SAFE SPORT POLICY HANDBOOK

Recognizing, Reducing, and Responding to Misconduct in Sport
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INTRODUCTION

There are numerous reasons to engage in equestrian sport at any level, from the beginner to the Olympic athlete. Equestrians share a love for the sport and a personal bond with the horse. People often engage in equestrian sport, whether in the role of an athlete, official, staff member, or other participant because of their love of horses and simply to have fun. In addition, equestrian sport encourages a healthy lifestyle and builds self-confidence.

Unfortunately, sport can also be a high-risk environment for misconduct. All forms of misconduct are both intolerable and in direct conflict with the United States Equestrian Federation’s Vision Statement:

*to continue to lead equestrian sport in the United States while ensuring fairness, safety and enjoyment for an ever growing number of people*

There are six primary types of misconduct covered in this Safe Sport Policy Handbook for the purpose of athlete protection:

- Emotional Misconduct
- Physical Misconduct
- Sexual Misconduct
- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing

Misconduct may damage an athlete’s psychological well-being. Athletes who have been mistreated may experience social embarrassment, emotional turmoil, psychological scars, loss of self-esteem, and negatively affected relationships with family and friends. Misconduct often hurts an athlete’s competitive performance and may cause him or her to drop out of sport entirely.

Any inquiries about the policies contained in this Safe Sport Policy Handbook should be directed to safesport@usef.org or you can contact one of the following individuals on the Athlete Protection Team:

Sonja S. Keating, General Counsel
skeating@usef.org | 859 225 2045

Sarah Gilbert
sgilbert@usef.org | 859 225 2022

Emily Pratt
epratt@usef.org | 859 225 6956
DEFINITIONS

This section defines key words and concepts used throughout this Safe Sport Policy Handbook. The definitions set forth are intended to be universal in nature; however, some definitions vary by state. For example, the legal definition of child abuse is determined by each individual state. Guidelines concerning specific states may be found by visiting the Child Welfare Information Gateway at www.childwelfare.gov.

**ATHLETE:** Any rider, driver, handler, vaulter, or longeur who participates in any USEF licensed competition or USEF sanctioned event.

**CHILD, CHILDREN, MINOR, AND YOUTH:** Anyone under the age of 18. The terms child, children, minor, and youth are used interchangeably throughout these policies.

**COACH:** Any adult who has or shares the responsibility for instructing, teaching, schooling, training, or advising an athlete or horse in the context of equestrian sport. The terms coach and trainer are used interchangeably throughout these policies.

**MISCONDUCT:** Conduct that results in harm, the potential for harm, or the imminent threat of harm. Age is irrelevant to misconduct. There are six primary types of misconduct in sport: emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, sexual misconduct, harassment, hazing, and bullying.

**USEF DESIGNEE:** USEF staff, USEF Licensed Officials, USEF Board Members, or any individual that USEF formally authorizes, approves, or appoints (a) to a position of authority over, or (b) to have frequent contact with any athlete as defined above.

**USEF PARTICIPANT:** Any USEF Member, or any other individual, required to sign an entry blank in connection with a USEF licensed competition or sanctioned event.
POLICY 1: ATHLETE PROTECTION POLICY

COMMITMENT TO SAFETY OVERVIEW
In the event that any USEF Designee either (a) observes misconduct as defined in this Safe Sport Policy Handbook, or (b) receives a report containing allegations of misconduct as defined in this Safe Sport Policy Handbook, it is the personal responsibility of the individual to immediately report this to safesport@usef.org or you can contact one of the following individuals on the Athlete Protection Team:

Sonja S. Keating, General Counsel
skeating@usef.org | 859 225 2045

Sarah Gilbert
sgilbert@usef.org | 859 225 2022

Emily Pratt
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No one should attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of any misconduct allegations as a condition for reporting to USEF. When potential criminal behavior has been reported to USEF, USEF shall report such allegation(s) to law enforcement authorities. Complaints and allegations will be addressed under the USEF Enforcement Policy set out below.

USEF recognizes that the process for training and motivating athletes will vary with each coach, trainer, and athlete, but it is nevertheless important for everyone involved in sport to support the use of motivational and training methods that avoid misconduct.

APPLICATION
This Athlete Protection Policy applies to Athletes, Coaches, USEF Designees, and USEF Participants as defined in the Definitions section of this Handbook and below:

ATHLETE: Any rider, driver, handler, vaulter, or longeur who participates in any USEF licensed competition or USEF sanctioned event.

COACH: Any adult who has or shares the responsibility for instructing, teaching, schooling, training or advising an athlete or horse in the context of equestrian sport. The terms coach and trainer are used interchangeably throughout these policies.

USEF DESIGNEE: USEF staff, USEF Licensed Officials, USEF Board Members or any individual that USEF formally authorizes, approves, or appoints (a) to a position of authority over, or (b) to have frequent contact with any athlete as defined above.

USEF PARTICIPANT: Any USEF Member, or any other individual, required to sign an entry blank in connection with a USEF-licensed competition or sanctioned event.

Athletes, Coaches, USEF Designees, and USEF Participants shall refrain from all forms of misconduct, which include:

- Emotional Misconduct
- Physical Misconduct
• Sexual Misconduct
• Bullying
• Harassment
• Hazing

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE
• Any sexual activity with a child. Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult, and any sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited. This includes sexual contact with a child that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual interactions between an adult and a child, regardless of whether there is deception or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity.

Note concerning peer-to-peer child sexual abuse: Sexual contact between minors also can be abusive. Whether or not a sexual interaction between children constitutes child sexual abuse turns on the existence of an aggressor, the age or size difference between the children, and/or whether there is an imbalance of power and/or intellectual capabilities.

• Any act or conduct described as child sexual abuse under federal or state law.

Exceptions: None

Examples: Sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching, or non-contact sexual acts such as verbal acts, sexually suggestive electronic or written communications, exposure, or voyeurism.

Because sexual abusers often groom children for abuse – the process used by offenders to target the victim; gaining trust; filling a need; isolating the child; sexualizing the relationship; and maintaining control (e.g. keeping the child from disclosing abuse) – it is possible that a USEF Designee may witness behavior intended to groom a child for sexual abuse.

All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to safesport@usef.org or you can contact of the following individuals on the Athlete Protection Team:

Sonja S. Keating, General Counsel
skeating@usef.org | 859 225 2045

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SEXUAL MISCONDUCT
• Any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is (a) not consensual or forced, (b) coerced or manipulated, or (c) perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative, or threatening manner;

• Any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct, or indirect authority. Such relationships involve an imbalance of power and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative;
• Romantic or sexual relationships, which began during the sport relationship, between athletes or other participants and those individuals (a) with direct supervisory or evaluative control, or (b) in a position of power and trust over the athlete or other participant. Except in circumstances where no imbalance of power exists, coaches have this direct supervisory or evaluative control and are in a position of power and trust over those athletes or participants they coach. The prohibition on romantic or sexual relationships does not include those relationships where it can be demonstrated that there is no imbalance of power. For example, this prohibition does not apply to a pre-existing relationship between two spouses or life partners; or
• Any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape).

Note: An imbalance of power is always assumed between a coach and an athlete.

TYPES OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT
Types of sexual misconduct include:
- sexual assault;
- sexual harassment;
- sexual abuse; or
- any other sexual intimacies that exploit an athlete. Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult, and all sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited.

Exceptions: None

Examples: Examples of sexual misconduct prohibited under this Athlete Protection Policy include, without limitation:

Touching offenses. Behaviors that include:
- fondling an athlete's breasts or buttocks;
- exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback) for sexual favors;
- genital contact;
- forcing a victim to engage in touching another person in a sexual manner; or
- sexual relations or intimacies between persons in a position of trust, authority, and/or evaluative and supervisory control over athletes or other sport participants.

EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT
• A pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an athlete. Non-contact behaviors include:
- verbal acts;
- physical acts; or
- acts that deny attention or support.
• Any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect).

Exceptions: Emotional misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline, or improving athletic performance.

Examples: Examples of emotional misconduct prohibited by this Athlete Protection Policy include, without limitation:

- Verbal Acts. A pattern of verbal behaviors that (a) attack an athlete personally in a degrading or belittling manner or (b)
repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular athlete or athletes in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose.

- **Physical Acts.** A pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as (a) throwing sport equipment, water bottles, or chairs at, or in the presence of, participants or (b) punching walls, windows or other objects.

- **Acts that Deny Attention and Support.** A pattern of (a) ignoring an athlete for extended periods of time or (b) routinely or arbitrarily excluding participants from practice.

Constructive criticism about an athlete’s performance is not emotional misconduct. Emotional misconduct must have a sustained and/or repetitive component or he seen as a course of conduct, not a single event.

**Note:** Bullying, harassment, and hazing, defined below, often involve some form of emotional misconduct.

**PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT**

- Contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threatens to, cause physical harm to an athlete or other sport participant; or
- Any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect, assault).

**Exceptions:** Physical misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improving athlete performance. For example, the demonstration of the proper use of a crop as opposed to using it against the athlete.

**Examples:** Examples of physical misconduct prohibited by this Athlete Protection Policy include, without limitation:

**Contact offenses.** Behaviors that include:
- punching, beating, biting, striking, choking, or slapping an athlete;
- intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment;
- providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age (under U.S. law);
- providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete;
- encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play prematurely following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion) and without the clearance of a medical professional; or
- prescribing dieting or other weight-control methods without regard for the nutritional well-being and health of an athlete.

**Non-contact offenses.** Behaviors that include:
- isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a small space);
- forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g. requiring an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface); or
- withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention, or sleep.

**Note:** Bullying, harassment, and hazing, defined below, often involve some form of physical misconduct.
COMMENT

Authority and Trust. Once the unique coach-athlete relationship is established, the authority and trust on the part of the coach over the athlete shall be assumed, regardless of age. Accordingly, sexual interaction or intimacies between a coach and an athlete or other participant are prohibited, regardless of age, both during coaching and during that period following-coaching if an imbalance in power could jeopardize effective decision-making.

Imbalance of Power. Factors relevant to determining whether there is an imbalance of power include, but are not limited to: (a) the nature and extent of the coach’s supervisory, evaluative, or other authority over the athlete being coached; (b) the actual relationship between the parties; (c) the parties’ respective roles; (d) the nature and duration of the sexual relations or intimacies; (e) the age of the coach; (f) the age of the athlete or participant; and (g) whether the coach has engaged in a pattern of sexual interaction with other athletes or participants.

Exception. This section does not apply to a pre-existing relationship between two spouses or life partners.

Non-touching offenses. Behaviors that include:
- discussing one’s sex life with an athlete;
- asking an athlete about his or her sex life;
- requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress photo to an athlete;
- exposing athletes to pornographic material;
- sending athletes sexually explicit or suggestive electronic or written messages or photos (e.g. sexting);
- deliberately or recklessly exposing an athlete to sexual acts;
- deliberately or recklessly exposing an athlete to nudity (except in situations where locker rooms and changing areas are shared); or
- sexual harassment; specifically, the sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, and
  • is unwelcome, offensive, or creates a hostile environment, and the offending individual knows or is told this; or
  • is sufficiently severe or intense to be harassing to a reasonable person in the context.
- voyeurism

BULLYING

• An intentional, persistent, and repeated pattern of committing or wilfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation, or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete; or
• Any act or conduct described as bullying under federal or state law.

Exceptions: Bullying does not include group or team behaviors that are reasonably designed to establish normative team behaviors or promote team cohesion.

Examples: Examples of bullying prohibited by this Athlete Protection Policy include, without limitation:
- Physical behaviors. Patterns of behavior that include (a) hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking or slapping an athlete; (b) throwing at or hitting an athlete with
objects such as sporting equipment.

- **Verbal and emotional behaviors.** Patterns of behavior that include (a) teasing, ridiculing, intimidating; (b) spreading rumors or making false statements; or (c) using electronic communications, social media, or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate, or humiliate (cyber bullying).

While other athletes or participants are often the perpetrators of bullying, it is also a violation of policy if a coach or other responsible adult knows or should know of bullying but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted athlete or participant.

**HARASSMENT**

- A repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that (a) are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance, (b) offend or degrade, (c) create a hostile environment, or (d) reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority, or power over an individual athlete or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, or mental or physical disability; or
- Any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.

**Exceptions:** None

**Examples:** Examples of harassment prohibited by this Athlete Protection Policy include, without limitation:

- **Physical offenses.** Patterns of behavior that include (a) hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, or slapping an athlete or participant; (b) throwing at or hitting an athlete with objects including sporting equipment.
- **Non-physical offenses.** Patterns of behavior that include (a) making negative or disparaging comments about an athlete’s sexual orientation, gender expression, disability, religion, skin color or ethnic traits; (b) displaying offensive materials, gestures, symbols; or (c) withholding or reducing playing time to an athlete based on his or her sexual orientation.

Harassment does not include group or team behaviors that are reasonably designed to establish normative team behaviors or promote team cohesion.

**HAZING**

- Coercing, requiring, forcing or wilfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome, or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for (a) joining a group, or (b) being socially accepted by a group’s members; or
- Any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law.

**Exceptions:** Hazing does not include group or team activities that are reasonably designed to establish normative team behaviors or promote team cohesion.

**Examples:** Examples of hazing prohibited by this Athlete Protection Policy include, without limitation:

- requiring, forcing, or otherwise requiring the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- tying, taping, or otherwise physically restraining an athlete;
- sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature;
- sleep deprivation, otherwise unnecessary schedule disruption, or the withholding of water and/or food;
- social actions (e.g. grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to
draw ridicule;  
- beating, paddling, or other forms of physical assault  
- verbal abuse;  
- threats or implied threats; or  
- excessive training requirements focused on individuals on a team.

WILFULLY TOLERATING MISCONDUCT
The act of ignoring misconduct or Safe Sport policy violations is also prohibited. It is a violation of this policy if a USEF Designee knows or should have known of the misconduct but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted athlete or participant.

It is a violation of this Athlete Protection Policy if a USEF Designee knows of misconduct in violation of this Policy but fails to report such misconduct to safesport@usef.org or to one of the following individuals on the Athlete Protection Team:

Sonja S. Keating, General Counsel
skeating@usef.org I 859 225 2045

Sarah Gilbert
sgilbert@usef.org | 859 225 2022

Emily Pratt
epratt@usef.org | 859 225 6956

REPORTING
Although this Safe Sport Policy Handbook is designed to reduce misconduct in sport, it can still occur. USEF Designees shall follow the reporting procedures set forth in USEF’s Reporting Policy. USEF does not investigate suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse, nor does it attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegation as a condition of reporting suspicions or allegations to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

VIOLATIONS
Violations of the Athlete Protection Policy shall be reported pursuant to the Reporting Policy and will be subject to penalties by the USEF Hearing Committee.
POLICY 2: REPORTING POLICY

REPORTING
USEF Designees shall report any misconduct as defined in the USEF Athlete Protection Policy as outlined in the Safe Sport Policy Handbook that he or she observes, or receives via report, to safesport@usef.org or to one of the following individuals on the Athlete Protection Team:

Sonja S. Keating, General Counsel
skeating@usef.org I 859 225 2045

Sarah Gilbert
sgilbert@usef.org I 859 225 2022

Emily Pratt
epratt@usef.org I 859 225 6956

USEF will report potentially criminal behavior to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

“WHISTLEBLOWER” PROTECTION
Regardless of whether the allegation(s) is proven, USEF will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. USEF will not encourage, allow, or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish, or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith or otherwise participates in an investigation (eg., witness). Such actions against a complainant may be grounds for disciplinary action.

BAD-FAITH ALLEGATIONS
Submitting a knowingly false allegation is prohibited and may violate state criminal law and civil defamation laws. Such reports will be considered a violation of USEF Safe Sport Policy Handbook and may be subject to penalty by USEF’s Hearing Committee.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING REPORTING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

GROOMING
Because sexual abusers often groom children for abuse – the process used by offenders to select a child, to win the child’s trust (and the trust of the child’s parent or guardian), to manipulate the child into sexual activity and to keep the child from disclosing abuse – it is possible that a USEF Designee may witness behavior intended to groom a child for sexual abuse. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to safesport@usef.org or to one of the following individuals on the Athlete Protection Team:

Sonja S. Keating, General Counsel
skeating@usef.org I 859 225 2045

Sarah Gilbert
sgilbert@usef.org I 859 225 2022

Emily Pratt
epratt@usef.org I 859 225 6956
PEER-TO-PEER SEXUAL ABUSE
Approximately one-third of all child sexual abuse occurs at the hands of other children. The obligation to report misconduct extends to peer-to-peer child sexual abuse. Whether or not a sexual interaction between children constitutes child sexual abuse depends upon the existence of an aggressor, the age difference between the children, and/or whether there is an imbalance of power or intellectual capabilities. If you have any concerns that an interaction between children may constitute sexual abuse, report it immediately to safesport@usef.org or to one of the following individuals on the Athlete Protection Team:

Sonja S. Keating, General Counsel
skeating@usef.org | 859 225 2045

Sarah Gilbert
sgilbert@usef.org | 859 225 2022

Emily Pratt
epratt@usef.org | 859 225 6956

REPORTING PROCEDURE

TO WHOM TO REPORT
All reports must be made to safesport@usef.org or to one of the following individuals on the Athlete Protection Team:

Sonja S. Keating, General Counsel
skeating@usef.org | 859 225 2045

Sarah Gilbert
sgilbert@usef.org | 859 225 2022

Emily Pratt
epratt@usef.org | 859 225 6956

USEF will make every effort to ensure that those named in a misconduct complaint, or are too closely associated with those involved in the complaint, will not be part of the investigative efforts.

HOW TO REPORT
USEF will take a report in the way that is most comfortable for the person initiating the report including an anonymous, in-person, verbal, or written report. Regardless of the method of reporting, it is helpful to USEF to get the following information: (1) the name of the complainant(s); (2) the type of misconduct alleged; (3) the name(s) of the alleged victim(s); and (4) the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct.

Individuals may complete an Incident Report Form. Information on this form will include:

- the name(s) of the complainant(s);
- the type of misconduct alleged;
- the name(s) of the alleged victim(s);
- the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct;
- the approximate date(s) and location(s) where the misconduct was committed;
- the names of other individuals who might have information regarding the alleged misconduct; and
• a summary statement of the reasons to believe that misconduct has occurred.
USEF will withhold the complainant’s name upon request, to the extent permitted by law. A copy of the USEF Incident Report Form can be found at www.safesport.usef.org

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMOUS REPORTING

CONFIDENTIALITY
To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, USEF will handle any report it receives confidentially and discreetly and will not make public the names of the complainant(s), potential victim(s), or accused perpetrator(s); however, USEF may disclose such names on a limited basis when conducting an investigation or reporting to law enforcement authorities.

ANONYMOUS REPORTING
USEF recognizes it can be difficult to report an allegation of misconduct and strives to remove as many barriers to reporting as possible. Anonymous reports may be made without the formality of completing an Incident Report Form:
• by completing the Incident Report Form without including their name; or
• by expressing concerns verbally to one of the following individuals on the Athlete Protection Team:

Sonja S. Keating, General Counsel
skeating@usef.org | 859 225 2045

Sarah Gilbert
sgilbert@usef.org | 859 225 2022

Emily Pratt
epratt@usef.org | 859 225 6956

HOW REPORTS ARE HANDLED

SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AND/OR CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES
USEF reports all allegations of child physical or sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities. USEF does not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities. As necessary, however, USEF may ask a few clarifying questions of the person making the report to adequately report the suspicion or allegation to law enforcement authorities.

* For mandatory reporting laws, visit www.childwelfare.gov.

MISCONDUCT AND POLICY VIOLATIONS
USEF will address all alleged Safe Sport Policy Handbook violations and misconduct, including Athlete Protection Policy violations.

USEF may also investigate allegations of child physical or sexual abuse that are reportable under relevant state and federal law, if such investigation does not interfere with any ongoing criminal investigation or prosecution for abuse. Such allegations may include:
• Abuse reported outside the relevant statutes of limitation; or
• Allegations of abuse that were reported to authorities, but: (a) legal authorities did not press criminal charges; or (b) criminal charges were filed, but not pursued to trial.

NOTIFICATION
Following USEF’s receipt of a credible allegation involving Safe Sport-related misconduct, USEF may consider the circumstances in which it will notify other parents of athletes with whom the accused individual may have had contact. At USEF’s discretion, and as appropriate, USEF may notify relevant staff members, contractors, volunteers, parents, and/or athletes of any such allegation that (a) law enforcement authorities are actively investigating; or (b) that USEF is investigating internally. Advising others of an allegation may lead to additional reports of child physical or sexual abuse and other misconduct.

POLICY 3: TRAINING AND EDUCATION

USEF has adopted the United States Olympic Committee’s Safe Sport training materials, which include a series of online training videos that are available for the training of athletes, coaches, and USEF Designees. All USEF Designees must successfully complete awareness training every two (2) years concerning the Athlete Protection Policy contained in this Safe Sport Policy Handbook. Non-members of the USEF, such as parents or guardians of minor athletes, are encouraged to complete the training. The videos in total are approximately 90 minutes long and can be accessed at www.usef.org. The videos covers misconduct in sport, which includes:
• Emotional Misconduct
• Physical Misconduct
• Sexual Misconduct
• Bullying
• Harassment
• Hazing
POLICY 4: CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

All USEF Designees shall undergo a criminal background check that complies with the Fair Credit Reporting Act. Through this criminal background check, USEF will utilize reasonable efforts to ascertain criminal history. The USEF Criminal Background Check Policy assists USEF in promoting the safety and welfare of athletes.

PROCESS
The Criminal Background Check Consent and Waiver Release Form must be submitted to USEF's criminal background check vendor and the USEF Designee cleared before he or she may perform services for USEF. Upon submission of the Criminal Background Check Consent and Waiver Release Form, USEF will request that its vendor perform the criminal background check. As part of its criminal background check, the vendor will:

• perform a national criminal record search;
• perform a search of state sexual offender registries; and
• verify a person's identification against his or her social security number or other personal identifier.

CRIMINAL HISTORY
USEF will use a criminal background check agency to gather information about criminal history. The information revealed by the criminal background check may disqualify an individual from serving as a USEF Designee. Any conviction, guilty plea, plea of no contest, deferred sentence, deferred adjudication, or similar disposition of any of the following will result in disqualification:

• **Sex Offenses: All Sex Offenses** regardless of time since the offense.
  Examples Include: child molestation, rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sodomy, prostitution, solicitation, indecent exposure, etc.

• **Felony Offenses:**
  - **All Felony Violence Offenses** - Regardless of the amount of time since the offense.
    Examples Include: murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, kidnapping, robbery, aggravated burglary, etc.
  - **All Felony Offenses** other than violence or sex within the past 10 years.
    Examples Include: drug offenses, theft, embezzlement, fraud, child endangerment, etc.

• **Misdemeanors:**
  - **All Misdemeanor Violence** offenses within the past 7 years.
    Examples Include: simple assault, battery, domestic violence, hit & run, etc.
  - **Two or more Misdemeanor Drug and/or Alcohol Offenses** within the past 7 years.
    Examples Include: driving under the influence, simple drug possession, drunk and disorderly, public intoxication, possession of drug paraphernalia, etc.
  - **Any Other Misdemeanor** within the past 7 years that would be considered a potential danger to children, including any crimes involving cruelty to animals.

For the purposes of this Policy, guilty shall mean that a person was found guilty following a trial, entered a guilty plea, entered a no contest plea, accompanied by a court finding of guilt (regardless of adjudication), or received court-directed programs in lieu of conviction.
PENDING COURT CASES
No decision will be made on a prospective USEF Designee's eligibility if he or she has a pending court case for any of the potentially disqualifying offenses until the pending case concludes. If, however, during the case's pendency, USEF undertakes an independent investigation and conducts a hearing, any determination may be used to disqualify the prospective USEF Designee.

FULL DISCLOSURE
Each USEF Designee and prospective USEF Designee has the affirmative duty to disclose his or her criminal history. Failing to disclose or intentionally misrepresenting an arrest, plea, or conviction is grounds for USEF Designee status revocation or restriction, regardless of when the offense is discovered. USEF Designees have the ongoing duty to disclose criminal history. USEF Designees need not disclose arrests in which charges are not filed, charges are dismissed, or the USEF Designee is acquitted; however, USEF Designees are required to disclose non-convictions involving deferred sentences, deferred adjudications, or other similar dispositions.

• If a prospective USEF Designee (1) is arrested, (2) enters a guilty plea or (3) is convicted of any offense identified above during the application process, he is required to disclose such information immediately.
• In the event a USEF Designee (1) is arrested, (2) enters a guilty plea or (3) is convicted of any offense identified above, he has an affirmative duty to disclose such information immediately to Sonja S. Keating, USEF General Counsel, at safesport@usef.org or 859-225-2045.
• Any USEF Designee or prospective USEF Designee who has been banned by another sport organization, as temporarily or permanently ineligible, must self-disclose this information. A failure to disclose is a basis for disqualification.

FINDINGS
USEF’s criminal background check report will return a red light or green light finding. A green light finding means that the background check vendor located no records that would disqualify the individual. A green light score, however, is not a certification of safety or permission to bypass/ignore other screening efforts. Other disqualifying factors may exist and can be revealed through other means.

A red light finding means the criminal background check revealed criminal records that suggest the individual does not meet the criteria and is not suitable for USEF Designee status.

Individuals who are subject to disqualification under a red light finding may challenge the accuracy of the information reported by the criminal background check vendor.

Notice of findings will be provided to the USEF Legal Department.

APPEAL TO CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK VENDOR
Any disqualified individual has the right to dispute the findings of the criminal background check directly with the criminal background check vendor. A disqualified individual may not appeal the automatic disqualification or the results of the findings of the criminal background check vendor to USEF. USEF is required by this Criminal Background Check Policy to accept the findings of the criminal background check vendor.
Individuals disqualified are excluded from participation in any USEF licensed competition and USEF- sanctioned events and/or activities as a USEF Designee unless an exemption is granted in accordance with the exemption request process below.

EXEMPTION REQUEST TO USEF
Any disqualified individual has the right to seek an exemption from the USEF Exemption Panel. The individual shall demonstrate that the conviction or charge does not violate the spirit of Safe Sport and that he or she poses no risk to the sport.

In order to seek an exemption from disqualification, contact Sonja S. Keating, USEF General Counsel, at safesport@usef.org or 859-225-2045 or submit an Exemption Request Form to USEF found at www.safesport.usef.org

FREQUENCY OF CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS
Criminal background checks for USEF Designees will be refreshed every two years or as otherwise required by law.

AFFIRMATIVE DUTY TO DISCLOSE
If a USEF Designee is accused, arrested, indicted, or convicted of a criminal offense set out above or a criminal offense against a child, it is the duty and responsibility of the USEF Designee to immediately disclose this information to Sonja S. Keating, USEF General Counsel, at safesport@usef.org or 859-225-2045.

OTHER POTENTIALLY DISQUALIFYING FACTORS
Even if an individual passes a criminal background check, USEF may determine that an individual may be disqualified and prohibited from USEF Designee status if the individual has:

- Been held liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse of a minor;
- Been subject to any court order involving any sexual or physical abuse of a minor, including but not limited to, domestic order or protection;
- A history with another organization (employment, volunteer, etc.) of complaints of sexual or physical abuse of minors;
- Resigned, been terminated, or been asked to resign from a position - paid or unpaid - due to complaint(s) of sexual or physical abuse of minors;
- A history of other behavior that indicates the individual may be a danger to athletes and participants; or
- Failed to disclose criminal background in accordance with this Policy.

REVIEW OF DISQUALIFIERS
USEF will review its disqualifiers from time to time or as otherwise required or modified by law.
POLICY 5: ENFORCEMENT

ENFORCEMENT

The enforcement of the policies contained in this Safe Sport Policy Handbook fall under the jurisdiction of the USEF Hearing Committee. As such, Chapters 6 and 7 of the USEF General Rules govern the enforcement phase and set forth the penalties that may be imposed for any violation of this Safe Sport Policy Handbook.

If the results of an investigation warrant referring the case to the USEF Hearing Committee, the Chief Executive Officer of USEF may file a Charge pursuant to and in accordance with General Rule 604.

Neither civil nor criminal statutes of limitation apply to reports of cases of sexual abuse.