



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 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 at the track, OTC, on trips, during training of any kind, or at any other USA Luge activity.

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.

Section 1

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.

When training camps are scheduled that require overnight stays at the US Olympic Training Center, USA Luge will make every effort to secure an adult chaperone to supervise down time activities on and off the OTC campus (chaperone to athlete ratio will be 1-10 or less). USA Luge is concerned with OTC activities between minors, minor athletes and adult age athletes, coaches and staff in the OTC environment. It is the goal of USA Luge that all overnight OTC programs have at least one responsible adult present during all team events to assure that only participants (coaches & athletes), approved team personnel and family members are permitted in the OTC at the appropriate times and in the appropriate areas and to supervise conduct at the OTC.

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. We will strive to 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

Though luge is an individual sport, it often includes male and female athletes training together at various venues. Special circumstances may exist that can increase the chance of abuse or misconduct. If the training venue consists of both male and female athletes, both female and male privacy rights must be given consideration and appropriate arrangements made. It is not acceptable for athletes to be observing the opposite gender while they dress or undress. Due to scheduling issues and other practicalities, it is often required that male and female athletes train during the same training sessions. As a result the unique environment at a luge run typically has male and female athletes preparing for training in the same start house. While it is recognized that this special environment exists where male and female athletes will be changing into their competitive gear in the same room, when requested, separate accommodations must be made for an athlete to change in privacy. It is possible, particularly during events held internationally in other countries, that USA Luge may not have direct influence over this environment. However, coaches will endeavor to insure 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 so that care is taken to minimize one on one interaction between youths and adults while travelling. Further, the policy directs how youth athletes will be supervised between and during travel to and from training and competitions. Adherence to travel policies helps to reduce the opportunities for misconduct.

A signature by each adult acknowledging receipt of and agreeing to the travel policy will be obtained by each adult accompanying a trip. Some travel involves only local travel to and from the venue for training or competition while other travel involves overnight stays.

Local Travel

- Often local travel involves a team traveling together, with all arrangements made by the coach or other authorized adult. These arrangements should be made in an acceptable, appropriate and safe manner.
- Whenever possible, coaches, chaperones and volunteers should not drive alone with an athlete and should only drive with at least two athletes or another adult at all times.
- All acceptable safety precautions, such as seat belts, maximum number of occupants and all applicable driving laws will be observed by all authorized adult drivers.

Organization/Team Travel

- Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a youth athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian or sibling of the athlete).
- Because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers and chaperones will often travel with the athletes. No coach, employee or volunteer will engage in team travel without the proper safety requirements in place and on record, including valid driver's licenses, proper insurance and compliance with all state laws. All chaperones shall have been screened in compliance with USA Luge screening policies. When residing at the OTC, all drivers will sign the USOC drivers agreement form.
- Adequate supervision by coaches and other adult chaperones shall always be in place. If a team is composed of both male and female athletes, then if at all possible, chaperones from each gender will be arranged.
- Athletes should share rooms of the same gender with 2-4 athletes assigned per room when possible and appropriate. Regular monitoring and curfew checks will be made of each room.
- Team personnel shall ask hotels to block adult pay per view channels.
- Individual meetings between a coach and athlete may not occur in a hotel room.
- All athletes shall be permitted to make regular check-in phone calls to parents. Team personnel shall allow for any non scheduled check-in phone calls initiated by either the parent or the athlete.
- Family members who wish to stay at the same hotel shall be permitted to do so but will be responsible for making all their own arrangements.
- The Team shall comply with all reasonable parent requests when a child is away from home without a parent/guardian.
- Specific travel itineraries will be distributed to parents when they are available and will include a detailed itinerary as well as contact information for all team personnel and chaperones.
- If disciplinary action against an athlete is required while the athlete is traveling without his/her parents, parents will be notified before any action is taken and will comply with the guidelines of the USA Luge Code of Conduct.
- No coach or chaperone shall at any time be under the influence of alcohol, or drugs while performing their coaching and/or chaperone duties.
- In all cases involving travel, parents have the right to transport their child and have them stay with them in whatever accommodations they have arranged as long as it does not taken the athlete away from scheduled team training/activities.

Section 2

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 that staff, coaches, officials and chaperones report abuse, misconduct and violations of its safety policies. To do so, these individuals should have a basic understanding of abusers and the strategies that offenders use to seduce their victims.

It is the policy of USA Luge that all staff, coaches, Board Members and chaperones shall complete the SafeSport program before having contact with youth participants.

To prevent child physical and sexual abuse and other types of abuse and misconduct, USA Luge has adopted the US Olympic Committee's online SafeSport program. SafeSport includes a series of online training videos in the following subjects that are available for the training of coaches, volunteers, administrators, etc: The Coach-Athlete Relationship, Bullying & Harrassment, Hazing, Emotional Misconduct, Physical Misconduct, Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Abuse, Grooming, Minimizing High Risk Opportunities, Local Travel, Overnight Travel, Signs & Symptoms of Abuse, The Barriers to Reporting Abuse, Reporting and Responding to Misconduct & Abuse.

Individuals who will be required to complete SafeSport training include:

1. USA Luge Board of Directors
2. USA Luge Staff (non coaching).
3. USA Luge Coaches. Coaches are the adults that typically have the most contact with luge athletes and are the leaders of USA Luge teams, programs and individual training and racing sessions. All staff, club and volunteer coaches who will be working with athletes in any US Luge program, will be required to complete the USOC SafeSport program online.
4. Chaperones. Adult chaperones are frequently used to help supervise US Luge programs and are particularly useful during extended overnight programs at the OTC and during training or racing trips to other venues requiring hotel or homestays. These environments can provide opportunities for abuse to occur. Chaperones who have received training will be more likely to recognize the signs of abuse and potentially be in a position to stop it from occurring or reduce the possibility of escalation.

Individuals who will be strongly encouraged to complete SafeSport training include:

1. Parents. Parent education is one of the keys to keeping a program safe from abuse and misconduct. Parents can help by helping avoid situations in which misconduct can occur, by being aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse, and by reporting suspected abuse.
2. Athletes. All athletes selected to a US Luge Team, at all levels, will be strongly encouraged to complete the SafeSport training.

SafeSport Website

To take the SafeSport online course, visit www.safesport.org and follow these steps:

- Click “Training”
- Click “Register” (or “Login” if you’ve already created an account)
- The course is free.
- Follow directions to complete the course
- Estimated time to complete the course is 90-120 minutes

Section 3

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.
- Deter offenders that have not been caught from joining USA Luge programs because the program has a known policy against abuse.
- 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 of its employees, volunteer coaches, officials and chaperones. The following are the minimum criteria that will be searched via screening background check and which may serve as a basis under which a person may be disqualified or prohibited from serving as an employee or volunteer:

- Any felony.
- Any lesser crime involving force or threat of force against a person.
- Any lesser crime of a sexual nature, or in which sexual relations is an element, or classified as a sex offense including but not limited to “victimless” crimes of a sexual nature such as prostitution, pornography, and indecent exposure.
- Any lesser crime involving controlled substances (not paraphernalia or alcohol).

- Any crime involving cruelty to animals.
- Sex offender registrant.
- Any lesser crime involving harm to a minor.

Convictions of (whether disclosed by the applicant or sourced in a criminal records search), and pending dispositions for any of the above crimes or offenses shall be reported and USA Luge shall make a determination of whether the applicant shall be approved for the position sought.

In addition to the minimum criteria mentioned, and any additional criteria that USA Luge elects to include in its search, the following additional criteria (which are unlikely to be found in a criminal records search) shall also serve as a basis under which a person may be disqualified or prohibited from serving as an employee or volunteer in any USA Luge sanctioned program:

- An expunged or sealed conviction for any of the minimum criteria above.
- Being adjudged liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse of children.
- Being subject to any court order involving any sexual abuse or physical abuse of a minor, including but not limited to domestic order of protection.
- Had their parental rights terminated.
- A history with another organization (volunteer, Employment, etc.) of complaints of sexual or physical abuse of minors.
- Resigned, been terminated or been asked to resign from a position, whether paid or unpaid, due to complaints of a sexual or physical abuse of minors.
- Has a history of other behavior that indicates they may be a danger to children in a USA Luge program.

Section 4

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 national personnel, including members of the Board of Directors and national staff have received all required training and have been screened as a condition of holding that position.

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. (we are currently still working on this 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 5

Responding to Abuse and Other Misconduct

All reports of misconduct shall be reviewed and reported in compliance with the Bylaws and Policies of USA Luge and U.S. Center for SafeSport.