#### General

Please remember that when an athlete takes part in any training session or race as a member of the Mid Sussex Tri Club:

* That person is individually accountable and responsible for themselves and their own actions, and
* Each individual is responsible for his or her own medical condition and will, if necessary, self medicate for their own conditions. The safety co-coordinator or session leader is not responsible for giving any medication. However each athlete has a duty to report any medical condition to the group leader.

#### PREVENTION

It is not always possible to avoid emergency situations, but common sense will often avoid them.

If an emergency situation occurs the single most important essential is to MAKE SURE YOU ARE SAFE before helping. Having extra casualties does not help any situation.

#### ICE (In Case of Emergency)

All members are strongly advised to have a **mobile phone** when taking part in all training sessions.

Members should record emergency contact details under ICE in the mobile phonebook. Many club members will have the Road ID ankle bracelet. This should be worn for all club activities.

#### SPECIFIC SITUATIONS

##### DROWNING

There will be no ‘floating’ during club swimming sessions except in designated areas when appropriate. Anyone seen floating will be considered to be in difficulties of some sort and will be assisted by any other member who notices them. Aimless swimming also implies that something is wrong.

There will be one or more spotters for inland open water. That person(s) will carry a mobile phone, a whistle and have the club’s first aid kit and safety buoy. If the whistle is blown it means that the spotter feels that there is a potential emergency situation.

Once the situation has been assessed in the water the priority is to get that swimmer out of the water quickly and safely.

##### HEAD INJURY

Collisions do occur in swimming. If a significant head injury occurred that was likely to incapacitate a swimmer, it is likely that the swimmer will be ‘floating’ or aimless. In this case the action plan for drowning is initiated.

##### HEART ATTACK

The population of the triathlon club is ageing!! Apparently fit and healthy athletes can still have heart attacks. Most heart attacks would give the individual time to swim to the shore, but they can be sudden and severe. They can certainly suddenly incapacitate somebody. Most people with heart attacks have sudden onset of chest pain, usually described as feeling like there is a weight or pressure on the chest.

In most situations the person would realise themselves that something serious may have happened and would adopt the recognised emergency position of floating on one’s back and raising an arm to attract the attention of other swimmers or spotters. If it is very sudden they may just be floating or aimless as a heart attack may trigger a cardiac arrest.

All suspected heart attack victims requires immediate assistance from the emergency services via 999.

STROKE

A stroke will occur without warning in many cases. It will suddenly incapacitate. It most commonly would leave someone weak or unable to move on one side.

The emergency procedure is exactly the same as for a heart attack. Safe exit from the water if swimming and immediate assistance from the emergency services via 999.

HYPOTHERMIA

This can and does creep up on a cold day, or with wetsuit failure. Hypothermia slows down brain function and makes people confused. It is most likely to occur, if at all during the three disciplines while swimming.

In the water it is most likely to make someone swim aimlessly as concentration goes. It is unlikely the individual would realise it himself or herself by this stage, so it is a situation that is best prevented. Again, aimless swimming must always be considered a sign that someone is in difficulty.

The emergency treatment is to get them out of the cold and initially warm them up with external layers.

##### DIABETES

The biggest risk with diabetes and exercise is hypoglycaemia - blood sugar level getting too low. It has an onset very similar to hypothermia, so it comes on gradually and is difficult for the individual to recognise once it happens. The first signs to other swimmers would again be aimless swimming, and eventually floating. Yet again, aimless swimming must always be considered a sign that someone is in difficulty.

The emergency treatment is to get some sort of sugar in to them once they are safely out of the water.

##### HYPERTHERMIA

Overheating is much more likely when running rather than when swimming. Drinking appropriate fluids during exercise, and taking extra care if it is especially hot, best prevent it. E.g. training early or late in the day.

##### WEIL’S DISEASE

This is included merely to increase awareness.

It is rare but swimmers and rowers have been known to contract it. The main symptom is a flu-like illness 2-12 days after exposure. Since flu-like illnesses are in themselves not that common during the lake swimming season it is highly recommended to be suspicious if this does happen and to make your doctor aware that you do swim in the lake. Weil's disease is treated with antibiotics. Although it is rare it can be reduced further by avoiding swimming in the lake if one has any open wounds, or covering them with waterproof plasters.

##### ANAPHYLAXIS

Most people who have this (it is a severe and potentially life threatening allergic reaction) know that they are at risk and usually carry their own supply of adrenaline. It is their individual responsibility to ensure they have this with them at all times and let others (leader, spotter, other athletes) know if they are prone to it and where they carry their adrenaline.

##### ASTHMA

Most asthmatics will not be exercising if they feel they are having an asthma attack. However occasionally asthma attacks are not recognised by the individual and can then suddenly become severe. In this situation the emergency position should be adopted if possible. This can be a life threatening condition so safe exit from the water and immediate assistance from the emergency services may be required via 999.

#### FIRST AID KIT

The First Aid Kit will be available with the group leader at the lake. It will only contain simple items that could be used by ANY club member.

* Plasters
* Sling and safety pins
* Bandages
* Antiseptic cream
* Antiseptic wipes
* Gauze
* Vaseline

The lake kit will separately contain the alert whistles, and the spotter's binoculars, and also life