

USA KARATE
REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR USA KARATE OFFICIALS



Member
United States Olympic Paralympic Committee

Effective January 13, 2023

USA KARATE REFEREE COMMITTEE VISION STATEMENT

*Honesty * Integrity * Commitment*

USA KARATE REFEREE COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

- Establish the rules of competition and guidelines for Officials
- Develop educational programs and opportunities for USA Karate Officials to improve and update their skills
- Implement a fair and transparent method of testing Officials' skills and providing opportunities for Officials to increase their certifications
- Oversee and evaluate the performance of USA Officials
- Encourage USA Karate members to become Officials.

GENERAL RULES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR USA REFEREES AND JUDGES

Requirements for USA Officials

- Current USA Karate Membership
- Current Safe Sport Training (annually)
- Current Background Screening (valid for two years)
- Review and sign Official's Code of Conduct (annually)
- Review and sign Conflict of Interest Disclosure (annually)

Certification Categories for USA Karate Officials

USA KARATE REGIONAL KATA LICENSES	USA KARATE REGIONAL KUMITE LICENSES	
USA Karate Regional Kata Judge C, B, A	USA Karate Regional Kumite Judge B, A	USA Regional Kumite Referee B, A

USA NATIONAL KATA LICENSES	USA NATIONAL KUMITE LICENSES	
National Kata Judge B, A	National Kumite Judge B, A	National Kumite Referee B, A

Age, Rank and Testing Requirements for USA Officials

Certification	Age	Rank	Online Exam
USA Karate National Kumite Referee: A	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	Attend Live
USA Karate National Kumite Referee: B	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	Attend Live
USA Karate National Kumite Judge: A	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	90%
USA Karate National Kumite Judge: B	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	90%
USA Karate Regional Kumite Referee: A	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	90%
USA Karate Regional Kumite Referee: B	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	90%
USA Karate Regional Kumite Judge: A	16+	1 st Kyu/Brown Belt	80%
USA Karate Regional Kumite Judge: B	14+	1 st Kyu/Brown Belt	80%
USA Karate National Kata Judge: A	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	Attend Live
USA Karate National Kata Judge: B	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	Attend Live
USA Karate Regional Kata Judge: A	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	90%
USA Karate Regional Kata Judge: B	16+	Shodan/Black Belt	80%
USA Karate Regional Kata Judge: C	14+	1 st Kyu/Brown Belt	80%

Online exams must have been completed and passed within 30 days of new license to be valid.

Examinations for National Kata Judge Licenses and National Kumite Referee Licenses are only available, in person, at USA Signature Events.

Participation and Recertification - Annual Requirements

To maintain a national license, Officials are required to attend one seminar per year and must attend and participate as an official in at least one signature event a year.

To maintain a regional license, officials are expected to attend at least one online or in person seminar a year that is given by a certified instructor and to participate in at least one tournament as an official each year.

If an official fails to meet the above requirements, they may recertify at their prior level by attending the appropriate seminar and passing the written and practical exams.

All officials are required to comply with the Officials' Code of Conduct.

The failure to comply with these requirements may lead to the suspension of the Official's license.

Exemptions

USA Karate Officials:

Exemptions for the inability to attend all or part of a USA Karate Signature Event may be granted to those officials who are engaged in conducting authorized business for USA Karate or as otherwise provided by the terms of this Policy.

International Officials:

International officials must actively support USA Karate Signature Events, among other considerations set forth by the Referee Committees, to be considered for international travel by the USA Karate Referee Committee and/or Administration. Participation in the prior two signature events is required before an Official will be authorized to participate in any international events.

Failure to participate as a referee or judge in a USA Karate Signature Event that the international Official attends, may result in consequences which may include, but may not be limited to, the forfeiture or suspension of the individual's USA Referee/Judge License.

An official whose license is not current and/or is not in good standing is ineligible to participate in International (WKF or PKF) Events or Seminars for the time period set forth.

Submission of Exemptions

Exceptions to this Policy must be submitted in writing and received by USA Karate no

later than 60 days prior to the USA Karate Signature Event in which the individual requests an exception. The written Attendance Exception Form (Appendix B) should be submitted to the Referee Certification Committee Chairperson and a copy to the Board of Director's Chair. For an exception to be approved and issued, all members of the Referee Certification Committee must unanimously agree and approve the request and a written response must be provided.

In case of a medical emergency, natural disaster, or an unplanned employment demand preventing attendance at a signature event, the official must submit the Attendance Exception Form as soon as possible to the Referee Certification Committee.

Officials' Review and Evaluation Process

The USA Karate Referee Operations Committee is charged with reviewing and evaluating the performance of all officials participating in the USA Karate Signature Events. The Referee Operations Committee shall collect feedback from the designated Tatami Managers and will also collect information through their own direct observations of Officials' performances during the Signature Events.

Comments or constructive criticism of a general nature will be discussed during Tournament briefings. The names of individual Officials shall not be discussed at such briefings.

If the Referee Operations Committee deems that an Official should receive a personal evaluation, the Referee Operations Committee Chair, along any at least one other member of one of the Referee committees, shall meet with the Official in a private location to discuss any comments or concerns that have arisen. At their discretion, the USA Referee Operations Committee may submit a written recommendation to the Referee Certification Committee for the review and perhaps reassessment of the official's license or the requirement for additional training or testing to maintain their status. If the Official is unwilling to accept the constructive criticism or is unwilling to comply with any recommendations, the two Referee Committee members involved in the discussion with the Official shall make a written referral to the Ethics Committee for evaluation of the official's conduct.

The USA Karate Ethics Committee is charged with evaluating Officials' compliance with the USA Karate Officials' Code of Conduct. The Ethics Committee may recommend sanctions against the official which will be evaluated by the Referee Committees and the USA Karate Board of Directors.

GENERAL RULES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR REFEREES AND JUDGES OF THE PAN AMERICAN KARATE FEDERATION (PKF)

Pan American Categories for Kata and Kumite Certifications

Kata		Kumite
Judge		Referee
Judge C	Judge	Referee B
Judge B	Judge C	Referee A
Judge A	Judge B	
	Judge A	

General Requirements

- All PKF Officials must comply with all requirements for a USA Karate Officials as noted above.
- USA Karate Officials who have received their USA Karate National Kata Judge “A” License or their USA Karate National Referee “A” License are eligible to test for an PKF license.
- PKF Officials must be at least 21 years of age and have obtained the rank of 2nd Dan in Karate.
- Prior to representing USA Karate at any PKF event, USA Karate Officials must have the approval of the USA Karate Referee Certification Committee.
- Upon passing or recertifying for any PKF license, the official must send a photocopy of the certificate (passing test) or entry in their Karate Passport (recertifying) to the USA Karate Referee Certification Committee.
- Subject to the Exemption Policy, any USA Karate Official participating in an PKF event must have participated as an official in the most recent two USA Karate Signature Events.
- All PKF Officials must submit an Emergency Information Form (Appendix C) one week prior to leaving the country.

PKF License Participation and Recertification Requirements

A Pan American Judge or Referee can be absent from three consecutive Pan American events without losing his/her category but must participate and renew his/her license in the fourth Pan American event.

PKF events include

PKF Senior Championship
PKF Junior and Cadet Championship

Dates and locations for these events may be found at www.pkfkarate.com.

GENERAL RULES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR REFEREES AND JUDGES OF WORLD KARATE FEDERATION (WKF)

World Karate Federation Categories for Kata and Kumite Certification

Kata	Kumite
Judge	Judge Referee
Judge B	Judge B Referee B
Judge A	Judge A Referee A

General Requirements

- All International Officials must comply with all requirements for a USA Karate Officials as noted above
- USA Karate Officials who have received their PKF Kata Judge “A” License or their PKF Karate Referee “A” License are eligible to test for a WKF license.
- All WKF Officials must be at least 25 years of age and have obtained the rank of 3rd Dan in Karate.
- Officials seeking a WKF license must hold a Dan Certificate from USA Karate
- Prior to representing USA Karate at any WKF event, USA Karate Officials must have the approval of the USA Karate Referee Certification Committee.
- Must submit an Emergency Information Form (Appendix C) one week prior to leaving the country.
- Upon passing the Kata and/or Kumite test or recertifying, Officials must send a photocopy of the certificate (passing test) or entry in the Karate Passport (recertifying) to the Certification Committee.
- Comply with all WKF requirements, policies and rules.

USA Karate Officials eligibility for WKF Referee/Judge Examination is based upon the following:

- Licensing examination is based on seniority.
- A USA Karate official who holds a current PKF Kumite Referee “A” and PKF Kata Judge “A” license is considered to have established seniority for WKF Referee/Judge licensing examination purposes.
- Within the roster of USA Karate officials, seniority is further established by each official’s date of PKF Kumite “A” and PKF Kata “A” licensing.
- In the event that PKF Kumite “A” and PKF Kata “A” certification was awarded to more than one USA Karate official on the same date, the USA Karate Referee Certification Committee shall determine which USA Karate/PKF Kumite “A” and PKF Kata “A” official(s) shall be eligible over the other(s) for WKF Referee licensing examination purposes.
- All testing requirements are subject to amendment by the WKF.

The USA Karate Referee Certification Committee shall maintain a seniority list of officials eligible to seek advancement within WKF. A USA Karate official who fails the WKF Referee licensing examination in a given year shall be positioned at the end of the USA Karate/PKF Kumite “A” and PKF Kata “A” official’s roster for future the next WKF Referee/Judge licensing examination.

The WKF ranking will be maintained by the USA Karate Referee certification Committee and will be posted on the USA Karate website and updated appropriately.

An official who does not pass a WKF exam shall be moved to the bottom of the priority list.

The scheduled WKF events and testing may be found at www.wkf.net.

SELECTION OF OFFICIALS FOR USA TEAM TRIALS

The USA Karate Referee Operations Committee will select Officials for these events using the following:

- Criteria provided by the Board of Directors
- Official's ranking as documented by the USA Karate Referee Certification Committee

REFEREE COMMITTEE MEMBERS REQUIREMENTS

All USA Karate Referee Committee members are required to attend the following:

- Anti-Retaliation Training
- Conflict of Interest Session

COMPLAINTS REGARDING CONDUCT OF OFFICIALS

A complaint alleging a violation of the USA-NKF Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest Policy, Gift Policy, Whistleblower Policy, SafeSport Policy, USA-NKF Minor Athletes and Officials Abuse Prevention Policies, USOPC Bylaws, Ted Stevens Act or any other USA-NKF rule shall be addressed by the Complaint and Hearing Procedures posted on the USA Karate Website.