



U.S. CENTER FOR
SAFESPORT

Safe Sport

MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS

MYTH

Adding a SafeSport requirement makes the process to be a member of USA-WSWS too complicated

FACT

Over time, SafeSport training will become the norm in all of sports. The 75-90 minute SafeSport Core Training only needs to be completed every four years, with 20-30 minute refresher training during the other years. Training is intended to educate members to help identify and prevent abuse within our sport, and to know how to properly report if abuse is witnessed.

MYTH

The USOPC is forcing USA-WSWS to require members to do SafeSport training

FACT

There is nothing more important to USA-WSWS than protecting our athletes, especially our young participants. USA-WSWS is joining 15 other NGBs by voluntarily introducing requirements for adult members to complete SafeSport training. Given the family nature of our sport, there are very few events that exclude children. Additionally, unobservable, and unintermittible one-on-one interactions that take place between minor athletes and adult participants within our sport create vulnerabilities for sexual abuse and misconduct to occur. By requiring awareness training, USA-WSWS is taking proactive measures to create a safe and positive environment for all members on and off the water.

MYTH

There is not a history of behavior that warrants the need for this education within our sport.

FACT

Since 2018, the Center has investigated a total of 7,209 cases among all NGBs, including 17 cases involving USA-WSWS members. There have been eight membership suspensions and two probations for violation of the SafeSport Code. Five cases currently remain open and are being investigated. Click here to view our [suspended member list](#).

MYTH

Requiring all members over 18 to be SafeSport trained will consequently reduce overall membership

FACT

When reviewing data provided by the 15 other NGBs who have recently initiated the same Safe Sport requirement, there is no evidence to support membership growth was negatively impacted by implementing SafeSport Training requirements. In some instances, NGB membership has actually increased.

MYTH

If I am involved in multiple sports, then I will have to take the SafeSport training multiple times.

FACT

The USA Water Ski & Wake Sports membership database has a direct connection to the SafeSport database. Any SafeSport trainings completed through another sport organization (as long as the dates of completion are valid), can be used to fulfill the USA Water Ski & Wake Sports annual training requirement.

MYTH

If I do not complete the training, then I will no longer be allowed to compete.

FACT

New members and those renewing their membership will have 30 days upon registering to complete the training. Membership status during this period will appear as “pending” until the training is completed. Members with a pending and active status are eligible to participate in USA-WSWS sanctioned activities. If, after 30 days, training is not completed, membership status will become “inactive” and you will be unable to participate until training is completed.

MYTH

Coaches/ Instructors cannot be friends with minors on social media

FACT

The Electronic Communications Policy, located in the SafeSport Handbook, states that all electronic communication including phone calls, videoconferencing, video coaching, texting, and social media must be open and transparent in all one-on-one engagements between a minor athlete and an adult participant. Open and transparent means that the adult participant copies or includes the minor athlete’s parent/guardian, another adult family member of the minor athlete, or another adult participant. If a minor athlete communicates with the adult participant first, the adult participant must follow this policy if the adult participant responds.

MYTH

This requirement will eventually go away.

FACT

USA Water Ski & Wake Sports is committed to building a culture that values a safe and positive environment for all members on and off the water and that is an environment free from abuse and misconduct. Additionally, Federal Law, S534, imposes general requirements on youth-serving amateur athletic organizations, like ours, which include prevention training for adult members who have regular contact with minor athletes.

MYTH

Accused individuals have no opportunity to have their voices heard.

FACT

While false allegations are unlikely, they unfortunately do happen, and the U.S. Center for SafeSport has highly experienced investigators who are skilled and trained to recognize false claims. The accused will have an opportunity to be heard by the case investigator. This affords the accused with the opportunity to provide their story, learn what evidence the investigator has gathered, and provide their own evidence, including the identity of witnesses who may have relevant factual information. This process occurs before any disciplinary action is taken. Further, there are consequences for knowingly making a false report as it may violate state criminal law and civil defamation laws.

MYTH

Under the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s process, you are guilty until proven innocent.

FACT

The U.S. Center for SafeSport follows a thorough investigative process, led by trained investigators, to ensure the accuser and the accused are fully heard. To protect both parties, the process is confidential and once a decision is issued by the Center, if designed, the accused can request a hearing before an independent arbitrator.