

LOCKER ROOM POLICY

Youth players are particularly vulnerable in locker rooms, changing areas and restrooms due to various stages of dress/undress and because players are often less supervised than at other times. Athlete-to-athlete problems, such as sexual abuse, bullying, harassment or hazing, often occur when a coach or other responsible adult is not in a position to observe – this is especially true in locker rooms. Adherence to a locker room policy enhances privacy and significantly reduces the likelihood of misconduct. Proper supervision of the locker room areas also helps ensure that players that may have suffered an injury during a game or practice have an adult present to confer with regarding such injury.

Locker Room Supervision

USA Hockey is concerned with locker room activities between Minor Athletes; Minor Athletes and Adult Participants; adults being alone with individual Minor Athletes in locker rooms; and with non-official or non-related adults having unsupervised access to Minor Athletes at team events.

It is the policy of USA Hockey that all USA Hockey Member Programs must have at least one responsible screened and trained adult (which may include coaches, managers or other volunteers) present at all times and monitoring the locker room during all team events to assure that only Participants (coaches and players), approved team personnel and family members are permitted in the locker room and to supervise the conduct in the locker room. While it is not always possible, two locker room monitors are preferable.

Preferred locker room monitoring includes having locker room monitors inside the locker room while Participants are in the locker room; at a minimum, locker room monitors must be in the immediate vicinity outside the locker room (near the door within arm's length and so that the monitor can sufficiently hear inside the locker room) ***who also regularly and frequently enters the locker room to monitor activity inside***. The responsible adult(s) who monitors and supervises the locker room shall have completed SafeSport Training in compliance with [Section II](#) **and** completed a background check in compliance with [Section III](#) of this Handbook. If the monitor(s) are inside, then it is strongly recommended that there be two monitors, as having a second monitor may help prevent allegations of impropriety by a monitor alone in the locker room. A Member Program or team may impose or follow stricter monitoring requirements. ***All Member Programs are responsible to work with their teams and coaches to adequately ensure that locker room monitors are in place at all appropriate times.***

Further, Adult Participants must also secure the locker room appropriately during times when Minor Athletes are on the ice. If a Minor Athlete goes to a locker room during practice or a game, and does not return in a timely fashion, then an Adult Participant (or if possible two) should check on the Minor Athlete's whereabouts. It shall be permissible for a Member Program or team to prohibit parents from a locker room. However, in doing so the team shall be required to have properly screened adults monitoring and supervising the locker room as required above. With younger players, it is generally appropriate to allow parents to assist the player with getting equipment on and off before and after games or practices and they should be allowed in the locker room to do so.

Locker Room Use and Rules

There shall be no one-on-one interactions between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete within any locker rooms or changing areas, unless a Policy Exception applies. Minor Athletes that are teammates with an Adult Participant that is more than four years older than the Minor Athlete, may share a locker room, but must not be alone in the locker room unless the interaction is Observable and Interruptible.

Notwithstanding the above, Adult Participants may shower with Minor Athlete(s) only if they are teammates and the Close-in-Age exception applies. If a parent/guardian requests that their Minor Athlete not change and/or shower with an Adult Participant during In-Program Contact, that request must be adhered to by the Member Program. Additionally, a private or semi-private area (such as a bathroom stall or separate bathroom) must be available for Minor Athletes to change clothes or undress.

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, which includes voice recording, still cameras, and video cameras, increase the risk for some forms of abuse or misconduct. As a result, the use of any device's recording capabilities in the locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces is prohibited. Notwithstanding the foregoing, exceptions may be made for media and championship celebrations, provided that such exceptions are approved by the Member Program, parent/guardian consent is obtained for all involved Minor Athletes, two or more Adult Participants are present, and where all persons in the locker room are fully clothed² and have been advised that photographs or recordings are being taken.

Coaches sometimes may need to use the team locker room to get dressed before or after practices. Coaches must always have at least a base layer of clothing at all times while changing, or must use a private area to change into acceptable clothing. An Adult Participant (other than for teammates to whom the Close-in-Age exception applies) shall not intentionally or recklessly expose his or her breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals to a Minor Athlete.

All Member Programs shall publish locker room policies to the parents of all Minor Athletes that are specific to the Facilities they regularly use. The Member Program's policies shall include the program's (a) practices for supervising and monitoring locker rooms and changing areas; (b) permission or lack of permission for parents to be in the locker rooms; (c) prohibited conduct, including at least all forms of abuse and misconduct prohibited by USA Hockey; and (d) specific policies regarding the use of mobile electronic devices and phones and prohibiting the use of a device's recording capabilities. A sample locker room policy form may be found at usahockey.com/safesportprogram.

For each team, the coach and/or team administrators shall be responsible for compliance with the locker room supervision requirements of this Policy. A coach and/or team administrator that fails to take appropriate steps to ensure the Locker Room Policy is adhered to, and any USA Hockey Participant or parent of a Minor Athlete who otherwise violates this Policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action; moreover, an Affiliate may impose fines or other sanctions against any Member Program whose teams do not comply with this Locker Room Policy.

Co-Ed Locker Rooms

As a team sport in which youth teams can often include players of different genders, special circumstances may exist that can increase the chance of abuse or misconduct. If the team consists of players of different genders, the privacy rights of all players must be given consideration and appropriate arrangements made. It is not acceptable under USA Hockey's Sexual Misconduct Policy for persons to be observing the opposite gender while they dress or undress. There are a variety of ways to comply with the above tenets, and what works may depend on the locker rooms that are available at a particular Facility. Although there are likely other acceptable ways to accommodate teams of different genders, below are some other options for compliance with USA Hockey's Co-ed Locker Room Policy:

- a. Minimum Attire. Have a minimum attire policy if sharing one locker room. All players should be required to arrive at the rink wearing their hockey base layers or shorts and t-shirts (in good condition – no holes or tears in clothing) under their street clothes. All members of the team must have this minimum attire before entering a co-ed locker room so that no player of one gender has the opportunity to see players of the opposite gender in a state of dress/undress. If a player is not wearing the required minimum attire, that player can be directed to a restroom or private area to change into his/her minimum attire before entering the locker room.
- b. Separate Locker Rooms. A second option is for the program to have players of different genders change/ dress in separate, supervised locker rooms. Then approximately ten (10) to fifteen (15) minutes before each game/practice everyone is to be ready in gear in one designated locker room so the coach can address the entire team. If a player is not fully dressed by the time the coach

² "Fully Clothed" for purposes of this policy means, at a minimum, a base layer of clothing that would be appropriate in a co-ed locker room setting; sports bras and/or underwear are not considered base layers for purposes of this policy.

arrives, then that player must go to a separate locker room or bathroom to finish dressing. The onus is on the players being properly dressed when the coaches begin preparing the team for the practice or game.

- c. Alternate Use of One Locker Room. Another option is the alternate use of a single locker room. Players of one gender dress in the locker room while players of the opposite gender wait outside. When the one group is ready (this may mean dressed in gear but not skates and helmets), then the players switch places and the players in gear wait for players of opposite gender to get dressed. No coaching is to be done until all the players are together in the locker room. Taking turns is a means of reasonable accommodation; neither gender group should be favored, nor should one group be the group who always has to wait to change.

Where possible, when players of different genders are together in the locker room, there should be at least two adults in the locker room that have completed SafeSport Training and been properly screened in compliance with USA Hockey Screening Policy. USA Hockey would consider it acceptable to have one locker room monitor immediately outside the locker room and regularly checking in on the locker room, but two locker room monitors is always preferable. If there are two monitors, then they can monitor from inside the locker room. Having only one monitor inside a locker room can expose that person to allegations or possible policy violations, so a second person can help protect one another from allegations.

The USA Hockey Safe Sport website (usahockey.com/safesportprogram) contains sample approaches that may be used by a Member Program depending on the facilities available at a particular arena.

Officials Locker Rooms

Officials locker rooms in hockey arenas are usually set apart from the team locker rooms. For a given game, there may be 2, 3 or 4 officials, and there may also be officials sharing the officials' locker room that are present for the game prior or game following. There may be officials of different genders, or there may be Minor age officials working with adult officials. Additionally, officiating supervisors or assignors may be present in some or all of these situations. Officials should never assume that other officials are comfortable with the same locker room situation as they are.

If separate dressing rooms are not available, then the following protocol shall be followed if there are referees of different genders present:

1. Prior to the game, officials of one gender enters the dressing room to get dressed while the other official(s) steps out.
2. Once dressed, the first official(s) steps out and allows the other official(s) to enter the dressing room to get dressed.
3. Once both dressed, both genders can be in the dressing room to conduct pre-game meeting.

The same procedure must be followed after the game.

In situations with Minor-age officials working with or sharing locker rooms with adult officials, the adult officials must limit one-on-one interactions and adhere to all other policies contained herein. This can be addressed by:

- a. Inviting a parent/guardian or other Adult Participant into the locker room;
- b. Asking another official to wait in the locker room before leaving; and/or
- c. Leaving the locker room door open (so that it is Observable and Interruptible) and making sure another Adult Participant is aware of the one-on-one interaction.

Supervisors and assignors of officials must always avoid any one-on-one interactions with any official (regardless of age or gender) unless such interactions are Observable and Interruptible.