

USATM
LACROSSE



ATHLETE PROTECTION AND
SAFETY POLICY

JULY 2023

I. OVERVIEW

A. INTRODUCTION AND APPLICATION

A paramount principle of USA Lacrosse is ensuring that all athletes and participants are provided with the opportunity for safe and fun lacrosse. USA Lacrosse's commitment to providing a positive environment that is free of misconduct and abuse is exemplified in the Athlete Protection and Safety Program, a part of the USA Lacrosse Center for Sports Science & Safety.

The following policy sets forth standards and responsibilities which apply to and should be followed by all USA Lacrosse members as well as the broader lacrosse community. This document is not intended to and does not take precedent over the Protecting Youth Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017, any applicable employment policies, or federal or state law. This policy also does not cover on-field conduct that is governed by the rules of play.

All USA Lacrosse members are responsible for familiarizing themselves with this policy and conducting themselves in a manner that is representative of USA Lacrosse's mission and values. As a condition of becoming a member, or renewing USAL membership, members agree to abide by this Athlete Protection & Safety Policy and the processes outlined below. This policy may be modified at the discretion of USA Lacrosse, without notice.

II. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

For the purposes of this policy, USA Lacrosse has defined all reports of misconduct into one of three categories: non-criminal, criminal, and extraordinary circumstances. If the criminal misconduct involves a minor, any individual under the age of 18 years, the allegations **MUST** be reported to the necessary local authorities **IMMEDIATELY**. For assistance in locating who to report to, go to: [Home - Child Welfare Information Gateway](#) .

B. NON-CRIMINAL MISCONDUCT

What is non-criminal misconduct?

Non-criminal misconduct is defined as behavior or actions which according to the law of the appropriate jurisdiction does not rise to the level of a crime in the respective jurisdiction authorities.

What are some examples of non-criminal misconduct?

- Team Selection
- Playing Time
- Parent/Coach/Official Disagreements



- Adult Administrator/Board Member Disagreements

What are examples of who non-criminal misconduct should get reported to?

- Head Coach/Assistant Coach
- Program Leader/Director
- Athletic Director/School Administrator
- Local Board
- League Board/Administration
- Statewide Organization

What will USA Lacrosse do with reports of non-criminal misconduct?

USA Lacrosse will NOT investigate any allegations of non-criminal misconduct on a local level, unless it is deemed to meet an extraordinary circumstance at the discretion of USA Lacrosse as defined below. Non-criminal misconduct should be reported to the respective local lacrosse organization for resolution as listed above.

C. CRIMINAL MISCONDUCT

What is criminal misconduct?

Criminal misconduct is defined as any behavior(s) or action(s) which violate the laws of the appropriate jurisdiction said action has taken place. As state-by-state laws vary, so actions defined as criminal misconduct also vary. If making a report to USAL regarding criminal activity involving a minor, immediately report to the necessary child protective services and law enforcement agency as well. For help locating a Child Advocacy Center who can aid in the reporting process, visit [USAL's Child Advocacy Center Map](#). All criminal misconduct should be reported to USA Lacrosse immediately, via the Reporting Process described below.

What are examples of criminal misconduct?

Child Abuse and Neglect

Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent, caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm. This also includes other conduct prohibited by applicable local and state law.

Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any minor to engage in or assist any other person in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; or the rape, and in cases of a caretaker or interfamilial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of minors or incest with minors.

Sexual Misconduct



Any contact or non-contact sexual interaction that is either non-consensual; is forced, coerced, or manipulated: or is perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative, or threatening manner. It also includes any act or conduct prohibited under federal or applicable state law (e.g. sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or rape.)

Sexual Contact with a Minor

Touching, slapping, or otherwise contacting the buttocks or genitals; intentional exposure of private areas, including the unintentional or intentional exposure of breasts, buttocks, groin, genitals, or coercion of another to do so to an adult where there is a power imbalance, or to a minor.

Physical Abuse and Misconduct

Any intentional act causing injury or trauma to another person or animal by way of bodily contact. Including but not limited to assault, battery, domestic violence, or child physical abuse.

Failure to Report

Any individual deemed a Mandated Reporter by the Protecting Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017, are required to report any suspected or alleged child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse, to the appropriate authorities (both law enforcement and child protective services) immediately. Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect can result in civil liability or criminal charges.

D. EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

In the event a report is received by USA Lacrosse and is deemed to include extraordinary circumstances, as solely determined by USA Lacrosse, then USA Lacrosse, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to investigate and impose necessary sanctions should they be deemed needed. Should USA Lacrosse determine they will not investigate, the individual submitting the initial report will be directed to contact their local lacrosse organization for resolution.

What are examples of extraordinary circumstances?

Bullying

Repeated and/or severe behavior that is aggressive, directed at a minor, and intended or likely to hurt, control, or diminish the minor emotionally, physically, or sexually. Bullying behavior may include, without limitation, physical, verbal, and sexual conduct, the use of social media or cyber bullying, acts of exclusion or shunning, etc.

Discrimination

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of ethnicity, age, sex, or disability.

Emotional Abuse and Misconduct

A pattern or deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm. Non-contact behavior includes verbal and physical acts that deny attention or support. Verbal behaviors include personal attacks or repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular participant or participants in a manner that serves no productive motivational purpose while physical behaviors can include throwing sports equipment, chairs, or other items at or near participants, or punching walls, windows, or other objects. Emotional abuse can also include acts that deny attention or support, such as ignoring or isolating a participant for extended periods of time.

Harassment

Repeated and/or severe conduct that causes fear, humiliation, or annoyance, offends or degrades, creates a hostile environment, or discriminates against an individual or group based on age, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, natural origin, mental or physical disability, etc. Whether conduct is deemed as harassment or not depends on that totality of the circumstances, including nature, frequency, intensity, location, context, and duration of the behavior.

Hazing

Any physical, mental, emotional, or psychological conduct that endangers, abuses, humiliates, degrades, or intimidates another individual as a conditioning of joining or being accepted by a group, team, or organization. Consent is not a defense to Hazing, regardless of the person's perceived willingness to cooperate or participate.

**Bullying, Harassment, and Hazing behaviors do not include professionally accepted coaching methods for skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved athlete performance. Concerns regarding these methods should be reported to the respective local lacrosse organization leader.*

To find additional solutions within your local lacrosse organization, including assistance with creating and implementing by-laws, anti-harassment and discrimination policies, or adhering to the Honor the Game Practices, contact your respective Regional Manager and/or Director. Find your representative here: [Regions | USA Lacrosse](#).

Racism

Discrimination and prejudice towards people based on their race or ethnicity. This can be present in but not limited to actions, practices, and verbiage used that support the expression of prejudice.

III. REPORTING PROCESS



USA Lacrosse has a standard process to submit misconduct reports. If an individual believes the allegation is appropriate to report to USA Lacrosse, based on the information in this policy, the report can be submitted by completing the online [Misconduct Report](#).

To maintain privacy, information reported will only be shared with the appropriate USA Lacrosse Staff, retained outside counsel, and the appropriate authorities on an as needed basis. Information provided in a misconduct report will **NOT** be shared with any external parties unless otherwise noted.

Anonymous Reporting

Any persons reporting to USA Lacrosse retains the right to report anonymously. However, some contact information may be needed to further validate a claim or report. Please keep in mind that an anonymous report which warrants involvement from local authorities may need the reporter's name and contact information in order to investigate.

Making a False Report

Filing a knowingly false allegation that an individual engaged in misconduct is a violation of USA Lacrosse policy which may be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of USA Lacrosse. A false allegation, however, is different than an unsubstantiated allegation. An unsubstantiated allegation means there is insufficient supporting evidence to determine whether said allegation is true or false, but this type of report may still be made in good faith and is not a policy violation.

Retaliation

USA Lacrosse also prohibits retaliation against anyone for engaging in USA Lacrosse's Athlete Protection & Safety Program reporting process. Any member, individual acting on behalf of a member, or any other individual subject to this policy shall not take any adverse actions against a person for making a good faith report of possible Athlete Protection & Safety Policy violations. Retaliatory behavior includes, without limitation, threats, intimidation, harassment, or any other form of conduct that would discourage a person from engaging in or participating in USA Lacrosse's processes. Retaliation can be present even when there is a finding that no violation of USA Lacrosse policies occurred.

E. REPORTING PROCESS

Once a report is submitted to USA Lacrosse, the following steps will be taken:

1. A report of misconduct is received and reviewed by the Manager, Athlete Protection & Safety to determine if the report is non-criminal or criminal in nature.
2. If the report is about non-criminal misconduct, the reporter will be directed to contact the necessary party within their local lacrosse organization to resolve the matter.
3. If the report involves criminal misconduct, the Manager, Athlete Protection & Safety at USA Lacrosse will verify with the appropriate local authorities to ensure a report has been submitted.

- a. If a report to local authorities does not exist, and the misconduct reported to USA Lacrosse includes criminal misconduct, USA Lacrosse will act as the reporting source to the authorities within the appropriate jurisdiction. All employees of USA Lacrosse serve as Mandated Reporters who are required to report allegations of criminal misconduct involving a minor (under 18 years old).
4. Upon confirming or submitting a report with local authorities, USA Lacrosse will immediately suspend the membership, where applicable, to the defending party citing the reason for the suspension*.
 - a. If the offender is not a current, but a past USA Lacrosse member, a note will be added to their file, and if appropriate, purchasing access will be removed to prevent future activation of membership.
5. USA Lacrosse will also notify the appropriate program leader for the local lacrosse organization in which the defending party is a part of for their reference.
6. USA Lacrosse will work alongside necessary parties, without interference, to stay up-to-date on the status of any active criminal investigation, or active case within the criminal justice system, including court proceedings.

*It is important to keep in mind that not all individuals who may have committed a criminal act are active members of USA Lacrosse or a local lacrosse organization. Though there will be a record of past membership, an individual who does not have membership will not have the ability to face suspension. USA Lacrosse will NOT reveal the membership status of any participant associated with an allegation of misconduct.

IV. ATHLETE PROTECTION AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Members of USA Lacrosse agree to abide by this policy and must complete the two requirements of the Athlete Protection & Safety Policy: background screening and abuse prevention training. Failure to complete these requirements within the necessary timeframe of twenty (20) days from the purchase of membership will result in suspended membership until their completion.

These requirements are **MANDATORY** for individuals that are 18 and older within the following roles:

- a) Coach Members
- b) Certified Trainers, Assigners, and Officials Observers (ODP)
- c) National Team Athletes, Coaches, and Supporting Personnel
- d) National Team Development Program Coaches and Supporting Personnel
- e) USA Lacrosse Volunteers
- f) USA Lacrosse Chapter Leadership (President, Secretary, and Treasurer)
- g) USA Lacrosse Board Members, Committee Members, and Subcommittee Members



- h) Employees of USA Lacrosse
- i) Official Members (currently optional)

F. ABUSE PREVENTION TRAINING

Adult members who have regular contact with or authority over youth athletes must complete Abuse Prevention Training as offered within the USA Lacrosse E-Learning platform.

The course is designed to be a preventative step in protecting minor athletes by expressing the importance of limiting one-on-one interactions between adult and minors, educating members on identifying signs and symptoms of abuse, and preventing, responding to, and reporting misconduct. The certificate for this course is valid for two years from the date of completion.

G. BACKGROUND SCREENING

Background Screening with USA Lacrosse is performed by the National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI), one of the nation's leading background screening service providers. NCSI performs screening for all United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) sport governing bodies.

Background screening reports can take up to two weeks, especially in the event the screen includes internationally lived addresses. The cost for a domestic background screen is covered by USA Lacrosse. An international screen may require an additional cost to be paid for by the individual submitting. Each background screen will be valid for two years from the date of decision/results found by NCSI*. The basic components of the NCSI background screening are:

1. Identity verification
2. SSN validation with address and name history**
3. Two multi-jurisdictional, national criminal database searches covering all 50 states
4. Two national sex offender registries covering all 50 states
5. Various watch lists, fugitive, and terrorist database searches
6. Automatic re-check after one year of one national criminal database and sex offender registries (county search not included in automatic recheck)
7. County courthouse search (current or longest/most recent residency in past five years)
8. Federal Court and District Court search (National leadership and Chapter leadership roles only)
9. Motor Vehicle Records Searches (USA Lacrosse Employees only)

**As part of agreeing to background screening with NCSI, all members agree to an automatic re-check approximately one year after their original submission date. This re-check may result in a different result than originally determined and defined below.*

***USA Lacrosse nor NCSI allow any substitution for social security number (SSN) on background screening. NCSI is aligned with industry best practices regarding data security, including high*



level encryption to protect information submitted online. Internal security measures ensure that your personal information is only viewed as needed to process your screen by qualified personnel who are trained in handling confidential data. NCSI is PCI-compliant and does not share any personal information with third parties. Failure to verify your identity utilizing SSN will result in a failed background screen and subsequently suspended membership with USA Lacrosse.

H. CRITERION OFFENSES

Any individual submitting for a background screening shall truthfully and fully disclose in their USA Lacrosse application or renewal form all information regarding convictions, arrests, or pending investigations. The current USA Lacrosse background screening criterion offenses defined as a disposition or resolution of a criminal proceeding, other than an adjudication of not guilty, or the existence of pending charges, for any of the below criminal offenses:

1. Any felony; and
2. Any misdemeanor involving:
 - a. All sexual crimes, criminal offenses of a sexual nature to include but not limited to; rape, child molestation, sexual battery, lewd conduct, possession and distribution of child pornography, possession and distribution of obscene material, indecent exposure, public indecency, or potentially require registration as a sex offender;
 - b. Any drug related offenses;
 - c. Harm to a minor, included, but not limited to offenses such as child abandonment, endangerment, neglect, abuse, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, or DUI with a minor;
 - d. Violence against a person, force, or threat of force (including crimes involving deadly weapons, or domestic violence);
 - e. Stalking, harassment, blackmail, violation of a protection order, or threats;
 - f. Destruction of property, including arson, vandalism, and criminal mischief; or
 - g. Animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect.

I. BACKGROUND SCREENING RESULTS

Once a background screen is complete, the results will show one of two possible determinations: green-light or red-light.

Green-Light

The registrant has no criminal history found, nor an arrest/conviction for a non-criterion offense.

Red-Light

The registrant has a pending charge and/or conviction of a criterion offense discovered on their record.



For those individuals who received a red-light determination, their membership and all associated benefits will be immediately suspended. To have their membership status reconsidered, the individual will have the opportunity to file an appeal with USA Lacrosse detailed in section VK.

If the results of the criminal background screening are believed to be inaccurate by the registrant or member, they can dispute the claimed inaccuracy directly to NCSI by contacting the help line at support@ncsisafe.com.

V. SUSPENSION AND APPEALS

In the event of a substantiated claim of criminal misconduct or a red-light determination on background screening, the membership for that individual will be suspended immediately. USA Lacrosse reserves the right to suspend the membership of any individual in an extraordinary circumstance, or at any other time determined by USA Lacrosse.

J. RIGHT TO TERMINATE

In addition to suspensions of memberships, USA Lacrosse reserved the right to terminate membership or the ability to purchase membership in the future as necessary.

K. APPEALS PROCESS

If an individual's membership is currently in suspension, they have the right to submit an appeal for relief of suspension with USA Lacrosse's Misconduct and Appeals Review Subcommittee (MARS). Should the individual choose to file an appeal, USA Lacrosse will then take the following steps:

1. Once an individual has received notification of a suspended membership whether through USA Lacrosse or direct communication from NCSI, the individual will have twenty (20) days from the notification to submit an appeal.
2. The individual submitting an appeal will need to provide the following three documents:
 - a. A formal appeal letter including:
 - i. The context in which the offense occurred
 - ii. The basis upon which relief from the temporary suspension of membership should be given
 - b. Two (2) letters of recommendation. The letters must:
 - i. Be addressed to USA Lacrosse and dated within twenty (20) days of the issuance date on the notice you received informing you about the suspension;
 - ii. Be written by two (2) different members of your community (excluding family members)

- iii. Speak to your character as a person and coach/official (the writer should detail their relationship to you, how long they have known you and positive personal qualities you exhibit)
 - iv. Include contact information of the writer (name, signature, phone, email)
3. The individual will submit the three documents above to USA Lacrosse via the [Appeals Submission form](#).
4. These documents along with the original misconduct or background screen will be reviewed by the Misconduct and Appeals Review Subcommittee for review and decision on whether to accept or deny the appeal.
5. If the appeal is denied, the membership of the individual will remain in suspension.
6. If the appeal is accepted, the membership of the individual and all associated benefits will be reinstated as active.