

Revised: October 25, 2023

Previous Policies:

- [April 2023 Pilot Policy](#)
- [January 2022 Pilot Policy](#)
- [2018 Pilot Policy](#)

Pilot Policy

Assessment and Promotions	2
Committees	2
Senior Pilots	2
Pilot Committee	2
Pilot Levels	3
All Levels	3
Privileges	3
Responsibilities	3
Accompanying Pilot	4
Promotion Process	4
Responsibilities	4
Restrictions	4
Pilot	4
Promotion Process	4
Responsibilities in addition to Accompanying Pilot	5
Restrictions	5
Lead Pilot	5
Promotion Process	5
Responsibilities in addition to Pilot	5
Privileges	5
Restrictions	5
Senior Pilot	6
Promotion Process	6
Responsibilities in addition to Lead Pilot	6
Assessment Pilot	6
Promotion Process	6
Responsibilities in addition to Senior Pilot	6
Demotion Process	6

Assessment and Promotions

To be assessed, a pilot emails serc-assessing-pilots@googlegroups.com. The Assessing Pilots will arrange an appropriate checkout swim.

Committees

Senior Pilots

All pilots who are at Senior Pilot level. This group votes to approve or deny promotions to Accompanying Pilot, Pilot, and Lead Pilot levels.

Pilot Committee

A committee of 3 or 4 Senior Pilots and the Swim Commissioner. This group votes to approve or deny promotions to Senior Pilot and Assessing Pilot levels, as well as voting on Senior Pilots to be included in the Pilot Committee itself.

Pilot Levels

	Accomp.	Pilot	Lead	Senior	Asses.
Can be in boat alone inside GGB/Bay Bridges, accompanied by Pilot	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Can be in boat alone outside GGB/Bay Bridges, accompanied by Lead Pilot	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Can lead Sunriser swims (only with the current, not cross-channel)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Can lead Club Swims (including cross-channel Sunrisers)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Can use RIBs outside of club events	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Can mentor pilots to higher levels	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Can assess other levels	No	No	No	No	Yes

All Levels

Privileges

- Once certified, any pilot is eligible for a \$50 reimbursement towards the purchase of a personal radio. To get this reimbursement, send a receipt of purchase along with the [Check Reimbursement Form](#) to the Swim Commissioner (swimming@serc.com) who will then authorize it and forward the form on to the office.

Responsibilities

- All pilots are considered part of the SERC leadership team. To help foster a positive and welcoming environment, pilots are expected not only to be competent in performing their duties, but must also model conduct that is above reproach even when not piloting.

Accompanying Pilot

Promotion Process

To become an Accompanying Pilot:

- Act as co-pilot with a Senior Pilot for a minimum of 5 required swim events
- Must have attended the SERC Piloting Class
- Must have a California Boater Card
- Assessment: co-pilot a Sunriser or Club swim with an Assessing Pilot in the boat
- Approval: The Assessing Pilot assesses the candidate and makes a recommendation to the Senior Pilots, who will vote on the recommendation.

Responsibilities

- Drives a boat competently and can be in a boat alone
- Can be trusted to keep swimmers safe
- Understands and carries out commands from the lead pilot of a swim
- Communicates effectively with other pilots, swimmers, and others assisting the swim
- Demonstrates appropriate leadership skills, teamwork, and behaviors on and off the water

Restrictions

- Must have a higher-ranked pilot (can be in another boat) on all swims
- Must have a higher-ranked pilot in the boat outside the Golden Gate or Bay Bridges

Pilot

Promotion Process

- Prior to promotion, act as Accompanying Pilot for multiple swim events
- When the pilot feels competent enough to assume the responsibilities of Pilot, they may request to be assessed.
- Assessment: The assessment will take place in the context of a Club swim. The prospective Pilot will, under the supervision of the Assessing Pilot:
 - plan the swim
 - carry out the briefing
 - manage communication with Vessel Traffic Services
 - demonstrate knowledge of the Bay, its currents, topography and major areas of potential threat to swims
 - organize on-water assets
 - ensure a successful conclusion to the swim
- It is understood that the prospective Pilot is still learning and the Assessing Pilot will be available to provide assistance.
- Approval: the Assessing Pilot will make a recommendation to the Senior Pilots who will vote on the recommendation

Responsibilities in addition to Accompanying Pilot

- Is capable of leading Sunrisers with the current
- Is capable of piloting a boat outside the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges

Restrictions

- May pilot all Club and Nutcracker swims but must have a Lead Pilot accompanying them in their boat or in another boat

Lead Pilot

Promotion Process

- Acts as co-Lead Pilot during at least 3 Club or Nutcracker swims.
 - Two should be outside the Golden Gate Bridge
 - Two should be cross-current
 - Some swims, like Kirby Cove, count as both outside the Golden Gate Bridge and cross-current
 - Senior Pilot will be in the boat with the candidate at all times
- Assessment: The assessment will take place in the context of the final of the above swims. The prospective Lead Pilot will, under the supervision of the Assessing Pilot:
 - perform all of the Pilot responsibilities without assistance
 - demonstrate advanced leadership and piloting skills
- Approval: the Assessing Pilot will make a recommendation to the Senior Pilots who will vote on the recommendation

Responsibilities in addition to Pilot

- Recruits other pilots for a swim
- Organizes and plans coverage of swim
- Conducts pilot briefing
- Assumes overall responsibility for the swim once the briefing begins
- Handles communication with Vessel Traffic Services, Marine Police, US Coast Guard, and other vessels or parties that affect the swim
- Must pilot at least twice per calendar year to retain their status

Privileges

- For swim program purposes or with Swim Commissioner approval, may use club RIBs outside of the Club Swim calendar, Sunriser calendar, and rowing events

Restrictions

- None

Senior Pilot

Promotion Process

- Any Lead Pilot can volunteer to be a Senior Pilot
- Approval: Lead Pilot submits their name as a Senior Pilot, and the Pilot Committee votes on the request.

Responsibilities in addition to Lead Pilot

- Acts as a mentor to help train and promote new and existing pilots
- Models exemplary boat handling, judgment and leadership skills
- Actively helps recruit and train new pilots
- Must mentor new pilots at least four times per calendar year to retain their status

Assessment Pilot

Promotion Process

- Designated by the Pilot Committee

Responsibilities in addition to Senior Pilot

- Assess candidates for pilot promotions in a fair and dispassionate manner

Demotion Process

To ensure the safety of the piloting program, the Pilot Committee (not including the Swim Commissioner) may by majority vote and for articulated reasons demote any pilot, or disqualify a pilot entirely. Reasons may include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to heed instructions from the Swim Commissioner, a higher-ranked pilot or the lead pilot of a particular swim
- Operating a boat unsafely

In determining appropriate treatment, the Pilot Committee shall take into account the nature, severity and frequency of the misconduct. A single instance of misconduct of sufficient gravity may support demotion or disqualification. Depending on the circumstances, the Pilot Committee may in its discretion decide to counsel or warn a pilot in the first instance, escalating the severity of the response based on whether the pilot repeats the misconduct after such counseling or warning.

Any decision by the Pilot Committee to demote or disqualify a pilot may be appealed to the Swim Commissioner.