



# SafeSport Program Handbook

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## Introduction

The safety of its participants is of paramount importance to USA Luge. This includes not only on-ice safety, but also off-ice safety in any part of USA Luge's programs.

This document is intended to protect USA Luge participants from physical, sexual, psychological and other forms of abuse and misconduct (more specifically discussed in Section 2) that can be harmful to athletes of any age. This policy is applicable to athletes, coaches, staff, administrators, volunteers, officials and parents during all USA Luge related activities, as more fully discussed in Section 1.

The Safe Sport handbook includes the various policies that apply to all USA Luge sanctioned programs. By combining all of these elements into a comprehensive Safe Sport program, USA Luge intends to create the safest possible environment for participation in the sport of luge.

USA Luge reserves the right to amend this Policy from time to time as necessary.

***Nothing contained in this policy is intended to super cede, replace, or otherwise abrogate the USA Luge Bylaws, the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, or the U.S. Center for SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movements.***

## Section 1 Application

This policy is applicable to the following individuals “Adult Participants”:

An **Adult Participant** is any adult (18 years of age or older) who is:

1. A member or license holder registered in an Athlete or Official division of USA Luge or any Clubs sanctioned by USA Luge
2. An employee or board member of USA Luge or any Clubs sanctioned by USA Luge
3. Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of USA Luge or any Clubs sanctioned by USA Luge
4. Authorized, approved, or appointed by USA Luge or any Clubs sanctioned by USA Luge to have regular contact with or authority over Minor Athletes.<sup>1</sup>

## Section 2 Prohibited Misconduct

Covered Individuals shall refrain from misconduct, including the following most common types of misconduct:

- Sexual misconduct
- Emotional misconduct
- Physical misconduct
- Bullying
- Harassment (including sexual harassment)
- Hazing

Definitions of the foregoing, examples and exceptions may be found in the U.S. Center for SafeSport Code. <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/response-and-resolution/safesport-code/>

**All forms of prohibited conduct are intolerable and in direct conflict with the Olympic Ideals.**

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<sup>1</sup> This may include volunteers, medical staff, trainers, chaperones, monitors, contract personnel, bus/van drivers, officials, adult athletes, staff, board members, and any other individual who meets the Adult Participant definition.

### Section 3

#### **Olympic Training Center, Weigh-in, Start House Policies and Travel Policies**

Youth athletes are particularly vulnerable when residing at the OTC for extended periods, during weigh-in prior to races and when changing before, during and after training sessions in the start house. Due to the possibility of various stages of dress/undress in these venues, athlete to athlete problems such as sexual abuse, bullying, harassment and hazing can occur when coaches or adult supervisors are not in a position to observe. Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras, and video cameras increase the risk of various forms of abuse or conduct. As a result, there will be no use of a mobile device's recording capabilities during weigh ins or in start houses at USA Luge training sessions and events. This does not preclude photography/videography for training, public relations, or spectator purposes in areas where athletes are not changing.

#### **Olympic Training Center**

Training camps taking place at a US Olympic Training Center (OTC) have a unique set of challenges. With this in mind, athletes residing at the OTC must abide by a specific set of rules governing policies set forth by both the USOC and those from USA Luge. These guidelines are reviewed and modified regularly. Athletes receive an updated copy outlining some of the more important rules and policies prior to the beginning of some camps and agree to abide by their requirements and consequences.

#### **Weigh-in**

Luge weigh-in has an inherent complication that requires athletes to disrobe (down to a base layer) in front of others. Weigh-ins typically take place at the USA Luge start house or in a building at the luge venue. Regardless of where the weigh-in takes place, every effort will be taken to assure privacy in the weigh-in environment. Separate male & female weigh-ins will be scheduled. Where possible, USA Luge will limit the number of adult male officials present during the male weigh-in and only female adult officials at the female weigh-in. No other extra personnel, administrators, friends or family of either sex will be present in the immediate area. The only exception shall be if a parent wishes to be present during the weigh-in of their child. If this is the situation, the parent may only be present when their child is being weighed-in and must exit the area when completed.

#### **Start House**

Luge has a unique training and competitive environment, where males and females may prepare for training and competition in the same start house. Nonetheless, it is not acceptable for athletes to be lurking around or otherwise observing the opposite gender while they dress or undress. It is possible, particularly during events held internationally in other countries, that USA Luge may not have direct influence over the start house environment. However, coaches will endeavor to ensure that the environment provided is appropriate and safe regardless.

#### **Travel Policy**

USA Luge programs often involve significant overnight travel for teams to train or compete.

Youth athletes are most vulnerable to abuse or misconduct during travel, particularly overnight stays. This includes a high risk of athlete to athlete misconduct. During travel, athletes may be away from their families and support networks, and the setting – new tracks, automobiles, and hotel rooms – is less structured and less familiar. A travel policy provides guidelines for those traveling. Adherence to travel policies helps to reduce the opportunities for misconduct.

A signature by each athlete (or where appropriate such athlete's parent or legal guardian), and each adult accompanying a trip acknowledging receipt of and agreeing to the travel policy will be obtained. Some travel involves only local travel to and from the venue for training or competition while other travel involves overnight stays.

## **Section 4**

### **Education and Awareness Training**

Education is a key component of any abuse and misconduct prevention strategy. Awareness training provides participants with relative information necessary to more effectively monitor their organization, minimize the opportunities for physical and sexual abuse and other types of misconduct, and respond to concerns. It is also a strong statement that the organization places a priority on participant safety.

USA Luge requires safe sport education and training for all individuals it formally authorizes, approves or appoints (a) to a position of authority over, (b) to have frequent contact with athletes, (c) any non-athlete individual that USA Luge authorizes to train, stay, or work at an Olympic Training Center and (d) all USA Luge Staff and Board or Committee Members (collectively, the “SafeSport Training Pool”). USA Luge also encourages athletes in the US Anti-Doping Registered Testing Pool (RTP) as well as all other athletes and anyone else involved in this sport to take the training.

No less than annually, USA Luge will publish on its website the categories of individuals in the SafeSport Training Pool. To view this list, click <https://www.usaluge.org>.

As to members of the SafeSport Training Pool newly taking a role, USA Luge requires completion of the education and training prior to contact with athletes begins, and in any event within thirty (30) days of the commencement of the new role.

USA Luge will track all SafeSport Training Pool education and training and perform periodic checks to ensure compliance with this policy.

#### **SafeSport Website**

To take the SafeSport online course, visit [www.safesporttrained.org](http://www.safesporttrained.org) and follow these steps:

- Click “Training”
- Click “Register” (or “Login” if you’ve already created an account)
- Enter USA Luge Key - `NGBLugeT9S3!1`
  
- The course is free.
- Follow directions to complete the course
- Estimated time to complete the NGB core training is 90-120 minutes

## **Section 5**

### **Screening & Background Checks**

#### Purpose of a Screening Policy

- Protect our members from known offenders to ensure they do not have access to USA Luge athletes.
- Protect USA Luge's reputation as a sport where participants are safe from abuse.
- Help insulate USA luge, its staff, programs and volunteers from liability that could arise from allowing a previous offender to have access to children.

#### USA Luge Screening

USA Luge shall conduct a screening background check at least every two years for those individuals it formally authorizes, approves or appoints (a) to a position of authority over, (b) to have frequent contact with athletes, and (c) any non-athlete individual that USA Luge authorizes to train, stay, or work at an Olympic Training Center (collectively, the "SafeSport Background Screening Pool"). For purposes of clarification, USA Luge is considered to formally authorize, approve or appoint an individual in instances where USA Luge has control over the appointment process.

No less than annually, USA Luge will publish on its website the categories of individuals in the SafeSport Background Screening Pool. To view this list, click <https://www.usaluge.org>.

In USA Luge's discretion on a case-by-case basis USA Luge may bypass this background check requirement for those people in the SafeSport Background Screening Pool who are under 18 years of age.

As to members of the SafeSport Background Screening Pool newly taking a role, USA Luge requires background screening prior to contact with athletes begins, and in any event within sixty (60) days of the commencement of the new role.

USA Luge will track all SafeSport Background Screening Pool background screening and perform periodic checks to ensure compliance with this policy.

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**Section 6**  
**Responding to Abuse and Other Misconduct**

USA Luge and its Adult Participants are subject to the U.S. Center for SafeSport (the “Center”) Code <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/response-and-resolution/safesport-code/> for the investigation and resolution of safe sport violations.

The Center has the exclusive authority to investigate and resolve Covered Individual conduct involving (a) sexual misconduct; and (b) prohibited conduct under the Center’s Code that is reasonably related to the underlying allegation of sexual misconduct. The Center also has discretionary authority over other alleged violations of any prohibited conduct under the Code.

All issues falling within USA Luge’s authority (i.e., outside of the Center’s authority) will be addressed by USA Luge – employee/volunteer matters will be handled pursuant to employee policies and procedures, and issues falling under the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (the “TSOASA”) will, after a preliminary determination (described below), be handled pursuant to the Hearing Procedures in the USA Luge Bylaws (Articles XXX and XXXI). Notwithstanding the foregoing, in an attempt to encourage reporting, a report initiated as set forth in Section 7 of this Policy will be considered to be filed properly (i.e., such a filing does not have to follow the filing requirements of USA Luge Bylaws Article XXX, Section F).

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## **Section 7** **Reporting**

Every Covered Individual must report reasonable suspicions or allegations of: (1) violations of this Policy and (2) child physical or sexual abuse to either the Center or the USA Luge as set forth below.

USA Luge also encourages member parents, athletes and other sport participants to communicate violations of the Policy and/or allegations and suspicions of misconduct and violations of ethical and safe sport policies to include but not limited to violations of the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP). Specifically, violations to policies relating to: One-On-One Interactions, Massages and Rubdown/Athletic Training Modalities, Locker Rooms and Changing Areas, Social Media and Electronic Communications, Local Travel and Team Travel policies, and other similar illegal or improper practices.

If you believe an allegation involves child abuse or neglect, the matter should also be referred to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Please report all issues falling within the Center's authority (see, Section 6, above) to the Center. And if possible, please copy USA Luge, so that USA Luge may implement any necessary interim measures.

TO REPORT TO THE U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT - CLICK: <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern/>

Please report all issues falling outside of the Center's authority to USA Luge.

TO REPORT TO USA LUGE – send an email to [info@usaluge.org](mailto:info@usaluge.org).

USA Luge will forward any reports falling under the Center's jurisdiction to the Center, and will address all other matters.

REPORTING TO EITHER THE CENTER OR USA LUGE MAY BE MADE ANONYMOUSLY. THERE ARE NO FILING FEES ASSOCIATED WITH INITIATING A REPORT.

**All suspicions/allegations of child physical or sexual abuse will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. As a matter of policy, USA Luge does not investigate suspicions/allegations of child physical or sexual abuse or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations as a condition for reporting to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.**

**Section 8**  
**Monitoring and Supervision of the Program**

The Monitoring and Supervision aspect of a SafeSport Program considers how the programs involved monitor, supervise and ensure that the other aspects of the program (i.e. implementation and enforcement of policies, training requirements, screening requirements, responding to adjudication procedures, etc.) are being followed, and how they may be improved, so that they result in a safe environment for the participants.

Monitoring and supervision must occur at different levels within USA Luge:

**National Level – USA Luge**

USA Luge shall monitor compliance with the USA Luge SafeSport Programs in all Clubs.

USA Luge shall ensure that all required training and background screening has occurred as set forth in this policy.

USA Luge shall promptly address any reports of abuse and misconduct, and make all such reports as are required under the USA Luge SafeSport Program or applicable law, and shall monitor and supervise the Club Programs to ensure all such reports are made.

**National Team Coaches**

The head coach for each team shall be responsible for monitoring his or her team to ensure that all sport areas are being properly supervised in accordance with the SafeSport policies. That the Teams travel is conducted in accordance with the Travel Policy that all team electronic communications are in accordance the Social Media, Mobile and Electronic Communications Policy.

It is recognized that the Head coach may not be personally responsible for direct supervision of each of these areas at all time and may delegate responsibility to team personnel for certain activities responsible for delegating as necessary to ensure compliance.

**Club Programs**

Club Programs and their administrators shall ensure that the program institutes and enforces compliance of its teams with all parts of this SafeSport policy.

Club Programs shall monitor their personnel to ensure that the programs coaches, participants, administrators, and other volunteers that will have routine access to youth participants have completed the required training in accordance with the Education and Awareness

Club Programs shall promptly address any reports of abuse and misconduct, and make all such reports as are required under the USA Luge SafeSport Program or applicable law.

**Section 9**  
**Interim Measures**

If the reported complaint indicates that a Covered Individual's continued employment, membership or participation poses a risk of ongoing physical or emotional harm, USA Luge may institute interim measures and/or suspend the accused individual pending final resolution of the complaint to eliminate any potential for danger to an athlete, sport participant or other individual. Except for employee/volunteer issues (over which USA Luge has absolute discretion), USA Luge will provide the Covered Individual with notice and offer her/him an opportunity to contest the suspension.

**Section 10**  
**Appeal Rights**

Any Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act suspension before final resolution may be appealed to the American Arbitration Association (AAA) at the written request of the accused individual within 30 days of the suspension as further detailed in USA Luge Bylaws, Article XXXI.