

Colorado Referee Committee

Policy Number: 009

Effective Date: USSF Registration Year 2021

Revised: 5/1/2021



## Minor Referee Abuse Prevention

**Purpose and Scope:** This document describes the Colorado Referee Committee (CRC) policy regarding the prevention of referees younger than 18 years of age (hereafter “minor referees”) from being sexually or emotionally abused by adults during one-on-one interactions, local travel, and through the use of social media and electronic communications. The policy mimics information pertaining to minor athlete abuse prevention outlined in *U.S. Center for SafeSport: Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies*, but makes the information applicable to minor referee and adult interactions. The policy applies to all adult assignors, referees, and mentoring staff (hereafter “applicable adults”) who are registered with the Federation by the State of Colorado, have regular contact with minor referees, and have authority over minor referees.

**Additional Authority:** U.S. Center for SafeSport and the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, 36 U.S.C. §§ 220501-220529.

**Responsible Parties:** State Referee Administrator (SRA), CSA Director of Assignment, and State Director of Assignment.

### Policy Statement

The CRC is committed to building a soccer referee community where participants can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of emotional, physical, or sexual misconduct. Because minor sexual abuse is often perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations, such interactions between minor referees and applicable adults must be limited and monitored. This includes interactions before, during or after matches, at the referee tent during tournaments, at meetings, at training or mentoring sessions, and during local travel to or from any of the aforementioned events. With technology becoming ever-more ubiquitous in the lives of minor referees, social media interactions and electronic communication between minor referees and applicable adults must be professional, open, and transparent. Violations of this policy or actions that give the appearance of impropriety shall not be tolerated, and either are subject to disciplinary sanctions provided for in CRC Policy 002 and U.S. Soccer Policy 531-10, Section 2 (as both may be amended).

### One-on-One Interactions

**Match Settings** - At any facility expressly intended for the soccer play that is partially or fully under the jurisdiction of US Soccer and the CRC, one-on-one interactions between a minor referee and an applicable adult (who is not the minor’s parent or legal guardian) are permitted only if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance by another adult. Interactions may include but are not limited to pregame discussions, halftime discussions, post-game debriefs, assessor debriefs, mentoring feedback, and soccer-related discussions at the referee tent during tournaments.

Observable and interruptible means an interaction takes place in such a manner that another adult can see the interactions happening and can interrupt if he or she observes any questionable behavior. The interruption can be physical or vocal.

**Scheduled Meetings** - At any meeting or classroom facility that is partially or fully under the jurisdiction of US Soccer and the CRC, the concept of two-deep leadership shall apply in all cases except under emergency circumstances. This means a minimum of two applicable adults (or one applicable adult and a participating minor referee's parent or legal guardian) is required for all scheduled meeting or classroom sessions with one or more minor referees in attendance. Such meetings or classroom sessions must always occur where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult.

One-on-one meeting interactions between a minor referee and an applicable adult (who is not the minor's parent or legal guardian) are permitted only if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance from another adult. One-on-one meeting interactions between a minor referee and only one applicable adult (who is not the minor's parent or legal guardian) are prohibited.

An emergency circumstance could include, for example, a participating individual experiencing a medical emergency that temporarily leaves a minor referee and an applicable adult without another adult within an observable and interruptible distance.

**Outdoor Training Sessions** - At any facility expressly intended for the outdoor training that is partially or fully under the jurisdiction of US Soccer and the CRC, training sessions shall be conducted in a group setting with multiple applicable adults in attendance. If one or more minor referees in attendance, the concept of two-deep leadership shall apply in all cases except under emergency circumstances. One-on-one interactions between a minor referee and an applicable adult (who is not the minor's parent or legal guardian) are permitted only if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance by another adult. Scheduled one-on-one (i.e. individual) training sessions involving a minor referee and only one applicable adult (who is not the minor's parent or legal guardian) are prohibited.

## **Local Travel**

Absent emergency circumstances, applicable adults (who are not also acting as a designated legal guardian) shall not ride in a motor vehicle alone with an unrelated minor referee, and must have at least two minor referees or another applicable adult at all times. This policy shall not be violated unless agreed to in writing by the minor referee's parent or legal guardian in advance of the local travel.

## **Social Media and Electronic Communications**

All electronic communication originating from applicable adults to minor referees shall be open, transparent, and professional in nature. Cyberbullying, online harassment, and sexting (sending or receiving sexually explicit texts and images via cell phone) are expressly prohibited.

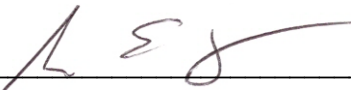
- Absent emergency circumstances, if an applicable adult with authority over minor referees needs to communicate directly with a minor referee via electronic communication (including social media), another applicable adult or the minor's parent legal guardian shall be copied.
- If a minor referee initiates electronic communication with an applicable adult (with authority over the referee) privately, said applicable adult shall respond to the minor referee with a copy to another applicable adult or the referee's parent of legal guardian.
- When an applicable adult with authority over minor referees communicates electronically multiple minor referees, said applicable adult will copy another adult.
- Parents or legal guardians may request in writing that their minor referee not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by specific applicable adults subject to this policy. Absent emergency circumstances, the CRC will abide by any such request that their minor referee not be contacted via electronic communication.
- Electronic communications should generally be sent only between the hours of **7:00 AM and 10:00 PM** (to allow for last-minute assignor communication), unless emergency circumstances exist or while traveling across time zones.

- An important assignor responsibility is to protect the identity and personal information of all referees, in particular minor referees. Because of the public nature of social media platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter), such platforms (and their associated internal applications) shall not be used as a method to develop and publish game assignments. This CRC policy is also consistent with US Soccer policy.
- The CRC shall monitor its social media pages and remove any posts that violate policies and practices for appropriate behavior.

Any telephone call between an applicable adult and a minor referee must be observable and interruptible by another adult or the minor referee's parent or legal guardian. The duration of a telephone call must be consistent with the professional matter under discussion.

Absent emergency circumstances, when an applicable adult must contact a minor referee via telephone in a timely and urgent manner (i.e. if the referee is late for an assigned match), said adult must first transmit a text message to both the minor referee and the minor referee's parent or legal guardian. The substance of the text must be consistent with the professional matter at hand. Any subsequent telephone call regarding the timely and urgent issue, and initiated by the applicable adult, must be directed to the minor referee's parent or legal guardian.

Approved by:



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Neal E. Fausset  
State Referee Administrator

3/24/2021

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Date