



USA Climbing Whistleblower and Anti-Retaliation Policy

Overview

The USA Climbing Whistleblower and Anti-Retaliation Policy applies to all athletes, employees, Board of Directors members, Officers, committee members, task force members, hearing panel members, volunteers, and contractors (referred to as “Covered Individuals” hereafter). This policy protects all individuals who, in good faith, report a violation of USA Climbing policies or reasonable parties (i.e. witnesses, victims, etc.) from retaliation. “Retaliation” is defined by USA Climbing as any adverse or discriminatory action, or the threat of an adverse or discriminatory action, carried out against an athlete, employee, board member or officer, member, committee member, task force member, hearing panel member, volunteer, or others associated with USA Climbing as a result of any report, complaint, or other communication reporting misconduct of any kind to USA Climbing, the USOPC, the Office of the Athlete Ombuds, any law enforcement agency or government entity, or employees of these organizations.

Organizational Expectations

No Covered Individual who, in good faith, reports a violation as articulated above shall be subject to retaliation. USA Climbing will not tolerate any retaliation against individuals who make good faith reports of potential policy, financial, ethical, or legal violations, or who cooperate with investigations of such reports. No Covered Individual may discriminate against, threaten, harass, or take any negative employment (where applicable) or participation-related action such as suspension, demotion, discharge, probation, negative reviews, etc. on that basis. No employee, contractor, agent, volunteer, or NGB shall take or threaten to take any action against an athlete as a reprisal for disclosing information to or seeking assistance from the Office of the Athlete Ombuds as outlined in Section 220509(b)(5) of the Act.

All individuals have the right to report alleged violations. The protections specified in this policy are in place to encourage Covered Individuals to report violations, in good faith, once suspected or observed. The identity of the whistleblower shall be kept confidential from those who do not have a “need to know” to further reduce the possibility of retaliation (see “Confidentiality and Anonymity” section below for more details).

Policy Coverage

The Policy covers reporting of any alleged violation of applicable law, policy, or procedures as well as potential ethical misconduct. Examples of alleged violations that may be reported under the Policy include, but are not limited to:

- a) Non-compliance with the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act
- b) Non-compliance with applicable provisions of the USOPC Bylaws or policies

- c) Non-compliance with USA Climbing's Bylaws, policies, or procedures
- d) Non-compliance with applicable Federal, State, or local laws
- e) Non-compliance with accepted accounting or financial practices (*e.g.*, fraud)

There are some violations that **must** be reported. Specifically, any violations of local, state, or federal law or any violations of applicable athlete safety policies, including those of USA Climbing and the U.S. Center for SafeSport, must be reported.

Note that nothing in this Policy changes or replaces any mandatory reporting obligations under the SafeSport Code for the Olympic and Paralympic Movements. USA Climbing's Membership and SafeSport Manager (see <https://usaclimbing.org/contact-us/> for contact information) can assist with any questions about those obligations. Additionally, suspected criminal activity against a person or property should be reported directly to law enforcement immediately.

If you are unsure about whether a matter might be a policy violation or are unsure about your reporting responsibility for a particular type of matter, start by reviewing the particular policy involved and reach out to the CEO (see <https://usaclimbing.org/contact-us/> for contact information) if you have further questions.

Reporting Violations and Retaliation

Any violation or suspected violation of USA Climbing Bylaws and policies, Code of Conduct, the Ted Stevens Act, the USOPC Bylaws and policies, state/federal/local laws, and applicable policies and procedures that govern the operations of USA Climbing (including accounting practices) should be reported to the CEO (see <https://usaclimbing.org/contact-us/> for contact information), Board of Directors (board@usaclimbing.org), or Judicial Committee (judicial@usaclimbing.org). Likewise, if retaliation for reporting such a violation is experienced or witnessed, retaliation should also be reported to the CEO, Board of Directors, or Judicial Committee. The act of retaliation shall be considered a violation of this policy and will be subject to review per the processes articulated in the USA Climbing Grievance Policy.

All violations are expected to be reported in good faith. Knowingly making a false report is a violation of this policy and may be reported as such.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

USA Climbing will make every effort to keep the identities of the reporting parties and witnesses confidential. However, disclosure of an individual's identity or identifying information may be required in some cases, such as where USA Climbing is required by law to report a matter to law enforcement.

If a matter is reported anonymously and the reporter chooses to remain anonymous as it is investigated, USA Climbing will respect that. USA Climbing will review all reports with the same level of attention, but if a reporter chooses to remain anonymous, USA Climbing may be limited in its ability to fully investigate a report.

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. Additionally, the [USOPC Integrity Portal](#) is a means to report concerns to the USOPC.