



**beyond
swim**

NORMAL OPERATING PROCEDURES AND EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Venue Name : Alnwick Triathlon Club at Ladyburn Lake

Version 1

03/05/2026



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Normal Operating Procedures

Part One: Background Information

The Venue

Address

Ladyburn Lake, Druridge Bay Country Park , Red Row, Northumberland. NE61 5BX

How to get to the venue:**By Car**

Ladyburn Lake is just a 10 minute drive from Amble.

Leave Amble on the A1068 heading south towards Hadston. Turn left into the park, signposted Druridge Bay Country park and follow the road to the car park at the Visitor Centre.

Remember to get your parking ticket from the ticket machine. Parking for the first hour is free.

Facilities

There are no showers or changing facilities when the visitor centre is closed.

Bring a changing robe or large towel that you can change under.

There is one toilet that can be accessed when the visitor centre is closed.

There is a picnic bench in front of the visitor centre.

The club has a limited number of tow floats, brightly coloured hats and whistles that can be borrowed by members. Please bring your own if you have them.



Venue Ownership, Organiser & Water Safety Provider

Venue Owner

The site is owned by Northumberland County Council, and club open water swimming sessions are operated by Alnwick District Triathlon Club.

Water Safety Provider

Water safety is provided by Alnwick District Triathlon Club. Volunteers will participate in club safety practice.

Activity Organiser

Each swim will be organized on the night by the nominated volunteers from Alnwick Tri Club: lakeside marshal, first aider and water safety.

They are responsible for:

- Monitoring the weather and informing swimmers at the earliest possible time if sessions are cancelled
- Monitoring conditions during the swim and ending the swim if necessary, e.g if visibility or weather conditions deteriorate
- Checking the temperature of the water
- Visually checking the water quality
- Signing swimmers in and out of the water
- Monitoring the acclimatization area
- Checking swimmers have completed the swimmer questionnaire
- Checking swimmers have signed up for the swim in SportMember
- Checking the route from the car park to the swim entry point
- Putting the marker buoys out
- Check the lifebuoy is in place, radios and airhorn all work
- Managing incidents should they occur
- Providing advice for tired and / or nervous swimmers and assessing the swimmer's ability to complete the lap

The club committee has been involved in the planning and development of open water activities including the risk assessment and documenting both normal and emergency operating procedures.



Key Contacts & Responsibilities

The nominated lakeside marshal, first aider and water safety will be on site for all club open water swims. The lakeside marshal will coordinate any emergency response.

Event/Activity Description

Alnwick Triathlon Club welcomes club members to train at their own pace around a course that is approximately 300m.

Swimmers must be capable of swimming 400m continuously to participate.

Each session lasts for 1 hour, and swimmers can complete as many or as few laps as they prefer.

There is capacity for up to a maximum of 30 swimmers in the session. All swimmers must book their place in SportMember.

All swimmers must be present for the pre-swim briefing.

Swimmers must be 18 years old or over unless a specific session is arranged for junior members, age related details and conditions are found in the appendices.

The course is marked by 3 red buoys and swimmers are to swim in an anti-clockwise direction around the outside of these buoys.

Swimming is only permitted once the water temperature is reliably above 11C.

Wetsuits are compulsory, tow floats are recommended.



Timetable

Identify who/which role is responsible for specific tasks e.g. opening, setting course, registering swimmers etc.

Registration 6.10pm – 6.20pm

Pre-swim briefing at 6.25pm

Swim starts at 6.30pm

Final lap 7.20pm

Swimmers to exit lake 7.30pm

Pack down 7.30pm – 7.50pm

Park closed and gates locked 8pm

The lakeside marshal is responsible for coordinating tasks with the safety team as appropriate:

Checking equipment, including but not limited to radios, airhorn, lifebuoy;

Setting up the sign in area, including setting out swim caps and whistles;

Taking the temperature of the water.

It's the responsibility of the Lakeside Marshal to register and sign in / sign out swimmers. They will remain stationed at the swim entry point and co-ordinate regular swimmer counts to ensure numbers in the lake correlate to swimmers on the register and, in an emergency (lake evacuation or the rescue of an unconscious casualty) to coordinate the appropriate emergency response in conjunction with the safety team and any coach or swim bike run leader involved in the session.



Site Plans

The toilet is at the Visitor Centre which is the building shown below.

The black arrows show the entry / exit to the lake via the steps.





Swim Course

The green circle shows the buoy to identify the entry / exit point. Swimmers may acclimatize by the green buoy.

The red circles are the buoys and the red arrows show the swim route and direction to swim.

The black arrows show the exit / entry point via the steps.

The lap will be approximately 300m. The buoy positions shown are approximate. The course shown is not to scale. Swimmers enter from the steps and swim from the green buoy to the first red buoy and then swim in an anticlockwise direction around the outside of the buoys.

The lake is deep and all swimmers will be out of their depth on the swim course. Swimmers will be able to stand up in the acclimatization area.

Registration and the safety briefing take place on the grass near the top of the steps of the swim entry / exit.

Lakeside marshal and First Aider are positioned near the top of the steps. Water safety / kayak is positioned within the course.





Pre-Swim Checks

Facility checks:

- Radios checked once in position
- Airhorn check
- Water and air temperature recorded on the paper register
- Weather & conditions monitored using weather forecasts. The session will, if necessary, be cancelled at earliest opportunity. Swimmers will be made aware of any applicable concerns.

Environment checks:

- Lake inspected for signs of blue green algae
- Swimmers advised to avoid any swans especially with young cygnets and advised of any other hazards
- Entry point checked before the start of each session.
- Weed length monitored and swimmers advised to take care and avoid weeds where possible.

Swimmer checks:

- Swimmers must have registered on SportMember & sign the paper register so we have an accurate record of attendance
- Swimmers may not swap places with anyone not named on the booking
- Swimmer questionnaire must have been completed (copy included in the appendices). This includes essential information such as medical information, emergency contact details and confirmation each swimmer is aware of the terms and conditions
- Swimmer briefing (include copy of briefing/checklist in the appendices).
- Swimmers advised on the risk of Weil's disease and the importance of hand washing, showering and reducing intake of water while swimming
- Any notes / comments regarding the session to be recorded on the register



Swimmer Tracking

Swimmers may change by their cars, on the grass near the registration area or arrive changed and ready to swim. Once changed they are to sign in with the lakeside marshal who will be based near the entry point. The marshal will have the online record and the paper register. Swimmers without their own brightly coloured swim hat and / or whistle may borrow one from the club for the swim.

Lakeside marshal will use the paper register to record swimmers as they enter and exit the water and will monitor swimmers as they swim. The lakeside marshal will stay in position for the entire session.

The water safety marshal will monitor swimmers from the water. The lakeside and water safety marshals are equipped with radios and whistles. The lakeside marshal has access to the lifebuoy.

Swimmers in the water will be monitored by the lakeside marshal and the water safety (who will be able to communicate by radio). When not dealing with any first aid issues the first aider will assist on monitoring swimmers.

Once swimmers have finished their swim they are to make sure the lakeside marshal records that they have exited the water.

Wetsuit Policy

Wetsuits are compulsory at all club swims. The lake will not exceed the temperature at which wetsuits are likely to cause overheating but if it does the club swims will not be held.

Tow floats are recommended.

Water Temperature

The water temperature will be measured using a thermometer shortly before the club swim commences.

Swimming will only be permitted when the water temperature exceed 11C.

Air temperature will be monitored using weather forecasts.

Lakeside marshal, First Aider and Water Safety marshal should be suitably dressed for the weather conditions.



Water Quality

The water is sampled from the area where swimming will take place and sent for analysis before club swim season commences and then periodically throughout the season.

Water is tested for:

E. Coli (must be less than 900 cfu/100ml);

Enterococci (must be less than 330 cfu/100ml);

pH (must be between 6 and 9).

If the water test results are outside the parameters club swims are suspended while the water is resampled and further tests carried out.

We have been using this lake for several years and water quality has been good.

The swimming area is inspected visually before each club swim for signs of blue green algae. The Country Park Facebook page is monitored for any report of blue green algal blooms. If any blue green algal blooms are present club swims are suspended until testing confirms the lake is safe. Northumberland County Council (venue owner) also put warning signs up if blue green algal blooms are present. NCC test the water if blue green algal blooms occur.

The risk of leptospirosis is low and testing is not readily available. If there is a case of Weil's disease in someone who has been swimming in the lake NCC will test the water and swims will be suspended until testing confirms the lake is safe.

Medical Arrangements

A qualified first aider will be positioned near the entry / exit to the lake at all club swims.

The first aider will have the club first aid kit.

There is a defibrillator on the wall of the visitor centre, about 25m from the swim entry / exit.

Phone 999 to access it.

Address & contact details for nearest hospital with A&E department:

Northumbrian Specialist Emergency Care Hospital, Northumbria Way, Cramlington. NE23 6NZ.

Wansbeck General Hospital, Woodhorn Lane, Ashington. NE63 9JJ

Tel 999 or 112



Part Two: Water Safety Arrangements

Safety Cover Resourcing Levels and Positioning

Number of engine- powered craft (safety boat)

0

Number of human-powered craft

1 safety kayak or SUP

- Providing support/encouragement for tired and/or nervous swimmers and assessing the swimmer's ability to continue and complete the course.
- Looking for signs of swim failure in cold swimmers and assessing (or seeking support to assess) the swimmer's ability to continue safely
- Providing support to conscious swimmers who get into difficulty
- Raising the alarm (whistle blow and paddle in the air) in the event of discovering an unconscious swimmer in the water and with the help of swimmers recover the casualty on to the kayak / SUP and bring them to shore
- Shepherding swimmers who stray from the course

Number of land-based support e.g. spotters

The lakeside marshal will be positioned at the swim entry & swim exit to manage registrations, swimmer sign in and sign out, emergency response and general information for swimmers. They will give the pre-swim briefing. At the swim entry they will ensure no swimmers enter the water until safety cover is in position. When all swimmers have entered the water, they will coordinate swimmer counts when not signing swimmers in and out. They will also look out for swimmers who get into distress and summon assistance if required from the safety kayak / SUP.

The first aider will assist the lakeside marshal with monitoring swimmers when not dealing with any incidents requiring first aid assistance.

Lakeside marshal will have a whistle and radio. The lifebuoy is positioned near the swim entry / exit. The first aider will have the first aid kit.



Positioning



Swim lap is approximately 300m with distance of approximately 100m between each buoy

- Water Safety Marshal 
- Lakeside Marshal 
- First Aider 
- Defibrillator 



Evacuation Point

Casualty will be brought to shore at the swim entry / exit point where first aid can be given.

Communication System

- The safety kayaker / SUP and land-based support will use radios with visual and audible signals (whistles) as a backup.
The safety kayak / SUP will raise a paddle in the air to indicate an unconscious casualty.
1 short whistle blast = get attention of a swimmer
2 short whistle blasts = get attention of safety kayak / SUP or lakeside marshal
3 short whistle blasts = to tell the team you are taking action
1 long whistle blast = clear the swimming area (the lakeside marshal will then sound the airhorn to end the swim)
- If swimmers need assistance they should lie on their back and wave one arm in the air. Swimmers are all issued with whistles to call for assistance.

Water Safety Team Briefing

- Pre-season - the water safety team will be sent a copy of the NOP & EAP and there will be a training session, including a rehearsal of the emergency action plans. Further training/practice will be arranged during the season including as & when new members join the team.
- Pre-session - prior to each session there will be a short team briefing to confirm roles & duties and highlight any changes and key points.



Emergency Action Plan

How to contact Emergency Services:

Lakeside Marshal is responsible for contacting Emergency Services by calling 999, this may be delegated to First Aider.

How will Emergency Services be directed to the scene of an incident:

Address of the venue Visitor Centre, Druridge Bay Country Park, Red Row, Northumberland. NE61 5BX. Be clear that it is the visitors centre – at the end of the access road into the park In case of any uncertainty, also provide the following WhatThreeWords reference for the visitors' centre: "drags.them.forgot"

Who else is available to help in case of issues:

Contact the person responsible for securing the park – Danny Goodall on 07928 500370 in case emergency services need to access the park (to keep him informed and also to ensure the park gate is not locked prior to the arrival / departure of emergency services). Venue is not staffed and so provision of first aid and dealing with all issues is the responsibility of the club (lakeside marshal, first aider, any coaches and other triathlon club members that can assist).

Swimmer experiences cold water shock:

Cold water shock can cause a number of instant, powerful, involuntary respiratory reflexes, such as sudden increase in heart and blood pressure that may result in cardiac arrest, even for people in good health. Any swimmer that is suspected to be experiencing cold water shock will be told by the safety crew to:

- Fight their instinct to thrash around
- Roll slowly onto their back and float, using the buoyancy of the wetsuit plus any flotation device available
- Float until they can control their breathing
- If feasible, swim to the shore or be assisted by the safety crew

If safety crew is treating a swimmer and unable to monitor the remaining swimmers the lakeside marshal will sound a klaxon / airhorn, ending the swim session for all.

Swimmer experiences hypothermia:

Hypothermia can cause the following symptoms:

- Shivering
- Numb hands or feet
- Confusion, memory loss, or slurred speech
- Exhaustion or drowsiness
- Shallow breathing
- Loss of consciousness

Treatment to be provided: Restore Warmth Slowly by:

- removing wet clothing and dry the person off, if needed.
- warm the person's trunk first, not hands and feet.



- Warming extremities first can cause shock.
- wrapping in blankets/towels or put dry clothing on the person.
- Use foil blanket as supplementary.

In severe case call 999, otherwise transfer to hospital

If safety crew is treating a swimmer and unable to monitor the remaining swimmers the lakeside marshal will sound a klaxon / airhorn, ending the swim session for all.

Course Evacuation e.g. lightning, declining visibility, safety support performing a rescue:

In the event of a lake evacuation, the airhorn will sound and the lakeside marshal will encourage all swimmers to exit the water at the swim exit, maintaining the process for counting swimmers out of the water.

Sessions to be cancelled with as much prior notice as possible if water temperature falls below 11C, water quality tests fail, adverse weather e.g fog, thunder & lightning, heavy rain preceding the day of the swim.

Missing Person:

A register of swimmers will be taken on entering the water and each person exiting the water will be recorded.

If a missing swimmer is suspected, get safety crew to do head count in water. If it doesn't match, kayak / SUP to start search of water.

If confirmed missing person, get all swimmers to exit water.

Check the ID of missing person, call their mobile, check they haven't left without being registered.

Organise land-based search around perimeter of lake, deploy kayak / SUP to search lake.

Call emergency services.

Take land-based register to check everyone else is accounted for.

Minor Injury:

For minor injuries (e.g. cuts, abrasions, impact from other swimmer or collisions, broken bone), swimmer to exit lake, may need assistance of safety crew.

To be treated by first aider at registration as appropriate within remit of first aider.

Depending upon injury swimmer advised to seek further medical attention at hospital or GP as appropriate, e.g. for head injury, possible swallowing of excessive amounts of water.

May need to consider getting someone to assist getting casualty home or to doctor/hospital – contact next of kin / emergency contact.

Recovery of a conscious casualty:

Safety kayak / SUP to encourage swimmer to swim to exit point and radio lakeside marshal to advise.

If the swimmer cannot swim themselves to the bank the safety kayak / SUP to radio the lakeside marshal to sound the airhorn and get all swimmers out of the lake. The injured swimmer to hold on to the front of the kayak / SUP which will bring them to the swim exit. If they are unable to hold onto the kayak / SUP they will need to be helped onto the SUP / Kayak and brought to the swim exit.

Once on shore the first aider will treat the casualty as appropriate within their remit.



Lakeside marshal can restart the swim, if appropriate, once the safety kayak / SUP is back in position.

Major Injury e.g. Recovery of an unconscious, non-breathing casualty:

- Safety kayak / SUP to radio / wave paddle in the air to notify lakeside marshal and use whistle to get attention of swimmers. In the event of radio malfunction use whistles.
- Safety kayak / SUP to reach casualty within 1 minute.
- Safety kayak / SUP person to get casualty onto the SUP / kayak (nearby swimmers to assist if necessary) and get casualty to the swim exit point and onto the flat area by the lakeside for first aid assistance within 2 minutes.
- Lakeside marshal to sound airhorn suspending / ending the swim session and direct swimmers out of the lake.
- Lakeside marshal to guide swimmers to exit point. Process for counting swimmers out of water to be maintained to ensure there are no other casualties/missing swimmers.
- Lakeside marshal to call 999 / instruct first aider to call 999, giving address to emergency services and obtaining code for defibrillator.
- Another club member tasked with waiting in the car park to guide emergency services on arrival.
- Casualty to be treated by first aider and safety crew in line with capabilities and await help from emergency services.
- Swim session suspended until casualty successfully dealt with and safety crew are able to re-focus on role. Most likely the session will be ended but if appropriate the session may restart once the situation is resolved and safety team are all back in position. Consider state of mind of safety team and swimmers before restarting swim.



Appendices

- Risk assessments



OWS_LadyburnLake
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- Public liability insurance certificate



PL 2026.pdf

- Role descriptions



Roles &
Responsibilities OW

- Swimmer questionnaire



Open water
swimming question

- Swimmer briefing



OWS briefing.pdf



- **Water safety team briefing**



OWS Water Safety
team Briefing.pdf

- **Checklists**



OWS Checklists
.pdf

- **Junior swims**



Junior OWS
info.pdf

- **Register**



OWS register
2026.pdf

- **NCC guidelines for water sports in the Country Park**



NCC guidelines for
watersports.pdf