

USRowing Background Check Policy

Date of Issuance: October 1, 2026

Applies to: USRowing Members

Purpose:

USRowing is committed to the safety of athletes and Participants involved in the sport of rowing. The United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (“USOPC”) requires USRowing to conduct background checks in order to (a) foster a safe environment at all competition and training sites sanctioned and/or overseen by USRowing and our Local Affiliated Organizations (hereafter referred to as “Member Organizations”); (b) create a safe participation, training, and competition environment for athletes and other individuals associated with USRowing and our Member Organizations; and (c) protect persons at risk.

All provisions in this policy are mandatory in substance and must be followed as applicable. The USOPC has set forth minimum standards and basic requirements that USRowing and our Member Organizations are required to follow. This policy sets forth USRowing’s standards and outlines guidelines for the use of background checks to determine eligibility for USRowing, organizational membership, and for participation in USRowing and Member Organization programs and services.

Policy Statement:

I. Application

This policy applies to the following USRowing and Member Organization individuals that are 18 years of age or older (“Adult Participants”). All individuals falling under this policy shall have an approved background check on record with USRowing or the applicable Member Organization prior to participation in the role (or competition) unless another timeframe is indicated below:

USRowing employees, member coaches, and individuals that USRowing authorizes, approves, or appoints to (a) serve in a position of authority over athletes of any age or (b) have regular contact with athletes under the age of 18 years old. This shall include, but is not limited to, USRowing staff, officials, coaches, board members, USRowing coordinators, local affiliated administrator/directors, trainers, independent contractors, volunteers, medical personnel, and other individuals authorized or nominated by USRowing to work with athletes or other sport Participants while at a USRowing Training Site¹ or competition event to which USRowing sends athletes.

A. Member Organization employees and individuals that Member Organizations authorize, approve, or appoint to (a) serve in a position of authority over athletes of any age or (b) have regular contact with athletes under the age of 18 years old.

B. Assistants or personal care assistants who are funded, have a contractual obligation with, or are credentialed by USRowing or a Member Organization, or who otherwise have regular

contact with USRowing, or Member Organization athletes.

C. All athletes and alternates, training partners, and guides 18 years of age or older who are invited by USRowing to participate in national team events or Delegation Events (Olympic, Paralympic, Pan American, and Parapan American Games) and NOC/NPC Events (the Youth Olympic, World Beach, and Youth Parapan American Games, and other international sporting events as designated by the USOPC).

D. All athletes and alternates, training partners, and guides 18 years of age or older that are invited by USRowing or a Member Organization to train at any Olympic & Paralympic Training Center, USOPC High Performance Training Center, or USRowing Training Site. Individuals referenced in this subsection shall have 45 days after reaching the age of majority (18 years of age) to come into compliance with this background check policy. Individuals in this category must have a valid background check during the entirety of their program or camp at the Olympic & Paralympic Training Centers. Program and camp rosters submitted to OPTC Operations must include the expiration dates of background checks for individuals who are subject to this requirement.

E. All USRowing national team athletes and alternates, training partners, and guides 18 years of age or older who may have regular contact or authority over other athletes, including teammates.

F. Other individuals who have regular contact with athletes as determined by USRowing or a Member Organization, at their discretion.

G. Any candidate for a governance position within USRowing. For such a position, no requirements of this policy may be modified or reduced by the governing committee to which a candidate is seeking or has been nominated to a position.

H. Any other individual(s) USRowing may require to complete a background check at any time, in its discretion, including but not limited to in connection with local, state, or federal law.

¹ The term “USRowing Training Site” refers to any facility/location that is own, managed, or operated by the USRowing and used by the USRowing or its athletes for competitions and/or training, recovery or coaching purposes.

II. Background Check Search Components

A. Full Background Checks. All full background check screens will include at minimum the following search components:

1. Social Security Number validation;
2. Name and address history records;
3. Multi-Jurisdictional Criminal Database searches covering 50 states plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico;
4. Federal District Courts search for each name used and district where the individual currently lives or has lived during the past seven years, going back the length of time records are available and reportable;
5. County Criminal Records for each name used and county where the individual currently lives or has lived during the past seven years, going back the length of time records are available and reportable for each county searched;
6. National Sex Offender Registry database search of all available states, plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico;
7. Multiple National Watch Lists;
8. [SafeSport Disciplinary Records](#) in accordance with USOPC Background Check requirements;
9. International Records search [following USOPC requirements](#) for U.S. citizens who have lived outside of the United States for six consecutive months in any one country, during the past seven years; Canadian citizens who have a Level 1, 2, or 3 Criminal Record Check conducted within a year of the end date of their participation may use this screen; U.S. military service and diplomatic members who lived abroad for more than six consecutive months in the last seven years may be exempt if they resided on a U.S. government compound; individuals who are on a current visa to enter the United States are exempt from the international background check requirement upon providing verification of current visa.
10. Motor Vehicle Records of at least a 3-year history in the state of licensure (if driving is required for position).

B. Supplemental Background Checks. All supplemental off-year background check screens will be conducted using at minimum the following search components:

11. Multi-Jurisdictional criminal database covering 50 states plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico;

12. Sex Offender Registry database searches of all available states, plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico; and,
13. [SafeSport Disciplinary Records](#) in accordance with USOPC Background Check requirements.

III. Timeframe

A. Full background checks will be conducted on all individuals outlined in Section I. and I. A-H every two years using at minimum the background check search components referenced in Section II.A.

B. A supplemental, partial, background check will be conducted in the off years using at minimum the background check search components referenced in Section II.B.

IV. USRowing Training Sites

For each USRowing Training Site, USRowing shall require criminal background checks in compliance with the background search components in Section II.A., for those individuals USRowing formally authorizes, approves, or appoints (a) to serve in a position of authority over athletes, or (b) to have regular contact with athletes.

V. Media

Individuals affiliated with the media, who are authorized or credentialed by USRowing or a Member Organization to attend a USRowing-sanctioned event, or authorized or credentialed by USRowing to access a Training Site are required to undergo a criminal background check if they have unsupervised one-on-one interactions with the athletes.

VI. Third-Party Vendors/Contractors

Contracts with third-party vendors/contractors that are (a) in a position of authority over or (b) in regular contact with athletes, must include the background check requirements set forth in this policy. The contracts shall also specify that certification must be provided by the vendor or contractor upon request by USRowing to establish that the mandated background checks were conducted.

VII. Partner Programs

When partnering with the USOPC, another NGB, or any community organizations for events, USRowing or the applicable Member Organization shall ensure that the partnership agreement includes language regarding background check requirements. The agreements shall also specify that certification must be provided by the partner or community organization upon request by USRowing or the Member Organization to establish that the mandated background checks were conducted, and USRowing or the Member Organization will validate background check completion using such certification.

When USRowing, or a Member Organization, partners with a local or state government entity (e.g., a Department of Parks & Recreation), the partner's background check may be accepted to fulfill the background check requirement for individuals who are subject to comply with the USRowing Background Check Policy. USRowing or the applicable Member Organization shall ensure that the partnership agreement with the local or state government entity reflects this term if applicable.

VIII. Background Check Report Review

A. Potential Disqualifiers. Any USRowing/Member Organization background check that results in a report of a disposition or resolution of a criminal proceeding², other than an adjudication of not guilty, for any of the below criminal offenses, the individual may be disqualified from membership in USRowing and events and activities sanctioned by USRowing, and/or from the applicable position with a Member Organization, and will be subject to USRowing's/Member Organization's (as applicable) policies and procedures to determine the individual's level of access and involvement:

1. Any felony³ not otherwise included in the Automatic Disqualifiers, below;
2. Any misdemeanor not otherwise included in the Automatic Disqualifiers, below, involving:
 - a. Any drug or alcohol related offenses;
 - b. Harm to a minor and vulnerable person, including, but not limited to, offenses such as child abandonment, child endangerment/neglect/abuse, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and DUI with a minor;
 - c. Violence against a person (including crimes involving firearms and domestic violence);
 - d. Stalking, harassment, blackmail, violation of a protection order and/or threats;
 - e. Destruction of property, including arson, vandalism, and criminal mischief;

² A "disposition or resolution of a criminal proceeding, other than an adjudication of not guilty" shall include, but is not limited to: an adjudication of guilt or admission to a criminal violation, a plea to the charge or a lesser included offense, a plea of no contest, any plea analogous to an Alford or Kennedy plea, the disposition of the proceeding through a diversionary program, deferred adjudication, deferred prosecution, disposition of supervision, conditional dismissal, juvenile delinquency adjudication, or similar arrangement, or the existence of an ongoing criminal investigation, a warrant for arrest, or any pending charges.

³ For purposes of these procedures, the term "felony" shall refer to any criminal offense punishable by imprisonment for more than one year.

f. Animal abuse or neglect.

B. Other Potential Disqualifiers. Even if an individual passes a criminal background check, USRowing may determine that an individual may be disqualified and prohibited from Participant status. Disqualification may occur if the individual has:

1. Been held liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse of a minor;
2. Been subject to any court order involving any sexual or physical abuse of a minor, including but not limited to, domestic order or protection;
3. A history with another organization (employment, volunteer, etc.) of complaints of sexual or physical abuse of minors;
4. Resigned, been terminated, been banned, or been asked to resign from a position- paid or unpaid - due to complaint(s) of sexual or physical abuse of minors;
5. A history of other behavior that indicates the individual may be a danger to athletes and Participants;
6. Failed to disclose background in accordance with this Policy.

C. Automatic Disqualifiers. Any USRowing/Member Organization background check that results in a report of a disposition or resolution of a criminal proceeding, other than an adjudication of not guilty, for any of the below criminal offenses, are immediately and automatically ineligible for USRowing membership, events or activities sanctioned by USRowing, and any applicable position with a Member Organization requiring a background check:

1. All sex offenses (felonies and misdemeanors), criminal offenses of a sexual nature to include but not limited to; rape, child molestation, sexual battery, lewd conduct, possession and distribution of child pornography, possession and distribution of obscene material, prostitution, indecent exposure, public indecency, and any sex offender registrant;
2. Murder and homicide (felonies and misdemeanors) regardless of time limit;
3. Felony violence and felony drug offenses in the past 10 years;
4. Any misdemeanor violence offenses in the past 7 years;
5. Any multiple misdemeanor drug and/or alcohol offenses within the past 7 years;
6. Any crimes against children in the past 7 years;

7. If the individual is currently ineligible for membership as the result of a violation (or allegation of a violation) of a USRowing Bylaw, rule, policy, or procedure;

8. If the individual is currently ineligible pursuant to the SafeSport Disciplinary Records.

The time frames associated with the categories of crime listed above are calculated based on the date of the offense. Individuals that are disqualified must wait one season before reapplying for affiliation with USRowing/Member Organization.

Any Adult Participant that has been convicted of, received an imposition of a deferred sentence for, or any plea of guilty or no contest for any sexual crime, criminal offense of a sexual nature, and/or is a sex offender registrant will be reported to the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Any Adult Participant that has been convicted of, received an imposition of a deferred sentence for, or any plea of guilty or no contest for any crime against a minor will be reported to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

D. Secondary Review of USRowing Determinations. USRowing/Member Organizations must comply with the USOPC Background Check Policy and Procedures and any determination reached by the USOPC in accordance with them.

E. Additional Background Checks. USRowing and Member Organizations retain the right to require additional background checks at any time.

F. USOPC. Any person's participation in a USOPC event or competition will be subject to appropriate USOPC background checks and potentially to a USOPC secondary review of previously completed USRowing/Member Organization background checks.

IX. Background Check Disputes and Appeals

A. Disputes of Findings. Disqualified individuals may dispute the findings of the background check directly with USRowing/Member Organization's approved background check provider.

B. Appeals of Disqualifications with USRowing. All individuals disqualified by USRowing on the basis of only a Potential Disqualifier have the right to request an appeal of their disqualification by filing a written request for review via email with the USRowing Safeguarding staff at safeguarding@usrowing.org within thirty (30) days from the date of notification of the disqualification.

1. USRowing Review Panel. Any individual's request will be reviewed by a USRowing Review Panel, consisting of no less than three (3) designated representatives selected by the Chair of Ethics and Governance Committee.

2. Considerations. The individual shall have the burden to show that, despite the Potential Disqualifier, they do not pose a risk to the sport of rowing, or its athletes or Participants, nor does the Potential Disqualifier have the potential to have a negative effect on USRowing. In rendering its finding, the Review Panel will consider the following, non-exclusive list of factors:

- a. The legitimate interests of USRowing in providing a safe environment for athletes and other individuals who may participate in USRowing programs and events;
- b. Any information produced by the individual, or produced on behalf of the individual, concerning the incident(s) that resulted in the disqualification;
- c. Any other information, which in the determination of USRowing, would bear on whether or not the individual should be denied or granted membership;

A determination will be made based on a majority vote of the USRowing Review Panel. The USRowing Review Panel will communicate its findings to the individual in writing within five (5) business days following the review. USRowing Review Panel shall serve as the final decision authority.

C. Appeals of Disqualifications with Member Organizations. All individuals disqualified by a Member Organization on the basis of only a Potential Disqualifier may appeal such disqualification through the relevant Member Organization's policies and procedures, if an appeal is offered, but not through USRowing.

X. Authorized Background Check Organization

USRowing and Member Organizations use the National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI) as their background check vendor. NCSI is a full-service screening organization that works in accordance with the *Recommended Guidelines*© established by the National Council of Youth Sports ("NCYS").

XI. Full Disclosure

Each Participant and prospective Participant has the affirmative duty to disclose his or her criminal history. Failing to disclose or intentionally misrepresenting an arrest, plea, or conviction is grounds for Participant status revocation or restriction, regardless of when the offense is discovered. Participants have the ongoing duty to disclose criminal history. Participants need not disclose arrest in which charges are not filed, charges are dismissed, or the Participant is acquitted; however, Participants are required to disclose non-convictions involving deferred sentences, deferred adjudications, or other similar dispositions as well as accusations, arrests, indictments, or convictions of a criminal offense set out above or a criminal offense against a child.

1. If a prospective Participant has been or (1) is accused, (2) arrested, (3) charged, (4) indicted, (5) has an adjudication other than not guilty, or (6) is convicted of any offense identified above during the application process, he or she is required to disclose such information immediately;

2. In the event a Participant has been or is (1) is accused, (2) arrested, (3) charged, (4) indicted, (5) has an adjudication other than not guilty, or (6) is convicted of any offense identified above during the application process, he or she is required to disclose such information immediately to the USRowing Safeguarding Team;

3. Any Participant or prospective Participant who has been banned by another NGB, another sport organization, or the Center has an affirmative duty to disclose such information immediately to the USRowing Safeguarding Team.