

## **USA CLIMBING CODE OF ETHICS / CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY**

### **I. Code of Ethics**

The Ethics Committee shall oversee the implementation and compliance with the Code of Ethics and make recommendations to the Board of USA Climbing and CEO for action.

The Code of Ethics applies to all members described in Section 5 of USA Climbing's Bylaws, including Introductory, Athlete, Coach, Routesetter, Judge, and Supporting members, as well as to all directors of the Board, employees, volunteers, and members of committees, task forces, and working groups. All of the aforementioned individuals are required to read and acknowledge a copy of this Code of Ethics annually, acknowledging that they understand and are agreeing to abide by its content. All other participants, volunteers, contractors, and spectators are also expected to adhere to this Code (all individuals described in this paragraph, "Covered Individuals").

All Covered Individuals will maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect toward each other as well as toward those with whom USA Climbing conducts business and those with whom it may come in contact during the execution of duties and activities.

All Covered Individuals will treat each other fairly.

Given, among other things, that USA Climbing is the National Governing Body for the Olympic sport of Competition Climbing in the United States, all Covered Individuals are expected to conduct their affairs on a basis consistent with the great trust that has been placed in USA Climbing. For these reasons, USA Climbing requires Covered Individuals to conduct themselves with integrity, to maintain a high standard of ethical conduct and to be guided by the knowledge that we are guardians of the Olympic values, spirit, and ideals.

Furthermore, because the appearance of impropriety can be just as damaging as actual impropriety, conduct that appears to be improper is also unacceptable.

Accordingly, all Covered Individuals are required to comply with the following requirements when representing USA Climbing or participating in USA Climbing activities or events:

- a. Conduct all dealings with honesty and fairness.
- b. Respect the rights of all other Covered Individuals to fair treatment and equal opportunity, free from discrimination and harassment based upon race, sex, creed, sexual orientation, age, national origin, mental or physical disability, or any other basis proscribed by law.
- c. Know, understand and comply with the applicable Bylaws, Rules, and codes of conduct governing the conduct of USA Climbing's business, both domestic and

foreign.

- d. Handle all transactions honestly and record them accurately
- e. Protect information that belongs to USA Climbing, including that of its donors, sponsors, suppliers and fellow Covered Individuals.
- f. Avoid conflicts of interest, both real and perceived.
- g. Never use USA Climbing assets or information for personal gain.
- h. Recognize that even the appearance of misconduct and impropriety can be very damaging to the reputation of USA Climbing and act accordingly.

In the event that the Ethics Committee is made aware of a relationship or activity that may violate this Code of Ethics, the Ethics Committee shall consider the appropriate steps to review and assess such disclosure and the actions to recommend, if any, in response to such disclosure. Examples of relationships or activities that would require the Ethics Committee's consideration include a person who serves on the Rules Committee and is also the parent of a currently competing athlete or a board member who is an officer of a National Governing Body outside of USA Climbing. Examples of relationships or activities that would require the Ethics Committee's consideration include being a parent to a currently competing athlete or serving as an officer of a National Governing Body outside of USA Climbing.

## **II. Conflicts of Interest**

### **1) Conflicts of Interest Overview.**

The purpose of this Conflicts of Interest Policy is to protect USA Climbing's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer, director, committee, working group, task force, or Hearing Panel member, or employee of USA Climbing, or the private interest of a director or officer of the Foundation. Individuals should be able to recognize and attempt to avoid any activity or investment that constitutes or might appear to constitute a conflict of interest. This policy is intended to supplement but not to replace any applicable state laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable corporations. Procedures for assessing and resolving matters involving conflicts of interest of Hearing Panel members are addressed per the USA Climbing Grievance Policy and in any Judicial Committee Procedures established thereunder.

### **2) Definitions.**

- a. Interested Person: Any director, officer, member of a committee, working group, or task force, employee of USA Climbing, or member of the board of directors or officer of the Foundation, in each case who has a direct or indirect private interest,

as defined below, is an interested person.

b. Private Interest

- I. A person has a private interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
  - i. an ownership or investment interest in any entity with which USA Climbing has a transaction or arrangement (for example, an ownership interest in a gym that hosts a USA Climbing competition);
  - ii. a compensation arrangement with USA Climbing or with any entity or individual with which USA Climbing has a transaction or arrangement;
  - iii. a potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which USA Climbing is negotiating a transaction or arrangement; or an interest of the individual or his/her family member in a matter such that the individual or such family member directly or indirectly stands to benefit, provided that such interest is actual, not merely speculative, and such potential benefit is different from or materially greater than the benefit that a broad range of members or other third parties would be expected generally to receive.
- II. Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are substantial in nature.
- III. Common examples of Conflicts of Interest include being a gym owner of a gym hosting a USA Climbing event or owning a business with which USA Climbing performs transactions.

3) Procedures.

- a. Duty to Disclose: In connection with any actual or possible conflicts of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence and nature of his or her private interest to the Ethics Committee. Additionally, an interested person should disclose conflicts related to the creation of or enforcement of selection procedures or panels to resolve grievances to the appropriate committee. In facilitation of this requirement, all Board members, and members of committees, working groups, and task forces, employees of USA Climbing, and member of the board of directors and officers of the Foundation, will be required to complete an annual questionnaire making general disclosure of Private Interests and any relationship or activity that may violate the Code of Ethics (Section I). To disclose a new private

interest or a relationship or activity that may violate the Code of Ethics, an individual shall submit an updated questionnaire through the membership platform. All questionnaires are reviewed first by the Membership & SafeSport Manager, and questionnaires with disclosures of any kind are then provided to the Ethics Committee Chair for their review and review with the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee will share all questionnaires with the board and with the committee, working group or task force for which the person serves. The questionnaires of the Ethics Committee Chair and Membership & SafeSport Manager are reviewed by the CEO. For the avoidance of doubt, such annual disclosure will not relieve a person of the requirement to disclose any additional conflicts of interest as they arise. Board members are required to disclose any known conflicts of interest in board meetings.

- b. **Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists:** After disclosure of the private interest, the Ethics Committee shall either determine if a conflict of interest exists or refer the matter to the board of directors to make such determination. In the event the interested person is a member of the Ethics Committee, or the board of directors, as the case may be, they shall recuse themselves while the private interest is discussed and voted upon. Any individual partaking in decision-making surrounding a potential Conflict of Interest needs to be disinterested in the matter.
- c. **Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest:**

The following procedures shall be followed by the Ethics Committee or the board of directors in the event the Ethics Committee has referred the matter to the board of directors under Section II(3)(b) above.

- I. The chairperson of the Ethics Committee or the board of directors shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or body to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- II. After exercising due diligence, the Ethics Committee or the board of directors shall determine whether USA Climbing can obtain a more advantageous transaction or arrangement with reasonable efforts from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
- III. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably attainable under circumstances that would not give rise to a conflict of interest, the Ethics Committee or the board of directors shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested members whether the transaction or arrangement is in USA Climbing's best interests and for its own benefit and whether the transaction is fair and reasonable to USA Climbing and shall make its decision as to whether USA Climbing should enter into the

proposed transaction in conformity with such determination.

- IV. If the Interested Person is a member of the Ethics Committee, or the board of directors, as the case may be, they should be recused from deliberation and decision-making with regard to the transaction or arrangement, provided that the Ethics Committee or the board of directors may seek information from the Interested Person.

#### 4) Violations

- a. Any person may raise an actual or potential conflict of interest, or a violation of this Conflicts of Interest Policy to the Ethics Committee for investigation. If the disinterested members of the Ethics Committee have reasonable cause to believe that an interested person has failed to disclose his or her own actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the person of the basis for such belief and afford the person an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
- b. If, after hearing the response of the member and making such further inquiry and investigation as may be warranted under the circumstances, including through a disinterested person the Ethics Committee chairperson may appoint to investigate the matter, determines that the interested person has in fact failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall recommend that USA Climbing take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

#### 5) Records.

The minutes of the Ethics Committee or board of directors meetings at which conflicts of interest are considered shall contain:

- a. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a private interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the private interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the Ethics Committee's or board of directors' determination as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- b. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement that were considered, and a record of any votestaken in connection therewith.

#### 6) Annual Statements.

All members described in Section 5 of USA Climbing's Bylaws, including Introductory, Athlete, Coach, Routesetter, Judge and Supporting members as well each director,

officer, member of a committee, working group, or task force, and employee shall annually sign a statement which affirms that such person:

- a. has received a copy of this Conflicts of Interest policy,
- b. has read and understands the policy,
- c. has agreed to comply with the policy, and
- d. understands that USA Climbing is a charitable organization and that in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

#### 7) No Retaliation.

Regardless of determination, USA Climbing will support a complainant(s) and his or her right to express conflicts of interest in good faith. USA Climbing will not encourage, allow or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish, allow or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a conflict of interest in good faith. Such actions against a reporter will be considered a violation of USA Climbing's policies and grounds for disciplinary action.

#### 8) Additional Resources

The USOPC Office of the Athlete Ombuds is a resource to provide cost-free independent and confidential advice to elite and emerging athletes on all sports-related rules, policies and processes, and to assist in the resolution of athlete concerns and disputes. More information about the Athlete Ombuds can be found at [www.teamusa.org/athlete-ombuds](http://www.teamusa.org/athlete-ombuds).

#### 9) Policy Owner

Questions regarding the Conflicts of Interest Policy should be directed to the CEO of USA Climbing (contact info at [www.usaclimbing.org](http://www.usaclimbing.org)).