

## Swimwear and Technical Suit Policy

Previously known as the Technical Performance Race Suit Policy - created in April 2018

Adopted and updated: November 2023

This policy update uses the current framework of the Swimming NZ Inclusive Swimwear policy (012) whilst retaining elements from the previously known Technical Performance Race Suit Policy.

### 1. Purpose

To outline policy on creating a welcoming and inclusive swimming environment for all competitive members.

### 2. Background:

- 2.1 Within our SNZ Strategic Framework, our goal is to get more people swimming more often. To achieve this outcome, we want to remove barriers to participation and create an environment where:
  - All New Zealanders feel welcome, safe, valued, and celebrated in swimming
  - All New Zealanders can participate in the role and at the level of their choice in swimming
  - New Zealand's diversity is reflected in swimming.
- 2.2 It is acknowledged that for some swimmers, the standard competitive swimsuit options defined by FINA requirements for swimwear approval may not suit their individual needs and preferences.
- 2.3 This may be attributed to a range of factors, including but not limited to a swimmer's cultural or religious observations.
- 2.4 Lack of appropriate competitive swimwear options are a key barrier to participation in swimming by many people in the community, including people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, transgender and gender diverse people, women, and girls.
- 2.5 To accommodate and support swimmers' individual needs and encourage participation and involvement in swimming competitions, Swimming New Zealand allows swimwear to be modified or alternative swimsuits to be worn in accordance with this Policy.

### 2. Objective:

- 2.1 This Policy has been developed to clarify and supplement the effective application of SNZ Swimming Rules SW 1.5, which reads:

Notwithstanding any other clause in these Rules, swimsuits may be modified, and alternative swimsuits may be worn to accommodate a swimmer's individual needs and preferences, including in respect of modesty, religious or cultural purposes, gender identity, physical disability or in connection with any other protected attribute under government anti-discrimination legislation, provided any modification or proposed alternative swimsuit complies with the Swimming New Zealand Inclusive Swimwear Policy.
- 2.2 If there is any inconsistency between this Inclusive Swimwear Policy and the Swimming Rules, the relevant Swimming New Zealand Rule will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

### 3. Application:

- 3.1 This Policy applies to swimmers, except swimmers seeking to achieve a World Record or international selection, competing in:
  - All levels of domestic pool and open water swimming competitions conducted by Swimming New Zealand, its affiliated Member Organisations and Clubs.

### **3.2 New Zealand Records**

All swimmers are eligible for a New Zealand record if they wear modified or alternative swimwear for the relevant event at which they achieve that record, provided the swimwear satisfies the requirements of this Policy.

### **3.3 World Records**

To be eligible for official World Records, swimmers must wear an approved swimsuit as required under World Aquatics rules and World Para Swimming Rules.

### **3.4 International Selection**

To be eligible for selection on international teams, swimmers must wear an approved swimsuit as required under World Aquatics rules and World Para Swimming Rules.

### **3.5 The swimwear of all swimmers shall be modest, in good taste and must not be transparent.**

### **3.6 Swimwear must be of textile material (i.e., permeable textile open mesh materials such as cotton, nylon, Lycra and the like) with no application of surface treatment closing the open mesh structure. Swimwear must not contain any non-textile material, such as polyurethane or neoprene.**

### **3.7 Swimsuits that the Technical Director/Meet Referee believes would be capable of unfairly enhancing a swimmer's performance will not be permitted, this includes compression swimwear that may be tight-fitting and/or increase buoyancy.**

### **3.8 Swimsuits that the Technical Director/Meet Referee believes would present a genuine safety risk to the wearer or other swimmers will not be permitted, this includes swimwear that may cover the face, prohibit the body from moving freely and/or impedes buoyancy. In accordance with World Aquatics regulations for open water swimming competitions in water with temperatures below 20°C, men and women may use either swimsuits (3.5 above) or wetsuits. When the water temperature is below 18°C, wetsuits are compulsory.**

### **3.9 The Technical Director/Meet Referee may ask the swimmer or their representatives to inspect the modified or alternative swimsuit prior to the swimmer's first event at the competition for approval to ensure they comply with this policy and for the swimmer's safety in the water.**

### **3.10 Swimmers are not required to justify their choice of swimsuit; however, swimmers may be required to provide information pertaining to items within this policy to assist with the Technical Director/Meet Referee's decision.**

### **3.11 The Technical Director/Meet Referee may approve a modified or alternate swimsuit at their discretion and in accordance with this Policy, the Swimming Rules, the Open Water Swimming Rules, and competition rules to the extent they relate to swimwear. The Technical Director or Meet Referee's decision shall be final.**

### **3.12 In instances where the Technical Director/Meet Referee is unsure whether the swimwear meets this Policy's requirements, the swimmer should be allowed to participate; however, the Technical Director/Meet Referee should contact Swimming New Zealand at [inclusion@swimming.org.nz](mailto:inclusion@swimming.org.nz) with details regarding the swimwear. Swimming New Zealand staff will work with the Technical Advisory Committee and associated Member Organisations to review the case and provide further feedback on this request to wear alternate or modified swimwear. Swimmers should also be encouraged to contact Swimming New Zealand at [inclusion@swimming.org.nz](mailto:inclusion@swimming.org.nz) if they require clarification or support on their request to wear modified or alternate swimwear.**

## **4. Accommodating Modesty:**

### **4.1 Swimmers may choose a swimsuit style that covers additional body surfaces, including the legs, arms and/or head, but not the face.**

### **4.2 Swimmers may choose a relaxed-fitting swimsuit style however, this must not be so loose as to cause a safety risk, this includes swimwear that prohibits the body from moving freely and/or swimwear that impedes buoyancy. Swimsuits must not cover the face as this is a drowning risk.**

### **4.3 Swimmers may choose to wear a swim skirt as an additional layer over a standard swimsuit.**


4.4 There is no limit to the number of pieces the swimwear may be made from, however as set out in 3.6, swimsuits that the Technical Director/Meet Referee believes would be capable of unfairly enhancing a swimmer's performance will not be permitted, this includes compression swimwear that may be tight-fitting and/or increase buoyancy.

5. **Technical/Performance Race Suit for 12 & under Competitors**

The use of technical/performance race suits for competitors aged 12 years and under competing at all competitions held under the Swimming Canterbury West Coast umbrella, are **banned**.

Retaining this section in the updated policy is to assist with retaining our young athletes by providing an environment that encourages fair competition alongside age-appropriate pressure. Research indicates that any beneficial gains made by using a Technical/Performance suit are not relevant to young swimmers, who have yet to physically develop. Suits are also expensive and there are enough financial pressures on swimmers and their families. In eliminating this unnecessary option, Swimming Canterbury West Coast's aim is to reduce a barrier for swimming families whilst building mentally strong athletes, confident in their own ability and training ethic, rather than depending on a technical/performance suit to improve results.

**Examples of Acceptable Swimwear**

 Full coverage with legging	 Full coverage with pant	 Three-quarter length	 Rash shirt/fitted T-shirt	 Neoprene wetsuit (open water swimming)
 *Hygiene swimwear or underwear	 Swimwear with ties	 Swimwear with zippers or fasteners	 Sportswear (if textile material)	 Swim skirt (additional layer)
 Swim shorts	 Trunks	 Briefs	* Note – Swimmers are not required to present modified or alternative swimwear to the Technical Director/Meet Referee	
				
			* Note – swimwear must have raised stitching on the outside of the fabric for swimmers aged 12 years and under.	

## Examples of Unacceptable swimwear



\* Note - loose-fitting shorts and T-shirts have been included on this list for safety reasons only. Board shorts are still permitted as an option. We encourage the Technical Director/Referee to use their discretion when deciding if there is a safety risk for the swimmer.

\* Note – swimsuit seaming is not permitted for swimmers aged 12 years and under - bonded/sealed seams and use of kinetic tape.

## 6. What is a Technical Performance Suit?

Technical/performance racing suits are manufactured using scientifically advanced materials. Materials of this type are normally comprised of spandex and nylon composite fabrics with features to reduce “drag” against the water. The fabrics include features which are highly compressive and increase the swimmer's glide through water and reducing absorption of water by the suit as opposed to regular swimsuits. Traditional one-piece race suits for females as well as briefs and trunks for male swimmers are not technical/performance suits and will be permitted. Knee length suits and “jammers” will also be permitted provided they do not feature the key components of a technical/performance swim suit will also be permitted.



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Swimming Canterbury West Coast Board

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023

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