better simulate and prepare athletes for open water environments; however, they need to carefully consider the abilities and experience of the participants, be aware and address increased risk factors such as collisions due to lack of lane ropes.

7. Coaching Open Water Swim Sessions

It is important to note that this guide is intended as a reference for coaches to coach in a venue that is managed by a suitably trained and qualified operator and that operator is responsible for providing the water safety provision. Coaches who are planning to deliver a session in a non-operated venue (i.e. the sea or an inland venue with no operator attached to it) should be aware that they are responsible for the water safety provision.

Therefore, if you intend to coach in a non-operated venue and you would be responsible for the water safety provision, you should get it touch with us via coaching@britishtriathlon.org for England and Wales and coaching@triathlonscotland.org before you even consider organising a coached session.



In England, the open water offer is called Beyond Swim. Although this branded programme does not operate in Scotland and Wales, the underlying principles, and guidelines, in respect to water safety, water quality and documentation should be applied by coaches across all three Home Nations in order for insurance to be valid. For coaches in Wales and Scotland, please contact your Home Nation for additional support. For simplicity purposes, where this document refers to Beyond Swim, it is intended to mean the branded programme in England, as well as the unbranded managed open water operations in Wales and Scotland.

7.1 Beyond Swim

Beyond Swim is the brainchild of Triathlon England and supported by Swim England and Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS UK). Its mission is to bring the open water swimming network together and provide leadership for the community so that both venues and swimmers feel connected and supported. Beyond Swim wants open water swimmers to have the best possible experience.

The Vision of Beyond Swim

- Highlight accredited venues that deliver safe, high-quality experiences.
- Encourage more people to swim in open water.
- Showcase the benefits of open water swimming for your health.
- To create a greater connection between venues and swimmers.
- Help to overcome the swimming obstacle to participation in triathlon.
- Add value to the membership propositions of the strategic partners.

In England Beyond Swim has now superseded the Sh2out programme. For more information on Beyond Swim please visit www.beyondswim.org or email hello@beyondswim.org

7.2 Qualification Requirements for Open Water Swimming

Level 3 coaches may deliver open water sessions independently, in appropriate open water environments.



Group Coaches can deliver in open water, we also advise they attend the Open Water CPD Course.

Level 2 / Group coaches can deliver open water swim sessions independently if either they have:

- Completed their Level 2 qualification and have attended the British Triathlon Open Water Coaching CPD Workshop.
- Completed and certificated as a Level 2 coach on a course commencing after October 2011.

Level 1 / Foundation coaches can only assist open water swim sessions under direct supervision from level 2 or 3 coaches.

Open Water Coaching CPD Workshop is now (from 2017) accessible by all levels, but coaches must still adhere to their wider qualification remit.

Please Note: Open water swimming skills can be delivered by a Level 1 or 2 Session Coach (not meeting above requirements) only in a swimming pool.

Ratios and considerations

At no point should you exceed the maximum ratio as outlined in [section 4 on ratios](#). The below factors including but not limited to, should be considered when making decisions on how many participants you will have in your sessions.

- Open water environment (sea/lake/river/reservoir/marina).
- Experience of participants.
- Your own open water coaching experience.
- Level of safety cover provided by venue.
- Temperature of water.
- Environmental conditions e.g., weather/swell/tides.
- Swim Course and the length of the course and distance from the shore.

If you find you have large numbers of people simply wanting to swim, the club should consider if these sessions are to run un-coached but under the safety cover of an operated venue.

7.3 Venue Selection

Ideally venues used for open water coached sessions should be an operated venue with appropriate safety procedures including competent and qualified water safety provision and



water quality checks. When a coach is using an operated venue, they should ensure that they have approval to use that venue and that the venue has the correct public liability insurance in place.

VENUE APPROVAL		
Evidence of permission for all open water swimming provision to take place at the venue		
EXPECTED CONTENT	INCLUDED?	GUIDANCE
A document; in the form of a contract, MOU, SLA or written agreement, that provides evidence that the open water swimming operator or organiser has all necessary authorisation in place for open water swimming to take place at the venue seeking accreditation.	□	For additional guidance please see the Beyond Swim Organised Open Water Swimming Guidance.

This is not always possible in some locations and in the case when a coach wishes to use a non-operated venue, where they are responsible for the water safety provision, then they will need to work through Beyond Swim accreditation should they wish to deliver a coached



VENUE APPROVAL

Evidence of adequate public liability and employers' liability insurance

EXPECTED CONTENT	INCLUDED?	GUIDANCE
Public Liability insurance policy for a minimum level of £5 million limit of indemnity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	For additional guidance please see the Beyond Swim Organised Open Water Swimming Guidance.
Employers Liability insurance policy for a minimum of £10 million limit of indemnity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
This should be in date for the time of the venue accreditation submission or when the venue is due to offer swimming. If completion of Beyond Swim accreditation takes place in the off season, and insurance cover is not in place, then evidence that insurance cover is/will be in place for the commencement of open water swimming activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

session. Please contact coaching@britishtriathlon.org for England and Wales and coaching@triathlonscotland.org for additional support.

Once you have decided on your venue and you have the above permissions and approvals in place to use the venue and that the water safety provision is in place, you should develop your risk assessment.

Risk Assessment

Evidence of undertaken risk assessments against all Open Water swimming activity.

- There should be a Generic risk assessment in place for the venue.
- There should be a specific risk assessment for each group providing open water swimming. i.e., club.
- For each potential hazard the risk assessment should identify: The level of risk, who it may affect, the control measures and who is responsible.

The risk assessment should include site considerations of:





- Access and Egress.
- Spectator Access.
- Safety Team - including emergency access - recovery of casualty and hand over to emergency services. Ensure the safety team is qualified and competent to operate dedicated safety craft. How will the safety team communicate?
- Protection from Elements.
- Swim course - Poor Design, Moving Buoys and Emergency Access - Rapid and Safe access for safety team to affect a rescue - this should be linked to the EAP.

The risk assessment should include water environment considerations:

- Water Quality Testing for Entero-bacterial contamination, Blue-green Algae, PH and Leptospirosis.
- Historical Water Quality data should be provided if available.
- A Water Quality testing protocol should be in place for the venue.
- If any issues are highlighted, there should be examples of how this information is communicated to swimmers.
- What measures the venue has taken to overcome any issues, resulting in further testing to achieve improved results.
- Waves and Currents.
- Underwater Features.
- Floating and Suspended Debris.
- Overhead Obstruction.

The risk assessment should include swimmer safety considerations:

- Information about how novice swimmers are identified and catered for.
- Information on how swimmers are briefed on how to call for assistance.
- Information on what the venue does to ensure visibility of swimmers.
- A system is available for collecting the information from participants before each session.
- A procedure should be in place to count swimmers into/out of the water and should link directly to NOP.



- Information on how swimmer numbers are managed to avoid impact injuries and/or panic.
- If there are other users of the water - how has the venue liaised with these to establish clear activity zones, and to agree an activity.

The risk assessment should include climate and weather considerations:

- Sun and glare.
- Electrical storms.
- Wind/Swell/Waves.
- Mist/Fog.

For additional guidance please see the Beyond Swim Organised Open Water Swimming Guidance.

7.4 Safe Supervision



Due to the nature of open water environments safe supervision of participants requires a much greater degree of resources and actions to ensure a safe environment.

A coach should NOT provide a dual role of coach and safety personnel. They can act as an additional safety person, but only over and above the minimum requirements. Best practice safe supervision is about having sufficient cover to spot and come to the aid of someone who appears to be getting into difficulty before it becomes an emergency, i.e., that they should be proactive, rather than just wait for an alarm to be raised and respond to that



alarm. However, as fore mentioned, the venue operator should be responsible for the water safety provision and if this is not the case, you should seek to achieve Beyond Swim Venue Accreditation. Please contact coaching@britishtriathlon.org for England and Wales or coaching@triathlonscotland.org for Scotland.

Beyond Swim guidance states swimmers must be attended by safety craft/personnel within one minute of getting into difficulty and recovered to the side with effective First Aid or CPR within three minutes.

You must have complete confidence that the venue operator and the water safety provision will be able to achieve the above competently, if not the session should not be delivered.

The venue operator should also have in place a Normal Operating Plan and an Emergency Action Plan. You should have requested and reviewed these before delivering your session. If these are not in place or not up to a standard you feel comfortable with, do not deliver your session.

7.5 Participant's Abilities

Emergency Action Plan

As above, the venue operator should have an EAP in place which describes how foreseeable incidents will be managed. Potential incidents may include:

- a missing swimmer
- a panicking swimmer
- an injured swimmer
- an unconscious swimmer
- a course evacuation

The EAP should clearly identify what action will take place, who is responsible and how it will be communicated.

The EAP should ensure everyone involved in providing safety cover is able to work together and communicate with others (e.g., medical support).



Rehearsing key scenarios (e.g., recovering a swimmer into a safety boat, transferring a casualty to the land-based support) provides the best test of arrangements and an opportunity to practice things in a controlled environment.

The EAP should be robust enough to ensure that safe supervision of the other swimmers can continue even when some resources are managing the incident.

For additional guidance please contact hello@beyondswim.org and request to see the Beyond Swim Organised Open Water Swimming Guidance.

7.6 Use of Equipment and Training Aids

The most common elements of equipment are swim cap and wetsuit. Swim caps should be a bright, easily identifiable colour, and as well as providing temperature protection to the head, also offers a safety element allowing safety crew to see participants in the water. Wetsuits should ideally be swimming specific wetsuits and should be of a good fit. A poor fitting wetsuit may allow water to flush through the suit and reduce its temperature protective properties.

Generally, within the UK wetsuits are highly advisable, and coaches should consider making them mandatory for training sessions. This is even more important with novice swimmers. The only exception to this is when temperatures become too high, and there then becomes a risk of overheating in a wetsuit, whilst rare in the UK, it is a possibility when water temperatures exceed 22 degrees, depending upon the length of the swim and other temperature affecting factors (see [Water Temperature](#) section). A wetsuit will serve as a flotation device should a swimmer have problems such as cramp or is fatigued. Some swimmers may elect to wear additional temperature protection, such as booties and/or gloves and neoprene caps. Whilst some of these pieces of equipment are not permissible in race situations they should be allowed and possibly recommended in training where appropriate.

Water Temperature

The [BTF Competition Rules](#) gives guidance around minimum temperatures for racing and maximum temperatures for wetsuits. You will need to understand your athletes' abilities, tolerance of cold and preferences.



Coaches should note that training sessions may not be as physically demanding as race situations, and athletes may cool more in training than race scenarios.

In training sessions elapsed time in the water should be considered in conjunction with water temperature, in a similar way that distance and temperature are considered for races.

Factors Effecting Water Temperature

- Most large open bodies of water will often have large variances in water temperature- warm in the shallows, cold in deeper water.
- Air temperature- water will not heat up as quickly as land, and can have huge variances e.g., 25' air temp with 7' water temp.
- Sea temperature does not rise until late summer, often still being very cold into May and June.
- Other weather factors such as wind and rain can have a significant impact on participant comfort levels.

Suggested Session User Rules:

Additionally, the following list details a suggested list of rules that should be given to swimmers. Before taking part in an open water coached training session, swimmers must:

- Provide the session leader with information about any medical issues.
- Provide their emergency contact details.
- Sign up to the club's safety code and rules for open water swimming.
- Ask all adult members to agree they are competent to swim 200m in a swimming pool?
- Swim within their own ability and adhere to any directions given by the safety officer/session coach and anyone providing safety cover.

If you plan to coach to U18, you must request the British Triathlon Young Person's Coaching Guidance by emailing coaching@britishtriathlon.org and this guidance must be followed as well as adhering to everything included in this guidance.



7.7 Coaching Guidance

A coach should not take part in their own sessions; however, as coach you should consider the best place to coach from:

- From bank/shore.
- From pontoon.
- In a boat or canoe (if they are competent, a coach who cannot control the boat or canoe can become a hazard themselves).
- In the water- this would only happen where the water is shallow around the bank and the swimmers must walk out to be able to swim. The coach should be in a position where they can stand up comfortably, i.e., no more than waist deep.

When selecting a position to coach from the coach must always consider their own safety and that of the participants.

A coach should consider how they will observe their athletes and control the group, if they are at distance from the coach this will be challenging, and the risks to the athletes will increase.

Coaches should consider courses set out for coached sessions and make use of small laps close to the shore, which reduced the burden on safety staff and craft, and reduces stress on inexperienced participants.

8. Coaching Cycling Sessions

The following sections cover guidance for coaches and participants during coached cycling sessions.



8.1 Cycling Clothing

Clothing should be appropriate to the activity, environment, and weather conditions, taking into consideration possible changes in weather. Trousers or shorts should not be loose or baggy, to avoid getting caught in chain or on seat during mount/dismount activities. Shoes should be appropriate to the activity and experience of the participants. Appropriate cycling gloves are recommended in most situations.

Participants and coaches should be dressed suitably for the session. Due to the nature of cycling, wind chill can have a far greater effect than inexperienced participants would consider. Clothing should preferably be of a layered nature to enable easy modifications to be made. Waterproof layers may be required, which will also provide wind chill protection.

For indoor turbo sessions, the opposite is true, and there is great potential for participants to overheat, loose fitting (except cycling shorts) and light clothing is recommended here.

Consider the cost of clothing when advising athletes, in particular younger athletes who are still growing. Some items can be used for running and cycling.

8.2 Helmets

Within competitive triathlon, helmets are a mandatory requirement. British Triathlon strongly recommends that riders always wear a helmet for training sessions as well as racing, with the exception of static bike (turbo) training sessions. British Triathlon qualified coaches should, within reason, insist upon wearing of helmets within coached sessions.

The only possible exception may be when wearing of a cycle helmet may not be compatible with religious, faith or disability issue. In these occasions the cyclist may be permitted to participate but the ultimate decision will rest with the coach who conducts the session and be based on a risk assessment for that session.

Helmets should be:

- Undamaged and in good condition.
- Correct size for the rider.



- Confirm to an appropriate standard such as BS EN 1078:1997 (Europe) or SNELL B95 (USA).
- Worn correctly, namely, the right way around, covering the forehead, shouldn't move around on the head, it should not be possible to move chin strap over the chin.

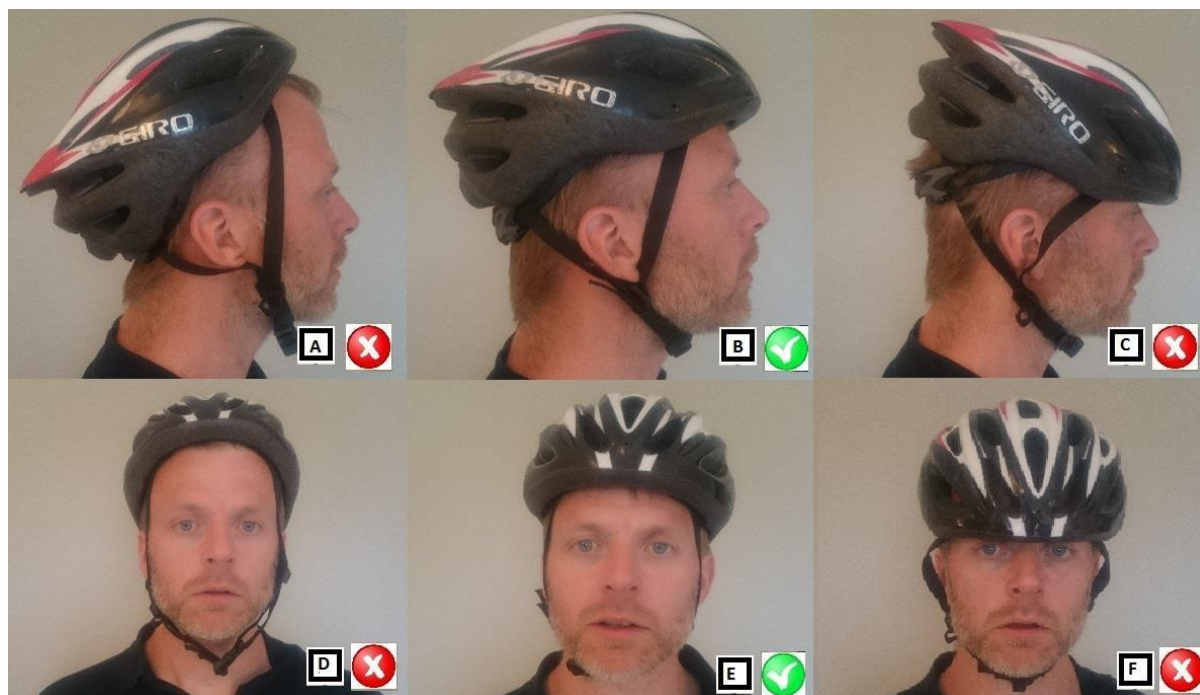


Image shows acceptable and inappropriate helmet positions. Children in particular may push the helmet back (as shown in A & D) , coaches should give guidance on this as this will give little protection in frontal impacts.

8.3 Bikes

Any bikes used within a coached session should be fit for the purpose of the session. For example, this may mean that a bike that is acceptable for a slow-moving skills session in a playground may not be suitable for a closed road session with larger groups moving at speed.

Coaches should be aware of, and consider advising participants, of the general rules for bikes within triathlon races (see [BTF Competition Rules](#)). These are evolving to take into account areas such as disk brakes, in most cases this won't affect a coaching session, however for example a coach should be aware that a person who arrives with a new bike



with disk brakes, may need a chance to get used to increased stopping power before riding in a group.



From a safety perspective the following points should be prominent in the coaches thinking and advice to participants:

- There must be a brake on each wheel. Disc brakes are allowed; however, coaches should seek to make riders aware that disc brakes can be more powerful. Therefore, when riding in a group be aware that a rider's brakes may be more effective than those of riding companions. This can reduce the risk of following riders crashing into the back of a rider with disc brakes.
- Both wheels must be classified as free wheels.
- Handlebars and tri-bars must be plugged (**pictured**);
- Add-ons, such as computer or lighting brackets and mounting points, must be positioned so as to prevent injury in the event of a crash or collision with other competitors or spectators.

For training sessions where groups are riding in close proximity at speed (e.g., practicing for draft legal racing on closed road circuit there are additional requirements:

- Only traditional drop handlebars are permitted.
- Wheels shall have at least 12 spokes (no disc wheels).





A triathlon coach is not trained in the maintenance or repair of any cycling equipment. A coach should not attempt to repair a participant's bike that they are not qualified to perform. The triathlon coach should encourage all athletes to check their own equipment, using bike 'M-Check' ([see Cycling Section: M-check for details](#)). A coach who isn't trained could damage equipment or directly lead to injury by incorrect maintenance.

It is the athlete's (or the parent's, in case of those under 18) responsibility to understand bike maintenance, (e.g., puncture repair) and to ensure their equipment is fit for purpose.

If a coach feels that an individual's bike isn't safe, they should not allow an athlete to take part in a session until this is resolved.



8.4 Coaching Equipment

Additional equipment may be used within a session, for example cones for marking courses, and in skills sessions. It is recommended that only soft (dome shaped) rather than road traffic cones are used.

Other equipment may be used as appropriate to the knowledge and experience of both coaches and participants, such as water bottles to pass to participants.

2-way radios can be very useful when working with groups over larger areas.

Any equipment used should be fit for purpose and the coach should be clear on how to use safety and effectively. This is particularly important with any shared or borrowed equipment, any loss or damage should be reported.

8.5 Participants

The coach should pay due care and attention to the health and safety of the participants, others involved in the session and themselves, particularly when coaching on open roads. The weather and environmental conditions must be conducive to learning and allow safe participation in the session.

Weather can have a greater effect on different participants, children are more likely to become cold more quickly than adults.

A coach must be prepared to cancel a session at any point if the weather will make the session unsafe. The coach should monitor the weather before any session and have a plan of how they will cancel or end a session early.

8.6 Surface Conditions

The coach should consider the ride surface in line with the proficiency, and experience of the participants and as appropriate for the session, considering elements such as:



- potholes and gutters.
- glass, litter, and debris such as wet leaves.
- painted markings especially when wet.
- pedestrians and observers of the session.
- recently resurfaced roads.
- street furniture (e.g., traffic lights, signposts).
- drain covers, manhole covers and other metal work on the road (especially when wet).
- Rain following dry spells will give roads a surface film which can be slippery.
- in cold weather any areas that could be icy even if other areas are clear (e.g., areas in permanent shade/ near water sources).

8.7 Level 1 & Foundation Coaching Environment

An appropriate environment for a cycling activity session conducted by a Level 1 or Foundation Coach should meet the following criteria:

- Indoor or outdoor traffic-free venue/location (e.g., a multi-use courts, playing field, or car park where access to vehicles is restricted).
- Has a surface that is appropriate for bicycles and activities (e.g., grass, tarmac, concrete).
- Is an appropriate size for the activity and size of the group?
- Appropriate for coaching the basic and selected intermediate triathlon techniques (e.g., gear selection, cornering and group riding);
- Easily accessible for the participants. It is not appropriate for a Level 1 Assistant Coach to have to lead a ride to get to the venue/location.
- Optionally does include undulations to aid delivery of gear selection sessions.
- From 2016, Level 1 coaches can also deliver static cycling sessions, see [Static Bike Section](#). Coaches who completed course pre-2016 can upgrade by completing the Level 1 bridging course).



Closed Road Facilities

Level 1 coaches qualified from October 2016, Level 1 coaches who have completed the 2016 bridging pack or Foundation Coaches can also coach in the following locations. Level 1 or Foundation coaches should be aware of their own abilities and experience and should gain support from a senior coach when starting sessions on these venues.

Closed Road Circuits

Most commonly this may be a purpose-built closed road circuit. The circuit should be:

- Well maintained, particularly the surface.
- Have a region around the whole length of the circuit where riders may run off the circuit safely, such as a grass verge.
- Ideally restrict access to non-participants to stop them crossing the circuit (e.g., dog walkers).
- Ideally not have ball sports in proximity, to avoid balls and other athletes crossing onto the circuit.

Outdoor 'Velodrome' Facilities

These are usually concrete or tarmac of an oval shape and may include banking. Following a review with our Insurers in 2016, coaches can utilise these venues providing they meet the following requirements:

- Conduct full risk assessment and emergency action planning process in line with general guidance.
- Dynamic risk assessment each time used and review use of venue in wet or icy conditions.
- Review venue NOP and rules of use. Please be aware some venues may require a track certification/ formal induction for all users.
- Liaise with any other users who may use the track or surrounding area; o Ensure any users have an orientation to the facility on first use and understand any risks.



- **Standard bikes must be used by participants - and must have front/ rear brakes and a free wheel (non-fixed). Track bikes are not allowed.**
- Consider novice and junior ability when planning sessions, in these sessions avoiding any banked sections until participant ability is developed.
- Do not engage in any activities beyond the scope of coach or athletes e.g., track style racing/training (Keirin or Derny pacing).

8.8 Level 2, Group Coach, Level 3 & HPCP Coaching

Environment

Coaches are qualified to deliver sessions in the environments including all the Level 1 environments plus:

Open Roads

Coaching on open road environments is challenging to deliver effective sessions and presents several risks. If possible, it is advisable to find a suitable off-road solution, however this isn't always possible.

A coach should first consider the nature of the session, is this a coached session? or is it simply a group/ led ride. You can find more guidance around this [here](#).

At Level 2, Group Coach, Level 3 or HPCP, coaching on public highway is permissible, however it is vital that the following considerations for this environment are considered:

- Current legislation governing road use should be adhered to. The coach and participants always adhere to current legislation and best practice, this may differ in England, Scotland, and Wales.
- Other road users, sessions taking place on public highway present a risk to both those involved in the session, but also other road users, such as motor vehicles, pedestrians, and horses.
- All riders should be over 14 years of age; Coaches working with young athletes on the athlete development programme (academy onwards) should contact the coaching team for guidance.



- Younger riders (those aged 14-18) should have parental consent, and the coach should have a clear supervision plan in place, further guidance is given in the next section.
- Road and weather conditions, length of the ride as well as the type of road (e.g., steep inclines) and areas where road climb to higher ground, all can have a significant effect on fatigue and air and wind chill temperatures, which can impact safety of participants greatly.
- The full route should be risk assessed, which is why it makes sense to have a short circuit as risk assessing a long-convoluted route is not practical. Therefore, a short circuit of approximately a mile would be best, so that the group can easily be managed, and they can reform if a split occurs. The selected route should ideally incorporate good visibility throughout, and the route should be selected to not risk impeding traffic.
- The content of the session must be carefully planned to ensure that the activities carried out will be safe in the location chosen.

Coaches should seek to minimise these risks by:

- Avoiding busy roads, or areas where other events are taking place.
- Giving plenty of warning to horse riders and passing wide of horses more slowly. Avoiding riding in large groups (greater than 8), where necessary split larger groups into smaller groups, each with a leader, and ensure sufficient gaps between groups to allow other vehicles to overtake safely.
- Ensuring participants have a prior basic knowledge and understanding of cycling proficiency on open roads. Coaches may choose to direct participants to a government approved Bike ability course, and ideally riders would have progressed through a Level 3 British Cycling Bike ability course. For further information, see <http://www.britishcycling.org.uk/cycletraining>;
- Seek to give feedback to riders in safe static situation, e.g., pull off the main carriageway into a car park or lay-by where the risk of injury or accident is significantly reduced, and participants and coach can give full attention to each other and the coaching points without having to overly consider safety implications.



- Support needed to ensure all groups are always visible, which is why it's advisable to have a second coach or experienced athlete following the group. Pace to be always controlled and within the limits of cyclist's capabilities.
- As with all sessions group control and emergency procedures should be in place along with Emergency First aid provision (for example the coach is trained as a first aider and has first aid kit)
- The coach also needs to consider logistics and safety of moving the group from a start/meeting position to the training area. This can be effectively managed as a non-coached group ride out to the training location.
- Sessions should be cancelled if the weather is poor, road conditions have changed adversely (e.g., excessive mud, flooding or ice), traffic on the route is heavier than expected.
- Have an appropriate plan in place in case of session cancellation.
- Industrial estates outside of normal working hours are usually a good option for sessions of this nature.
- Country lanes can have limited traffic but should be carefully reviewed. Issues include vehicles travelling faster than expected, limited passing places, farm traffic, livestock & mud on road,
- Ensure riders are signed in and out of the sessions.

8.9 General Guidance for Younger Riders



When coaching participants under 14 years of age (**closed road facilities only**), the riders should remain in sight of a coach or responsible adult always, an option could be to



get parent to ride around with group, it's to help for instance if there is an accident out of sight, so that they can respond quickly throughout the session. It can also help with session discipline to ensure riders remain on task.

For participants between 14 and 18 years of age the coach should exercise discretion regarding the length of time riders may be out of sight of a coach or recognised volunteer. When making this decision the safety of the rider should be paramount.

Additional support will be needed in these sessions, for example positioning support coaches or approved parent helpers when athletes are out of sight.

8.10 Static Bike Sessions (Turbo and Spin)

Prior to delivering these sessions a coach should ensure they are suitably trained to lead these sessions. Since 2016, level 1 and 2 coaches are required to complete a static bike module as part of their course.

Coaches who qualified before this can access & complete the module [here](#).

For sessions which take part on static bikes, the following considerations are important:

- Spin bikes (i.e., bikes that rely on a flywheel and have fixed pedals (i.e., the pedals will keep rotating even when the participant stops pedaling) are permissible under British Triathlon insurance provided that the coach has undergone the static bike module on the Learning Hub (released to Level 2/ 3 September 2015 and to all coaches from September 2016).
- Spin bikes are adequately maintained with minimal chance of mechanical failure.
- When a coach is hiring a bike from a facility, the coach should confirm the maintenance schedule and be given an orientation to the bikes on safe use.
- Bikes are set up appropriately for participants, in line with basic advice given on [coaching courses](#), to avoid serious injury due to poor bike fit.



- Bikes should be checked to ensure they are securely fastened to the turbo trainer, and there is no danger of bike (and participant) toppling over during the session.
- Adequate spacing between bikes should be maintained to ensure riders can get on/off without meeting other participants.
- Ventilation and air flow should be considered to ensure participants don't overheat, provision of fans in more enclosed environments is recommended.
- Coaches should ensure that participants have adequate access to drinks.
- Participants should have their own towels to soak up sweat and avoid potential slip hazard of pools of water forming, additionally coaches may wish to warn participants of the corrosive nature of sweat on bike frames and tell the athletes to seek to minimise sweat on bike frames.

Further information is available through the [static bike module on Learning Hub](#)

9. Coaching Running Sessions

Running is generally the safest sport in terms of life-threatening situations, but the most likely sport for injuries to occur.

9.1 Environments

Coaches across all levels can coach in all the below coaching environments:

- Athletics tracks (tartan, grass, or cinder surfaces).
- Off road paths and tracks.
- Parkland areas.
- Playing fields.
- Astro turf playing surface.



9.2 Non-fixed Environments

If the coach is not operating at a static venue, e.g., they are using paths or trails with their coaching group, rather than an athletics track, then the coach needs to consider the age and abilities of the group and anticipate fatigue and injury. This places additional burdens on the organisation of the session and the coach needs to consider how to manage the group safely and equitably, whilst operating within child safeguarding and protection guidelines (if appropriate).

This will usually require a greater number of coaches or recognised helpers; in case the group needs to be split based on ability or those unable to continue can be safely returned to the base location for the session. For these reasons shorter loops are preferable so that younger and inexperienced groups can be catered for if there is a need to modify the plans. Greater coach/helper: participant ratios also ensure children can be kept in sight at all times.

9.3 Specific Hazards

Coaches should consider the following hazards in addition to any standard risk assessment that has been produced:

- Surface and kerbing – slipping/tripping due to worn or uneven surface or loose kerbing.
- Other users, including pedestrians, cyclists, dog walkers.
- Surface conditions – debris and stray equipment.
- Weather conditions, e.g., rain or snow/ice, note that some running tracks can become icy/slippery in temperatures above freezing or overheating, heat stroke, sunburn.
- Other users of the track and field events (e.g., throwing objects or ball-based sports playing on an infield).
- Observe lane discipline specific to the track – ensure participants are fully aware of which lanes they can and cannot use during the session.
- Light- during the winter months a coach must consider the time it will get dark. Floodlights may be available for tracks / courts but may need to be arranged in



advance. Coaching sessions where there is no available lighting (e.g., trail/park) is not recommended after dark even where users have head torches.

For all coaching environments coaches and athletes must exercise greater caution during the session when there are other groups or members of the public in the same environment.

9.4 Equipment and Clothing

Any equipment needed for the session must be:

- Available and in good working order.
- Maneuvered in an appropriate way.
- Tidied away and stored appropriately for other users.

Coaches should only make use of equipment they are trained and competent to use (for example using high hurdles is not a piece of equipment triathlon coaches will have been trained in using). Some equipment/facilities may need to be set 'out of bounds' such as long and high jump areas.

Coaches should check that participants are:

- wearing appropriate clothing for the session and weather conditions.
- wearing appropriate footwear for the session, weather and terrain.
- visible to other participants and road users (for example using high visibility clothing if appropriate).
- running on an appropriate surface to the participants and the session activity.

10. Coaching Individual Triathletes

Coaching individual triathletes refers to when a coach works on a 1:1 basis with an athlete. This can either be in a face-to-face session(s), or by writing training programmes.

Guidelines for the new Level 2 Diploma Coach qualification can be found in this section.



10.1 Qualification Level and Insurance

Coaching triathletes on a one-to-one basis is only applicable to coaches who are in possession of a valid British Triathlon/1st4sport Level 3 Coaching Qualification or the Level 2 Diploma (new in 2018).

Level 2 Diploma

This is a new qualification that bolts on the level 2 qualification. further details can be found [here](#).

Guidance around insurance cover for level 2 dip coaches can be found [here](#).

Level 3

This has evolved significantly over the last 15 years; however, the overall remit remains the same for all coaches who hold this qualification.

All level 3 coaches have received in depth and face to face training on a range of areas, including additional technical knowledge across all disciplines and working with specific groups.

The latest version of the level 3 course focussed on a very different delivery model- details can be found [here](#)

Level 1, Foundation Coaches, Level 2 and Group Coaches

Are only trained and qualified to deliver group sessions. Within these sessions, a coach can work with individuals on technique/performance and give general guidance to athletes, in line with the training they have received, and experience gained. Additional guidance for level 2 coaches can be found in section 9.3.

Level 1, Foundation Coaches, Level 2 and Group Coaches who coach/train individuals (e.g., prescribe individual training programmes) will be working outside the remit of their qualification, and in effect working without insurance cover. In the event of legal action, a coach could find themselves without support from the Home Nations Association or British Triathlon.



10.2 Individual Training Prescription

In addition to the general points listed in these guidelines, when prescribing training for an individual, the coach should also consider the following points.

- *British Triathlon* regards a *group* to be defined as a **minimum of 3 or more participants**.
- The **minimum** age for prescribing training programmes to triathletes (i.e., training prescription for an individual triathlete) is **14 years old**. This takes into the consideration the early maturation period of the [Long-Term Triathlete Development Model for Triathlon](#). In many club environments there may be sufficient group coaching sessions to not need to prescribe individualised training until the age of 16.
- In addition to the general information that should be collected about the participant, an athlete Profile Questionnaire and Lifestyle Audit should be completed.
 - Example forms are available in the [1:1 Coaching Resource section](#).
- Where triathletes complete prescribed training alone or in a group in the absence of a coach, the triathlete(s) are responsible for their safety and choosing appropriate training environments. In the case where a triathlete is under the age of 18, the parents are ultimately responsible for safety and training environments being used. This should be made clear to the triathletes and parents at the onset of coaching. All coaches should refer to wider [British Triathlon safeguarding guidelines](#).
- When coaching triathletes individually through a prescribed training programme, it is recommended that meetings should take place in a public place and if the athlete is under the age of 18 the parents should also be present. It is recommended that the coach keep a record of all communication with the athlete including meetings, phone calls and emails etc.
- Individual programmes should be developed with due consideration for the triathlete's goals, ability, age, lifestyle, training history and available resources (equipment, training environments and support).
- During the execution of prescribed training, it is the responsibility of the triathlete to ensure that the correct personal clothing and equipment is used. For triathletes under the age of 18 it is the responsibility of his/her parents/guardians.



The coach must also ensure they meet the wider Coaching Code of Practice, as working with individuals can present range of personal challenges for the coach.

10.3 Skills Based Sessions

Level 2, Group Coaches & Level 3/HPCP coaches may provide individual skills-based coaching in a club environment, e.g., working on a specific technical element of the swim stroke. This is effectively the same as providing drills and feedback to an individual in a group session, but just on a 1:1 basis.

In these situations, the coach should be aware of issues around being alone with athletes and should only work within their current knowledge and qualifications.

It is important to note that for Level 2 and group coaches, this is NOT about prescribing training plans or a periodised programme for an individual.

11. Coaching Overseas

For most coaches, your overseas involvement will be in training camps. British Triathlon does offer overseas cover for coaches delivering camps, but you must ensure you have the correct level and still meet the wider remit and requirements of your qualification. For full details refer to the insurance section of these guidelines.

Managing and delivering training camps should be approached the same way you would for any coaching in the UK, with risk assessments, emergency action planning and clear session planning.

Some other areas you will need to consider:

- **Local laws and road regulations-** e.g., riding on the correct side of the road, rules for giving priority in situations like roundabouts. Some countries require helmets and to carry ID by law.



- **How will you overcome language barriers** whether accessing training facilities or in an emergency?
- **Emergency services-** there may be a different phone number and process to the UK, e.g., some ambulances are private and can charge high fees.
- **Health care-** do all participants have the right level of cover? You may have to pay at point on entry into a health service.
- **Travel insurance-** all participants including the coach should check the cover they have. Most will cover general activities such as swim, bike and run but may exclude specific training camps.

Simple planning and research will ensure that all have a positive experience and that everything is covered when something goes wrong.

Coaches that may be considering more longer-term coaching/ residency overseas.

- British Triathlon courses are designed to meet the requirements of coaching within the UK- specifically around the club structure. If you are planning to coach abroad, you will need to look at local guidance and regulations.
- In some countries formal licensing is required for coaches, in others such as North America which has a very litigious culture, having solid insurance and legal cover is a must.
- You may need to look at converting your UK qualification, the UKCC is recognised in Europe and is highly regarded worldwide but this doesn't automatically allow you to coach.
- Can you gain insurance? British Triathlon insurance cover only applies to coaches who are residents of the home nation of the federation (England, Wales, Scotland)
- If you need to get additional qualifications can you access a local [World Triathlon approved](#) course?

Likewise, when planning training camps, some simple research will allow to understand the requirements of the country you are looking to live and coach in, but you cannot assume that you will be qualified and insured as you are in the UK.



12. CPD and Personal Development

British Triathlon coaching qualifications have a specific remit as to what coaches are insured and expected to do. Sometimes this remit is narrower than a wider reaching coaching remit that may be required in some roles. Many coaches seek additional qualifications and training to enhance their skills and ensure they are appropriately qualified.

British Triathlon has created a number of CPD opportunities with this in mind.

Whilst there is no formal requirement to complete a specific amount of CPD to retain coach status, we recommend all coaches should keep their knowledge and skills up to date. Any coach who is a home nation member has access to the Learning Hub which has the latest version of education materials, along with a range of other resources to support coaches.

A program of CPD courses and learning has been created. We are currently offering the following formal CPD workshops:

- **Head Coaches Workshop**

Aimed primarily at coaches who are performing the role of Head Coach within a club environment and aims to support their development within that position.

- **Open Water Coaching**

Designed to support the development of open water coaching knowledge and ability. There is also an opportunity to gain practical experience through coaching a group of open water swimmers.

- **Strength and Conditioning Workshop**

Coaches will be able to prepare, deliver and review safe and effective strength and conditioning (S&C) sessions within a non-weighted (body weight only exercises) environment. This workshop will not extend a coach remit to allow them to coach using weighted Olympic style lifting exercises and equipment.

Full details of the remit these courses give coaches can be found in the [CPD section of the website](#). Monthly coach's newsletters will contain articles and personal learning opportunities.



In 2017 access to the CPD courses was widened to allow level 1 coaches and those still in training to attend, **coaches must still work to their overall remit with any CPD activity**, In addition to the workshops there is also a [British Triathlon Coach Mentoring scheme](#) and monthly coach's newsletters which contains articles and learning opportunities.

12.1 External CPD and Courses

There are a range of educational and CPD courses directly marketed to Triathlon coaches, these cover all the disciplines and areas of sport science. CPD courses not delivered or endorsed by British Triathlon, whilst may improve skills and knowledge will not be recognised for the purpose of widening coach remit or covered under the British Triathlon insurance policy cover. Examples of this are listed below:

- Ironman University.
- Component specialism e.g., track cycling certification.

With coach plus membership, certain qualifications and activities are covered under this package, please refer to the [coaching membership notes](#) or coaching team for further guidance.

12.2 Personal Trainers/Fitness Instructors

Personal training/ fitness instruction and coaching do have a range of similar activities and outcomes; however, they also have several differences. Therefore, should be treated as separate in relation to remit and insurance cover.

The British Triathlon coaching pathway at Level 1 and 2 is focussed on group (club) coaching. In most instances personal training involves working with individuals towards health and fitness goals within a gym environment.

We recommend that personal trainers/ fitness instructors who are coaches, clearly define the roles in which they are working and ensure they are suitably insured. Coverage for certain wider activities is now offered through the ultimate coach package providing



participants are working towards a triathlon goal. Please contact the membership team for more details.

Examples:

Level 1 coach and personal trainer delivering a 1:1 session covering bike skills. on the open road.

This would be outside the remit of the Level 1 coach as on open road, and most likely not in remit of the PT insurance as coaching specific skills.

Level 2 coach and personal trainer - giving a triathlete a personal periodised triathlon plan for an athlete to follow.

This is outside the remit of the Level 2 and will depend on the PT qualification held, some do have modules with general periodised planning for fitness and sports goals. However, a true periodised plan covering all sessions in detail, will probably be outside the PT and coach remit. Under British Triathlon remits only a level 2 diploma or level 3 coach can prescribe this sort of plan.

13. Contact and Support

These guidelines have been designed to give coaches the guidance needed to conduct safe and effective sessions. Whilst it is impossible to cover all situations and outcomes, these guidelines will help in the decision-making process.

The wider objectives are to ensure there are as few barriers to coaching as possible, so the sport is accessible to all. Over the past decade several enquiries have led to changes in the guidelines which have benefited all coaches.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the coaching team who can provide support and give guidance.





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