



Swimmers & Kayakers

Locations

- [Casco Bay Lines](#) - 56 Commercial Street, Portland, Maine 04101
- [East End Beach](#) - 1 Cutter Street, Portland, Maine 04101
- [Peaks Island](#) - 1 Welch Street, Portland, Maine 04101

Times

Key times to remember for the day of our event:

- 0545am - First ferry to Peaks Island
- 0645am - Second ferry to Peaks Island
- 0630am - 0730am - Check In on Peaks Island
- 0830am - First heat departs for East End Beach
- 1100am - Post Event Results and Recognitions

Safety

In addition to your personal kayaker (if you have chosen to bring one!), event staff and certified lifeguards will be stationed on both beaches. Having a personal swim support kayaker is not required, but is highly recommended - especially for first time participants. While in the water, swimmers will be monitored by patrol boats that will be staffed with certified lifeguards. In addition to event staff boats, local Harbormasters and the US Coast Guard will be local to the event and on standby. Post race, a medical tent and EMT will be on scene if needed!

Packet Pickup

Packet pickup will be held at our Casco Bay Branch (14 Old South Freeport Rd, Freeport, ME 04032). This location has free parking. Packets will be available Friday, July 10 from 4:30pm - 6:30pm. All packets MUST be picked up during this time.

Packets will include:

- Official swim cap
- Swimmer t-shirt
- Kayak flag
- Hypothermia information
- Kayaker lineup information
- Ferry ticket
- Fundraising prizes earned prior to soft deadline

Check-In

Check in will happen on Peaks Island. Once you arrive on the ferry you will find volunteers wearing teal event shirts to help with check in, body marking, and race chip assignment. Volunteers will also help with directions to porta potties, bag drop area, and wave lineup areas.

Numbering and Timing Chips

Upon arrival at Peaks Island, swimmers must check in at the numbering station on the beach. Numbers are written on your hand and upper arm. Swimmers will then proceed to the timing chip area where they will receive their chips.

Timing chips will be provided on race day on Peaks Island. Make sure to get there early enough to get your chip. Swimmers cannot start the race without a chip.

Swimmer Information

As a safety precaution, we will be counting all swimmers as they enter the water. Swimmers will be able to do their normal warmup; however, they must return to the beach and pass through the chute to be counted when their wave is called.

Please be aware of sharp oyster shells as you enter the water on Peaks Island. Our volunteers will work their best to clear the beach prior to the race, but shells may persist. Swimmers in past events have recommended using duct tape on your feet to avoid cutting them on shells.

There is a pipe in the water near the beach at Peaks Island which will be marked with a buoy. Please DO NOT swim near the buoy or the pipe.

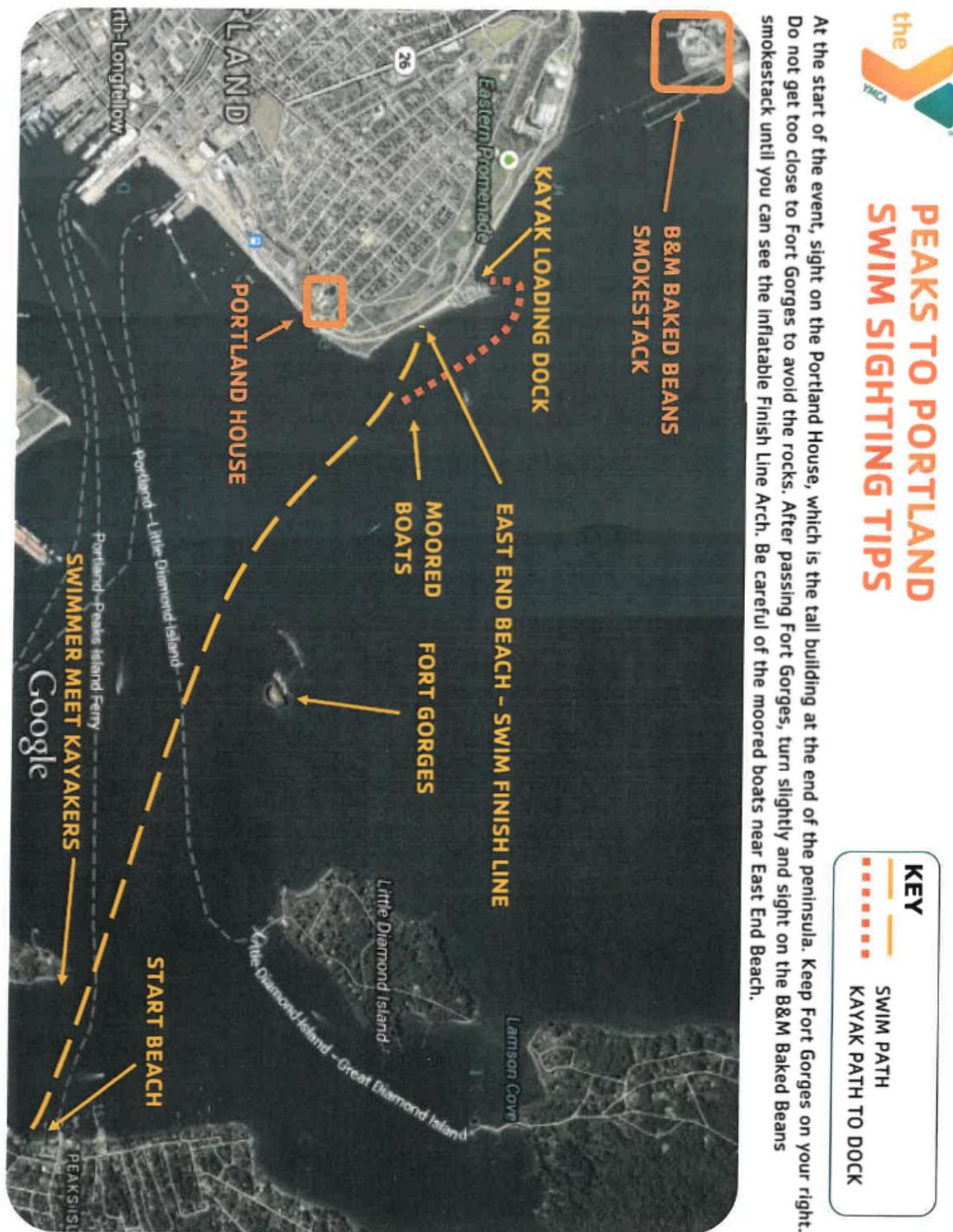
Swimming Directions

- Swim towards the large gold brick condominium tower in Portland and stay well to the left of Fort Gorges
- Once past Fort Gorges, turn and swim toward the old B&M Baked Beans building until you can see the finish line
- If you are in distress, swim to your kayaker. If you can't find your kayaker, please wave your hands and yell "help" if possible. A boat will get you.
- When approaching the finish line, keep the orange buoys to YOUR RIGHT
- Swimmers need to turn into the chute before the buoy
- After crossing the finish line, volunteers will help remove your timing chip
- Volunteers are able to assist with wetsuit removal if needed

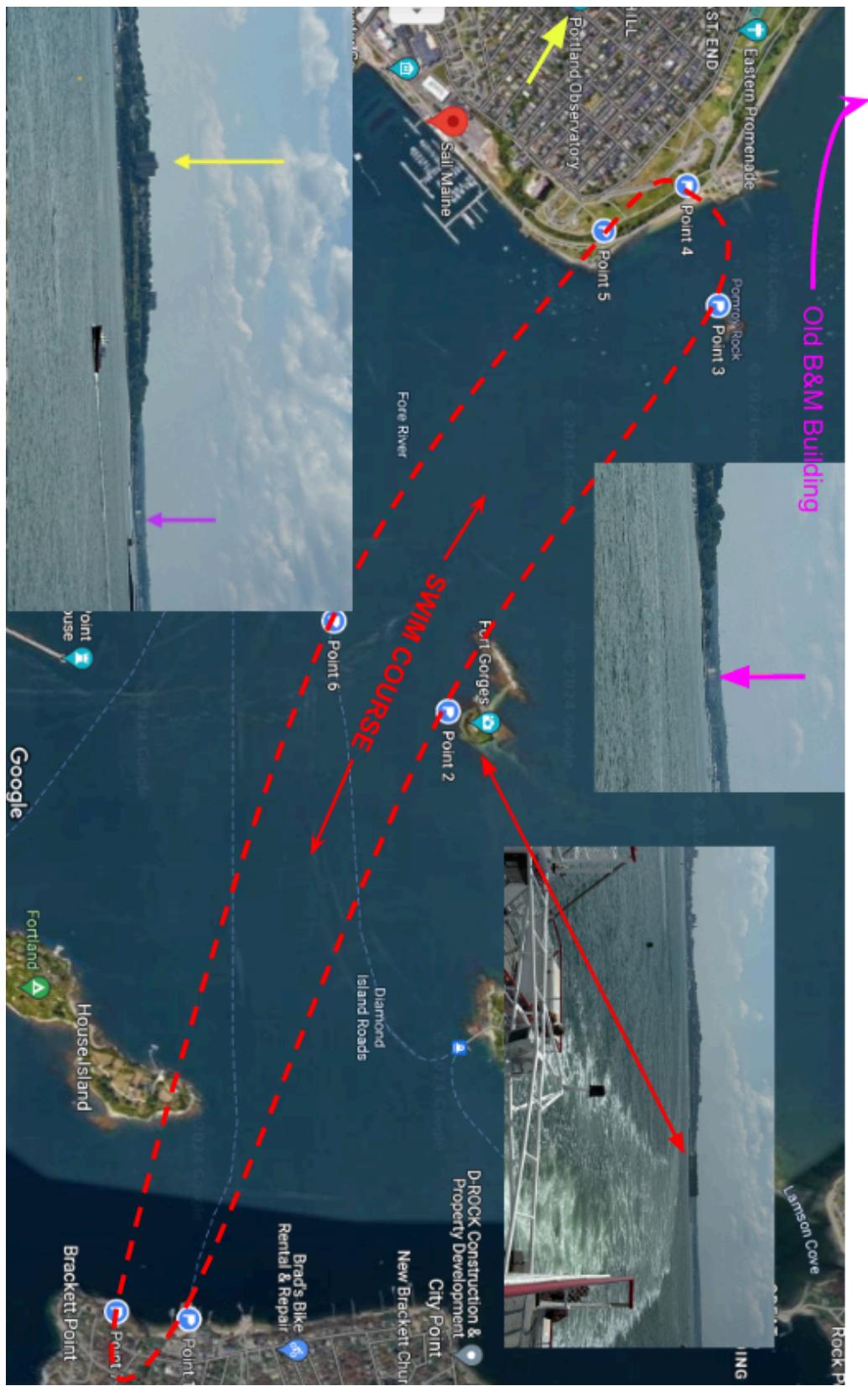
Swimmer Rules

- Swimmers must wear their official swim cap
- Swimmers may wear a wetsuit during the event
- Swimmers must check in at Peaks Island upon arrival (See Check-In and Numbering and Timing Chips sections above)
- The race will depart peaks island in five heats
- Due to tide conditions, swimmers still in the water two hours after the start of the last heat will be picked up and transported to East End Beach via rescue boats
- Swimmers must pass through the race chip chute on Peaks Island (start) and East End Beach (finish) to ensure accurate timing
- Swim safely and be courteous to the other swimmers
- Swimmers are not permitted to touch the kayak/boat, paddle/oars, rower, or spotter while their craft is in motion (i.e. holding on to rest, eat, drink, etc. is acceptable as long as the kayak is not moving)
- If you need water, your kayaker can pass it to you
- Swimmers who “draft” behind any boat will be disqualified
- If a swimmer gets too cold, tired, or does not feel they can continue the swim, have your kayaker signal for help. If no kayaker is with you, waive your hands, verbally yell “HELP” for assistance, and swim towards a rescue boat if possible
- Please remain in the finish line chute until your finishing time and race numbers have been recorded
- Please ask friends and family to stay out of the chute! This area MUST stay clear for EMT assessment of swimmers

Course Map



Sighting Map



Kayakers

All boats must have the following items:

- Whistle
- Flag – will be provided to your swimmer at packet pickup
- Wooden dowel or equivalent to attach flag to kayak & duct tape or rope
- Two (2) Type III Personal Flotation Devices (life jackets) for boater and swimmer
- Kayaker must be wearing their flotation device at all times

Additional kayaker information:

- At 8:08am all kayakers must begin to leave the beach and kayak toward House Island
- At House Island, kayakers will line up in order of heat assignment, Heat 1 being first
- **DO** line up in order of heats, talk to your fellow kayakers and be courteous of each other's space, kayak flag colors match their swimmers' heat swim cap colors
- **DO NOT** cut across the swim path to find your swimmer, the chaos of kayakers clogging up the swim lane can confuse and disorient swimmers
- **DO NOT** land on House Island, it is a private island and anyone who goes ashore could be charged with trespassing
- A race official will announce the start of each kayaker heat, **DO NOT** start until your heat has been called
- Kayakers must not paddle to their swimmer, swimmers must paddle to their kayaker. Failure to obey this rule could result in serious injury of swimmers
- You may store nutrition and water for your swimmer in your kayak
- **DO** bring all of your swimmer's belongings to East End Beach from Peaks Island
- Your swimmer may rest beside you, but you can make no forward motion while the swimmer is resting
- At the finish, guide your swimmer to the finish chute, then leave them to swim into shore on their own. Paddle your kayak around the bend to the right to unload at the far boat ramp. Volunteers will be waiting to assist you and your kayak out of the water.
- **DO NOT** unload your kayak at East End Beach!

Kayak Safety Signals

- **Voluntary Assistance:** Give lifejacket to swimmer, hold paddle in the air, and signal with one long whistle blow.
- **Swimmer in Distress:** Give lifejacket to swimmer, wave paddle in the air, and signal with three short whistle blows. Continue blowing your whistle in multiples of three until a safety boat acknowledges. **DO NOT** attempt to go in after a swimmer!
- If your swimmer has any signs of hypothermia, please use the Swimmer in Distress signal. Symptoms include: uncontrollable shivering, numbness in extremities, confusion, and extreme fatigue

Swimmers Without Kayakers

There will be a boat available for swimmers without kayakers to bring personal belongings to East End Beach. If you are dropping a bag at Peaks Island, **DO NOT FORGET** to mark your bag. All items will be transported to the grassy area by the bath house at East End Beach where you will be able to gather them. Please keep all your belongings together in one bag that is easily identifiable. All bags will be transported after the final heat departs the island.

Kayaker Lineup Map



Spotting Your Person

It is very difficult for swimmers to see their kayakers and kayakers to find their swimmers during the initial rush into the water and beginning of the race. Please have a plan to spot your kayaker! Here are some useful tips from past participants:

- Swimmers put colorful tape on their arm, back, or swim cap for their kayaker to see
- Kayakers wear wild hats to be noticeable
- Kayakers tie inflatable balloons to your kayak to be noticeable

Tips and Tricks

- Wearing your bathing suit (and wetsuit) to Peaks Island can make your trip over easier
- Go for a short swim after check-in, to help warm up and burn off nervous energy
- Let your kayaker be your guide, their vantage point will allow you to continue swimming instead of constantly stopping to look around and get your bearings
- Have your kayaker bring fresh water with them in case you need it
- Prepare for chafing! If you are not used to wearing a wetsuit, chafing typically occurs in the neck and armpit areas.
- Mind the current at Fort Gorges! While you will not get injured, getting stuck in the currents around the fort can really tire you out.
- Mind the current at East End Beach! Getting stuck in the current so close to the finish line will absolutely gas you. Swim as long as you can until your hands are touching the sand before trying to stand and run out of the water.

Medical Staff

There will be two Emergency Medical Technicians stationed at East End Beach. There will be lifeguards at the start, on boats, and finish of the event for safety. If you request to come out of the water, you will be brought to shore either at East End Beach or Sail Maine (depending on which side of the course you are on). Please turn in your timing chip aboard a rescue boat.

Event Hazards

This event is the YMCA of Southern Maine's largest annual fundraiser first, and a race second.

Should inclement weather arise, the Harbormaster and US Coast Guard will decide if the event can proceed or must be canceled. The YMCA of Southern Maine does not have a say in this matter.

During the event, if the weather becomes hazardous, the event may be called off and motorized rescue boats would be notified to pick up swimmers. There is no rain date for this event.

The safety of our swimmers is our top priority. Shark sightings in the area are actively monitored and we work closely with the Portland Harbormaster and the Coast Guard to monitor the situation. Both agencies are providing expert guidance to ensure optimal race conditions. In the unlikely event of heightened shark activity leading up to the Peaks to Portland swim, we would prioritize swimmer safety and cancel the event. We'll keep you updated on any developments as we progress closer to the day of our event.

Parking Plan

There is no free parking available at Casco Bay Lines; however, there are several paid parking options in the vicinity. Where possible, please carpool with others and/or arrange drop off and pickup. Parking at East End Beach is expected to fill and once full, street parking is the only remaining option. Please park as much as practicable in the following areas:

1. Street Parking
2. Road Parking
3. Upper Lot
4. Lower Lot



East End Beach Land Map



Peaks Island Land Map

