



ANNUAL GUIDE 2025-2026

*As many as possible,
for as long as possible,
in the best environment possible.*



PURPOSE

Vermont State Amateur Hockey Association (VSAHA) is responsible for developing and implementing those action plans and activities that best meet the spirit of the following USA Hockey Core Values.

Sportsmanship:

Foremost of all values is to learn a sense of fair play. Become humble in victory, gracious in defeat. We will foster friendship with teammates and opponents alike.

Respect for the individual:

Treat all others as you expect to be treated.

Integrity:

We seek to foster honesty and fair play beyond more strict interpretation of the rules and regulations of the game.

Pursuit of Excellence at the Individual, Team, and Organizational Levels:

Each member of the organization, whether player, volunteer, or staff, should seek to perform each aspect of the game to the highest level of his or her ability.

Enjoyment:

It is important for the hockey experience to be fun, satisfying, and rewarding for the participant.

Loyalty:

We apprise to teach loyalty to the ideals of fellow members of the sport of hockey.

Teamwork:

We value the strength of learning together. The use of teamwork is reinforced and rewarded by success in the hockey experience.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHANGE LOG.....	5
OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS.....	6
MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS.....	7
Local Associations.....	7
Allied Members.....	7
Sled Hockey.....	7
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS.....	8
Face-Off Meeting.....	8
Monthly Board of Directors Meetings.....	8
Annual Meeting.....	8
BOARD OF DIRECTOR POSITIONS.....	9
Elected Positions.....	9
VSAHA Appointed Positions.....	10
USA Hockey Appointed Positions.....	11
Director Positions.....	11
COMMITTEES.....	12
Required Committees.....	12
Appointed/Special Committees.....	13
IMPORTANT LINKS.....	14
MEMBERSHIP REQUEST PROCESS.....	15
REGISTRATION WITH USA HOCKEY & VSAHA.....	17
Rosters.....	18
Credentialing Requirements.....	20
Games Played for Tournament Eligibility.....	21
International Player Transfers.....	22
Tournament Sanctioning.....	22
COACHING REQUIREMENTS.....	23
Overview.....	23
CEP Requirements.....	23
USA HOCKEY COACHES HELMET POLICY.....	24
GIRLS & WOMEN’S HOCKEY.....	25
GOALTENDING.....	26
USA HOCKEY OFFICIATING PROGRAM.....	27
Certification Process.....	27
Seminars.....	27
8 & UNDER HOCKEY.....	28
No Full Ice Games and Tournaments.....	28
ADM Stages for 8U & Under.....	28
Important Aspects of 8U & Under.....	29

8U Program Structure.....	30
Cross Ice Format.....	32
USA HOCKEY SAFE SPORT PROGRAM.....	34
Local Safe Sport Coordinator.....	36
Safe Sport Training.....	37
DECLARATION OF PLAYER SAFETY.....	38
Competitive Contact.....	38
Body Checking.....	39
Competitive Contact Category.....	40
Body Checking Category.....	41
Unsportsmanlike Conduct.....	42
Summary.....	42
NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT PLAYER DEVELOPMENT TRYOUTS.....	43
Overview.....	43
Organizational Structure.....	43
Registration Requirements.....	44
TIER I SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCESS.....	45
CRITERIA FOR ALL NATIONAL & REGIONAL BOUND TEAMS.....	46
REGIONAL, SECTIONAL & NATIONAL BOUND TEAMS.....	46
LOGO USAGE POLICY.....	47
STANDARDIZED DISCIPLINE POLICY.....	48
GAME LEVEL.....	49
ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL.....	50
MATCH PENALTY POLICY.....	51
GAME MANAGEMENT POLICY.....	54
VIDEO REVIEW REQUEST POLICY.....	55
VIDEOS THAT MAY BE REVIEWED.....	55
VIDEOS THAT WILL NOT GENERALLY REVIEWED.....	55
SUBMISSION PROCESS.....	56
VIDEO REVIEW PROCEDURE.....	56
VIDEO REVIEW DECISIONS.....	56
MEETING ATTENDANCE POLICY.....	57
PLAY UP POLICY.....	58
COMBINED TEAM POLICY.....	59
ASSOCIATION TRYOUT POLICY.....	60
GAME CANCELLATION POLICY.....	60
OUTSTANDING DEBT POLICY.....	61
INJURY INCIDENT REPORTING.....	63
Concussion Management Protocol.....	63
Injury Reporting Form.....	63
CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY.....	64

Definitions.....	64
Existence of a Conflict of Interest.....	65
Questions.....	70
CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY.....	71
Types of Confidential Information.....	71
Failure to Comply.....	71
WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY.....	72
RECORD RETENTION POLICY.....	74
INTERNAL PAYMENT POLICY.....	75
USA HOCKEY AND HOCKEY CANADA RULES AGREEMENT.....	75

CHANGE LOG

VERSION 1	Initial Release (9/15/25)
VERSION 2	Updated Coaching Requirements (10/3/25)

OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

<p>PRESIDENT John Cioffi 802-782-2569 © president@vthockey.org VSAHA Elected - Term Expires: 2026</p>	<p>1ST VICE PRESIDENT Policy & Rules Chair Nate Isham 802-793-9191 © vp@vthockey.org VSAHA Elected - Term Expires: 2026</p>
<p>2ND VICE PRESIDENT State Tournament Director Pat Phillips 802-233-7558 © tournaments@vthockey.org VSAHA Elected - Term Expires: 2026</p>	<p>TREASURER Player Development Co-Chair Adam Hammond 802-355-3763 © treasurer@vthockey.org VSAHA Elected - Term Expires: 2026</p>
<p>SECRETARY Player Development Co-Chair Christopher Micciche 802-318-6201 © cmicciche@miccichelaw.com VSAHA Elected - Term Expires: 2027</p>	<p>STATE REGISTRAR Bob Greemore 802-828-4777 © rgreemore@msn.com USA Hockey Appointed</p>
<p>COACH-IN-CHIEF (CIC) Becky Street 802-922-3629 © girlshockey@vthockey.org USA Hockey Appointed</p>	<p>REFEREE-IN-CHIEF (RIC) Alex Bergeron 802-363-6032 © ric@vthockey.org USA Hockey Appointed</p>
<p>SAFE SPORT COORDINATOR Ray St. Pierre 802-316-9517 © rstpierre@NEAir.com USA Hockey Appointed</p>	<p>PLAYER SAFETY COORDINATOR Jody Lavanway 802-249-8937 © playersafety@vthockey.org VSAHA Appointed</p>
<p>GROWTH COORDINATOR Peter Langella 603-867-0491 © growth@vthockey.org VSAHA Appointed</p>	<p>GIRLS/WOMEN DIRECTOR Becky Street 802-922-3629 © girlshockey@vthockey.org VSAHA Appointed</p>
<p>GOALTENDER DEV COORDINATOR Ellie Simmons 716-468-4604 © goalies@vthockey.org VSAHA Appointed</p>	<p>DISABLED HOCKEY COORDINATOR VACANT VSAHA Appointed</p>

MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

Local Associations

[Burlington Amateur Hockey Association](#)
[Central Vermont Youth Hockey Association](#)
[Chittenden South Burlington Youth Hockey Association](#)
[Essex Youth Hockey Association](#)
[Lyndon Area Youth Hockey Association](#)
[Middlebury Amateur Hockey Association](#)
[Milton Youth Hockey Association](#)
[Missisquoi Amateur Hockey Association](#)
[Northshire Hockey Association](#)
[Rutland Amateur Hockey Association](#)
[St. Albans Skating Association](#)
[Stowe Youth Hockey Association](#)
[Woodstock Youth Hockey and Skating Association](#)

Allied Members

[Black Ice Hockey](#)
[Brattleboro Hockey Association](#)
[Vermont Junior Catamounts](#)
[Rice Knights](#)
[Upper Valley Youth Hockey Association](#)
[Vermont Flames](#)
[Vermont Shamrocks](#)
[Vermont Stars](#)

Sled Hockey

[Central Vermont Pioneers](#)
[Ice Vets](#)
[Vermont Sled Cats](#)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Face-Off Meeting

Sunday, August 24th, 2025

8:00am to 2:00pm

Face-Off Meeting Location

Capital Plaza Hotel

100 State Street

Montpelier, VT 05602

Monthly Board of Directors Meetings

Executive Board - 6:00pm - 7:00pm

Full Board - 7:00pm - 9:00pm

Monthly & Annual Meeting Location

Windjammer Conference Center

1076 Williston Road

South Burlington, VT 05403

Tuesday - October 14th, 2025

Tuesday - November 11th, 2025

Tuesday - December 9th, 2025

Tuesday - January 13th, 2026

Tuesday - February 10th, 2026

Tuesday - March 10th, 2026

Annual Meeting

Tuesday - April 14th, 2026

Dates, times, and location subject to change

If necessary, Zoom information will be shared via email prior to the meeting.

Committee meetings will be called when necessary.

BOARD OF DIRECTOR POSITIONS

Full Job Descriptions can be found on the VSAHA website:

<https://www.vermonthockey.org/boddescriptions>

Elected Positions

President (1 Year Term)

The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Association and shall have general management of the business and affairs of the Association.

First Vice President (1 Year Term)

The First Vice-President, in the absence of the President, shall assume the duties and have all the responsibilities of the President. The First Vice President shall also Chair the Rules Committee and Policy Committee.

Second Vice President (1 Year Term)

The Vice-President shall perform such other duties and have such other powers as the Board of Directors shall from time to time prescribe or as the President may from time to time delegate. The Second Vice President shall Chair the Tournament Committee.

Treasurer (2 Year Term - Even Number Years)

The Treasurer shall be custodian of all funds and maintain financial records of VSAHA. The Treasurer shall have the authority to sign all checks written by the Association.

Secretary (2 Year Term - Odd Number Years)

The Secretary shall keep all records and be charged with the mailing of all meeting notices and the recording and keeping of all minutes, as well as any correspondence required by the Executive Board and the Board.

VSAHA Appointed Positions

Growth Coordinator (Until Replaced)

The Growth Coordinator for VSAHA is responsible for coordinating growth initiatives, and working closely with USA Hockey and VSAHA leadership to establish and implement yearly growth plans. This is a non-voting position.

Girls Hockey Coordinator (Until Replaced)

The Girls Coordinator at VSAHA oversees the development and promotion of girls' hockey, working closely with coaches, administrators, and the VSAHA executive officers to establish and implement yearly plans that align with USA Hockey initiatives. This is a non-voting position.

Disabled Hockey Coordinator (Until Replaced)

The Disabled Hockey Coordinator at VSAHA is tasked with serving as the primary contact for disabled hockey issues, facilitating communication between VSAHA, the New England District, and USA Hockey, and promoting disabled hockey throughout the state. This is a non-voting position.

Goalie Coordinator (Until Replaced)

The Goalie Development Coordinator at VSAHA is responsible for advancing goaltending through education, providing support and resources to member associations, and fostering a community among goaltending coaches. This is a non-voting position.

Player Safety Coordinator (Until Replaced)

The Player Safety Coordinator at VSAHA is tasked with implementing USA Hockey's player safety initiatives within the organization and its member associations, including concussion management and return-to-play protocols. This is a non-voting position.

USA Hockey Appointed Positions

State Registrar (Until Replaced)

Responsible for ensuring all players and teams are correctly registered with USA Hockey and VSAHA requirements. This is a non-voting position.

Safe Sport Coordinator (Until Replaced)

Responsible for overseeing the adherence to and enforcement of USA Hockey's Safe Sport policies within the organization, including monitoring training and compliance among program administrators and coaches. This is a non-voting position.

Coach-In-Chief (Until Replaced)

Responsible for overseeing all coaching aspects within the organization and ensuring compliance with the VSAHA, New England District and USA Hockey requirements. This is a non-voting position.

Referee-In-Chief (Until Replaced)

Responsible for overseeing all referee aspects within the organization and ensuring compliance with the VSAHA, New England District and USA Hockey requirements. This is a non-voting position.

Director Positions

Local Association State Representative

Serves as the liaison between local hockey associations and VSAHA.

Responsible for representing the interests, concerns, and aspirations of their local associations, ensuring that policies, programs, and initiatives align with the needs of grassroots youth hockey. This is a voting position.

Allied Member Representative

The Allied Member Representative serves as the liaison between local hockey associations and VSAHA. Responsible for representing the interests, concerns and aspirations of their program. This is a non-voting position.

COMMITTEES

Current membership of each committee can be found on the VSAHA website:

<https://www.vermonthockey.org/committees>

Required Committees

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be empowered to conduct routine business of the association, coordinate the work and presentations of all committees and to serve in an advisory capacity to the President and the Board of Directors. The executive committee will include the President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and other members of the Board of Directors as the President may deem necessary.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall be composed of three (3) current directors. The Committee and Committee Chair shall be appointed by the President of the Association Board of Directors at the regular February meeting. The committee shall be charged with presenting a slate of nominations for officers to be presented at the regular March meeting each year, such slate together with nominations from the floor received at the March meeting, to be voted upon at the Annual Meeting.

Rules Committee

The Rules Committee shall be chaired by the First Vice President and shall consist of two or more additional persons elected by majority vote at the Regular October meeting. This committee shall function as a judicial body in all matters pertaining to playing rules, disciplinary actions, procedures and participation in hockey programs sponsored by VSAHA. The Rules Committee shall defer jurisdiction to the Members Association or may take original jurisdiction of any matter which it feels is not being handled in an appropriate or timely manner.

Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee shall be chaired by a VSAHA elected officer and shall consist of two or more additional persons elected by majority vote at the regular October meeting. This committee shall function as the committee who hears all appeals to matters that came before the Rules Committee.

Tournament Committee

The Tournament Committee shall be chaired by the Second Vice President and shall consist of four or more members. This committee shall be responsible for preparing and recommending to the Board matters concerning conduct of the Vermont State Tournaments operated by VSAHA, including format, site selection, team seeding, rules and player and coach eligibility, and for implementing Board directives concerning tournament arrangements.

Player Development Committee

The Player Development Committee shall be chaired by an Executive Officer and will be made up of the Coaching Director for VSAHA, Woman's Director for VSAHA, and a representative(s) from any Member Association appointed by the VSAHA President. The Committee will develop the overall protocol to be used throughout the Select Team selection process to ensure a fair and equitable process takes place.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee shall consist of at least three persons, all of whom shall be a current board of director. The Audit Committee members will be appointed by the President and the President shall designate a Chair from the appointed committee members. Each director appointed to the Audit Committee shall: Not have participated in the preparation of the financial statements at any time during the past two years; and be able to read and understand fundamental financial statements or become able to do so within a reasonable period of time after appointment to the Audit Committee.

Appointed/Special Committees

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee shall be chaired by the First Vice President. This committee shall function as a policy creation body in all matters pertaining to playing rules, disciplinary actions, procedures and participation in hockey programs sponsored by VSAHA.

Play Up Committee

The Play Up Committee shall be chaired by the President. This committee shall be made up of the VSAHA Growth Coordinator, and Registrar. The committee is responsible for administering the play up policy as it relates to requests received.

Growth Committee

The Growth Committee shall be chaired by the VSAHA Growth Coordinator and include the VSAHA Girls Coordinator, VSAHA Treasurer, and other VSAHA Board members. The goal of the committee is to create and implement a plan for growth efforts for VSAHA. This may include the oversight of any growth funds and events throughout the season.

Girls Committee

The Girls Committee shall be chaired by the VSAHA Girls Coordinator. This committee will include VSAHA board members and girl representatives interested in guiding and supporting girls hockey.

Disabled Hockey Committee

The Disabled Hockey Committee shall be chaired by the VSAHA Disabled Hockey Coordinator. The purpose of the committee is to build awareness in Vermont of USA Hockey Disabled Hockey and expand all six of its disciplines. This group will focus on building and supporting events that help grow the sport for all individuals.

IMPORTANT LINKS

VSAHA Member Contact Info	https://www.vermonthockey.org/contactinfo
USA Hockey Annual Guide	https://www.usahockey.com/annualguide
USA Hockey Rule Book	https://www.usahockeyrulebook.com
VSAHA Bylaws & Annual Guide	https://www.vermonthockey.org/annualguide
VSAHA Bylaw Change Proposal	https://forms.gle/cMuAxsQJjProCLu58
VSAHA Policy Change/Creation	https://forms.gle/SoSMbDbYv9uQRfTr9

MEMBERSHIP REQUEST PROCESS

Step 1: Determine Membership Type

VSAHA consists of two membership types as outlined in your [Bylaws](#):

Local Association

Is any association within Vermont, representing a specific geographic area approved and designated by VSAHA which:

- A. Has one or more USA Hockey registered team members, and
- B. operates a program of skill development, practice or competition or a combination of such, in house or with other Local Associations or registered team members, and
- C. functions throughout the regular winter season, and
- D. has an approved signed Affiliate Agreement with VSAHA

Allied Member

Any individual, organization or entity which does not qualify as a Local Association Member, shall be deemed an "Allied Member"

Step 2: Review VSAHA & USA Hockey Governing Documents

Please review these documents and confirm that you understand and can comply with all the rules and regulations of VSAHA and USA Hockey. Maintaining compliance with all regulations is a condition of membership.

[VSAHA Bylaws](#)

[VSAHA Annual Guide](#)

[USA Hockey Annual Guide](#)

Step 3: Membership Request Letter

Submit a formal letter requesting the desired membership type, including the following required information:

- 1) What is your program name, mission statement, and governance structure?
- 2) Program Structure:
 - a) What team(s) and levels are you offering?
 - b) Are team(s) full or split season?
 - c) Where are the players from?
 - d) Where have you secured ice?
 - e) Describe your schedule makeup
- 3) Any additional information you feel is important to share

The letter shall be emailed to:

VSAHA President - president@vthockey.org
VSAHA 1st Vice President - vp@vthockey.org

It'll be reviewed for compliance with the requested information and if anything is missing, you'll be notified.

Step 4: VSAHA Review & Consideration

The VSAHA Executive Board will review and consider the membership request. They have the authority to approve or deny single-team requests, or they may refer them to the full VSAHA Board of Directors.

For membership requests of more than one team, the Executive Board will review, and then refer the request to the VSAHA Board of Directors to approve or deny. You will be notified of the board meeting where your request will be heard, and provided a chance to say a few words at the meeting.

The VSAHA Executive Board must provide the VSAHA Board of Directors at least 30 days notice for any membership request that is being referred to them. This is so member associations have a chance to review with their associations prior to being asked to vote.

Step 5: Notification of Membership Request Status

Upon reaching a decision regarding your membership request, you'll be notified of the outcome via email.

If denied, all decisions are final, and you must wait until the following playing season to resubmit your application for the same association.

If approved, a checklist of next steps will be provided to you. This will include things such as association contact information submission process, association board Safe Sport compliance validation and the VSAHA Membership Agreement.

Additionally, all new member associations are ineligible for State, Regional, and National Tournament participation due to a mandatory 3-year probationary status.

REGISTRATION WITH USA HOCKEY & VSAHA

Participants include ALL players, coaches, managers, initiation instructors and helpers, and volunteers. There are now two steps for a participant to be properly registered.

- 1) Individual Membership Registration is completed – This shall be accomplished by registering online through the USA Hockey website at www.usahockey.com. A paper registration and transmittal may occur only with the prior approval of the State Registrar.
- 2) The registered participant is included on an approved Team Roster – All participants playing or coaching on teams must be included on an official team roster.

Cross ice 8U that just participates in cross-ice jamborees or games, house/recreational league players that do not play against other organizations, and initiation players, do not need to be on a team roster but must be included on a master roster that includes all coaches assigned to these levels.

Prior to a coach being placed on a roster and participating in any coaching activity, on ice or off ice, with the Member Association, the coach must have the appropriate Coaching Education Program (CEP) Level, completed a current background screening, completed the Safe Sport requirements and completed the age appropriate CEP module for the age category that will be coached. These requirements are mandatory for all coaches and instructors including coaches and instructors of cross ice, house/recreational and initiation programs.

Member Associations are required to follow procedures prescribed for background screening and safe sport compliance prior to coaches going on the ice and volunteers performing functions for the association.

To reiterate, no adult coaches are allowed on the ice for practices, games or off ice activities until they have been registered, taken the safe sport training (will show as verified in the coach's record) and submitted their screening information and received clearance. Coaches must obtain the appropriate coaching education certification (CEP) for the level they are coaching. Coaches have until December 31 to obtain certification at the appropriate CEP level except those who are coaching split-season teams who need CEP certification

by October 31. Student coaches must submit the student coach forms to their association registrar prior to participating as a student coach.

The Member Association registrar is responsible for registering participants with the member association using the registry portal provided by USA Hockey. If the participant registered online, the player registration and fee will be processed by the internet transmittal and the association does not need to forward fees for that participant. The USA Hockey registration fee is specified on the registration page at www.usahockey.com.

For players who are approved to be registered by paper, the member association shall contact the State Registrar for permission and submit to the State Registrar for each player and coach the fees specified by USA Hockey for the current year. There is no charge for participants born in 2018 or later, however, online registration is still required for those participants. All transmittals and fees are due to the State Registrar before a participant steps onto the ice.

Volunteers can register online for no charge and their contact information will appear in the registration software for that association.

Rosters

The team roster is the online form where the organization assigns players, coaches, locker room monitors and managers to a team. There is a limit of 20 players to a team, 18 skaters and 2 goalies (there can be more than 2 goalies on a team but the number of skaters would be reduced for each additional goalie rostered).

The following paragraph is excerpted from page 171 of the 2025/2026 Annual Guide:

“A limit of twenty (20) players at any one time may be registered per team except for (1) high school, girls high school, college and women’s college which may roster 30 players and may dress 20 players, (2) adult and women’s teams which may roster 25 players and may dress 20 players, and (3) Tier I teams at the 18U, 16U and 15O youth classifications and 19U girls classification which may roster and dress 22 players, of which not more than 20 shall be skaters (see Section XI: Junior Hockey for junior roster limits). Affiliates may allow their post-season (spring/summer) teams, formed to play between the end of the last USA Hockey Youth/Girls National Championship and August 31, to have a limit of twenty-five (25) players on a roster and may dress twenty (20) players per game. A player may be registered in only one (1) national ice hockey federation.”

A team roster is required for all teams who travel to play other organizations and who wish to participate in the state tournament. An individual team roster is not required for house/recreational team participants, cross ice mites or initiation (learn to skate) participants, however, a master roster of all players at these levels and coaches must be submitted to the state registrar. All rosters must be submitted to the State Registrar before any games are played. Local registrars should consult the technical bulletin included with the USA Hockey registry portal access codes when creating team rosters. Any games played prior to the roster date associated with the state registrar's signature do not count towards qualifying for the state tournament.

There may be additions and deletions to the team roster as the season progresses. To delete/add participants a supplemental team roster must be submitted by the local registrar through the USA Hockey registry portal. All team rosters must be 'approved' by the State Registrar by December 31 in order for the team to be eligible for the State Tournament. The Team Roster must be finalized before December 31 for youth Tier I and Tier II teams and girls'/women's (except Women's A) national tournament-bound teams. Roster changes (other than coaching changes) will not be accepted after December 31 for teams that are going to participate in the qualifying tournaments for the Tier I and II youth teams, girl's Tier I and Tier II teams and senior women's regional and national tournaments. No 10U level teams can be rostered as Tier 1.

Excerpt from 2025-2026 Annual Guide, page 164, regarding players who are required to have SafeSport certification:

"All players seventeen (17) years of age or older on or before December 31 of that playing season, and that play on a team in a classification that allows minor age players, shall be required to complete U.S. Center for SafeSport online training before being added to such team and prior to participation (on-ice or off-ice). This requirement shall apply to all teams in the Youth, Girls, High School, Junior Hockey, Flex Hockey and Disabled Hockey program classifications that allow both minor age and adult age players. Players required to complete the training shall complete the Core Center for SafeSport Training prior to being added to a team and shall complete the Refresher Course on an annual basis in accordance with SafeSport policies each subsequent season in which they are on a team in the above classifications."

Excerpt from the 2025-2026 Annual Guide, page 173, regarding player eligibility for National Championship-Bound Teams:

“A player may not register on more than one team that participates in games leading towards a national championship except for players on High School division teams, who may also play on a Youth or Girls’/ Women’s national championship-bound team. Player changes to the official team roster form (1-T) for youth or girls Tier I and Tier II national championship-bound teams will not be accepted after December 31. Refer to Rules and Regulations Section IX: District Playoffs and National Championships, for additional requirements for national championship-bound teams.

No player may play in more than one State, Affiliate or District Championship or playoffs leading thereto. However, a player rostered on both a High School division team and a Youth or Girls’/Women’s national championship-bound team may play in both of their teams’ State, Affiliate or District Championship or playoffs leading thereto.

In the event a player is registered on more than one team that participates in games leading towards a national championship, the appropriate registrar shall have the final authority to certify the eligibility of any such player solely on the basis of the date on which the effective date of the earliest team roster registration form, as provided above, is received.

Girls may dual roster on a youth and girls’ team if the Affiliate rules permit dual registration for females. Dual-rostered females playing on youth and girls’/women’s teams may continue playing on both teams until the end of the regular season. However, the player must declare in writing to her appropriate registrar, or his/her designee, by December 31 on which national championship-bound team she wishes to be eligible to advance to the district, state, regional and national championship. If the player does not indicate on which team she wishes to be eligible for district, state, regional and national tournaments, the appropriate registrar shall have the final authority to certify the eligibility of any such player solely on the basis of the date of the earliest team roster registration form, as provided above, is received.”

Credentialing Requirements

All teams that are required by VSAHA to be rostered shall prepare and carry to every game a credentialing book. The credentialing book shall contain a copy of the approved team roster, copies of the USA Hockey waiver of liability form for players who did not register online, and copies of game sheets from qualified games.

In order to count games as tournament qualifying games, game sheets for games played against teams from another affiliate shall include a copy of the approved roster of the opponent and game sheets vs. a Canadian team shall include a copy of the USA Hockey approved travel permit for games played in Canada or a copy of the Hockey Canada travel permit for games played in the United States. No games against Canadian teams who are not members of

Hockey Canada are authorized or sanctioned and if a game is played against a non-sanctioned opponent, the association will be subject to VSAHA penalties.

Games Played for Tournament Eligibility

The requirements are as follows:

- 10U Youth, 12U Youth, and 14U Youth: Each team must have played as a team unit at least 20 games and an individual player must have played in at least 10 of those games.
- All Female Teams: Each team must have played as a team unit at least 14 games and an individual player must have played in at least 10 of those games.
- Split Season 18U and 16U Youth: Each team must have played as a team unit at least 20 games and an individual player must have played in at least 10 of those games.

Before a game can count toward the eligibility requirement and prior to the game being played, the participating teams' rosters must have been approved by the State Registrar or, in the case where the team is from another affiliate or country, the team's roster has been signed by the appropriate official of that jurisdiction. A non-rostered player or coach participating in a game will negate the game counting toward the eligibility requirement for the rostered team. Also games played against teams not registered or rostered with USA Hockey or Hockey Canada (travel permit required for the game to count) must be specifically approved in advance by the State Registrar in order to count toward the eligibility requirement. Teams may begin counting games played August 15, 2025 and after.

International Player Transfers

All non-US citizens are required to have an approved transfer executed between their hockey federation and USA Hockey. The member association registrar has access to the forms that need to be completed to accomplish the transfer. The USA Hockey Annual Guide describes the documentation for allowable transfers.

Tournament Sanctioning

Any organization hosting a tournament must complete an Invitational Tournament Application ([found online on the New England District website](#)) and have it filed with and approved by the State Registrar prior to the tournament.

If a tournament is hosted without this approval, insurance protection provided through USA Hockey may not apply to incidents arising from actions at the tournament. Consult the Technical Bulletin and the Important Information document included with the Registry documents sent to each local association registrar for other requirements.

Any registration questions can be directed to: Robert Greemore 31 Hutchins Circle Barre, VT 05641, Cell: (802) 272-8523, Email: rgreemore@msn.com.

COACHING REQUIREMENTS

Overview

USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program (CEP) is dedicated to developing and providing the best possible coaching education programs for the youth hockey coach. It is important that all youth hockey players participate in a positive, enjoyable, and safe environment. These young athletes must be introduced to hockey and coached in a way that assists them in developing their skills, have fun while playing, compete in the spirit of fair play, and provide them with the maximum opportunity for participation. This is vital to ensuring that all youth hockey players develop a love of the game, which will promote active involvement throughout their lives.

The USA Hockey environment has experienced rapidly changing techniques, strategies, teaching methods and safety concerns. Each year, thousands of new dedicated people begin coaching youth hockey although most have not previously been provided with little or no preparation for such an important role. USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program provides these coaches with simple, up-to-date, age-specific and user-friendly materials regarding all aspects of coaching.

CEP Requirements

An outline of the CEP requirements & resources can be found on the VSAHA website. <https://www.vermonthockey.org/coaches>

USA Hockey Requirements must be completed **before participating in any team activities:**

- Register as a member of USA Hockey.
- Complete the background screening (every 2 years).
- Complete the USA Hockey Safe Sport Training (yearly).
- Complete an age-specific module(s) for each age level that you are coaching. Once you complete a module, you do not have to take the module over again in future seasons.
 - *New coaches will need to complete the Foundations of Player Development Prerequisite before they can take an age-specific module.*

Coaching Education Program courses must also be completed **by Oct 31st for split-season team coaches and Dec 31st for full-season team coaches.**

- First time coaches of **10u+ teams** start with a Level 1 Coaching Clinic
- **New in 2025-26:** First time coaches who are **only coaching 6u/8u teams** take the 6u/8u Coaching Clinic
 - *This is good for 5yrs or until the coach moves up to 10u+, whichever comes sooner – they will then need to take their Level 1*
- Returning coaches who already have their Level 1 must advance through Levels 2-4 in successive years.
- Once coaches reach Level 4, they must complete 5 Continuing Education credits over 3 years to maintain it or they can attend the National Coaches Symposium for their Level 5 certification.
 - *Coaches that obtained their Level 4 prior to Jan 1, 2021 and are not coaching Tier I or II teams are not required to take any coursework.*
- Once coaches reach Level 5, they must complete 5 Continuing Education credits over 4 years to maintain it.
 - *Coaches that obtained their Level 5 prior to Jan 1, 2021 and are not coaching Tier I or II teams are not required to take any coursework.*

Compliance

Any coach who fails to comply with all coaching requirements will be deemed ineligible to coach for the remainder of the season.

Every member association is responsible for verifying that each and all coaches in that association have the proper credentials PRIOR to any coach taking the ice for any practice or games.

USA HOCKEY COACHES HELMET POLICY

All ice hockey coaches and instructors of registered USA Hockey Youth 18 & Under and below, high school, girls'/women's 19 & under and below, and disabled programs must properly wear an approved ice hockey helmet during all on-ice sessions, including practices, controlled scrimmages and all Coaching Education Program clinics and/or workshops. **It is the responsibility of the Member Association to enforce this policy. Failure to comply will result in a 30 day suspension from all activities involving USA Hockey registered programs.**

GIRLS & WOMEN'S HOCKEY

For girls' hockey to have a future, growth should be a primary focus for each association in the upcoming season. It takes effort, creativity, and collaboration within and between associations to build up girls' hockey and be able to provide female players of all ages the opportunity to learn and thrive on the ice. Strategies for encouraging growth include:

- Appoint a Girls Hockey Coordinator for your association, whether you have a girls' hockey team or not.
- Host a Try Hockey for Free event, either youth or girls-specific, to encourage community members to try hockey and get introduced to your association.
 - **USAH Try Hockey for Free Days – Sept 13th & Mar 7th**
- Invite girls to join in on girls-only practices or scrimmages – this is especially effective in associations that do not have a girls' hockey team.
- Encourage players to “Bring a Friend to Practice” to encourage girls to try hockey and get introduced to potential teammates.
- Attend fall sports events to promote your association within the community.

Bringing in new players is the first step – player retention also needs to be prioritized to continue to build strong programs and increase friendly competition around the state. Strategies for player retention include:

- Encourage your coaches to participate in coaching education specific to girls' hockey and/or sports:
 - Positive Coaching Alliance
 - Tucker Center “Coaching Her” modules
 - USAH “Bring It In” Sessions for female coaches
- Provide opportunities for girls to SEE role models (HS hockey, college hockey) and BE role models to younger players.
 - **2026 Milano-Cortino Winter Olympics – Feb 6th – 22nd**: Team USA will have 4 preliminary round games, Feb 5th – 10th
- Recognize and celebrate your girls' teams & players on social media so they feel valued within your association.
 - **IIHF World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend – Oct 17 – 19th**
 - **IIHF Global Girls' Game – Mar 6 – 8th**
- Encourage parents to get involved, even in small roles, as players tend to stay in sports when their parents are also invested.

GOALTENDING

Our mission is to evaluate, grow, develop, and support Vermont goaltenders. VSAHA is committed to providing resources and support organizations, coaches, families, and goalies. Our goal is not only to grow the goaltending community but also to unite it. This collaborative effort is what we call One Goal Vermont.

One Goal Vermont is an initiative dedicated to welcoming new goalies into the Vermont hockey community while also supporting and connecting current goaltenders. In our community, goalie partners may be the ones you compete against, but they are also those who cheer you on, challenge you to improve, and grow alongside you. Together, we aim to create an environment that is fun, supportive, and focused on development.

Recommendation for Organization and Team Goalie Liaisons

Developing Vermont goaltenders is a team effort. VSAHA strongly encourages every organization to appoint a Goalie Liaison and each team to designate a Team Goalie Coach.

- **Goalie Coordinator/Liaison (Organization Level):**
 - This individual helps foster a sense of community among goalies, supports organizational goalie development goals, and assists in coordinating training opportunities. Goalie experience is not required – training and resources will be provided.

- **Team Goalie Coach (Team Level):**
 - This person serves as a dedicated support for the team's goalie(s), helping them with practice warm-ups and ensuring they receive focused attention during practices.

These roles are flexible and intended to enhance goalie development and support. Liaisons will receive ongoing communication and resources from the VSAHA Goalie Coordinator.

Our extensive VSAHA Goalie Handbook can be found on the website:

<https://www.vermonthockey.org/goalienation>

USA HOCKEY OFFICIATING PROGRAM

Certification Process

Every USA Hockey official is required to attend a yearly seminar and pass one or more yearly exams in order to be certified at any level. There are 4 levels of certification.

New officials begin at Level 1 and progress from there. Each level attained allows an official to referee at a different age level as set forth in the USA Hockey Officiating Program's recommendations for game assignments. These recommendations are set forth in the chart noted below.

Please note that all Local Officials Associations and Local Assignors have final decisions regarding the assignment of local hockey games. Local Assignors have the responsibility to follow the recommendations noted below.

Furthermore, registration with the USA Hockey Officiating Program does not guarantee any official any game assignments. As recognized Independent Contractors, all officials are responsible to obtain their own game assignments from Local Assignors. Officials should find out who assigns games in their area and contact that person.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Any Local Assignor who assigns "non-complete" registered officials to games is subject to serious liability as he/she jeopardizes the insurance coverage of the officials and players involved. Updated listings of currently registered officials are available from the District Referees-in-Chief

Seminars

Seminars for the 2025-2026 season will be posted online at <https://www.usahockey.com/officialseminars>. You must attend the entire seminar in order to receive credit.

8 & UNDER HOCKEY

VSAHA is committed to promoting and implementing the American Development Model's Red, White, & Blue Hockey. **It is mandatory that all member associations that are offering an 8U program in Vermont use the cross-ice format.**

Each member association should take an active role in growing the game of hockey utilizing USA Hockey's Hat Trick Challenge, Try Hockey for Free Days, and any other VSAHA or locally developed program to acquire and retain players.

No Full Ice Games and Tournaments

VSAHA will not sanction any 8U full ice games or tournaments, in state or out of state. Any association hosting or playing in a full ice game or tournament will be subject to disciplinary action and a hearing with the VSAHA Rules Committee.

ADM Stages for 8U & Under

Active Start (Ages 0-6): This early development period is essential for acquiring fundamental movement skills (running, gliding, jumping, kicking, catching, striking...) that lay the foundation for more complex movements, thereby preparing children for a physically active lifestyle. USA Hockey encourages activity that incorporates fundamental movement skills in the 4 environments that lead to physical literacy:

- In the water: Swimming
- On the ground: Athletics
- In the air: Gymnastics
- On ice and snow: Sliding and Skating

FUNDamentals (Ages 6-8 Female | Ages 6-9 Male): The objective of this stage is to refine fundamental movement skills and begin to acquire basic sports skills. This is the time when a foundation is laid for future acquisition of more advanced skills. The focus is on the development of physical literacy. Fundamental movement skills should be mastered, and motor development emphasized, while the participation in many sports/activities is encouraged. For optimal skill acquisition, the basic hockey skills of skating and puck control are introduced. FUN competitions are also introduced in a team environment.

Important Aspects of 8U & Under

Fun for All: At these ages the primary focus should be on having fun. If the kids have fun, they try hard, learn to skate, develop skills, and fall in love with the game of hockey.

More Puck Touches: Confined ice area and fewer numbers of players on the ice will get players more touches of the puck and the ability to be involved in the game more than on a larger ice surface.

Increased Competition: A smaller ice surface makes any player of any ability to think and act quicker resulting in more frequent battles for the puck.

Everyone is Involved: We recommend that there be no set positions allowing the players to be involved in the play. We would also suggest a rotating goalie. No one player should be set as goalie full time so as to not limit his/her development as a skater. Allowing the kids to just play will increase creativity while developing skill.

Increase numbers: USA Hockey and VSAHA are facing flat or decreasing numbers of new players. The biggest focus of USA Hockey in youth hockey is growing the number of kids playing and retaining the ones we have at the U8 level.

Cost Savings for All: By getting more kids on the ice during an ice session, getting more kids involved and limiting travel, we hope to be able to reduce costs for hockey.

Research Based: Kids 8 & under are at the FUNdamental and Active Start stages of development. All programs should be striving to meet the age appropriate guidelines set by USA Hockey.

8U Program Structure

Member Associations need to structure their programs based on their needs and numbers, but it is recommended that the 8U level be structured into three different levels based on ability. Each association may have their own unique name for each level, but the basic philosophies should be followed.

Initiation: Learn to skate - ages 4-8 but usually a first or second year skater. The focus of the program is to teach basic skills in a fun, energetic and nurturing environment. There really is no emphasis on playing hockey games. Have fun! Be positive! Promote attitudes of fairness, honesty and unselfishness.

House Mites/Mite Minors: Introduction to the game of hockey using cross ice format. Most players have come from the initiation program. Games would be played against other teams (heterogeneous mix) in your association or possibly against other associations that are within a short drive from home. Many of the same attitudes and philosophies from the initiation program should be displayed here. Players should get more ice touches in this program.

Travel Mites/Mite Majors: A chance to refine the skills learned in previous levels and the opportunity to play more travel games. Teams are grouped heterogeneously. Games use the cross-ice format. May include more family commitment to the association in terms of ice time, travel, volunteer work, etc.

Reduced Travel: It is required that the distance teams travel be kept to a minimum. Having your players spend more time in the car than on the ice is discouraged.

Scheduling: Recommended to schedule one to two game weekends per month involving other organizations, with about 5 actual game days. The intent is to limit the amount of travel, while focusing on the development of basic skills. It is important to offer a schedule that is feasible for as many as possible. On other weekends in-house games and/or practice would be recommended.

Typical Season Structure:

- 40-50 ice sessions per season (ADM Station Based)
- 2-3 ice sessions per week, 1 off-ice session per week
- 50- 55 minute ice sessions
- 20 weeks per season, 5 to 6 months
- 9-10 skaters per team; no full-time goalies
- 4+ teams per ice session

Minimum of 16 cross-ice games and 34 practices / Maximum of 20 cross-ice games and 40 practices

Players grouped: Top 1/3, Middle 1/3, Bottom 1/3

Equipment Costs: Many people may be put off from hockey, not only due to travel expenses but also due to the cost of equipment. Recycled equipment donated back into the association may be one way to reduce the cost of playing.

Communication & Support: It is important to be positive and give the coaches at the 8U level as much guidance as possible, as most often, they are the ones in the association that have the least amount of experience. Developing a coaching guide for 8U hockey with your association may be a practical way to ensure that the correct skills are being taught and emphasized. USA Hockey provides practice plans and many other materials at www.admkids.com.

Education and Involvement of the Community: One of the principal goals of 8U hockey is to make it more attractive to potential hockey players, both those already in our initiation programs and those who have not yet realized that hockey is the right sport for them. Solicit the help of your local high school or college teams to help at your practices or come up with other ways to involve your hockey community. Each association needs to make it a priority to make hockey affordable, fun and manageable for new families.

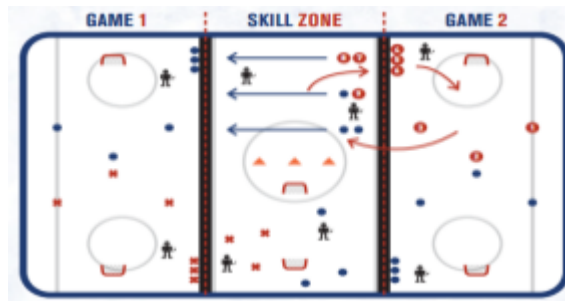
Cross Ice Format

Team Makeup: Ideally 7-10 players. A heterogeneous mix seems to work for all, but it has been clearly stated that some associations want the flexibility to possibly group the kids by talent. It will be important to communicate throughout the season with upcoming opponents about how the games will be set up. It is the intent of this program to keep skilled players against each other, so all will have the opportunity to touch the puck, instead of being bystanders. After the first few games, the appropriate kids should be easily placed in the correct level. This way, a very strong group will not be going out against a group of new kids.

Officials: Older youth players or coaches are encouraged to be the officials. The use of level 1 officials would be ideal. Each cross-ice game needs to have an official to call common infractions such as tripping, slashing, etc. A player can be removed from the ice and replaced with another player. There should not be any man advantage opportunities. Keep in mind that officials should be talking to the players and coaches to help teach the game.

Game Format:

8U Cross Ice - 3 v. 3



- Bumpers/dividers are recommended to create three separate areas as shown in the illustration above.
- 3 players per team, plus goalie.
- Nets (mid-size - 3' x 4') are placed on each face-off circle
- Blue pucks must be used.
- 24-minute periods with running time. 2-minute intermission between periods. • 60 or 90 second shifts (established prior to game start)
- Face off only to start the period. After a goal is scored the puck is placed behind the net of the team scored upon, while the scoring team retreats to half ice. When the buzzer is blown, the puck is spotted evenly between teams near far boards for play to continue.

- Play is not stopped for penalties, but players will be sent to the bench and informed of the infraction. Another player subs and the child with a penalty will go back for his or her next shift. No Penalty Shots or faceoff - officials will keep play going.

8U Half Ice - 4 v. 4



- Bumpers/dividers are recommended to create three separate areas as shown in the illustration above.
- 4 players per team, plus goalie. Teams share benches and use different doors
- Nets (mid-size - 3' x 4') are placed in the goalie crease and mid-ice.
- Blue pucks must be used.
- 24-minute periods with running time. 2-minute intermission between periods.
- 60 or 90 second shifts (established prior to game start)
- Face off only to start the period. After a goal is scored the puck is placed behind the net of the team scored upon, while the scoring team retreats to half ice. When the buzzer is blown, the puck is spotted evenly between teams near far boards for play to continue.
- Play is not stopped for penalties, but a penalized player will be sent to the bench and informed of the infraction. Another player subs and the child with a penalty will go back for his or her next shift. No Penalty Shots or faceoff - officials will keep play going.

USA HOCKEY SAFE SPORT PROGRAM

The safety of its participants is of paramount importance to USA Hockey. [USA Hockey Safe Sport](#) is the organization's program related to off-ice safety.

USA Hockey has long had systems in place to protect its participants from physical abuse, sexual abuse and other types of abuse and misconduct that can be harmful to youth hockey players and other participants. These include without limitation Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Screening, Locker Room Supervision and Hazing Policies, in addition to Codes of Conduct applicable to administrators, coaches, officials, parents, players and spectators. The USA Hockey Safe Sport Handbook is intended to update and collect USA Hockey's various policies to protect its participants from all types of misconduct and abuse.

Any persons banned or suspended by the Center for SafeSport as a result of a SafeSport violation can be searched by name and sport through the link below.

[CENTRALIZED DISCIPLINARY DATABASE](#)

Quick Links	
Making a Report	Affiliate Coordinators
Safe Sport Training	Safe Sport Handbook Revised: 12/30/2022
Background Screen	NGB Services Page
Other Resources & Downloads	

The Safe Sport Handbook includes the various policies that apply to all USA Hockey Member Programs. Those policies address:

- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Bullying, Threats and Harassment
- Hazing

The policies also address areas where misconduct can occur and are intended to reduce the risk of potential abuse, including:

- Locker Room Policy
- Electronic Communications Policy
- Travel Policy
- Billeting Policy

In addition to policies, the Safe Sport Handbook includes information about the available and required Training of USA Hockey and its Member Programs' employees, volunteers, administrators, coaches, parents and players on recognizing and reducing circumstances for potential abuse to occur; information on USA Hockey's Screening and Background Check Program; the availability and procedures for any person to Report suspected abuse or misconduct (including protections from any retaliation or repercussions for such reporting); the procedures and means by which USA Hockey and its Member Programs should Respond to allegations of abuse and misconduct; and how USA Hockey and its Member Programs will Monitor and Supervise the Safe Sport Program to help ensure its effectiveness.

By combining all of these elements into a comprehensive Safe Sport Program, USA Hockey intends to create the safest possible environment for participation in hockey.

As an affiliate of USA Hockey, the Vermont State Amateur Hockey Association (VSAHA) adheres to the latest version of the USA Hockey SafeSport program. VSAHA shall adopt policies prohibiting sexual and physical abuse as described in the USA Hockey Safe Sport Program which meet the minimum criteria established by VSAHA and USA Hockey (but subject to any contrary requirements contained in state or local law applicable to the Association).

All USA Hockey members shall familiarize themselves with each form of misconduct and shall refrain from engaging in misconduct and/or violating any of these policies.

As an affiliate of USA Hockey, VASHA adheres to the guidelines outlined in the SafeSport program. In addition, there are policies that VASHA has adopted that are stricter than the USA Hockey policy. VSAHA's Safe Sport program has an affiliate Safe Sport Coordinator, whose job is to oversee the education, application, and enforcement of the SafeSport program.

Local Safe Sport Coordinator

Each association will designate an association SafeSport coordinator. The following information must be sent to the affiliate Safe Sport coordinator:

- Coordinator's Name
- Member Association Name
- Phone number(s)
- E-mail address

This information will be posted on the VSAHA website.

Each association Safe Sport coordinator will be responsible to ensure that all Safe Sport complaints are acknowledged, investigated, and resolved. This does not mean the Safe Sport coordinator is responsible to conduct investigations on their own, they must merely ensure that the Safe Sport Policy guidelines are followed.

Each Safe Sport coordinator will have differing experience in investigating incidents. Some will have many years of experience, and others will have no experience.

Each association Safe Sport Coordinator will be responsible to confirm and report to the Affiliate Safe Sport Coordinator that all their participants (coaches, officials, board members, locker room monitors, team parents, etc) have completed the Safe Sport training at the beginning of the season, but no later than November 1.

Each Safe Sport coordinator must report all reported violations to the Affiliate Safe Sport coordinator. The Affiliate Safe Sport coordinator will be responsible to monitor and provide assistance as is necessary to the local association. The Affiliate Safe Sport coordinator is a resource for the association Safe Sport coordinator or board members. The Affiliate Safe Sport coordinator will not work directly with those involved in the incident, unless he or she determines it is necessary.

Safe Sport Training

There are several changes to the SafeSport Training requirements, as required by federal law and the Center for SafeSport:

- A. SafeSport Training is required for all adults that have regular contact with minors which, as explained more fully below, includes adult-aged players on the same team with minor athletes.
- B. SafeSport is required every year rather than every other year.
- C. A person must first take the course known as “Core Center for SafeSport Training,” which is taken online and takes approximately 90–120 minutes to complete. After that a “Refresher Course” is available each subsequent year for a person that has completed the Core Center for SafeSport Training. The Refresher Course takes 30 minutes or less to complete. There is no cost to members of USA Hockey to complete either training course.
- D. Training must be completed before a person begins having regular contact with minor athletes, or if they do not have regular contact with minors, no more than 45 days after beginning the role that requires them to complete training.

Training for Players Seventeen (17) and Over in Age Classifications that Allow Minor Age Players.

To ensure that all adult-age players on the same team with minor athletes comply with the law, (i) all players 17 years of age or older on or before December 31 of that playing season, and (ii) who play on a team in a classification that allows minor-age players, must complete SafeSport Training before being added to such team and prior to participation (on-ice or off-ice). This requirement applies to all teams in the age classifications Youth, Girls, High School, Junior Hockey, Flex Hockey and Disabled Hockey programs that allow both minor-age and adult-age players, and to officials who are turning 17 before December 31. Players and officials that complete the training prior to turning 18 will be required to provide parental consent.

DECLARATION OF PLAYER SAFETY

USA Hockey is committed to creating a safe and fair environment for all participants. Respect for the game, the opponents, coaches and officials is a critical part of the environment that is created and it covers several different aspects of sportsmanship and fair play. This initiative will encourage a change in culture as to what is considered to be acceptable/unacceptable body checking and competitive contact at all levels of play.

The following is not designed to replace our current rules/definitions, but instead is intended to clarify and update the existing rules/definitions to more clearly outline what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Video examples can be found online at usahockey.com/declaration. Please review the materials thoroughly so you can play a positive role in making our game safer.

Competitive Contact

Competitive contact is body contact between two or more skaters who are in the immediate vicinity of the puck and who are in the normal process of playing the puck. These skaters are reasonably allowed to lean into each other provided possession of the puck remains the sole object of the contact. Competitive Contact is encouraged in all age classifications of play within USA Hockey and provides the foundation for the skills necessary to advance to Body Checking classifications.

Acceptable examples of competitive contact Include:

Angling is a legal defensive skill used to direct/control the puck carrier to an area that closes the gap and creates an opening that is too small for the puck carrier.

Physical Engagement is when two players who are in pursuit of the puck are allowed to reasonably lean into each other provided that possession of the puck remains the sole objective of the two players.

Collisions occur when players are allowed to maintain their established position on the ice. A player shall not be penalized if the intention is to play the puck and in so doing causes a collision with an opponent. No player is required to move out of the way of an oncoming player to avoid an impact.

Body Checking

A body check represents intentional physical contact, from the front, diagonally from the front or straight from the side, by a skater to an opponent who is in control of the puck. The opposing player's objective is to gain possession of the puck with a legal body check and NOT to punish or intimidate an opponent.

Legitimate body checking must be done only with the trunk of the body (hips and shoulders) and must be above the opponent's knees and at or below the opponent's shoulders. The use of the **hands, forearm, stick or elbow** in delivering a body check is unacceptable and not within the guidelines of a legal body check.

The primary focus of a body check is to gain possession of the puck and proper body checking technique starts with **stick on puck**, therefore the stick blade of the player delivering the check must be below the knees.

USA Hockey reminds coaches and players that these requirements are the responsibility of the player delivering the body check. Under no circumstance is it acceptable to deliver a body check to a **vulnerable or defenseless** opponent, an opponent who is not in possession and control of the puck or to use the hands, stick, forearm or elbow in delivering a check to an opponent.

Vulnerable or Defenseless: A skater is considered to be in a vulnerable or defenseless position when the player is unaware, unprepared, or unsuspecting of an impending hit.

Infractions that occur as a result of a body check delivered to a vulnerable or defenseless player must be penalized under the Boarding, Charging, Checking from Behind or Head Contact Rules. When done in a dangerous, careless or reckless (unacceptable) manner where the player delivering the check has made no effort to play the puck, the **major plus game misconduct or match penalty** provisions of these rules must be assessed.

When two or more players are **physically engaged** for control of the puck along the boards, they are considered to be **vulnerable and defenseless**. Any body check delivered by a skater to an opponent who is **physically engaged** with another skater is considered dangerous, careless or reckless (unacceptable) and must be penalized accordingly.

Late Avoidable Body Check: Any avoidable check delivered to a player who is no longer in control of the puck. An avoidable check is when the player delivering the check has an opportunity to avoid contact or minimize contact, once it is realized the opponent no longer has control of the puck.

The concept of “finishing the check” is an unacceptable action as it is one that is meant to intimidate or punish the opponent with no intent to gain possession of the puck. The responsibility is on the player delivering the check to avoid forceful contact (minimize impact) to a **vulnerable or defenseless** player who is no longer in control of the puck.

Competitive Contact Category

Non-check hockey does not mean no contact and the Body Contact Category game can be very physical. **USA Hockey strongly encourages legal competitive contact to occur in all age classifications as part of the skill progression that teaches legal body checking.**

When determining whether a body check has occurred, the official must focus on whether the player is attempting to play the puck and whether there is any overt hip, shoulder or forearm action used to initiate contact and separate the opponent from the puck.

Legal **competitive contact** occurs when players are focused on gaining possession of the puck and are simply maintaining legally established body position. This most often occurs when two players are **physically engaged** in front of the goal or along the boards.

Legal **competitive contact** also commonly occurs when a player has established an angle on the opponent and closes the gap to create an opening that is too small for the puck carrier. Additional acceptable forms of competitive contact include:

- A skater is entitled to the ice they occupy so long as they maintain their skating speed and body position between an opponent and the loose puck.
- A skater is entitled to stand their ground and is not required to move if an opponent wishes to skate through that area of the ice. A skater may block an opponent so long as they are in front of the opponent and moving in the same direction.

- A skater can use their body position to force an opponent to take a less direct route to the puck, so long as they do not use a hand or arm to hold or block the opponent.

Body Checking Category

It is USA Hockey's intent to create a safe environment for players to be able to develop their skills including body checking in age appropriate classifications while also being able to physically compete within the rules.

A player delivering a check to a **vulnerable or defenseless** player, who is not in control of the puck, will be assessed a penalty for roughing. Officials are to pay particular attention to these examples when applying this rule. These are intended as a guide and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A player who is dangerous, careless or reckless (unacceptable) in delivering a check.
- A player who anticipates an opponent gaining possession **or** control of the puck but who makes contact with the opponent before possession **or** control occurs.
- A player who delivers a **late avoidable check** to an opponent who has released a shot or pass and is no longer in control of the puck.
- The use of the hands, forearm, stick or elbow in delivering a body check **OR** making contact with the opponent after the whistle. If contact is made above the shoulders, this action must be penalized as head contact. **This includes any contact that occurs as part of a scrum situation after play has been stopped.**
- Two skaters who use competitive contact for position as they skate to a loose puck are within their rights to do so, unless one uses their stick, arm, or skates to obstruct their opponent's ability to skate to the puck.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

A bench minor penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct shall be assessed to any team whose players or team officials commit the following actions while on the players' bench.

Banging the boards with a stick or other object, including skates or arms, after a body check regardless as to whether the check is being penalized. It is deemed to be unsportsmanlike conduct and should be penalized when done as a means of escalating dangerous and/or unnecessary physical play where there is no intent to legally gain possession of the puck.

Summary

All USA Hockey members must demonstrate awareness and support for the application, spirit and the respect of the rules in order for continued improvement in the game of hockey.

- **Coaches** are expected to teach proper skills and hold their players accountable for illegal and dangerous actions, regardless as to whether they are properly penalized, or not.
- **Parents** are expected to support the decisions of the officials and support the coaches in teaching the proper skills in a safe and positive environment.
- **Officials** shall enforce a strict penalty standard according to the guidelines that have been established.
- **Players** are expected to compete within the playing rules.
- **Administrators** are expected to hold players, coaches, officials and parents accountable for their actions in an effort to promote a safe and positive environment for all participants.

All members of USA Hockey share an equal responsibility to ensure the integrity of the game is upheld. The onus to incorporate change is not only on the officials, but also on administrators, coaches, parents and players, as well.

NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT PLAYER DEVELOPMENT TRYOUTS

Overview

VSAHA will conduct tryouts to select players who will represent Vermont at the New England District (NED) Festival Weekend(s) and/or District Development Camp(s). Dates and locations for the NED festival and camps will be posted on the NED website: <https://www.nedusah.org/>

The Futures Development Camp is for 12 year old & 13 year old hockey players in the New England District. This camp is the player's first introduction to the USA Hockey National Development process. Led by USA Hockey National Office personnel, the Futures Development Camp consists of on and off ice training sessions, small area games, and full ice games.

The New England District camps combine the best players in our district with the best coaches in the Northeast for development opportunities and for the purpose of identifying/selecting the best-suited players to advance to a multi-district camp or USA Hockey's National Camps.

USA Hockey Player Development Camps for 15 year old, 16 year old and 17 year old provide the United States' top young players with age-appropriate on and off-ice training and coaching from elite-level instructors, as well as the opportunity to compete against their peers from throughout the country.

The USA Hockey Player Development Camps also serve as an evaluation environment for players competing to represent the U.S. at international tournaments and events including the Hlinka Gretzky Cup, the Under-17 Five Nations Tournament, and the Women's National Festival in Lake Placid, N.Y..

Dates and locations for the USA Hockey National Camps will be posted on the USA Hockey website: <https://teamusa.usahockey.com/playerdevelopment>

Organizational Structure

The VSAHA Player Development Committee will be chaired by a VSAHA Executive Officer. The committee will be made up of representatives appointed by the VSAHA President.

The Committee will develop the overall protocol to be used throughout the selection process to ensure a fair and equitable process takes place.

The Evaluators will utilize the Team Genius electronic evaluation software during all tryout sessions. This evaluation software compiles and analyzes evaluator data and provides the initial rankings. The evaluation team will review the rankings and make final selections.

A pre-tryout meeting will be conducted for all evaluators and staff to review tryout day protocols and explain the scoring system and evaluation criteria.

Each birth year will be assigned a group leader who will oversee the evaluation team for all tryout sessions. The group leader will also conduct a post tryout meeting immediately following the tryout session for the purpose of conducting a final review of the evaluation data and selections.

The Committee chair will be responsible for collecting and maintaining the final scores and rankings. These scores and rankings will only be shared on a need to know basis of VSAHA executives members, NED and USA Hockey Player Development personnel.

Registration Requirements

Information about tryouts, such as dates/locations/registration will be posted at: <https://www.vermonthockey.org/playerdevelopment>

All players must be U.S. citizens and a resident of Vermont. Out-of-State players are not eligible to register to try out in Vermont even if they have played the entire season with a VSAHA Member Association. Players are required to try out in the state where they have primary residence.

To be considered for one of VSAHA selections to the NED Festival and/or Development Camps, the eligible player must attend all required tryout sessions

All players (including high school players) **MUST BE REGISTERED** with USA Hockey prior to the tryout session(s). Players can register through the USA Hockey at: <https://membership.usahockey.com/>

TIER I SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCESS

For the purpose of seeking the Vermont State Amateur Hockey Associations (VSAHA) Tier I allocation(s) for tournaments leading to, and including, USA Hockey National Tournament, member associations will use the criteria and process outlined below.

On or before September 1 of each year, USA Hockey will provide VSAHA the number of teams it will be permitted to have at the Girls Tier I 14u, 16u, 19u and Youth 14u, 15, 16u, and 18u national tournament bound levels. These numbers will be posted on the VSAHA website as soon as they are available.

Member associations that would like to form a Girls or Youth National Bound team(s) must comply with the Youth Tier I Standards and Criteria and/or Girls Tier I Standards and Criteria as outlined in the USA Hockey Annual Guide and all VSAHA Bylaws and Rules and Regulations.

Member associations that would like to form a Girls or Youth National Bound team(s) for the following season must publish and advertise tryout dates prior to the start of the current USA Hockey National Tournament, provided however, that no tryouts may occur until 48 hours after the last game of the National Tournament. Member associations holding tryouts, and players trying out are not necessarily guaranteed that the teams selected/rostered will be granted a Tier I allocation.

Prior to August 1st of each season, member associations must finalize rosters and their intent to seek the Tier I allocation. No late declarations will be considered. All rostered teams seeking the allocation must carry a minimum of 15 players, including goaltenders, and meet all other VSAHA and USA Hockey rostering requirements.

In the event that the number of declared teams in a playing classification exceeds the number of teams permitted by USA Hockey for the specified season, a Tier I Showcase will be held prior to November 30th of that season. The results of the Showcase will determine which teams will be awarded Tier I status and eligible to compete in the VSAHA Tier I State Tournament, New England Regional or USA Hockey National tournaments.

Teams, and participating players on those teams, that compete in any respect in the Showcase and do not qualify for Tier I status for that season, may not

register that season for or on a Tier II USA Hockey National Tournament bound team.

Teams that are awarded a Tier I allocation will not be allowed to make any changes to their rosters for the balance of that season and are required to compete in the VSAHA Tier I State Tournament if one is necessary.

Teams receiving Tier I status must have a signed membership agreement and be a member association in good standing with VSAHA.

CRITERIA FOR ALL NATIONAL & REGIONAL BOUND TEAMS

National Tournament Bound teams representing VSAHA at Tier I and Tier II tournaments must adhere to the following to be considered for any spot in any tournament(s) or game(s) leading to the USA Hockey national tournament. It is the responsibility of the team to make sure all requirements are met prior to the expected deadlines.

- Follow the VSAHA Bylaws which outlines being a member and players residency requirements in sections two and four.
- VSAHA Tryout Policy.
- The USA Hockey Annual Guide offers additional requirements for Tier I and II teams to follow around membership, tryouts and registration.
- Refer to the VSAHA National Bound Teams page for updated information.

REGIONAL, SECTIONAL & NATIONAL BOUND TEAMS

Participation in Regional, Sectional, or National tournaments is mandatory for qualifying teams. Failure to attend will result in consequences for VSAHA. In cases where VSAHA does not send a team at a given level, VSAHA and the non-attending team or association will incur financial penalties. Additionally, the affiliate will lose its slot in that age category for the following year.

Member Association penalty for not attending the Regional/Sectional, National Tournament: The entire member association, at all age levels, both girls and youth teams will be ineligible for all VSAHA State tournaments the following year.

LOGO USAGE POLICY

Vermont Member organizations are permitted to use the VSAHA logo in conjunction with their logo on apparel and team information to represent membership in Vermont State Amateur Hockey Association.

Members are not permitted to use the logo with “Team Vermont”, “Select”, “All-Stars” or similar which may denote a team run by VSAHA.

Use of the logo is permitted on State Championship jackets provided the member association has requested its use.

Requests for the logo and intended use of the logo must come directly from a member association. Please include a brief description, mock-up of your intended use. Requests can be sent to the VSAHA President. The response will include relevant information such as length of permission and any instructions for the supplier, etc.

STANDARDIZED DISCIPLINE POLICY

The Vermont State Amateur Hockey Association (VSAHA) has established standardized discipline for certain infractions to create consistency in disciplinary actions and inform members of potential consequences.

When a violation occurs that carries a standardized penalty, the Rules Committee will document the evidence, review it, and make a preliminary determination of one of the following:

The violation is accurate and warrants the suspension as outlined in the policy.

For administrative level violations, the Rules Committee notifies the offending party of this finding and offers the opportunity to accept the suspension or reject the decision and request a hearing. If a hearing is requested, the hearing shall be offered in accordance with USA Hockey Bylaw 10. If the offending party requests a hearing under this section, the hearing body may, as a result of that hearing, reduce the suspension, maintain the suspension or increase the suspension imposed.

For Game Level violations, the Rules Committee notifies the President of the Member Association of this finding. It's the Member Associations responsibility to ensure the additional suspension is served and noted on the game sheets.

- or -

The violation is accurate and warrants the suspension as outlined in the policy. However, the action and/or history warrants further disciplinary review. The Rules Committee notifies the offending party and/or the President of the Member Association that a hearing shall be conducted in accordance with USA Hockey Bylaw 10.

The following standardized penalties are subject to change at the discretion of the Rules Committee, with approval from the Executive Committee.

GAME LEVEL

GAME MISCONDUCTS - LAST 5 MINUTES OF GAME

Any game misconduct assessed in the last five (5) minutes of a game; an additional game suspension will automatically be assessed.

RULE 601 INFRACTIONS

Any game misconduct assessed for rule 601(d); a four (4) game suspension will automatically be assessed

Any spectator(s), upon review, is found to be in violation of Rule 601, will be suspended from all games and practices for thirty (30) days and be subjected to a hearing.

ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL

PLAYER NOT ON ROSTER - GAME PLAYED	
1st Offense	Head Coach 1 game suspension for each game where an offense took place
2nd Offense	Head Coach 7 day suspension from all USA Hockey activities
All further Offenses	Offending association and head coach hearing with Rules Committee

COACH NOT ON ROSTER - GAME PLAYED	
1st Offense	1 game suspension for each game where an offense took place
2nd Offense	Offending coach 7 day suspension from all USA Hockey activities
All further Offenses	Offending association and head coach hearing with Rules Committee

NO USA HOCKEY ROSTER - GAME PLAYED	
1st Offense	Head Coach 1 game suspension for each game where an offense took place
2nd Offense	Head Coach 7 day suspension from all USA Hockey activities
All further Offenses	Offending association and head coach hearing with Rules Committee

NO LOCKER ROOM MONITOR	
1st Offense	Head Coach 1 game suspension for each game where an offense took place
2nd Offense	Head Coach 7 day suspension from all USA Hockey activities
All further Offenses	Offending association and head coach hearing with Rules Committee

MEMBER ASSOCIATION HOSTING NON-SANCTIONED TOURNAMENT	
1st Offense	\$300 fine payable to VSAHA
All further Offenses	Offending Member Association hearing with Rules Committee

MATCH PENALTY POLICY

VSAHA is committed to stopping any and all activities that lead to match penalties. With this in mind, the VSAHA Rules Committee will require the Member Association to impose a minimum two-week suspension to a player or a Team Official incurring a match penalty.

USA Hockey has established suspension range recommendations for match penalties. These suspension ranges shall serve as a means to create consistency in the application of suspensions involving players or team officials assessed match penalties.

When a match penalty has been assessed, the official(s) will submit the required incident report to the USA Hockey Incident Report System. The VSAHA Rules Committee will review the report and make a preliminary determination of one of the following:

1.) The incident report is accurate and the proper application of the rule(s) has been implemented. The action warrants the suspension as outlined in the policy. The Member Association of the offending party is then notified of this finding with the required suspension length. The Member Association communicates with the offending party and offers the opportunity to accept the suspension or reject the decision and request a hearing.

If a hearing is requested, a hearing shall be offered in accordance with Playing Rule 405(c) and with Bylaw 10D (Suspension Hearings/Domestic Competition Playing Rules) conducted by the offending party's Member Association.

(Note) If the offending party requests a hearing under this section, the hearing body may, as a result of that hearing, reduce the suspension, maintain the suspension or increase the suspension imposed.

2.) The incident report was determined to be inaccurate (mis-application of the rule(s) or wrong player identified), in which case the VSAHA Rules Committee will work with the referees to correct the incident report. Once corrected, the VSAHA Rules Committee will close out the incident or start with item #1 above.

3.) The incident report is accurate and the proper application of the rule(s) has been implemented. However, the action and/or history warrants further disciplinary review. The VSAHA Rules Committee shall notify the offending party

that a hearing shall be conducted in accordance with Playing Rule 405(c) and Bylaw 10D (Suspension Hearings/Domestic Competition Playing Rules).

In all instances where a player or team official has been suspended for a period of time as a result of a match penalty, the player or team official shall be prohibited from participating in all USA Hockey activities for the length of the suspension. The required game(s) suspensions shall include the next regularly scheduled games that appear on the schedule of their team at the time of the incident. A player or team official who is rostered on multiple USA Hockey registered teams must serve the suspension in full before they are permitted to participate on any other USA Hockey registered team, unless otherwise specified by the VSAHA Rules Committee.

For the purpose of this policy, there shall be three levels of standardized suspension:

Level 1 – Match penalties assessed under the below rules have a recommended range of a 6 - 10 Game Suspension

- Rule 305(b) Dangerous Equipment
- Rule 601(e) Abuse of Officials and Other Misconduct (This includes all match penalties assessed under this rule except 601(e.1) Physical Assault of an Official)
- Rule 602(a) Attempt to Injure/Deliberate Injury of Opponent

Level 2 – Match penalties assessed under the below rules have a recommended range of a 4 - 8 Game Suspension

- Rule 603(c) Boarding
- Rule 606(b) Butt-Ending
- Rule 607(e) Charging
- Rule 608(c) Checking from Behind
- Rule 619(b) Head Butting
- Rule 620(c) Head Contact
- Rule 634(d) Slashing (Swinging Stick During Altercation)
- Rule 635(b) Spearing

Level 3 – Match penalties assessed under the below rules have a recommended range of a 3 - 5 Game Suspension

- Rule 601(e.3) Abuse of Officials and Other Misconduct – Hateful/Discriminatory Language
- Rule 604(e) Body Checking- Competitive Contact Category
- Rule 609(c) Cross-Checking
- Rule 611(c) Elbowing
- Rule 615(c) Fighting (Helmet Removal)
- Rule 621(c) High Sticks
- Rule 622(c) Holding an Opponent
- Rule 623(c) Hooking
- Rule 627(b) Kicking Opponent or Puck
- Rule 628(c) Kneeing
- Rule 633(a or b) Refusing to Start Play
- Rule 634(c) Slashing
- Rule 639(c) Tripping/Clipping/Leg Checking/Slew Footing
- Rule 640(e) Unnecessary Roughness (Roughing)

(Note) Any match penalty assessed under Rule 601(e.1) (Physical Assault of Official) is excluded from this policy. Original jurisdiction in any hearing resulting from a match penalty assessed under Rule 601(e.1) (Physical Assault of Official) shall reside with the VSAHA and is governed by USA Hockey’s “Resolutions of Disputes, Arbitration and Suspensions” section of the current USA Hockey Annual Guide.

If a coach or Team Official chooses to ignore the ejection or suspension for the coach, player, or Team Official, the VSAHA Executive Committee a hearing shall be conducted in accordance with Bylaw 10D (Suspension Hearings/Domestic Competition Playing Rules) with the intention of suspending the individual for at least the remainder of the season.

GAME MANAGEMENT POLICY

The only legitimate time a game can end before time runs out is if there is a physical problem with rink conditions, i.e., the ice melts or the lights go out or a gate will not close safely, etc. or if one team has been reduced to fewer than the minimum number of players, i.e., four (4), either by penalties or other reason. In the case of a team not being able to put four (4) players on the ice that team shall immediately forfeit the game, and the game will end.

Any time a team is removed from a game, a match penalty is automatically assessed to the person responsible for the decision. This means the coach or team official making the decision will be automatically suspended from all games and practices. A hearing shall be conducted in accordance with USA Hockey Bylaw 10D.

USA Hockey Rule 633: Refusing to Start Play

(a) With both teams on the ice, after the game has started, a team for any reason refuses to play after being ordered to do so by the Referee, the Referee shall warn the Captain and allow the team 15 seconds to resume play.

A bench minor penalty for delay of game shall be assessed to the offending team who still refuses to start play and if the same team refuses to continue play, the Referee shall suspend the game and assess a match penalty to the responsible Team Official(s).

(b) A bench minor penalty for delay of game shall be assessed to the offending team if prior to the start of the game or start of a period, one team fails to go onto the ice promptly when ordered to do so by the Referee.

A match penalty shall be assessed to the responsible Team Official(s), and the game suspended, if the same team fails to go onto the ice and start play within five minutes.

In the case of a game that has become so rough that a coach has concerns about his/her players' safety, running time can be used, but players must remain on the ice, choosing, if they desire, not to become involved in any play.

Pulling a team off the ice is a very serious matter and always will result in a suspension of some length of time.

VIDEO REVIEW REQUEST POLICY

With the increasing availability of video provided by rink-based programs and partners, we are proactively establishing a formal video review request policy. This policy does not limit the scope of video review abilities of the VSAHA Rules Committee, for any investigations and/or hearings that are under their jurisdiction.

No decision from a video review shall affect the outcome of the game as played or any game played after the game.

The USA Hockey Rulebook Rule 502(a) begins by stating: *“The “REFEREE” shall have general supervision of the game and his decision shall be final in all matters occurring before, during or after the game. The role of the official is to “enforce” the rules of the game and in doing so shall have full authority over all participants.”*

Therefore, the scope of what is allowable for a request of a video review shall be limited by the following.

VIDEOS THAT MAY BE REVIEWED

- A. Videos that show an incident that resulted in a serious injury where a penalty was or was not assessed for the infraction.
- B. Videos that show incidents of pre-game, post game or any off-ice altercations.
- C. A situation where the incorrect player has been assessed an infraction that resulted in a suspension and the video clearly shows that a different player should have been assessed the penalty.

VIDEOS THAT WILL NOT GENERALLY BE REVIEWED

- A. Videos for the purpose of reviewing game play situations such as off-sides, icing, goals or disallowed goals, etc.
- B. Videos for the purpose of reviewing calls or non-calls of on-ice officials, including penalty selection, unless otherwise outlined in this policy.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

A request for video review must be submitted by a Member Association President, provided the request is submitted in writing within 48 hours of the completion of the game. Submissions by anyone else will not be accepted.

All submissions must include the following information:

- A. A \$100 deposit per request. The deposit will be returned if the Rules Committee determines a penalty is warranted or the wrong player was assessed the penalty. Otherwise, the deposit will be allocated to the VSAHA Referee Growth Fund.
- B. A rationale for the requested review
- C. A legible copy of the completed game sheet if done by paper or link to an electronic game sheet.
- D. An unaltered copy of the video that captures the entire infraction being requested for review. (Video clips must not have excessive footage before or after the incident that is not relevant to the review)
- E. A signed VSAHA Injury Report form by a licensed medical personnel.

VIDEO REVIEW PROCEDURE

Within 24hrs, the chair of the Rules Committee will review the submitted video(s) to determine the validity of the video(s) and confirm or deny acceptance of the request.

Within 72hrs, the Rules Committee will conduct its review. At least one (1) of the on-ice officials from the game will be consulted as part of the Rules Committee review.

VIDEO REVIEW DECISIONS

The standard of review to be used in addressing a video review request is “conclusiveness”, therefore videos must conclusively show that the in-game determination was incorrect. After conducting a review, the Rules Committee will make one of the following decisions and has the sole discretion to determine any further action:

- A. Determine that the review is conclusive and that a penalty should have been assessed.
- B. Determine that the review is conclusive and that the official penalized the wrong player.
- C. Determined that the review is conclusive and a hearing will be scheduled to address the pre or post game issue.
- D. Determine that the review is inconclusive and therefore any decisions and/ or suspensions resulting from the assessed penalty(ies) will remain in effect.

All decisions regarding video reviews are final and only those resulting in supplemental discipline being assessed are subject to the provisions of USA Hockey Bylaw 10.

MEETING ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance at all scheduled meetings is essential for the effective governance of amateur hockey, facilitating the decision-making processes, and ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered in the deliberation of matters impacting the sport across our state.

All Member Associations are expected to attend the annual Face Off Meeting and any other statewide event or conference that the VSAHA Executive Board has deemed to require in-person attendance. Notice of in-person requirement will be given at least 30 days in advance.

The schedule of Board of Directors meetings will be communicated at the yearly Face Off meeting, be included in the VSAHA Annual Guide and posted on the VSAHA website. Attendance will be tracked and posted monthly on the VSAHA website.

Attendance for the monthly board of directors meeting is strongly encouraged to be in person. Remote attendance will be offered for the monthly board of directors meetings only. Member Associations who are unable to join in person for a particular meeting, must notify the VSAHA President in advance for the remote connection details.

If the appointed State Representative or President of the Member Association is not available to attend either in person or remotely, a suitable Member Association board member may take their place (“covering representative”). (See By-Law Article II 2.13). The VSAHA President must be notified in advance of the meeting if a covering representative is being assigned to attend and how they intend to join, either in-person or remotely.

Member Associations with more than two consecutive absences will be unable to vote at the following meeting. Member Associations with four (4) or more absences in a season will be reviewed by the VSAHA Rules Committee. Possible sanctions could be a monetary fine, loss of voting rights, inability to apply for VSAHA grants, restrictions on state/district/national tournament participation, non-renewal of membership agreement and/or any other sanctions the Rules Committee may choose.

PLAY UP POLICY

VSAHA remains firmly committed to the American Development Model guideline that all participants play within their age classification and most particularly at the 8U level. However, VSAHA understands that due to unique and sometimes unpredictable challenges, having flexibility with this guideline allows for a practical and reasonable resolution to these difficulties.

Waiver Request

A Play Up Waiver must be submitted for **ALL** players looking to play outside of the USA Hockey defined age classifications. Requests must be submitted by November 1st of the current season via the online form on the VSAHA website. Deadline exceptions can be granted by the Play Up Committee.

The Play Up Committee will review and make a ruling on the waiver with the support of the Executive Board when necessary. All Play Up Committee decisions are final and not appealable.

8U Play Up Requirements

- Player must currently be 8 years old and have played at least two (2) seasons of 8U hockey; and
- Player(s) are needed to make 10 skaters and 1 goalie at the 10U level for the association to provide a team at the 10U level; or
- Player(s) are needed to make 2 teams when there are 18 or more 10U players

A Member Association may move one (1) 8yr old player to the 10U level regardless of numbers at the 10U level. A waiver **MUST** still be submitted.

12U Play Up Requirements

- Player must currently be 12 years old
- Cannot play up to a Tier I or Tier II team (USAH National Rule for teams with a National Bound path)

Violations of Policy

Any violations of this policy may result in any or all the following disciplinary actions:

- Player and/or player's team rendered ineligible for State/District/National Tournament(s)
- Member Association and/or teams Head Coach subject to a disciplinary hearing with the VSAHA Rules Committee.

COMBINED TEAM POLICY

Any two (2) or more Local Associations may request VSAHA to approve a single combined team when one (1) or more of the local associations do not have enough age appropriate players available to form their own team. Players from the local associations in the age category of the combined team should not be denied or cut from participating unless approved via the operating plan that was approved/modified as part of the approval process.

The VSAHA Executive Board will review the application and supporting documentation and approve or not the combined team request. The Executive Board may refer the application to the VSAHA Full Board for their review and vote. If the application is referred to the Full Board, at least two (2) weeks must be provided to State Representatives to review with their local boards before voting on the matter at the next scheduled VSAHA board meeting.

Procedure:

1. Complete the online application at www.vermonthockey.org
2. Provide the following documentation:
 - a. Minutes from each local association approving the combined team request
 - b. Registration numbers from each local association for the requested age grouping for the combined team request
 - c. Written operating plan on how the combined team will be administered
3. VSAHA Executive Board will review application and all submitted documentation and approve, deny, or defer to the VSAHA Full Board for consideration
4. If a combined team is approved, players must first be claimed by their current association in the USA Hockey Registration portal. After that, the managing association can claim the players in their USA Hockey Registration portal. This order is important so that the player's association remains correct in the system, otherwise the player will be subject to the Transfer and Release policy.

ASSOCIATION TRYOUT POLICY

Teams at the 13O level and above cannot hold tryouts until 48 hours after the last USA Hockey National Championship Game.

Teams at the 12u level and below, cannot hold tryouts until the Monday after the last March New England District Regionals (all Tiers, all Levels) are completed.

For a first offense of this policy, a \$2,000 fine will be assessed to the association and must be paid before a USA Hockey roster is approved.

For all further offenses of this policy, no USA Hockey roster will be approved for that season which the tryouts were held for.

GAME CANCELLATION POLICY

Any Member Association that cancels a scheduled game within seven (7) days prior to the game is subject to pay \$225 to the hosting association, unless the hosting association can secure a replacement game with another association.

Weather related or rink closures are the only exceptions to the cancellation fee. The hosting association is responsible for enforcing this policy. In the event of a dispute, the matter may be presented to the VSAHA Rules Committee for review and final ruling.

OUTSTANDING DEBT POLICY

A Member Association, pursuant to its policies, may determine that a player who is delinquent in member fees, equipment/uniform fees, volunteer requirements, etc to the Member Association is not eligible to continue participating in the Member Associations program during such delinquency.

The Member Association may request VSAHA to extend such ineligibility of the player to all Member Associations by submitting the player to the Outstanding Debt List (ODL). VSAHA will review the submitted information, validate USA Hockey Bylaw 10D(j) has been followed and supporting documentation has been provided.

A player on the ODL, may NOT participate in any form (on ice or off ice) until the player has been removed from the ODL or by approval from the VSAHA Rules Committee. Any Member Association found using a player whose name is on the ODL, will be required to pay the outstanding debt owed to the Member Association and/or be subject to a hearing with the VSAHA Rules Committee.

Any player whose name was added to the ODL by a Member Association and that Member Association ceases to operate before the debt is cleared, must make payment and/or return any equipment to VSAHA before being removed from the ODL. Such payments to VSAHA will be used for growth initiatives at VSAHA's sole discretion.

The ODL list will be maintained on a private page of the VSAHA website. The President and Registrar of Member Association's, along with the VSAHA President, 1st Vice President and Registrar will be granted access to the private page. Only the player's name, parent/guardian's name, age category and the fact that there is an outstanding debt will be published on this private page.

PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSIONS

1. USA Hockey Bylaw 10 Financial Dispute Guidelines must be followed and can be found in the most current edition of the USA Hockey Annual Guide. (www.usahockey.com/annualguide)
2. Once the Member Association holding the debt believes they've complied with the USA Hockey Bylaw 10D(j), the online ODL form must be completed.
3. The VSAHA 1st Vice President will review the submitted information. If there are questions, unclear/missing information, or non-compliance with USA Hockey Bylaw 10D(j), VSAHA will follow up with the Member Association before the player is officially placed on the ODL.
4. A notification will be sent to the parent/guardian of the player once listing is confirmed. Parents must contact the Member Association holding the debt directly with any questions and/or payments. VSAHA is not a debt collection agency and shall in no way address the liability for or amount of the outstanding debt.
5. Once a debt is cleared, the Member Association shall inform the VSAHA 1st Vice President in writing within two days for removal of the player's name from the ODL.

INJURY INCIDENT REPORTING

Concussion Management Protocol

The USA Hockey Concussion Management Protocol and most state statutes require that an athlete be removed from any training, practice or game if they exhibit any signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion or are suspected of sustaining a concussion. The player should not return to physical activity until he or she has been evaluated by a qualified medical provider who has provided written clearance to return to sports. This form is to be used after an athlete has been removed from athletic activity due to a suspected concussion and must be signed by their medical provider in order to return without restriction to training, practice or competition.

[USA Hockey Concussion Return to Play Form](#) - Must be completed and returned to your association and VSAHA Player Safety Coordinator prior to returning to practice or play.

Injury Reporting Form

[USA Hockey Catastrophic Injury/Spectator Injury Reporting Form](#) - Use this form only to report potential catastrophic injuries or spectator injuries. This is not a claim form and does not trigger an insurance claim. This form is for reporting purposes only. Return to your association and VSAHA Player Safety Coordinator.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY

Conflicts of interest have the potential to cause legal problems as well as embarrassment for Vermont State Amateur Hockey Association, Inc (“VSAHA”). While conflicts of interest are not prohibited, they must be duly considered by an appropriate body or party of VSAHA, based on disclosures as required by VSAHA. This Conflicts of Interest Policy (this “Policy”) is intended to help directors, officers, employees, members of committees and similar bodies, and certain other persons identify situations that present possible conflicts of interest and to provide VSAHA with procedures whereby potential conflicts may be reviewed by an appropriate body or party of VSAHA.

Conflicts of interest exist where an individual’s activities or relationships present the potential for improper personal gain or advantage, or an adverse effect on the interests of VSAHA. It is impossible to list every circumstance giving rise to a conflict of interest; however, this Policy will serve as a guide to the types of circumstances that create conflicts of interest. Because the nature of the business of VSAHA requires great public respect for and trust in the reputation and integrity of VSAHA, and because VSAHA operates in the public spotlight, VSAHA is expected to conduct its affairs in a manner consistent with high ethical principles. VSAHA correspondingly requires Responsible Persons (as defined below) to act in the same manner.

It is recognized that many persons serving in paid, volunteer and other roles with VSAHA may also have volunteer, employment, management, ownership and other relationships with other entities involved in hockey that give rise to fiduciary and similar obligations to those other third parties. Ordinarily a Responsible Person’s obligations to VSAHA and a third party are not in conflict; however, when Conflicts of Interest arise, a Responsible Person has a primary fiduciary duty to VSAHA and must always act in the best interests of VSAHA. If a Conflict exists, then the Responsible Person must recuse themselves from involvement in the matter as more fully set forth in Section C below. Recognizing that Conflicts of Interest arise, this Policy is intended to preserve the integrity of the decisions and actions taken by VSAHA.

Definitions

As used in this Policy, the following capitalized terms shall have the meanings indicated.

“Agent” refers to a person serving as a director, officer, agent, partner, associate, trustee, personal representative, receiver, guardian, custodian, conservator or other legal representative of an entity or individual.

“Board” is the Board of Directors of VSAHA.

“Transaction” is any contract, transaction, agreement or relationship involving the sale or purchase of goods, services, or rights of any kind, the providing or receipt of a grant or loan, or the establishment of any other financial relationship with VSAHA or a Related Organization.

“Control” exists if an entity or individual either (i) owns, directly or indirectly, at least fifty percent (50%) of the equity ownership of another entity, or (ii) has the right, directly or indirectly, to direct or cause the direction of the management and policies of another entity, whether through the ownership of voting interests, by contract, or otherwise.

“Family Member” is a spouse, parent, child or a spouse of a child, brother, sister or spouse of a brother or sister, of a Responsible Person.

“Related Organization” is an entity that controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with VSAHA.

“Responsible Person” is any person who holds one or more of the following positions with VSAHA or a Related Organization: Director; officer; member of a committee or similar body; member of VSAHA staff; member of a task force or other similar ad hoc committee; member of a hearing or appeal panel regarding a disciplinary matter, or any other person determined by the President of VSAHA to be subject to this policy.

Existence of a Conflict of Interest

A “Conflict of Interest” or “Conflict” exists when a Responsible Person’s activities or interests, whether direct or indirect, interfere with, influence, or have the potential to interfere with or influence his or her responsibilities in any material respect on behalf of VSAHA or undermine the interests of VSAHA; provided, however, where a Responsible Person has a financial interest (regardless of the materiality of the financial interest) in a Transaction, a potential Conflict of Interest may exist. This definition of Conflict of Interest is intended to be interpreted broadly because the appearance of impropriety can be just as damaging as actual impropriety. Therefore, a Conflict of Interest

exists whenever the public may reasonably infer from the circumstances that there is or could be such a conflict. Conflicts of Interest include, without limitation, the following types of circumstances and related examples, which are presented for illustration purposes and are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all potential Conflicts of Interest:

When VSAHA is considering entering into a Transaction with a Responsible Person or Family Member.

Example: Approval of the Board is sought for an agreement for the provision of consulting services by a director of VSAHA.

When VSAHA is considering entering into a Transaction with an entity (other than a Related Organization) or individual in which a Responsible Person or Family Member has a financial interest or is an Agent.

Example: Approval of the Finance Committee of VSAHA is sought for a banking relationship with a company of which a VSAHA director is the Vice President.

When a Responsible Person engages in activities competing with VSAHA or a Related Organization, including in the provision of services for, or in any other transaction or arrangement with, a third party.

Example: An officer of VSAHA agrees with a national governing body other than USA Hockey to promote the other national governing body in negotiations with potential sponsors or licensees.

When a Responsible Person has a financial interest in an entity or individual that competes with VSAHA or a Related Organization, including in the provision of services for, or in any other transaction or arrangement with, a third party.

Example: The spouse of an officer of VSAHA works for or is an investor in a company that competes with VSAHA or a Related Organization, or in a company that provides services to a company that competes with VSAHA or a Related Organization.

When a Responsible Person accepts gifts, excessive entertainment or other favors from any individual or entity that does, or is seeking to do, business with VSAHA or a Related Organization, if it might be concluded that such action was intended to influence or might influence the Responsible Person in his or her duties to VSAHA. This does not preclude the acceptance of items of nominal or insignificant value that are clearly tokens of respect or friendship and not

related to any actual or potential transaction or activity of VSAHA or a Related Organization.

Example: *The chair of the Finance Committee of VSAHA is offered free use of a lake home belonging to the President of an organization that has a financial proposal under review by VSAHA.*

When a Responsible Person has a financial interest or is an Agent of VSAHA that is reasonably likely to be impacted (financially or otherwise) by an action or decision made by the Responsible Person in his or her capacity acting on behalf of VSAHA.

Example: *A committee member who works for a league, program or other organization is called upon to vote or make a decision on a matter materially impacting the league, program or other organization.*

Example: A director working or volunteering for a Tier I program serves on a committee for determining whether to grant Tier I status to competing programs.

When a Responsible Person's activities or interests, whether direct or indirect, interfere with, influence, or have the potential to interfere with or influence his or her responsibilities on behalf of VSAHA or undermine the interests of VSAHA.

Example: *A director has a significant client that owns or operates a facility being considered as the host of an VSAHA event.*

Example: *An officer serves on a hearing panel or appeal panel involving discipline against a member of the officer's program.*

Policy and Procedures

The procedures set forth below are designed to help Responsible Persons identify situations that present potential Conflicts of Interest and to provide VSAHA with a procedure for independent review and, when appropriate, approval of a circumstance in which a Responsible Person has or may have a Conflict of Interest. The policy is intended to comply with the procedure prescribed in the 11B V.S.A. § 8.31 which governs conflicts of interest for directors of nonprofit corporations.

Reporting Conflicts of Interest

Prior to Board, Executive Committee or other action on a matter involving a Conflict of Interest (including any decision or any Transaction), a Responsible Person who believes he or she has a Conflict of Interest shall disclose all facts material to the Conflict of Interest as follows:

- A. In the case of Board or Executive Committee action, to the President;
- B. In the case of action by a committee, task force, other ad hoc committee, or hearing or appeal panel, to the applicable chair (for example, a member of a Committee who believes that he or she has a Conflict of Interest shall report the matter to the chair of the committee); or
- C. In the case of action by VSAHA staff, to the President.

Such disclosure shall be made by the person with the Conflict prior to or at the meeting.

The individual to whom the disclosure is made shall report the disclosure at the meeting prior to consideration of the matter involving the Conflict, and the disclosure shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting. If the person having the Conflict of Interest is the President, then the required disclosure shall be made to, and the required report shall be made by, a Vice President or another officer.

For any other Conflicts of Interest not described above, the Responsible Person who believes he or she may have a Conflict of Interest shall disclose to the President the facts relating to the potential Conflict of Interest.

A Responsible Person with a Conflict of Interest shall refrain from any action that may affect VSAHA's participation in the subject Transaction or other decision or action of VSAHA and shall not attempt to exert his or her personal influence regarding the matter.

Individuals or bodies of VSAHA with questions about procedures for disclosure and review of Conflicts of Interest may seek advice from designated legal counsel for VSAHA, who may answer such questions or refer such questions to a member of VSAHA or other designee.

Unreported Conflicts of Interest

At the direction of the President or designated legal counsel for VSAHA, VSAHA may review any matter to be considered by the Board, or a committee, task force, other ad hoc committee, hearing or appeal panel or other body of

VSAHA, to determine whether a Responsible Person has a Conflict of Interest, and if it is determined that a Conflict exists the Conflict of Interest procedures herein shall apply.

Review of Conflicted Transactions

For matters in which a Responsible Person has a Conflict of Interest, the Board, Executive Committee, committee, task force, other ad hoc committee, hearing or appeal panel, or other body of VSAHA, as applicable, shall review each Conflict of Interest that is reported to it, and may approve the matter if the material facts as to the matter and the Conflict of Interest are fully disclosed or known to the body considering the matter, and the body approves the matter in good faith by the affirmative vote (without counting the person(s) with the Conflict) of a majority of the disinterested members of the body at the meeting, even though the disinterested members constitute less than a quorum for such meeting.

A Responsible Person who believes he or she has a Conflict of Interest may participate in the body's discussion of the matter if they have disclosed the material facts related to the Conflict and all parties related to the subject of the matter are present or represented; provided however, the chair of the body considering the matter may provide an opportunity for the body to discuss the matter without the person with the Conflict of Interest present. The person with a Conflict of Interest may not vote on the subject matter. The chair has the power to require the interested person to leave the room while the vote is taken and/or during deliberations.

The minutes of the meeting of the body reviewing a Conflict of Interest and making a decision on the underlying matter shall reflect (1) the matter under consideration, (2) the Responsible Person with a Conflict of Interest, (3) the Responsible Person's ineligibility to vote and/or absence from the meeting during any discussion or vote, and (4) the decision of the body on the matter under consideration.

For all other Conflicts of Interest, the President shall determine whether the Conflict of Interest should be reported to or acted on by the Board or other body of VSAHA. The President may also determine whether review and resolution of a Conflict of Interest should be handled by another party or body of VSAHA, including a special committee designated by the President. In each case, the President may direct and address review and resolution of the matter in the President's discretion and shall make a written record of the disclosure of the Conflict of Interest and related decision on referral of the matter.

Questions

If it is not clear whether a Conflict of Interest exists, then a Responsible Person with a potential Conflict shall disclose the circumstances to the President, who shall determine whether there exists a Conflict of Interest that is subject to this Policy.

Individuals or bodies of VSAHA with questions about procedures for disclosure and review of Conflicts of Interest may seek advice from the VSAHA's designated legal counsel, who may answer such questions or refer such questions to a member of the VSAHA or other designee.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Non Disclosure Policy

Each Responsible Person (defined below) shall exercise care not to disclose confidential information acquired in connection with such status, the disclosure of which might be averse to the interests of Vermont State Amateur Hockey Association, Inc (“Organization”). No Responsible Person shall use confidential information for his or her personal gain.

Policies

For the purposes of this policy, a “Responsible Person” is any person who holds one or more of the following positions with Organization or with an entity that controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with Organization: Director; Director Emeritus; officer; member of a council, committee or similar body; member of the Organization staff; member of a task force or other similar ad hoc committee; member of a hearing or appeal panel regarding a disciplinary matter, or any other person determined by the President of Organization to be subject to this policy.

Types of Confidential Information

The following types of information received by a Responsible Person in the performance of his or her responsibilities as a Responsible Person shall be treated as confidential unless otherwise determined by the board of directors of Organization:

1. Information regarding the appointment or termination of employees.
2. Employee evaluations and compensation.
3. Information about contractual relationships with third parties.
4. Financial information.
5. Membership data, including any identifying or contact information for any member of Organization, or within Organization’s records or database(s).

The foregoing is not intended to be a complete list of all the types of information that may be considered confidential.

Failure to Comply

Any Responsible Person who fails to comply with the provisions of this confidentiality policy shall be subject to such sanctions or other action by Organization pursuant to Organization’s Bylaws. Any other person who is subject to this policy and who fails to comply with it shall be subject to

discipline, termination of employment, or such other sanction as Organization determines is appropriate.

Each Responsible Person must also be familiar with and comply with any applicable state or federal law with respect to protection of private information.

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

NOTE: At this time VSAHA has no employees.

This Policy and procedures are for employees, independent contractors, volunteers, and board members of Vermont State Amateur Hockey Association (“VSAHA”), and any good faith reporter or other reasonable parties (i.e., witnesses, victims) (“Covered Parties”) to be protected under this policy and to identify concerns about actual or suspected violations of:

- A. The bylaws, rules & regulations and policies of VSAHA;
- B. Federal and applicable state law;
- C. USA Hockey’s applicable codes of conduct;
- D. Legal and regulatory requirements regarding financial reporting and disclosure requirements, preparation of financial statements, accounting practices, internal accounting controls, financial audit matters, matters concerning fraud against VSAHA, or inappropriate use of its resources, including without limitation billing for services not performed or goods not delivered and fraudulent financial reporting.

Any Covered Party is encouraged and has the right to report actual or alleged violations set forth above. Covered Parties are required to report any violations of the applicable codes of conduct. Failure by any employee, volunteer or board member to report a violation of this Policy may subject such person to discipline.

A whistleblower as defined by this Policy is any Covered Party who reports an activity that he or she considers to be addressed by this Policy. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures; appropriate officials of VSAHA are responsible for such actions

Submitting a Report

VSAHA respects the legal rights of Covered Parties to report the type of actual or suspected activity addressed by this Policy directly to government agencies, or USA Hockey management personnel. Alternatively, the reporting process described below may be followed.

If a Covered Party has knowledge of or a concern regarding activities addressed by this Policy, the individual should contact the VSAHA President, who shall in turn refer applicable matters to the Rules Committee for review. An individual may also submit a written report anonymously to the Chair of the Rules Committee, however, that may make investigation more difficult. Reports should be factual and contain as much specific information as possible to allow a proper assessment. This is particularly critical if a report is submitted anonymously.

Anyone making a report concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates an actual or potential issues addressed by this Policy. Any allegations that prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense and may be reported as such.

Whistleblower Protections – Confidentiality and Anti-Retaliation

Whistleblower protections cover two important areas; confidentiality and anti-retaliation. To the extent possible, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, an individual's identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with law, or to provide accused individuals their legal rights of defense.

VSAHA has zero tolerance for retaliation against people who make good faith reports under this Policy or those who cooperate with investigations of those reports. "Retaliation" for the purposes of this Policy, includes, without limitation, any adverse or discriminatory action, or the threat of an adverse or discriminatory action, carried out against an athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator, official, employee, board member or officer, as a result of any report, complaint, or other communication reporting misconduct of any kind to VSAHA, USA Hockey or any law enforcement agency or government entity.

The right of the whistleblower to protection against retaliation does not include protection against personal wrongdoing by an individual.

Investigation and Resolution

The Rules Committee shall be responsible for the investigation of any allegations of a violation of this Policy by employees, independent contractors, volunteers, and board members, and if it determines that a violation of this Policy has occurred, adjudication shall be in accordance with the procedures and requirements of USA Hockey Bylaw 10.

RECORD RETENTION POLICY

It is the intent of VSHA to adhere to all applicable federal and state laws in the management and retention of all relevant legal, financial, or corporate documents of this organization. In the event there is an inconsistency between the policy prescribed herein and those in federal or state law, the law shall control.

VSAHA will permanently retain the following documents:

- Articles of Incorporation
- Determination Letter from the IRS
- Insurance policies
- Corporate resolutions
- Minutes of board meetings

VSAHA will use applicable federal/state regulations in the storage, management and archiving of the following documents:

- Bank Statements
- Federal Tax filings
- Financial books/Payment and Income records;
- Checks
- Donation records
- Contracts and leases

INTERNAL PAYMENT POLICY

To prevent conflicts of interest and ensure the integrity of financial transactions, this policy mandates an enhanced oversight process for payments made to any internal signatory or related entities. This includes all payments, reimbursements, bonuses, and financial transactions directed towards bank signers or their associated entities.

Pre-Approval Requirement

Any transaction benefiting a bank signer or related entity must have approval from at least one additional bank signer who is not directly or indirectly benefiting from the payment.

Periodic Review

The Audit Committee will periodically review transactions covered under this policy to ensure compliance and identify any potential conflicts of interest.

Transparency and Reporting

All approvals must be documented, including the rationale for the payment and the relationship of the payee to the bank signer. These documents should be stored securely for audit purposes. Transactions to bank signers or related parties must be reported in the organization's annual financial statements, including the nature and amount of the transactions, to ensure transparency.

Consequences of Violation

Any attempt to circumvent this policy will result in disciplinary action, which may include removal from office, termination of contractual relationships and legal action if necessary.

USA HOCKEY AND HOCKEY CANADA RULES AGREEMENT

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