



Instructor's Corner

Clarification to Recommended Depths for Headfirst Entries

The Swimming and Water Safety program materials state that headfirst entries should only be performed in water at least 9-feet deep. A clarification has been made to the Red Cross recommendation, which will be reflected in the second printing of the Swimming and Water Safety products. The clarification is as follows:

- "Be sure water is at least 9-feet deep unless performed with proper supervision and in water depths that conform with the rules of the concerned regulating body, such as USA Swimming, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), YMCA of the USA and the international swimming federation (FINA)."

Swim team members who are under the supervision of qualified coaches learn how to enter performing headfirst entries following a learning progression for shallow-angle dives whereby they learn to demonstrate control of their angle of entry at each and every step. Once these skills are learned, trained swimmers can adjust the depth of their entries when they are aware of the depth or when told of the water depth. Knowing how to properly enter the water is the key to knowing how to control how shallow or deep an entry is into the water. Swimmers who learn how to enter the water with control can manage depth safely.

Starting blocks should only be used by trained swimmers during controlled practice, supervised warm-up or meet conditions.

Headfirst entries into water less than 9-feet deep should be performed only with proper supervision and in water depths that conform with the rules of the concerned regulating body, such as USA Swimming, the NCAA, the AAU, the NFHS, YMCA of the USA and the international swimming federation (FINA). The coach must follow current rules of the regulating body. Higher standards, established by local and state bathing codes, supersede any regulations and recommendations established by competitive organizations.

The Red Cross continues to stress that Water Safety instructors only teach headfirst entries and dives from the deck in water at least 9-feet deep for participants in Red Cross Learn-to-Swim courses.