



# United States Olympic Committee

## United States Olympic Committee SafeSport Audit of USA Climbing

August 2018

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# Executive Summary

## Summary Observations

It shall be the policy of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) that each National Governing Body (NGBs) adopt a Minimum Standards Policy for Athlete Safety Programs (NGB Athlete Safety Policy) by December 31, 2013<sup>1</sup>.

Based on this review of USA Climbing's SafeSport-related documentation and administrative materials, USA Climbing's policies and procedures met the requirements of the 2017 NGB Athlete Safety Policy. Therefore, there were no observations noted during this audit.

During our review, we also tested compliance with the new NGB Athlete Safety Policy requirements that must be included in each NGB's SafeSport Policy by September, 2018. We noted the following opportunities to enhance the design of USA Climbing's compliance with these requirements:

- > **NGB Athlete Safety Policy - Specification that criminal background checks and education and training will be completed before contact with athletes begins and in any event within 60 days of an individual taking a new role** - USA Climbing's SafeSport-related documentation and administrative materials do not specify that criminal background checks and education and training concerning the key elements of the NGB athlete safety program will be completed before contact with athletes begins and in any event within 60 days of an individual taking a new role.

## Background and Approach

USOC engaged Baker Tilly Virchow Krause (Baker Tilly), to assist the USOC in the completion of SafeSport audits, to assess compliance with SafeSport policies and procedures at the USOC and all of its NGBs and High Performance Management Organizations (HPMOs).

Baker Tilly performed a review of USA Climbing to evaluate compliance with the NGB Athlete Safety Policy. The following activities were performed for this review of USA Climbing:

- > Developed and executed an audit program that included:
  - Holding a virtual entrance meeting to discuss and document USA Climbing's SafeSport program and processes.

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<sup>1</sup> Effective June 20, 2017 the USOC replaced the Athlete Safety Standards with the NGB Athlete Safety Policy. Due to the timing of this audit, fieldwork was performed in accordance with the NGB Athlete Safety Policy.



- Selecting a sample of 10 from the required individuals to determine whether a background check was performed and education and training was completed. See **Appendix A** for a list of documents reviewed.
  - Reviewing USA Climbing's athlete safety policy and determining whether the following was addressed:
    - Required misconduct is prohibited and defined;
    - Reporting procedures are documented; and
    - The grievance process is documented and complies with the NGB Athlete Safety Policy.
  - Identifying which individuals are required to undergo a criminal background check and complete education and training.
- > Conducted a virtual exit meeting, if requested, following delivery of the draft report, to discuss audit findings and recommendation(s) with USA Climbing. See **Appendix B** for a list of individuals interviewed.
- > Identified specific observations and recommendations regarding opportunities to enhance compliance with NGB Athlete Safety Policy. Observations include the following attributes: criteria, condition, cause, effect and recommendation, as set out in the International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF) Standards and Practice Advisory 2410-1.



## Detailed Report

The table below represents opportunities to enhance the design and effectiveness of USA Climbing's compliance with the NGB Athlete Safety Policy.

<b>1. NGB Athlete Safety Policy - Specification that criminal background checks and education and training will be completed before contact with athletes begins and in any event within 60 days of an individual taking a new role</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	The 2018 NGB Athlete Safety Policy states that each NGB shall have a policy requiring criminal background checks and education and training concerning the key elements of the NGB athlete safety program for (1) those individuals it formally authorizes, approves or appoints (a) to a position of authority over, or (b) to have frequent contact with athletes; and (2) NGB staff. As to individuals newly taking such a role, the policy should specify that such education will be completed before contact with athletes begins and in any event within 60 days of the new role.
<b>Condition</b>	USA Climbing's SafeSport-related documentation and administrative materials do not specify that criminal background checks and education and training concerning the key elements of the NGB athlete safety program will be completed before contact with athletes begins and in any event within 60 days of an individual taking a new role.
<b>Cause</b>	USA Climbing may not have reviewed and updated its SafeSport-related documentation and administrative materials to include all of the requirements in the NGB Athlete Safety Policy.
<b>Effect</b>	USA Climbing must be in compliance with the NGB Athlete Safety Policy to be a member in good standing. Noncompliance with the NGB Athlete Safety Policy can result in disciplinary action by the USOC including withdrawal of high performance funding.
<b>Recommendation</b>	USA Climbing must update their SafeSport-related documentation and administrative materials to specify that criminal background checks and education and training concerning the key elements of the NGB athlete safety program will be completed before contact with athletes begins and in any event within 60 days of an individual taking a new role as documented in the NGB Athlete Safety Policy. Compliance with these requirements for all individuals USA Climbing formally authorizes, approves or appoints (a) to a position of authority over, or (b) to have frequent contact with athletes must be completed within 90 days of receipt of the final audit report.



**1. NGB Athlete Safety Policy - Specification that criminal background checks and education and training will be completed before contact with athletes begins and in any event within 60 days of an individual taking a new role**

**Management response**

USA Climbing will be updating its Rulebook for the 2019 season for approval no later than September 1, 2018. Per the Baker Tilly report recommendations, we have included updated language (below) around the maximum length of time to have required documentation, training, etc...complete. We believe this additional language will mainly apply to staff outside of the coaching realm as coaches are not certified to begin work until all required documentation and training is complete.

See attached management letter provided.



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## Report Appendices

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## Appendix A: Documents Reviewed

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We reviewed the following documents:

- > Athlete Safety Standards Program Questionnaire
- > Population listing of “required individuals” (i.e., covered individuals required to undergo background check and training)
- > USA Climbing By-Laws (Revised July 2017)
- > USA Climbing SafeSport Policy (Revised April 2018)
- > USA Climbing SafeSport Screening and Criminal Background Check Policy (Effective April 2018)



## Appendix B: Personnel Interviewed

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We interviewed the following personnel:

- > Kynan Waggoner, Chief Executive Officer
- > John Muse, Interim Director of Operations



**USA  
CLIMBING**

To Whom It May Concern:

USA Climbing will be updating its Rulebook for the 2019 season for approval no later than September 1, 2018 . Per the Baker Tilly report recommendations, we have included updated language (below) around the maximum length of time to have required documentation, training, etc...complete. We believe this additional language will mainly apply to staff outside of the coaching realm as coaches are not certified to begin work until all required documentation and training is complete.

### **BACKGROUND CHECK AND TRAINING**

Covered individuals must submit to criminal background screening pursuant to USA Climbing's Screening and Criminal Background Check Policy, separately posted on USA Climbing's website: <http://www.usaclimbing.org/Officials/Coaches/SafeSport.htm> Except as otherwise required for Coach Certification or other certification under the Rulebook, criminal background checks, education, and training must be completed before contact with athletes begins or within 60 days of an individual taking a new role. Additionally, Covered Individuals are also required to complete awareness training to reinforce the concepts covered under this Policy. Awareness training is required every two (2) years for each Covered Individual.

Best regards,

Marc Norman  
Chief Executive Officer  
USA Climbing

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Where Olympic Journeys Begin