

SAFESPORT FAQs
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What does it mean to be SafeSport compliant?

All Coach, +Coach and +CheckEd members with USA Fencing are required to complete a *background screen* through USA Fencing and to complete the online *SafeSport training course* (90-minute online abuse prevention course) in order to meet the SafeSport Policy requirements.

Coach, +Coach and +CheckEd members who have not completed the background screen or the SafeSport training Course prior to expiration will have their membership reverted away from Coach, +Coach or +CheckEd.

Who must complete the online SafeSport course and how often?

The following persons must complete the SafeSport course: (1) All USA Fencing directors, staff members, division officers, committee/task force members and national team staff; (2) Officials and volunteers at all USA Fencing sanctioned events who have direct access to minors participating in such events. This includes persons who interact directly and frequently with athletes as part of their duties, e.g., event administrators, referees, bout committee members, armorers and vendors. (3) All Affiliate and Member Club coaches, independent contractors, owners, board of director members and administrators.

USA Fencing is managing the SafeSport course process through the membership types of Coach, +Coach and +CheckEd. The +CheckEd membership can be added to the membership and must be purchased annually. The SafeSport training is valid for two years.

Who must complete the background screen process and how often?

The following persons must complete the background screen process: (1) All USA Fencing directors, staff members, division officers, committee/task force members and national team staff; (2) Officials and volunteers at all USA Fencing sanctioned events who have direct access to minors participating in such events. This includes persons who interact directly and frequently with athletes as part of their duties, e.g., event administrators, referees, bout committee members, armorers and vendors (3) All Affiliate and Member Club coaches, independent contractors, owners, board of director members and administrators.

USA Fencing is managing the background screen process through the membership types of Coach, +Coach and +CheckEd. The +CheckEd membership can be added to any membership type and must be purchased annually. These membership types include the cost of the background screen. The screening process typically takes 3-10 working days and results will automatically upload to the member's profile. The background screen is valid for two years.

How do I complete the SafeSport training?

After completing the process to become a Coach, +Coach or +CheckEd member, please follow the steps below:

- a. Log in to your USA Fencing profile.
- b. Under “My Membership,” scroll down to SafeSport Clearance.
- c. Click on the link “Visit our SafeSport page to watch the online training.”
- d. The link will take you directly to the SafeSport Course website where you can complete the course. Course completion will be automatically uploaded into your member profile within a day.
- e. Note that the course consists of three separate modules, each of which must be completed to complete the online training.

How do I complete a background screen?

After completing the process to become a Coach, +Coach or +CheckEd member, please follow the steps below:

- a. Log in to your USA Fencing profile.
- b. Under “My Membership” scroll down to Background Check.
- c. Click on the link “Start your Background screen.”
- d. The link will take you directly to the NCSI website where you can complete the screening information.
- e. When the screen is complete (typically 3-10 working days), Green Light screens will report directly back to your profile with an expiration date and will change your membership type from (pending) to Coach/+Coach/+CheckED (Note: a Red Light screen could be a function of not having submitted all the required documents so be sure to complete the entire application).

Why was the SafeSport Policy adopted?

In 2012, the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement launched the SafeSport program to improve athlete safety across the U.S. Olympic Committee’s (USOC) 47 sport National Governing Bodies (NGBs). Since its adoption, the program has provided education and prevention resources related to emotional, physical and sexual misconduct, bullying, hazing and harassment. To further the mission of SafeSport and provide even more comprehensive services, in 2017, the U.S. Center for SafeSport opened. The Center is the first and only national organization of its kind focused on ending all forms of abuse in sport while carrying out its mission of making athlete well-being the centerpiece of our nation’s sports culture through abuse prevention, education and accountability. As an independent non-profit headquartered in Denver, Colorado, the Center provides services to sport entities on abuse prevention techniques, policies and programs. The Center also provides a safe, professional and confidential place for individuals to report sexual abuse within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movements (see website: <https://www.safesport.org/>).

USA Fencing, along with other leading youth sports groups, National Governing Bodies and the U.S. Olympic Committee, is committed to taking a proactive, multi-faceted approach to creating a positive and safe environment for all of our athletes.

What types of misconduct are reportable offenses under the SafeSport Policy?

The six primary types of misconduct that are reportable under the USA Fencing SafeSport Policy include: sexual misconduct, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, bullying, harassment and hazing.

Additional policies are included in the SafeSport Policy to help reduce the risk of potential abuse and are considered reportable offenses if violated. These policies include: Travel Policy, Lesson and Practice Policy, Medical Treatment Policy, and Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy.

What do I do if I suspect a SafeSport Policy violation?

USA Fencing recognizes it can be difficult for an athlete, teammate, friend or family member to allege misconduct and strives to remove as many barriers to reporting as possible. You may remain anonymous if you wish.

All potential sexual misconduct or abuse violations must be reported to the U.S. Center for SafeSport – Response and Resolution Office. The Response & Resolution Office has the **exclusive authority** to investigate and resolve possible violations of the *SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement* by covered individuals that involve **sexual misconduct**. If USA Fencing receives a SafeSport report that alleges any type of sexual misconduct, the report will be immediately turned over to the U.S. Center for SafeSport – Response and Resolution office.

All other potential SafeSport Policy violations, including emotional and physical misconduct, harassment, hazing, and bullying and proactive policies, should be directed to USA Fencing SafeSport. The reporting form can be found on the USA Fencing website at <http://www.usafencing.org/safe-sport>. You may also call the USA Fencing SafeSport Coordinator (719-866-2616) to file a report. USA Fencing requires reporting of physical, sexual or other misconduct by any member and strongly encourages reporting of any concerns relating to SafeSport. USA Fencing appreciates your willingness to report inappropriate behavior.

How will USA Fencing respond to SafeSport reports?

Reports that allege sexual misconduct will be immediately turned over to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

If the SafeSport allegations do not include sexual misconduct, Section VII of the USA Fencing SafeSport Policy addresses the organization's response to violations. As appropriate, and at its discretion, USA Fencing may institute a formal investigation and hearing procedure to address serious allegations of misconduct (e.g., physical misconduct). However, USA Fencing anticipates that an investigation and hearing will be undertaken to address only the most serious allegations and patterns of behavior that warrant significant sanctions. Accordingly, USA Fencing anticipates that this disciplinary procedure will be used rarely.

If a report is received that alleges serious misconduct or policy violation, the SafeSport Coordinator can review and recommend to the Executive Director, in consultation with the General Counsel, to call for a Disciplinary Panel with approval from the board of directors.

Why is the Travel Policy a part of the SafeSport Policy?

During travel, athletes may be away from their families and support networks, and the setting is less structured and less familiar. Athletes may be more vulnerable to abuse or misconduct during travel, particularly overnight stays. The Travel Policy provides guidelines so that care is taken to ensure the athlete is safe and supported and to minimize one-on-one interactions between minors and adults while traveling.

Why is the Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy in place?

USA Fencing understands the need for effective communication between coaches and athletes. However, the improper use of mobile and electronic communications can result in misconduct or the appearance of misconduct. Adherence to the Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy helps reduce those risks.

Are there SafeSport education material or information provided to the membership?

Yes, USA Fencing developed educational materials and training seminars. New material and additional resources for coaches, parents, club owners and athletes are regularly being added to the SafeSport section of the www.usafencing.org web page.

How will divisions and local clubs be involved with SafeSport?

Divisions and local clubs interact more frequently and more directly with coaches, athletes and parents. Therefore, USA Fencing will be asking divisions and clubs to take a larger role in promoting and administering the program in the future, including having SafeSport discussions with athletes, providing SafeSport educational materials and resources to athletes, coaches and parents, and creating and supporting educational opportunities.

What company does USA Fencing utilize for the background screens and how are the screens conducted?

USA Fencing has a contract with the National Center for Safety Initiatives (<http://www.ncsisafe.com>) to serve as the background screen provider for the organization.

NCSI searches the following databases in order to obtain information:

- a. Two independent national databases
- b. Sex offender registries of all available states
- c. Social Security number and address verification
- d. OFAC Database Search - Office of Foreign Assets Control
- e. Real Time County Records Search: 1 in 5; current or longest/most recent county of residence in the past five years.

Is a credit check completed when processing the background screen?

No, a credit check is not completed on anyone going through the background screening process.

What criminal offenses does the criminal background check look for?

USA Fencing currently uses the following criteria: Automatic Disqualifiers (Red Light): Convictions of, disclosure of convictions of, and pending dispositions for any of the following crimes will prompt a determination that an applicant does not meet the criminal background screening criteria and a red light determination will be issued:

- a. Any felony (any crime punishable by confinement greater than one year)
 - i. Defined on the basis of the offense for which the defendant was convicted, pled guilty, or pled nolo contendere. If pled down, then the crime to which the defendant ultimately pled.
 - ii. Defined as any crime punishable by greater than one year in jail or prison, regardless of how characterized by jurisdiction. If range, alternate sentencing, or indeterminate sentencing, outer range > one year.
- b. Any lesser crime involving force or threat of force against a person
- c. Any lesser crime in which sexual relations are an element, including "victimless" crimes of a sexual nature (including pornography)
- d. Any lesser crime involving controlled substances (not paraphernalia or alcohol)
- e. Any crime involving cruelty to animals
- f. Any Sex Offender Registrant
- g. Any lesser crime involving harm to a minor

Can I submit a background screen from another source?

No, NCSI is the only background screen accepted by USA Fencing. While USA Fencing respects the background check policies of other organizations, we cannot as a matter of policy accept background checks from other agencies. Any one exception would mean we would have to accept checks from a variety of organizations, thus diluting the consistency and value of the NCSI system.

Are minors who coach, referee or volunteer required to have a background screen or SafeSport training?

No, individuals under the age of eighteen (18) are not required to complete a background screen or SafeSport training. This applies to minors who are acting as coaches, officials, volunteers or other roles that would otherwise be included in the background screen and SafeSport training.

If I am a referee or another type of volunteer, do I have to add +CheckEd or +Coach to my membership every year?

Yes, you will need to add the +CheckEd/ +Coach membership add-on every year, but you only need to renew your background screen and SafeSport training every two years.

Can a non-citizen of the United States without a Social Security Number complete the background check requirement?

Yes, please contact the National Office, information@usafencing.org, as you will need a USA Fencing registration number to initiate an international background screen. The cost of completing a foreign background screen will vary.

Are foreign guest coaches, referees or referees training at events required to have a background check and SafeSport training?

The SafeSport background screen and SafeSport Training Policy applies to all coaches and referees participating in USA Fencing sanctioned events or activities, including guest coaches and foreign referees. The background screen and SafeSport Training Policy also applies to referees in training at USA Fencing sanctioned tournaments.

I am a foreign tournament official and have Global Entry, NEXUS, SENTRI or equivalent status. Do I still need to complete a background screen?

Foreign officials who have Global Entry or an equivalent status do not need to submit a background screen if appropriate documentation (a copy of their Global Entry/NEXUS/SENTRI identification) is on file at the National Office.

As a tournament organizer, how can I find a complete listing of SafeSport members?

The list of individuals who have a current background screen, current online SafeSport training and are Coach, +CheckEd or +Coach members can be found on the following page:

<http://www.usafencing.org/current-member-list>.

Our college club is a USA Fencing Affiliate Club and does not work with minors. Are we required to have the club contact or coach successfully pass SafeSport training and background screen?

Yes, the SafeSport Policy covers all athletes and participants; therefore, all clubs and coaches affiliated with USA Fencing must adhere to the SafeSport policies. All Affiliate Clubs, including those associated with a collage or university, are required to have a head coach that is an active Coach member

Is “self-refing” at local tournaments allowed without background screens?

Members who are over 18 and “self-refing” in an open tournament are not required to be Coach or +CheckEd members, or have SafeSport training and a background screen.

My club contracts with a company to provide athletic trainers for events. If the company has already screened the trainer, can the individual work at a sanctioned event?

Yes, as long as the screen is current (within the last two years) and the club has documentation of the current screen on file.