



USA SWIMMING SAFE SPORT PROGRAM

2014 STATUS REPORT

USA Swimming is committed to providing a safe environment for all its members. The USA Swimming Safe Sport Program is a comprehensive abuse prevention initiative rooted in six core areas: Policies & Guidelines, Screening & Selection, Training & Education, Monitoring & Supervision, Recognizing, Reporting & Responding, and Grassroots Engagement & Feedback. USA Swimming is proud of its proactive approach to abuse prevention and continually strives to be the leader in Safe Sport in the Olympic movement. This report is a summary of USA Swimming's efforts in each of these areas since the program's inception in 2010.

Policies & Guidelines: *Provide specific, mandatory rules that must be followed by all members; provide additional best practices that protect all members; solicit feedback on policies and guidelines in practice and use the feedback to review and propose updates.*

- In 2010, USA Swimming worked with the Child Welfare League of America **to evaluate the existing Code of Conduct and augment it with the addition of mandatory, comprehensive Athlete Protection Policies and Reporting Requirements.** USA Swimming also published Best Practice Guidelines, aimed at **providing clubs with additional guidance in their Safe Sport efforts.**
- The Safe Sport Committee **conducts annual reviews of athlete protection legislation**, considering feedback from the local level, soliciting expert input, and monitoring societal trends (e.g., bullying, electronic communication) **to propose legislative changes that best meet the needs of the membership and keep athlete safety as the priority.**

Screening & Selection: *Establish the organization's first line of defense against predators; provide tools to evaluate which individuals are allowed to become members, employees, or volunteers.*

- **Over 35,000 non-athlete members** have completed a mandatory criminal background check, including a national sex offender registry search and federal court search, since the new program launched in January 2011. The program includes a monthly recurring check which means that, in total, **USA Swimming's non-athlete membership is background checked over 400,000 times a year.**
- **Each of USA Swimming's 2,800 member clubs must complete three required pre-employment screens** on any new employee as a responsible hiring practice: (1) reference checks; (2) education verification; and (3) motor vehicle reports.

Training & Education: *Provide tools and resources for the USA Swimming community to increase awareness of abuse in sport and abuse prevention; create opportunities for education and training; review and update efforts based on industry findings.*

- Since September 2011, **over 35,000 non-athlete members** have completed **free, mandatory athlete protection training** customized especially for USA Swimming membership by Praesidium, Inc., a national leader in sexual abuse risk management. Members are required **to renew their APT certification every other year.**
- In July 2012, **free, online abuse prevention training was made available to parents** of USA Swimming's athletes. To date, **over 6,000 parents** have completed the course. In April 2013, USA Swimming released **free abuse prevention training for athlete members age 12-18.** To date, **4,275 athletes** have completed the online training.
- **Trained 821 coaches, athletes, and volunteers** in live workshops nationwide in 2014.

Monitoring & Supervision: *Observe interactions and react appropriately at the local and the national levels; provide clear expectations of behavior for both adult-youth and youth-youth interactions.*

- Since 2013, each LSC has been required to identify a Safe Sport Chair to serve as a communication and education liaison between the local level and the national office. **40 LSC Chairs attended the annual Safe Sport Chair Workshop** in September 2014 and additionally, **50 Chairs attended one of four Zone Workshops** held in Spring 2014.

Recognizing, Reporting, & Responding: *Empower membership to recognize red flag behavior, abusive behavior, or signs of abuse in athletes; make reporting channels clear and accessible; remove barriers to reporting; establish clear responsibilities for NHQ, the LSC, and the club on how to respond to reports.*

- Since the release of the mandatory athlete protection training in September 2010, there has been a dramatic increase in communication from our members with questions, concerns, and reports in which they directly reference that **something in the training resonated and made them pick up the phone.**
- Reports of suspected abuse can be made **by phone, by email, by letter, by fax, or by USA Swimming's online reporting form.** Persons who report can **choose to identify themselves or they can remain anonymous.**
- To date in 2014, **USA Swimming has sanctioned 21 members for violations of Safe Sport related measures, 10 of whom have been banned for life.**

Grassroots Engagement & Feedback: *Create connection between the national and the local levels; establish clear communication channels going both ways; solicit feedback and communicate how the feedback was incorporated into change efforts.*

- The Safe Sport Committee is the 11-member body **charged with review of athlete protection policies, guidelines, educational programs, reporting and adjudication procedures.** The Committee is comprised of diverse membership that includes athletes, coaches, officials, and outside expertise from the fields of law enforcement, abuse prevention, legal, and Olympic Sport.
- In February 2015, **USA Swimming will host the 2nd Safe Sport Leadership Conference** engaging leaders from the swimming community, other youth sports organizations and international experts in the field of abuse prevention to learn, discuss, and increase understanding of the dynamics and challenges of abuse in sport.