

SAFE SPORT POLICY MANUAL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Contents

Topic	FAQ #	Page(s)
Safe Sport	1-3	1-3
Notable Changes to Policies	4-5	3-4
Enforcement, PSO, NSO	6-8	4-5
Complaint Reporting & Handling	9-19	5-7
Implementation	20-22	7-8
Dispute Resolution & ADR Saskatchewan	23-27	9-10
Background & ITP Sport	28-30	10

1. What is safe sport?

The Coaches Association of Canada regards safe sport as places that, *‘Create, foster and preserve sport environments that ensure positive, healthy and fulfilling experiences for all individuals’ and to ‘recognize and report acts of maltreatment and prioritize the welfare, safety and rights of every person at all times’.*

Safeguarding environments to prioritize participant safety has is an important priority across the Canadian amateur sport system and there has been a lot of recent work done in this area, driven by the 2019 Red Deer Declaration. The emphasis and attention on ensuring safer sport environments for all participants has never been a higher priority than it currently is in Canada.

Developments in the national safe sport movement

[The Office of Canada’s Sport Integrity Commissioner \(OSIC\)](#), developed by the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC), launched its first phase of operations on June 20, 2022, which includes the following services:

- Receive reports about violations of the
- (UCCMS) alleged against a registered participant of an OSIC program signatory organization, and initiate the complaint management process, including investigations where relevant.

- Complaints are received through a dedicated and confidential online platform. Operators with the Canadian Sport Helpline are available to help users navigate the complaint process.
- Initiate, within specific sport environments, auditing or reviewing for Sport Environment Assessments which are intended to address systemic and cultural issues linked to the UCCMS. The focus of these Assessments is to improve the sport environment for current and future participants; and
- Offer education, prevention tools and resources, and other accompanying services, including mental health and legal aid referrals.

The above services are only available to OSIC program signatories and their UCCMS participants. Abuse Free Sport (OSIC) maintains a current listing of [OSIC program signatory organizations](#).

A) What is a UCCMS Participant?

“UCCMS Participant” - an Individual affiliated with [PSO]’s national sport organization, and who has signed the required UCCMS Participant consent form.

UCCMS Participants are usually athletes, coaches, officials, or other volunteers who are involved in national team programming.

In some cases, national signatory agreements with the SDRCC/OSIC/Abuse Free Sport will include coverage for the national sport body’s provincial members, however we do not expect that many of our members in Saskatchewan will have access to OSIC services through their national sport organizations. For complaints that do not contain allegations of serious maltreatment or that do not involve an OSIC program signatory/UCCMS Participant. OSIC will typically send these complaints back to their provincial members to be handled within the provincial jurisdiction.

2. Why has Sask Sport adopted the safe sport policy manual?

- Since the [2019 Red Deer Declaration](#), and the subsequent creation of the [UCCMS](#), minimum standards regarding the handling of complaints and maltreatment have been raised, and newer best practices in sport safety have been widely publicized. Among the most prominent, is the mandate that all federally funded sport organizations [sign on with the OSIC as their Independent Third Party to receive complaints \(ITP\), no later than April 1, 2023](#). All complaints related to maltreatment involving a UCCMS Participant must be reported to the OSIC. In addition, those complaints containing allegations of maltreatment are required to be adjudicated on, and potentially investigated by professionals, who are independent of the organization where the issue originated.
- Provincial members have been left to determine how complaints are handled when they are not considered to be within the jurisdiction of the OSIC. The Sask Sport Safe Sport Manual for PSOs ensures that our members have access to an independent, fair, and timely, provincial complaint handling system, that establishes higher standards in participant safety, offers due process aligns with the national system through the OSIC.

3. Why are safe sport policies and procedures mandatory for the membership?

Safeguarding sporting environments in Saskatchewan is among the guiding principles in the Sask Sport, Sport Development Framework, especially against minor aged participants, is of the utmost importance.

Sask Sport, as the sport federation in SK, works to ensure that all active members meet a minimum standard in many areas but governance and policy specifically, is an area of focus. Criteria for active members in Sask Sport outlines each required condition for membership. This document lists the requirements for all active members to adopt the dispute resolution policies developed with support from Sask Sport (Point 13 in PSO criteria and point 10 in MSO criteria). This point will be updated to reflect the new policy requirements as they relate to adopting and implementing the Safe Sport policy manual.

4. What are some notable additions to the new Safe Sport Policy Manual for PSOs?

- Saskatchewan now has an independent complaint reporting and handling system
- Sask Sport has adopted the UCCMS
- Athlete safety has been prioritized above all and the Athlete Protection Policy attempts to proactively address areas of risk, and lists best practices related to safeguarding sport environments
- Better alignment with updated best practices and standards that National Sport Organizations have been required to implement
- Distinct processes for handling minor vs severe infractions

The Sask Sport Safe Sport Manual consists of the following:

- Athlete Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct & Ethics
- Discipline & Complaints
- Investigations
- Alternative Dispute Resolution (Mediation) Policy
- Appeals
- Screening
- Social Media (Optional but highly recommended)
- Conflict of Interest

5. What are some of the new responsibilities that adopting member organizations should be aware of?

- Selecting a PSO Safe Sport Liaison -Each PSO will identify at least one designated individual who is responsible for acting as a representative of their organization and point of contact for any safe sport or dispute resolution matters. This includes, but is not limited to; 1) working directly with ITP Sport to select Complaint Resolution Officers, Case Managers and Appeal Managers from approved listing (on Sask Sport website), 2) ensuring major and minor sanctions are enforced, 3) ensuring mediation agreements are approved by PSO/club and upheld, 4) long-term suspensions (1 year or longer) are reported to Sask Sport, 5) screening requirements and educational/training requirements are enforced. Safe Sport Liaisons must have knowledge and experience in board

governance and must have completed the Governance Essentials e-learning course offered by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport

- Selecting a Complaint Resolution Officer -Once the ITP has determined that an allegation is a minor infraction, the member organization will have five (5) days to select a service provider and communicate this to ITP Sport to have a Complaint Resolution Officer appointed
- Selecting Case Manager -If the ITP determines that the complaint contains allegations of a severe infraction, the member organization will have (5) days to select a service provider and communicate this to ITP Sport to have a Case Manager appointed
- Screening Requirements- Screening personnel and volunteers are a vital part of providing a safe, sporting environment. It has become a common practice amongst sport organizations that provide programs and services to the Canadian sport community. Screening requirements are outlined in Appendix A of the Screening Policy
- Member organizations must make the complaint reporting information available on their websites
- Sask Sport will publish all outcomes of formal complaints and appeals as directed in the Discipline and Complaints and Appeals policies

6. How are the policies effectively enforced?

Sask Sport membership conditions require Active and Affiliate Members to have the eight (8)-part Sask Sport Safe Sport Manual, as outlined in the *Criteria for Active Membership in Sask Sport* (Point 10).

It is the adopting organization's responsibility to promote the policies and oversee compliance within their respective organizations, and for the members to align and adhere to the new policies. However, Sask Sport is in regular communication with its membership to ensure that they fully understand the policy suite and the available tools and resources. Sask Sport also conducts audits when necessary to investigate issues that may arise with regards to any PSO's condition of membership.

7. Are there situations where the National Sport Organization's Dispute Resolution policies are required to be followed instead of the Provincial Sport Organization's? Which policy should be used?

Regardless of whether a complaint is made to Saskatchewan's independent complaint handling system (ITP Sport), through the national sport body's ITP, or the OISC, independent complaint triage should result in the complaint being directed towards the organization that is deemed to have jurisdiction and its respective policies and procedures will be followed.

8. What are the implications of National Sport Organizations requiring Provincial Sport Organizations to align their policies with Federal Guidelines?

- Saskatchewan’s amateur sport community has worked hard over the years to establish comprehensive policies and procedures that support safe, welcoming, inclusive and respectful environments for sport. With assistance from the Sask Sport Safe Sport Manual available on Sask Sport’s [website](#) and Sask Sport’s mandatory policy requirements, Sask Sport’s members are well positioned to comply with federal mandates to support safe sport. If provincial policy changes are required by National Sport Organizations, Sask Sport anticipates that the changes will be minimal.
- Sask Sport recognizes the important work of National Sport Organizations and working groups that promote and support safer sport environments for all. We support the initiatives to ensure that everyone in Canada is accountable to the same, fair, and equitable processes and standards in keeping participants safe. We are committed to working with our members to work through those national policy modifications, to ensure that the initial spirit and intent of the provincial policies and procedures are not jeopardized and are available to help with any questions.
- Keep in mind, all policy changes must be documented and provided to Sask Sport in a format that displays the changes clearly. Sask Sport requests that organizations track all policy changes in a Microsoft Word version of the templates (available on the Sask Sport [website](#) by using the “Track Changes” tool.

9. How are complaints made?

All complaints should be sent to ITP Sport via their Integrity Counts reporting platform, which can be accessed [here](#) or by phoning [1 \(800\) 758-9412](tel:18007589412)

10. What is a Case Manager, a Complaint Resolution Officer, and an Appeal Manager?

- “*Case Manager*” – an independent individual appointed by [PSO] to fulfill the responsibilities described in the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*. In order to be appointed as a Case Manager, the individual must have relevant experience and skills to manage complaints and perform their duties, either as a legal practitioner or sport administrator. Case management service providers that satisfy the relevant requirements to perform such duties can be found on the Sask Sport website here.
- “*Complaint Resolution Officer*” – an individual appointed by [PSO] to handle the duties of the Complaint Resolution Officer as described in the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*. Complaint Resolution Officers that satisfy the relevant requirements to perform such duties can be found on the Sask Sport website here.
- “*Appeal Manager*” – an individual appointed by [PSO] to oversee the administration of the Appeal Policy. The Appeal Manager’s responsibilities shall include those as described in the Appeal Policy. The Appeal Manager shall be independent of [PSO]. Appeal Managers that satisfy the relevant requirements to perform such duties can be found on the Sask Sport website here.

11. What is the cost to access Case Manager, Complaint Resolution Officer and Appeal Manager services for Sask Sport members?

- Sask Sport covers all fees for Complaint Resolution Officers, Case Managers or Appeals Managers, as a membership service.
- However, if dispute resolution requires the engagement of an Arbitrator, Mediator, Investigator or other professional neutral, these fees are the responsibility of the organization where the parties involved hold membership.

12. Will PSOs be able to recover costs for any of the services that are the organization's responsibility?

- Sask Sport has set aside a pool of funding for PSOs who are required to pay for arbitration, mediation and investigation services.
- Once verified by Sask Sport via the *PSO Safe Sport Manual Cost Recovery Application Form*, located on Sask Sport's [website](#)
- Each PSO may be eligible for a single use, cost recovery up to \$5,000
- Proof of expenditure is required (invoice for services) and the services must have been accessed during the formal complaint or appeal process (complaint reported to Sask Sport's provincial, independent complaint handling system, administered by ITP Sport).
- Service provider costs resulting from a complaint, appeal or investigation conducted under the policies and procedures of a provincial organization's National Sport body are not eligible for cost recovery from Sask Sport

13. How do we contact a Case Manager, Complaint Resolution Officer or Appeal Manager?

ITP Sport will contact the PSO's designated Safe Sport Liaison to confirm the PSO's choice of service provider to fulfill the required role. Once the PSO has confirmed with ITP Sport, the file will be sent to the appropriate service provider. Eligible service providers are listed on Sask Sport's website.

14. What should I do if our organization receives a complaint?

If anonymous, report the complaint immediately to ITP Sport via the Integrity Counts online platform. If not anonymous, inform the Complainant to report the complaint to ITP Sport via the Integrity Counts online platform.

15. What does the policy say about an appeal process?

Individuals who wish to appeal a decision have 14 days from the date of which they received notice of the decision to submit an appeal in writing, to ITP Sport via the Integrity Counts online platform. The policy suggests an appeal fee of \$500 to be submitted along with the written appeal to the provincial organization. The appeal fee will be refunded if the appeal is successful, or forfeited if the appeal is denied.

16. How much can it cost to engage in a mediation, arbitration or investigation?

To get a good estimate of the costs that a PSO may incur, consider requesting an estimate from the applicable service providers prior to the work commencing. Professionals accessed from the ADR Institute of SK's network have agreed to a rate of \$150 per hour.

17. Where does the resolution facilitation, mediation, mediation/arbitration or arbitration take place?

A mediation session or arbitration hearing can be held in person, by videoconference, by conference call, or any combination of these formats.

18. What happens after an agreement has been signed or an arbitration decision has been rendered?

The parties MUST comply with the agreement or the decision because they undertook to do so by agreeing to resolution facilitation, mediation, mediation/arbitration, or arbitration before the dispute resolution service provider.

19. What happens if a party fails to comply with the agreement or decision?

If one of the parties fails to comply with the agreement or decision, the injured party can always ask a court to confirm (ratify) it. When the court confirms (ratifies) the agreement or decision, it becomes enforceable, just as if it had been handed down by the court itself. In short, the injured party can go through the court system to make the offending party comply with the agreement or decision.

20. How are the Dispute Resolution policies implemented?

The Sask Sport Board of Directors approved the Safe Sport Policy Manual at the November 2023 Board meeting, along with the timeline for all active and affiliate members to have the new Dispute Resolution policy suite approved within their organization by no later than January 31, 2024.

STEP 1: Policy documents are prepared

Sask Sport has provided a template of the Sask Sport Safe Sport Manual, which is available on its [website](#). Member organizations should become acquainted with the Safe Sport Manual, and personalize the policy documents to include:

- Organization name and contact information as indicated by highlighted areas throughout and where applicable, national sport organization title, international sport federation title
- Implementation, review and board approval dates, replaces or amends information, as applicable
- Insert definition of “*members*” as per your organization’s bylaws or enter “see PSO bylaw” and include applicable sections

- Enter the date your organization adopted the UCCMS (page 13, point 7) *required
- List individual (executive director or equivalent) to impose a provisional sanction (page 25, point 26)
- **Optional for PSOs to determine if the Appeal Policy applies to team selection decisions** (page 41, point 4) and determine the administrative appeal fee and payment procedures (page 42, point 6.i)
- Determine whether PSO adopts the optional (recommended) Social Media Policy as part of the Safe Sport Manual

STEP 2: Policies approved and implemented

Personalized policy documents are then to be approved by PSO Boards; a Board motion to adopt the full component of the Sask Sport Safe Sport Manual will demonstrate that implementation is in place. A Dispute Resolution Policy Implementation Checklist is available on the Sask Sport [website](#) to help guide you with policy implementation. Each point must be completed.

STEP 3: Sask Sport reviews finalized policies

Ensure organization reports to Sask Sport when you have the policy implementation requirements completed and please provide the Board approved version of your organization's Safe Sport Manual. Following Sask Sport's satisfactory review of the policy submission, a confirmation letter will be forwarded to the organization and the information will be kept on file with Sask Sport.

STEP 4: Policy awareness

Sask Sport recommends that PSOs generate awareness of the new policies to all individual members or guardians of minor aged members, member clubs, leagues and teams.

21. What is required by an organization as proof of implementation to Sask Sport?

The following are required PSO submissions to Sask Sport that ensure policy compliance:

- Safe Sport Manual Checklist (available at on Sask Sport's [website](#) – this checklist confirms that all conditions for the Safe Sport Manual approval have been completed by the organization)
- A signed, final copy of the Sask Sport Safe Sport Manual
- A signed copy of the meeting minutes or motion from the PSO Board meeting that verifies Board approval

22. What if an organization wants to make some modifications to the policy templates provided?

Sask Sport will not approve significant variances in the policies and procedures outlined in the provided Safe Sport Manual templates, however some modifications are allowed, as long as the spirit, intent and standards of the Safe Sport Manual are not jeopardized. **All proposed changes to any of the policies within the Sask Sport Safe Sport Manual template must be documented and provided to Sask Sport in a format that displays the changes clearly.**

Sask Sport requests that organizations track all proposed policy changes in a Microsoft Word version of the templates (available on the Sask Sport [website](#) by using the "Track Changes" tool.

Sask Sport requests that documents are submitted with the “Track Changes” activated/visible, in order to cross reference, the proposed changes made by PSOs. Sask Sport’s Provincial Sport Consultants are available to answer questions or to discuss potential policy changes.

23. What is dispute resolution?

Dispute resolution is a process that occurs in many forms, including resolution facilitation, mediation, mediation/arbitration, and arbitration. In resolution facilitation and mediation, help is given to facilitate a resolution without rendering any kind of formal decision. In arbitration, the arbitrator considers the merits of both sides of the case then renders a decision. In mediation/arbitration the process starts with mediation and, if the dispute is not resolved, concludes by arbitration.

24. What are the two fundamental principles of natural justice, and why are they important for managing a dispute?

The two fundamental principles of natural justice are:

1. *the right to be heard*: the chance to present one’s case, submit evidence and arguments, and to know and respond to allegations made by other parties
2. *impartiality*: the decision is made by independent individuals, free from conflict of interest, and having considered all the evidence presented

The Dispute Resolution policy suite strongly adheres to these fundamental principles.

25. Why are dispute resolution policies and procedures important?

Sask Sport believes that fair play extends beyond how athletes compete on the field and behave on game day; fair play also applies to how sport organizations operate fairly and equitably when conflict arises. Sask Sport works with its membership to provide good governance practices and policies that reduce the risk of conflicts and disputes.

26. Who is ADR Saskatchewan and why did Sask Sport partner with them?

- The Alternative Dispute Resolution Institute of Saskatchewan (ADR SK) is a non-profit affiliate of the ADR Institute of Canada (ADRIC). ADRIC is a national, non-profit organization that provides leadership in the development and promotion of dispute resolution services in Canada.
- Their regulatory framework is designed to ensure organizations and members of the public seeking ADR services receive quality service.
- Since 2013, Sask Sport has contracted ADR SK to help manage complaints and concerns regarding the Saskatchewan sport system.
- It is important for Sask Sport to be an arms-length from being the provider of case manager services to remove bias or conflict of interest, involving disputes.

- Qualified ADR professionals administer cases effectively and efficiently and ensure that the cases proceed in a timely and cost-efficient manner. Professional ADR management will assist the parties in resolving disputes (without bias nor the perception of bias) and avoiding the high costs of litigation.

27. Can I access ADR SK or ITP Sport services to assist with issues that are not formal complaints or appeals?

- ADR SK is available to help with a variety of services and resources (including meeting facilitation and guidance, advice, document review, etc.). More information about their services are available on the ADR SK [website](#).
- ITP Sport’s main role with Sask Sport is to administer the provincial independent complaint handling system, however they offer additional services to organizations related to preventing maltreatment, which are available on the ITP Sport [website](#).

28. Who developed the Sask Sport Safe Sport Policy Manual?

A “Work Team” comprised of Dispute Resolution committee volunteers, PSO member organization representatives, and Sask Sport representatives worked alongside Sport Lex and ITP Sport, to develop and recommend updated, comprehensive, user-friendly, policies and procedures.

29. What have been the impacts of the policies and procedures to date?

Alignment of the policies has resulted in a consistent, more comprehensive approach that is common across all member organizations.

The policies, resources, and programs that we have in place today have helped create a strong foundation for helping identify and deal with abuse, neglect, harassment and bullying in sport.

30. Why did Sask Sport partner with ITP Sport?

ITP Sport and Recreation supports organizations, stakeholders and participants across the sport community in building awareness and skillsets to prevent and address Maltreatment in sport, while encouraging positive and healthy sport behaviour.

31. What will ITP Sport’s role and responsibilities be?

- ITP Sport and Rec will administer Sask Sport’s provincial, independent complaint handling system
- Complaint triaging, Complaint Resolution Officers & Case Managers
- Opportunities for safe sport focused educational sessions for members
- Additional services available upon request