

The Chicago Shoreline Marathon Safety Policy

This policy is subject to change. Please check back prior to race day to ensure that you and your craft will be compliant.

The Marathon is a 17+ mile paddle along the shoreline of the City of Chicago and north suburbs. Participants will compete in the open waters of Lake Michigan where conditions can vary dramatically throughout the day. Occasionally the water can be very rough, with strong winds and high waves. Hazards exist along much of the course (sea walls, breaker walls, piers, busy harbors). With easterly winds, waves are reflected from sea walls and can be chaotic. See the map and detailed course description for particularly hazardous areas with high boat traffic. Unless you have solid experience in difficult conditions with the boat you plan to use, you should not enter this event. There will be one official check-in point along the route (north turn point at Lloyd beach just south of Tower Road). Get familiar with the course ahead of time. The check-in beach is a good point to drop out of the course if needed. Additional safe locations include Gillson Beach and Dempster St. Beach. If you leave the race at any point and have not notified a race official at a check point, please call 312-515-7205 to report that you are dropping out.

Be prepared to be fully independent and self-sufficient for the entire course of the marathon .

Officials' boats are instructed to allow competitors who experience problems to make an attempt at a self rescue. Fellow competitors are expected to help and notify the nearest officials' boat/beach stop. Race officials will make their best efforts at adjustments for time in case of those assisting another competitor.

Safety kayakers will be utilized along the course. Look for the orange hats. If you need assistance, these guys are there to help. They are in communications with both race officials and rescue teams.

The Chicago Shoreline Marathon reserves the right to refuse to register any individual or boat. It may also disqualify or refuse any participant or boat before or during the event for lack of required equipment, unsafe operation, disregard for event rules, or unsporting behavior. Beach stop officials have the right to evaluate and disqualify any competitor who appears severely fatigued, injured or otherwise unable to safely complete the course. All competitors must be at least 18 years of age to compete in the Marathon at date of event.

All race events will end at 4PM. Any craft in the water after 4pm, will not be affiliated with the race.

In the event of bad weather, the race committee may decide to run a contingency course. Please see the separate Contingency Course description in the Course section of our website.

Read required equipment details below.

Short Course and Relay event safety notes:

Please read the above safety information for the marathon event. Both the short course and relay will be run in a smaller area of the shoreline between Leone Beach and Gillson Park. This stretch is relatively free of hazards and usually has less boat traffic. However, competitors need to be aware of the potential for rough, choppy water and quickly changing conditions. This includes the chaotic chop waves seen with a wind out of the east. A pre-race briefing for competitors will include updates on lake conditions at time of race. All competitors in the short course and relay events must have a familiarity with paddling alone in open water.

Officials' boats are instructed to allow competitors who experience problems to make an attempt at a self rescue. Fellow competitors are expected to help and notify the nearest officials' boat/beach stop. Race officials will make their best efforts at adjustments for time in case of those assisting another competitor. If you drop out of the race at any point and are not able to notify a race official boat or beach check-in official, please call 312-515-7205 to report that you are safely out of the water.

The Chicago Shoreline Marathon reserves the right to refuse to register any individual or boat. It may also disqualify or refuse any participant or boat before or during the event for lack of required equipment, unsafe operation, disregard for event rules, or unsporting behavior. Beach stop officials have the right to evaluate and disqualify any competitor who appears severely fatigued, injured or otherwise unable to safely complete the course. All competitors must be at least 14 years of age to compete in the short course or relay events.

All race events will end at 4PM. Any craft in the water after 4pm, will not be affiliated with the race. The race will be cancelled if there are small craft advisory warnings.

Required Equipment for all events:

Each participant must wear a USCG-approved PFD. Inflatable belts are acceptable. Each participant must also carry an attention-getting noisemaker, such as a whistle on a lanyard. All competitors are required to carry a cell phone or VHF radio to contact race officials if necessary.

Participants may also find useful bailers, compasses, signaling mirror, GPS and charts of the area. Remember to bring the fluids or food you plan to consume during the event. Water will be available at official check-in points.

All vessels will be safety checked prior to the start of the events.