

Safe Sport Act Overview

What is the Safe Sport Act?

The Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 was created in reaction to the abuse found in various youth sports organizations including USA Gymnastics. This act will create a new standard of care which will affect youth serving organizations across the country. The purpose of the law is to expand existing mandated reporting laws to all youth sport organizations that participate in international or interstate sporting events. This has the potential to affect not only national governing bodies like USA Gymnastics, USA Swimming, and other Olympic sports, but the law could also impact camps, public and private schools, collegiate sports, country clubs, community organizations, and sport facilities.

Are New Policies Required?

The Safe Sport Act requires sports organizations to establish reasonable procedures to limit one-on-one interactions between an adult and an amateur athlete who is a minor... without being in an observable and interruptible distance from another adult.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Who is Impacted?

The law is written very broadly. Therefore, it is likely this new federal law impacts youth sports organizations in every state. At a minimum, any organization involved in youth sports will likely be held to an increased “standard of care” regarding reporting, training, policies and procedures, and periodic safety system reviews. It is imperative you speak with your legal counsel to determine the specific impacts of the new law on your organization.

Does My Staff Need More Training?

All youth sport organizations are likely required to provide consistent training in “abuse prevention.” These organizations must offer and give consistent training to all adult members who are in regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors, and subject to parental consent, to members who are minors, regarding “prevention and reporting child abuse...” It is important to note that the required training must include “preventative” measures. Therefore, the training must not only focus on reporting or identifying those that have been abused, but it must train individuals in actual prevention techniques such as understanding “grooming” practices. Additionally, such individuals affiliated with National Governing Bodies are required to complete the “Core Center for SafeSport Training” provided by the U.S. Center for SafeSport. This training must be completed before regular contact with a minor begins, within the first 45 days of initial membership, or upon beginning a new role subjecting the participating adult to this policy.

Am I Now a Mandated Reporter?

The Safe Sport Act expands the list of individuals required to report child sexual abuse. Now, it is likely any adult who is authorized to interact with youth athletes will be required to report suspicions of abuse to the appropriate law enforcement agencies. Therefore, all staff and volunteers working with youth at your organization could be considered mandatory reporters. Further, there is an additional requirement to report suspicions to the U.S. Center for SafeSport if your organization is governed by a “National Governing Body” or “Paralympic Sports Organization”.

Additional Requirements for National Governing Body Organizations and Paralympic Sports:

For NGBs and Paralympic sports, additional procedures and policies are required. Such organizations must enact oversight procedures, including regular and random audits conducted by subject matter experts, to ensure that policies and procedures developed to prevent abuse are followed correctly. These audits must be conducted by subject matter experts, like Praesidium. Additionally, these organizations are required to report suspicions of abuse to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, implement a standardized mechanism for reporting, and enact procedures to prohibit retaliation.

5 Effects Of The Safe Sport Act

- 1. *Increase in Standard of Care:*** Organizations involved in youth sports are held to an increased standard of care regarding reporting, training, policies and procedures, and periodic safety system reviews.
- 2. *Expansions of Mandatory Reporting:*** All staff and volunteers authorized to interact with minor athletes are now mandated reporters. Reports must be filed within 24 hours to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.
- 3. *Mandatory Prevention Training:*** All staff and volunteers authorized to interact with minor athletes are now mandated reporters. Reports must be filed within 24 hours to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.
- 4. *Additional Requirements for National Governing Body & Paralympic Organizations:*** Mandatory reporting to the U.S. Center for SafeSport Required to complete Core Center for SafeSport Training Standardized mechanism for reporting Procedures to prohibit retaliation. Regular and random audits conducted by subject matter specialists, such as Praesidium, to ensure that polices are correctly followed
- 5. *Required Prevention Policies:*** Establish reasonable procedures to limit one-on-one interactions, including but not limited to: Meetings and Individual Training Sessions Massages and Rubdowns^{SEP}Locker Rooms, Rest Rooms, and Changing Areas Social Media and Electronic Communications Local Travel and Team Travel

The information above is a black and white version of brochures from the Praesidium Inc., www.praesidiuminc.com. 800-743-6354 that were distributed at the SERA Annual meeting. Praesidium is one of the organizations that provided information to the SERA Ad-Hoc Committee.