



Dear USA Hockey members and parents,

We have made some important updates to the USA Hockey SafeSport Program and this correspondence outlines how they affect you as a member of USA Hockey. We understand this letter contains a lot of information, but communicating this information to you is part of USA Hockey's obligation as the national governing body for the sport of ice hockey in the United States. Please take the time to review all information below. We thank you in advance for your time, and for your support and dedication to the safety of participants in USA Hockey programs.

As the national governing body designated by the United States Olympic Committee for the sport of ice hockey, USA Hockey, including all of its "Participants" (described more fully below), is subject to the jurisdiction of the Center for SafeSport. The Center for SafeSport is an independent non-profit organization committed to ending all forms of abuse in sport, including bullying, harassment, hazing, physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual misconduct and abuse (more information about the Center for SafeSport can be found at [www.safesport.org](http://www.safesport.org)). The Center has two primary functions:

- It is an office for education and outreach, which develops training, oversight practices, policies and procedures to prevent abuse (the SafeSport Training required to be taken by USA Hockey participants is produced by the Center for SafeSport); and
- It is an office for response and resolution that establishes mechanisms to report, investigate and resolve allegations of misconduct (the Center has exclusive authority over allegations involving sexual misconduct, and discretionary authority over other forms of misconduct, including bullying, harassment, physical and emotional abuse).

USA Hockey enacted its SafeSport Program in 2012 by compiling and updating its longstanding policies prohibiting sexual and physical misconduct and hazing, for background screening and locker room monitoring, and our codes of conduct for coaches, officials and administrators, into a comprehensive program aimed at eliminating misconduct and abuse in USA Hockey programs.

The new updates to USA Hockey's SafeSport Program arise from federal law (the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017), which created the authority and requirement for the Center for SafeSport to enact policies to protect minors from abuse in sport. The policies adopted by the Center for SafeSport are known as the Minor Athlete Abuse Protection Policies ("MAAPP Policies"), and are required to be adopted by the national governing body of each sport. USA Hockey has incorporated the MAAPP Policies, as well as changes by the Center to its SafeSport Code, into the USA Hockey SafeSport Program Handbook, a copy of which you can find here [LINK]. For your reference, copies of the Center's MAAPP Policies and the Center's Safesport Code can be found at <https://www.safesport.org/policies-procedures>.

Among the important changes to the USA Hockey SafeSport Program are:

1. *SafeSport Jurisdiction*. The rules and provisions from the SafeSport Code and USA Hockey SafeSport Program apply to persons within USA Hockey defined as "*Participants*." Participants include any person who is seeking to be, currently is, or was at the time of an alleged violation:
  - a. Registered with USA Hockey as a Registered Participant Member (players and coaches), Referee, or in the Manager/ Volunteer category;

- b. Serving as a member of USA Hockey's Board of Directors, on a national level council, committee or section, or in any other similar positions appointed by USA Hockey;
  - c. A coach, official or staff person (e.g., trainers, physicians, equipment managers) for any USA Hockey team, camp or national level program;
  - d. An employee of USA Hockey, a USA Hockey Affiliate or Member Program; and
  - e. Authorized, elected or appointed by USA Hockey, a USA Hockey Affiliate or Member Program to a position of authority over minor athletes or to have regular contact with minor athletes (even if not registered with USA Hockey).
2. Mandatory Reporting by Participants. All Participants defined above are required by the SafeSport Code and by law to report actual or suspected sexual misconduct or child abuse to the Center for SafeSport and, when appropriate, to applicable law enforcement. The Center will have exclusive jurisdiction for the investigation and resolution of such reports related to a person's eligibility for USA Hockey programs. USA Hockey retains the authority to investigate and resolve allegations of SafeSport policies that are non-sexual in nature. Information on how to make a report to the Center for SafeSport and/or USA Hockey can be found at <https://www.usahockey.com/makingareport>.
3. SafeSport Training. There are several changes to the SafeSport Training requirements, as required by federal law and the Center for SafeSport:
  - a. SafeSport Training is required for all adults that have regular contact with minors which, as explained more fully below, includes adult-aged players on the same team with minor athletes.
  - b. Beginning this season, SafeSport is required every year rather than every other year (however, anyone who completed training in the most recent season (2018-19) will retain valid training status for 2019-20, and will complete training annually beginning in 2020-21).
  - c. A person must first take the course known as "Core Center for SafeSport Training," which is taken online and takes approximately 90 – 120 minutes to complete. After that a "Refresher Course" is available each subsequent year for a person that has completed the Core Center for SafeSport Training. The Refresher Course takes 30 minutes or less to complete. There is no cost to members of USA Hockey to complete either training course.
  - d. Training must be completed before a person begins having regular contact with minor athletes, or if they do not have regular contact with minors, no more than 45 days after beginning the role that requires them to complete training.
4. Training for Players Seventeen (17) and Over in Age Classifications that Allow Minor Age Players. To ensure that all adult-age players on the same team with minor athletes comply with the law, (i) all players 17 years of age or older on or before December 31 of that playing season, and (ii) who play on a team in a classification that allows minor-age players, must complete SafeSport Training before being added to such team and prior to participation (on-ice or off-ice). This requirement applies to all teams in the age classifications Youth, Girls, High School, Junior Hockey, Flex Hockey and Disabled Hockey programs that allow both minor-age and adult-age players, and to officials who are turning 17 before December 31. Players and officials that complete the training prior to turning 18 will be required to provide parental consent.

5. *Youth Athlete Training*. Shortly after its release by the Center for SafeSport, USA Hockey will be offering age-specific SafeSport Training to youth athletes. USA Hockey will notify all parents of the availability of the training, and how to access and take the training. Accessing the youth athlete training will be subject to parental consent on the Center for SafeSport website. Youth athlete training will not be required for participation but is strongly recommended.
6. *Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies*. USA Hockey has had longstanding Locker Room, Social Media & Electronic Communications, and Travel policies. To incorporate the Center's required MAAPP policies, USA Hockey has adopted updates to those policies, and has also adopted new policies addressing One-On-One Interactions and Athletic Training Modalities. Information on these policies can be found in the [USA Hockey SafeSport Program Handbook](#).
7. *One-On-One Interactions*. The One-On-One Interactions Policy specifically *prohibits one-on-one interactions* between adult members of USA Hockey or those authorized by a USA Hockey program to have regular contact with or authority over minors, unless they occur at an *observable and interruptible distance by another adult*. There are exceptions for emergency circumstances.
8. *Background Checks*. The current changes to the SafeSport Handbook do *not* include changes to USA Hockey's background check policy. However, we anticipate updates to the background check policy that will come into effect for the 2020-21 season.
9. *Communication of Changes*. We will be communicating more specific information to groups affected by these changes, including local programs, coaches, officials, players 17-20 years of age, and parents of youth athletes, so please stay tuned for more information in the coming days.

Thank you again for all of your efforts in support of the safety of participants in USA Hockey programs.