

Safety Plan
for the
46th Annual Swim Around Key West
Saturday, July 2nd, 2022

1. The 46th Annual Swim Around Key West is scheduled for Saturday, July 2nd, 2022. The starting time will be 9:20AM sharp for the first wave of swimmers (for any slower swimmers) and 9:50AM for the second wave (the remainder). The starting times are based on high tide in the Key West Harbor. The event will begin at the west end of Smathers Beach (near the rest rooms). The swimmers will proceed clockwise into the Harbor and continue until they have completed the distance around the Island of Key West. The purpose of the staggered start time is twofold: 1) To assist the slower swimmers to make it through critical tidal areas before the tide affects them negatively and 2) To get all the swimmers through the Key West Harbor as quickly as possible.
2. We expect a maximum of 100 swimmers on the day of the event. The swimmers will be made up of three divisions: 1) Solo swimmers; 2) 2-Person relay swimmers; 3) 3-Person relay swimmers. Every solo swimmer is required to have a kayak at his/her side throughout the duration of the swim. The kayak is to provide safety and fuel for the swimmer. Every relay team must have a motorboat for the same purpose but also to carry the other teammates. If a swimmer does not have a support vessel that swimmer will be disqualified from the event. All personal support craft will display a bright orange pennant with the swimmer's number on it. This pennant must be prominently displayed. Every swimmer will be marked with that corresponding number on his/her right leg.
3. All relay transitions will take place from the boat, none from land. Buoys will be placed at the 4- and 8-mile distance for the 3-person relay and at mile 6 for the 2-person relay. Relay swimmers will be advised to not dive into the water on their entrance to avoid injury. The event organizers will be responsible to drop off and pick up the transition buoys before and after the event.
4. The organizers of the Annual Swim event will provide "Committee Boats." We will have a minimum of three "Committee Boats." A "Committee Boat's" primary responsibility is the safety of the swimmers and their support boat/kayak crew. All "Committee Boats" will be flying a bright yellow flag to identify them.
5. In addition to the "Committee Boats" we also plan to have kayakers, as needed who are specially designated "Safety Kayaks" roving the waters around the swimmers. The kayakers of these boats will also have the bright yellow flags prominently displayed on their kayaks indicating to our participants that they are officials in our event. These kayaks and kayakers will serve the same function as the "Committee Boats," to aid and assist swimmers and kayakers involved as needed.
6. There will be a "Committee Boat" before the lead swimmer and one behind the last swimmer. The other will patrol the swimmers and support boats in between. Extreme caution will be heeded as they pass through the Key West Harbor and through the Fleming Cut. I estimate that the first swimmers will enter the Harbor at approximately 10:45AM. I estimate that the last swimmer will pass under the Fleming Bridge no later than 12:30AM.

7. If a swimmer drops out of the event for any reason, he/she will be required to contact the **Race Director, Mr. Terence White on cell phone 305-304-4341 or by radio (VHF Channel 74)**. Mr. White will also have a roster (He will be positioned on Smathers Beach during the entire time of the event). **Captain Don Nelson** will coordinate the Committee Boat activity from aboard his boat. Captain Nelson's cell # is: **Cell # 305-304-0091**.
8. Captain Nelson will keep in contact with the Race Director and with the other Committee Boats. He will make note of any swimmers who drop out and communicate that to the Race Director. The Race Director will keep a record of every swimmer who finishes the course and his/her finish time. We will have a full accounting of all swimmers who enter the water throughout the entire event. The roster will contain personal cell numbers of all the swimmers and a contact number to be called in case of emergency. Mr. White and Captain Nelson will be in contact with the other "Committee Boats" and with one another.
9. **The Committee Boat Coordinator, Captain Don Nelson (Cell # 305-304-0091)** has extensive experience in the waters around the island. He has lived in the Keys for many years now. The "Committee Boats" will guard and direct the swimmers through critical areas as the Harbor; the Fleming Cut, and the Cow Key Channel. The Committee Boats will be in the water until the last swimmer completes the course. Any swimmer that is not finished by 5:20PM will be instructed to exit the water. There is an eight-hour limit beginning with the first wave at 9:20AM.
10. A mandatory pre-race meeting for all swimmers and support crews will be held at the Smathers Beach in Key West on Friday, July 1st. The rules and course will be explained to all swimmers and their crews. All swimmers will be required to sign in before that meeting. At this meeting the swimmers will see the distinctive yellow flag, which will be prominently displayed on the "Committee Boats." The swimmers and support crews will also be notified clearly that all "Committee Boats" will be equipped with VHF radio and the operating **channel** will be **74**. Additionally, they will receive a printed copy of the Race Director White's cell phone number. This number along with the radio frequency will be sealed with a plastic laminate. The event organizer will provide this information as a courtesy to all swimmers for their crew's use. All kayakers and boaters are urged to have cell phones in waterproof cases in event of an emergency.
11. There are three points where the "Committee Boats" will transport any swimmers or boaters in case of medical emergency. **Point 1** is the Coast Guard Base docks. **Point 2** is the Sigsbee Marina. **Point 3** is the Hurricane Hole Marina. The captains of the "Committee Boats" will transport any victims to the closest of these three locations and will notify 911 to send an ambulance to that specific location.
12. Weather will be closely monitored. If lightning appears swimmers will be directed to exit the water. If the lightning passes, they will be allowed to reenter the water and continue to the finish in accordance with the lightning rule on our books. This will be clearly explained to the all at the pre-swim meeting the evening before. If the Weather Service issues a small boat advisory the Race Director in conjunction with the "Committee Boat" Coordinator will decide if the

- event will continue. The final decision rests with the Race Director. If the advisory becomes a small craft warning the event will be cancelled. The “Committee Boat” Captains will direct boaters by VHF and kayakers and swimmers by voice to leave the water. If the weather is so inclement at the race start, the start will be postponed for 60 minutes and if the weather fails to clear the event will be called off for the year. This is no alternate event date for 2020.
13. The swim is insured by Frazier Insurance Agency. This agency has provided “special event insurance,” for the entire day of the event. A copy of the policy will be available for the U.S. Coast Guard’s review. A copy of the insurance policy has been given to City of Key West. The City of Key West is named on the policy. A copy is available upon request. City permits, if needed, will be procured before the event takes place.
 14. The swim organizer and members of the committee will continue to keep the US Coast Guard updated on any changes to the event. The event organizers will respectfully and gladly receive any counsel or instruction from the U.S. Coast Guard.
 15. Flyers will be distributed to all local marinas announcing the date and time of the swim. The pennant which the support kayaks and boats will be displaying will be pictured. The goal is to make known to as many as possible that there will be swimmers in the water so that the boaters/jet skiers will be aware and alert.
 16. **Criteria for Cancelling the Annual Swim Around Key West.**

The race will be cancelled if during the event the winds reach sustained speeds of 25 knots.

Swimmers will be instructed to exit water if lightning flashes are within 5 miles. Distance will be measured by the Flash to Bang technique. Twenty-five seconds between lightning flash and clap of thunder indicates lightning is within 5 miles. Race will be restarted when lightning moves from the area. Swimmers will be permitted to re-enter the water at or behind the point they exited. If the conditions do not improve within 45 minutes, then the race will be officially cancelled. This will be communicated to all the swimmers and support boaters by way of the Committee Boaters, who will be assisting swimmers and kayakers out of the water.

If either or both of the two preceding paragraphs describe the conditions at the race start, the race will be postponed up to 60 minutes; if the conditions don’t clear the race will be cancelled. There is no alternate race day.

If the director deems it necessary to cancel the event after the start the swimmers in first place after mile 4 will be declared the winner and the time posted as unofficial.

The Lightning Rule is thus: *If a lightning storm threatens you as a swimmer you may swim to shore or get into your escort boat and head for shelter. Once the threat passes you may reenter the water in as near to the location you exited the*

water as possible. You will not be disqualified for the event; however, the clock continues to run.

All final decisions will rest with the Race Director and are incontestable.

17. The Race Director will communicate with the U.S. Coast Guard contact assigned to the event when the last swimmer has arrived on the beach. In this way the U.S. Coast Guard will know that all swimmers who began the event have been accounted for.
18. The Event Organizer, Bill Welzien will be participating as a swimmer the day of the event and will not be available for comment until after he completes the course.
19. The swim is entering its 46th year. By God's grace there has never been a fatality or injury. Safety has been our top priority. Our goal is to have a safe, enjoyable event, one that all the participants find rewarding and will feel compelled to return to Key West again and again. We wish not only to promote our annual event but our great community, which has much to offer to all.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Bill Welzien
Organizer & Swimmer
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Race Day Contacts:

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