

Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse

On February 14th, 2018, the President signed the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 which is aimed at protecting amateur athletes* from sexual abuse. What exactly does the Law state?

The Law has a three-pronged approach:

1. Any adult interacting with amateur athletes in the program has a duty to report abuse and or suspected abuse within a 24 hour period. EVERY adult is a mandatory reporter.
2. The statute of limitations is extended for up to 10 years after a victim realizes he or she was abused.
3. Limits an athlete under the age of 18 from being alone with an adult who is not their parent.

**What is an amateur athlete?* Any child or minor under the age of 18. Legislation is available for download ([click here](#)).

What are the requirements for NGB's and NGB-Affiliated?

Reporting: A mechanism that allows a complaint to be easily reported for a reasonable suspicion of Sexual or Physical abuse/neglect, within a 24 hour period of awareness. Federal regulations state that reports should be made to a) local law enforcement and b) local/state child protective services c) US Soccer, and d) the US Center for SafeSport. EVERYONE is a MANDATORY REPORTER.

Mechanism for Reporting: The list below outlines the appropriate contacts for reporting when physical, emotional or sexual abuse is suspected. The individual who is first aware of a possible case of sexual or physical abuse/neglect is responsible for reporting as follows:

- Local Law Enforcement Number: May be posted on club website and given to athletes and parents.
- Division of Child Protection & Permanency (formerly Division of Youth & Family Services): Report if suspicious activity is applicable, 1-800-292-9582 may be on club website and given to athletes and parents

AFTER receiving guidance and direction from law enforcement and/or the Division of Child Protection & Permanency, consideration should be given to reporting incidents as follows:

- Club Risk Manager Contact Information (every club should have a point person for reporting)
- State Risk Manager: Laura Sturdivant executivedirector@dysa.org 302-584-0008
- National Governing Body (NGB)

US Soccer Integrity Hotline Number: (312) 528- 7004

US Soccer: <https://www.ussoccer.com/integrity-hotline>

US Center for SafeSport: <https://www.safesport.org/report-a-concern>

For details on Mandatory Reporting Requirements: Delaware go to <https://Kids/Delaware.gov>

Other forms of misconduct such as bullying, hazing, or harassment may also be reported and consideration should be given to consulting with legal counsel for direction about reporting such issues.

- Club Risk Manager Contact Information (every club should have a point person for reporting)
- Club or Board of Directors Review (BOD)/Hearing: There should be a process and policy to document and address misconduct.
- State Risk Manager: Laura Sturdivant executivedirector@dysa.org 302-584-0008

An individual who is required, but fails, to report suspected child sexual abuse is subject to criminal penalties including fines and a sentence up to one (1) year in jail.

What are the requirements for NGB's and NGB-Affiliated?

Prevention Training: Offer and provide consistent training to adult members who are in contact with amateur athletes who are minors. Currently there is no mandated training provider. NJ Youth Soccer is aware of several program options for awareness/prevention training of sexual abuse. Until there is a mandate or law change, you may use whatever program your organization deems will meet this training requirement. Some programs are currently available no cost to the adult or organization. Most programs will take between 75 to 90 minutes to complete.

Delaware Youth Soccer recommends our members take the program provided by the US Center for SafeSport.

- US Center for SafeSport: To enroll in this program just click on the link below, click on "Sign In," click on "Register." When prompted make sure to select US Soccer as your NGB and then enter the access code proved below.
 - To register or learn more: <https://www.safesport.org/>
- In order to complete your course registration you will receive an email to confirm your email address. You must respond to this email to activate your account.
- Upon completion print out your certificate and keep on file.

Prohibit Retaliation: Include in your club policy that there can be no retaliation from the club toward those who are reporting.

What is Delaware Youth Soccer doing next?

Both US Soccer and US Youth Soccer are developing a strategy to help all State Associations understand, communicate and manage their abuse prevention programs.

This communication, which follows up on previous communications from both US Soccer and US Youth Soccer, provides a summary of the new law and the requirements for mandatory reporting. The new law states that The Center for Safe Sports shall develop training, oversight practices, policies and procedures for implementation by a NGB. This work is in progress and will be communicated when available.

As noted in this communication, training has yet to become mandated. DE Youth Soccer is working with both the US Soccer and US Youth Soccer in coordination with The Center for SafeSport to make their training programs available at no charge. If training is mandated, these programs may have a fee associated with them. We will keep our member organizations informed of any changes.

What else is important to know about this Law? How might my club be impacted?

There are additional and more specific requirements for several categories of youth sports providers listed as 'Applicable Entity' within the Bill. Those listed under this category include:

- National Governing Body (NGB) - Such as the United States Soccer Federation
- Amateur Sports Organization (sanctioned by NGB) - Such as NJ Youth Soccer and Member Affiliates (town programs, clubs and leagues)
- Amateur Sports Organizations (NOT sanctioned by NGB) - Such as YMCA, Church Leagues, Municipal Leagues, Independent Recreation Leagues, Camps, all others

U.S. Center for SafeSport fact sheet: <https://www.safesport.org/files/details/78>