



Rules Enforcement at USA Triathlon (USAT) Sanctioned Events

A certain level of officiating is required for any organized race. Competitive rules exist for the good of any sport and triathlon is no different. Rules are not designed to take the fun out of our sport but to actually enhance the race day experience of the vast majority of our athletes who seek to compete fairly. Rules are intended to promote and maintain sportsmanship, equal opportunity, fair play and the integrity of the sport.

At USAT sanctioned events, rules must be enforced in accordance with the [rule book](#) and any approved [rules dispensations](#) which may exist; and someone, preferably [USAT certified officials](#), is appointed to ensure that this is the case. Effectiveness of enforcement depends on resources, but consistent rules enforcement across our sport is a critical component to the success and growth of our sport.

Inconsistency of enforcement at events diminishes respect for the rules and erodes the authority of the official as interpretation seems untethered to any defined rule or principle. Participants uncertainty regarding the scope of their responsibility, their behaviors associated with the role responsibility, the process of how it will be evaluated and the consequences when not carried out, negatively influence participant satisfaction.

As a race director of a USAT sanctioned event, you have a number of options for rules enforcement and should consider how these duties will be carried out at your event, by who (certified officials or otherwise) and available resources. A number of considerations, such as event type; number of participants; level of competition; course and available resources; are factored to determine the appropriate level of officiating.

Options for Rules Enforcement and Rules Education include:

- [Requesting USA Triathlon Certified Officials](#) - The respective Regional Officials Coordinator (ROC) will appoint the head official and team who will facilitate rules enforcement at your event.
- [Self-Officiating](#) – The Event Director will appoint someone as the head official and provide them the training and resources needed to facilitate rules enforcement at the event.
- [Volunteer Marshals](#) - The sport of triathlon is somewhat unusual in that it may use volunteers in the position of marshals who are empowered to report rule infractions. If a USAT Official is requested, the head official may deputize and train volunteers to serve as marshals for rules enforcement in transition or other areas. This works because the head official is the only person who actually assesses penalties and it is that trained official's judgement that will be relied upon for fairness.
- [Rules Ambassadors](#) - Their primary responsibility is to educate constituents about the USAT Competitive Rules and to promote the USAT National Officials Program. This role and assignments within this role are independent of officiating assignments.

Additionally, ROCs are your regional officiating resource, so do not hesitate to reach out to your ROC for guidance.

Requesting USA Triathlon Certified Officials

- Race directors can request USAT Officials by checking the “USAT Officials are requested for this race” check box in the Race Information portion of the sanction application.
- If USAT Officials have been requested for the event, the Regional Officials Coordinator (ROC) will determine the number of officials based on the number of athletes listed in the sanctioning document.
- The typical ratio of officials to participants is 1 official for every 200 athletes, but keep in mind the number needed will vary depending on the course distance and layout.

Event Size	Head	Assistant(s)
200 or fewer	1	0
201-400	1	1
401-600	1	2
601-800	1	3
800+	1	4+

*Please contact your [ROC](#) if you have questions regarding the options available for your event

Minimum resources, provided by event director:

- Motorcycle(s) and licensed motorcycle driver(s) for assigned Official(s).
- A supply of bar-end plugs and a volunteer assigned to plug bars.
- Opportunity for the head official to have a pre-race rules review with athletes.
- Instruct timer that all penalties assessed by the head official must be applied prior to the awards ceremony and included in the final results.
- Comply with the decisions of the Head Official without interference

USAT Certified Officials costs/expenses, payment from event director to official(s):

- Stipend Head official:
 - \$165 for short distance events; \$315 for long/ultra distance events.
- Stipend Assistant Official(s)
 - \$90 per official for short distance events; \$150 for long/ultra distance events.
- Mileage per mile/per official (IRS Rate), round trip; or airfare and ground transportation.
- Tolls and parking
- Lodging, if needed (no more than two officials, gender appropriate, per room)

**Payment to USAT official(s) is made on-site at event, unless otherwise agreed upon.*

Some costs involved could present an obstacle to smaller or lower-budget races, but USAT works to support each event that requests the presence of trained officials. Reach out to your ROC or Event Services to learn more.

Self-Officiating

- Race directors may choose to self-officiate by not checking the “USAT Officials are requested for this race” check box in the Race Information portion of the sanction application.
- If USAT Officials have not been requested for the event, the race director is responsibility for appointing a head official to interpret and enforce the rules, and providing the required resources to facilitate rules enforcement.
- The typical ratio of officials to participants is 1 official for every 200 athletes, but keep in mind the number needed will vary depending on the course distance and layout.

Event Size	Head	Assistant(s)
200 or fewer	1	0
201-400	1	1
401-600	1	2
601-800	1	3
800+	1	4+

Minimum resources, provided by Race Director (RD):

- Motorcycle(s) and licensed motorcycle driver(s) for appointed Official(s).
- Instruct timer that all penalties assessed by the head official must be applied prior to the awards ceremony and included in the final results.
- A supply of bar-end plugs and a volunteer assigned to plug bars.
- Comply with the decisions of the Head Official without interference
- Opportunity for the head official to have a pre-race rules review with athletes.

Self-officiated costs/expenses, payment from RD to official(s):

- Stipend for Head official:
 - To be determined between RD and appointed head official.
- Stipend for Assistant Official(s)
 - To be determined between RD and assistant officials.
- Following expenses to be determined by RD and official(s):
 - Mileage per mile/per official (IRS Rate), round trip; or airfare and ground transportation.
 - Tolls and parking
 - Lodging, if needed

**Payment to official(s) is determined between RD and official(s).*

Volunteer Marshals

- If a race director requests a USAT official, the head referee may deputize and train volunteers to serve as marshals for rules enforcement in transition or other areas.
- Volunteer marshals, who have been deputized and trained by the USAT head official, can be used in the position of marshals who are empowered to report rule infractions to the head official.
- Proper training of the volunteer marshals is critical to ensure they make the appropriate calls.
- All USAT officials who are working the bike portion of the event must be passengers. Citations should not be accepted from those marshals or volunteers who are drivers.
- All violations reported by volunteer marshals will be reviewed by the head official. The head official is the only person who actually assesses penalties and it is that trained official's judgment that will be relied upon for fairness.

Minimum resources, provided by Race Director (RD):

- Motorcycle(s) and licensed motorcycle driver(s) for appointed Official(s).
- A supply of bar-end plugs and a volunteer assigned to plug bars.
- Opportunity for the head official to have a pre-race rules review with athletes.
- Instruct timer that all penalties assessed by the head official must be applied prior to the awards ceremony and included in the final results.
- Comply with the decisions of the Head Official without interference

Self-officiated costs/expenses, payment from RD to official(s):

- Stipend for Head official:
 - \$165 for short distance events;
 - \$315 for long/ultra-distance events.
- Stipend for Assistant Official(s)
 - \$90 per official for short distance events; \$150 for long/ultra-distance events.
- Mileage per mile/per official (IRS Rate), round trip; or airfare and ground transportation.
- Tolls and parking
- Lodging, if needed (no more than two officials, gender appropriate, per room).
- Volunteer Marshal – If any stipend is provided or costs/reimbursement is determined by RD.

** Payment to USAT official(s) is made on-site at event, unless otherwise agreed upon.*

Rules Ambassadors

- Rules Ambassadors are certified officials who volunteer as representatives for the USAT National Officials Program; providing education, support, positive advice and guidance to participants, outside of competition, about the USAT Competitive Rules and officiating.
- Rules Ambassadors can be used at various venues and meetings to provide rules education and officiating practices in our sport, especially at participatory or beginner events.
- This role, and assignments within this role, are independent of officiating; however, there may be exceptions for events which are “participatory” only, no results sent to USAT for rankings.
- The rules ambassadors would educate participants and be lenient on rules which are not safety related (*requires request for [rules dispensations](#)*); however, acts of unsportsmanlike behavior, violence or aggressive behavior will be penalized and a disqualification must always be cited.
- The priority is to educate newcomers about the rules, ensure they learn an important aspect of our sport, understand and follow the rules as they progress from beginner to serious competitor.
 - ***Prior approval for [rules dispensations](#) from USAT is required and would require same costs associated with requesting officials.**
 - In this case, it is possible to have your event mock officiated.
 - Rules ambassadors will perform rules enforcement at the event, but rather than have penalties applied to on site results. Participants who have been cited must consult with the rules ambassadors to learn what was observed which violated a rule and which rule.
 - It is essential and indispensable to highlight that triathlon is a sport with rules, so it is important to help new participants understand and follow the rules.
 - This is the aim of rules ambassador at participatory events
- Because of the educational nature of beginner participatory events with rules ambassadors, the exchange of information between participant’s and officials should be set up at the venue to be as supportive and relaxed as possible. It must be a moment of communication, contact and growth for both the athlete’s community and the official’s community.
- Education is a fundamental area of emphasis for compliance and should begin from the very first introduction to the sport. This ensures participants understand the rules when learning the sport and aware of the rules and consequences when they reach competitive events.
- There are many opportunities to utilize Rules Ambassadors at your events, either to enhance your event by offering education in the days leading up to or at your event by attending packet pick up, beginner meeting, expo, etc. Additionally, the opportunity to introduce new participants to rules and officiating by simulating rules enforcement at your participatory events.

**Rules Ambassadors are requested and assigned through the USAT Officials Program.*

Dispensation Process:

If you are interested in requesting an amendment, modification or dispensation, then the process is fairly simple. The request must be sent in writing to the Event Services Team at USA Triathlon, Event.Services@USATriathlon.org, during the sanction review process for an event. The team will review the request and determine whether it shall be approved or denied – the more information and rationale for the request, the better. If approved, the dispensation must be posted on the event's website so that all athletes are aware of the adjustment.

Not every request will be supported but those that are well defended and positioned as an element not compromising safety, the chances are good that the request will receive support.