

On August 27, 2018 the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) Board of Directors met and approved rule GR1303: Safe Sport Requirements that mandates all USEF Adult Competing Members take Safe Sport Training. This includes amateurs, professionals, and owners who have an annual, three-year, or lifetime membership (USEF Fan Members are not required to take Safe Sport Training). Members must complete the Safe Sport Training by January 1, 2019 or within 30 days of renewing their membership if after January 1, 2019. If the Safe Sport Training is not completed, the individual will not be eligible to participate in USEF competitions or activities until the training is completed.

How this rule change came about...

Signed by President Trump on February 14, 2018, Senate bill S.534 “Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017” amends two Federal statutes: The Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 and Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act. Among other things, S.534 extends reporting duties, expands civil remedies, and designates the U.S. Center for SafeSport to serve as the independent national Safe Sport Organization. Under this law, every National Governing Body (NGB) designated by the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act and interstate youth-serving sports organization must offer and provide Safe Sport Training. A National Governing Body (NGB) is an amateur sports organization that is recognized by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC). There are fifty NGB's, one of which is the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF), which is recognized as the United States Olympic Committee's National Governing Body for Equestrian Sport.

What is the U.S. Center for SafeSport?

Opened on March 3, 2017, and initially chartered by the USOC, the U.S. Center for SafeSport is a national non-profit organization focused on preventing all forms of abuse in sport. The objective of the center is to provide education and independent response and resolution services for U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Organizations. The U.S. Center for SafeSport (The Center) has exclusive jurisdiction over reports of sexual misconduct concerning all members, competition participants, and persons appointed by a NGB (in this instance USEF) as an authority over athletes or who have frequent contact with minor and amateur athletes. The Center receives reports, conducts investigations, determines sanctions, and informs NGBs of sanctions of individuals for violations of the Safe Sport Code. The NGB's are, in turn, required by Federal Law to enforce the sanctions imposed by The Center.

A suspended or banned person is prohibited from participating in any activity or competition authorized by the USOC, the recognized NGB, or any organization affiliated with the NGB. Although the American Saddlebred Horse Association, American Hackney Horse Society, American Morgan Horse Association, Arabian Horse Association, and American Roadster Horse and Pony Association (among others) are considered ‘National Breeds’ and do not participate in Olympic disciplines, they are all recognized affiliates of USEF and therefore mandated to uphold the sanctions passed down from The Center to USEF. Competition management is responsible for ensuring no banned or suspended individual is on the competition grounds.

Does U.S. Center for SafeSport handle all reports of misconduct?

The Center exclusively handles all reports of sexual misconduct. USEF handles all reports of non-sexual misconduct including harassment, hazing, bullying, and physical or emotional misconduct. Additionally, under GR1303, “every Federation adult member and Federation adult participant, with the exception of the victim, shall report suspected sexual misconduct, including sexual abuse, and suspected child abuse, within 24 hours to the appropriate authorities and to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.” As stated in the USEF Safe Sport Policy, no statutes of limitations apply to reports of incidents of sexual misconduct.

Additional information on Safe Sport, including links to incident report forms, can be found at usef.org under the Safe Sport heading.