



## Technical Swim Suit Policy

confirmed by SNM Board on 13 Nov 2018

The Swimming Nelson Marlborough Board, in the interests of athlete development and retention, has adopted a policy on the use of certain swimwear known as “technical suits”.

The policy prohibits the use of Technical Suits by all competitors 12 years of age and under at SNM sanctioned events, effective 1 January 2019.

With the adoption of this policy, all four regions in the South Island have the same policy, which will reduce the scope for confusion at South Island swim meets. Auckland and Waikato have adopted similar policies.

This follows the introduction of similar policies in Western Australia, Victoria along with several states in the USA and the Brazilian Swimming Federation, whose research indicates that much of the benefit of wearing a technical suit is not relevant to young swimmers who have yet to physically develop. Manufacturers do not design technical swim suits for young swimmers, rather they are designed for older athletes. One of the main benefits of wearing a technical suit is muscle compression, and children, who are not yet developed, are not impacted by this benefit. There is no documented evidence that supports any performance benefits of technical suits for athletes 12 years and under.

Technical suits can also be very expensive, and this may create a barrier to entry for families starting out or staying in swimming - there is enough financial pressure on parents without adding unnecessary purchases.

### **Swimming Nelson Marlborough's Policy:**

Effective 1 January 2019, swimmers aged 12 Years and under will no longer be permitted to wear Technical race suits at any competition sanctioned by Swimming Nelson Marlborough (SNM). This includes any regional, club or South Island meet held within the SNM region that is on the approved SNM calendar of swim meets.

The policy is contained in Standing Order 33, which states:

1. As of 1 January 2019, swimmers aged 12 years or under (hereafter in this clause “junior swimmers”) shall not be allowed to wear a Technical Swim Suit at any SNM sanctioned event, including both club and regional meets.
2. A Technical Swim Suit is one that has bonded seams, kinetic tape or meshed seams. Any suit that does not have all stitched seams shall be deemed a technical suit and subject to this standing order.
3. If a junior swimmer wearing a technical swim suit appears at marshalling or in the start area at an event, the Marshall or any technical official shall advise the Referee. The swimmer may elect to change into a different swimsuit but the race will be started without regard for whether the swimmer is ready. The Referee shall inspect the swim suit and, if it is confirmed to be a technical suit, shall disqualify the swimmer and not allow them to start the race.
4. A junior swimmer wearing a technical suit may be disqualified retrospectively, i.e. after swimming an event, only if the Referee examines the swimwear before the swimmer has an opportunity to change to a different swim suit. Such disqualification shall apply to that event only.

## **Does this apply in other regions, or at National meets?**

To date, all South Island regions, Auckland and Waikato have adopted similar policies, and other Regional Associations are considering doing so. Athletes are reminded to check regional policies before competing at a meet outside of the region.

As of September 2018, Swimming New Zealand does not have a national policy on Technical suits for 12 years and under swimmers, so they will still be able to be worn by swimmers 12 years and under at Swimming New Zealand meets, such as the Junior Festival, Division II Championships and National Age Groups.

## **What is a Technical Suit?**

Technical racing suits are manufactured using scientifically advanced materials. Suits of this type are normally comprised of spandex and nylon composite fabrics with features that are highly compressive. They increase the swimmer's glide through water and reduce water absorption compared to regular swimsuits.

Traditional one-piece race suits for females as well as briefs and trunks for male swimmers are not technical 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 swim suit as outlined below.

## **What are the key components of a Technical suit?**

The key components of technical suits are the following:

- Bonded/Sealed Seams
- Meshed Seams
- Kinetic Tape

Technical Swim Suits have bonded seams, kinetic tape or meshed seams.

***Only swim suits that have all stitched seams will be permitted to be worn.***

## **How will this change be implemented?**

Swimming Nelson Marlborough will host a training session for Technical Officials and Coaches to assist all parties to accurately identify the difference between the two types of suits.

Swimmers will be monitored throughout all SNM-sanctioned meets and will be asked to change into a complying swim suit if required. If a swimmer appears at marshalling or the start area wearing a non-complying suit, they will not be allowed to swim and the race will proceed without them. They may also be disqualified directly after a race if a non-complying suit is detected too late to stop them from swimming.

The following page has illustrations of standard suits and technical suits.

## PERMITTED



The above photographs are examples of seaming which will continue to be **permitted for swimmers aged 12 years and under**, note the stitching is raised on the outside of the fabric.

## TECHNICAL SUITS: NO LONGER PERMITTED AS OF 1/1/2019



The above photographs are examples of swim suit seaming which **will no longer be permitted for swimmers aged 12 years and under**. Note the bonded/sealed seams and use of kinetic tape.

Please note: the above pictures are examples of seaming only. The brands and styles depicted are **not** the only brands or styles to which the new policy will apply.

If you are unsure whether the suit you currently have, or are considering purchasing, will be permitted, please check with the retailer, ask your coach, or contact SNM for advice: [technical@snm.org.nz](mailto:technical@snm.org.nz).