

USA Climbing Policy

Event Authority & Discretion



USA Climbing does not tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, or national origin.

USA Climbing believes that every eligible athlete has the right to compete in a respectful, safe and harassment-free environment and has the right to participate in fair competition in accordance with USA Climbing's rules, policies, and mission.

Purpose & Scope

USA Climbing is committed to fair, consistent, and athlete-centered competitions. While the Rulebook and regulations are designed to cover most circumstances, unexpected situations—such as severe weather, venue issues, or procedural errors—may arise where strict application of the rules would undermine fairness, safety, or the orderly conduct of an event.

This Policy establishes a framework for limited discretion to be exercised by the USA Climbing CEO and the Chief of Sport (or designee). That discretion may be used to alter, waive, or amend published rules, regulations, or policies when necessary to (though not limited to):

- Protect fairness and integrity of competitions and Series.
- Safeguard athlete safety and well-being.
- Maintain consistent and equitable outcomes for all competitors.
- Ensure competitions can progress in a timely and orderly manner.

Authority: under this Policy, discretionary authority is granted to:

- The USA Climbing CEO
- The Chief of Sport², where such discretion is expressly provided for in a rule, regulation, or policy

Both roles are accountable to consult with relevant officials and committees when possible, report the use of discretion to the Board of Directors and Rules Committee, and publish summaries of discretionary actions to maintain transparency.

² All discretionary and decision-making authority granted to the Chief of Sport in USA Climbing rules, regulations, and policies is also granted to the CEO.

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USA Climbing CEO Authority & Discretion.

Notwithstanding other USA Climbing rules, regulations, and policies, the USA Climbing CEO³ has the authority and discretion ("CEO Discretion"), in consultation, where relevant, with the Event Organizer and Jury President, to take actions such as (though not limited to):

- Canceling competitions
- Modifying competition formats
- Advancing a set of competitors (e.g., between rounds or directly to another event)

CEO Discretion may be exercised in unavoidable situations, including but not limited to:

- A major weather event affecting a significant number of competitors
- Errors that, without corrective action, would materially undermine the integrity of a round, competition, or Series

Exercise of CEO Discretion must meet the following conditions:

- All material changes must be communicated as promptly as practicable, using methods reasonably designed to reach all (or substantially all) affected individuals.
- Changes must be made in good faith to impact all similarly-situated competitors in as consistent a manner as practicable.
- No single individual competitor may be granted a bye or waiver due to personal circumstances (e.g., weather delays, injury, illness, personal hardship).

Procedural requirements include:

- During each USA Climbing Championship event or Collegiate Nationals Qualification event, a senior employee with CEO Discretion authority must be available.
- The Rules Committee Chair (or designee) should be consulted in advance if time allows or notified promptly afterward if not.

Reporting requirements include:

- The Board of Directors and the Rules Committee must be notified within thirty (30) days of exercising CEO Discretion.
- A public summary of each exercise of CEO Discretion must be published in a timely manner on the [rules page](#) of the USA Climbing website www.usaclimbing.org.

³ Authority may be designated to another individual by the CEO. Such designation may be limited in scope and/or timeframe and takes effect only after the Board of Directors and the Rules Committee are notified.

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USA Climbing Chief of Sport Authority & Discretion.

Where expressly provided in a USA Climbing rule, regulation, or policy (“rule”), the Chief of Sport⁴ may exercise “Sport Discretion” and has “Sport Discretion” authority. Sport Discretion permits the designated official to:

- Select among options listed in a rule, or
- Waive or amend the rule, to the extent specifically authorized by that rule.

Procedural requirements include:

- The Rules Committee Chair (or designee) should be consulted in advance if time allows or notified promptly afterward if not.
- When Sport Discretion affects a particular Series, the following groups must be consulted in advance if possible, or notified afterward:
 - **Elite Series** – USA Climbing Athletes’ Advisory Committee
 - **Collegiate Series** – Collegiate Committee
 - **Para Climbing Series** – Para Climbing Committee
 - **Youth Series** – National Coordinators

Reporting requirements include:

- The Board of Directors and the Rules Committee must be notified within thirty (30) days of exercising Sport Discretion.
- A public summary of each exercise of Sport Discretion must be published in a timely manner on the [rules page](#) of the USA Climbing website www.usaclimbing.org.

Questions

Any questions regarding this Policy may be directed to USA Climbing at info@usaclimbing.org.

⁴ Authority may be designated to another individual by the CEO. Such designation may be limited in scope and/or timeframe and takes effect only after the Board of Directors and the Rules Committee are notified.

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Grievance Process

Individuals who believe that an action or decision was inconsistent with USA Climbing bylaws, rules, regulations, codes, or policies may submit a grievance by way of the [USA Climbing Grievance Policy](#). That policy is administered by the USA Climbing Judicial Committee and outlines the grievance submission process as well as how a grievance is processed. Grievances and/or questions may be sent to the Judicial Committee at judicial@usacimbing.org.

External References

- [USA Climbing Rulebook](#)
- [USA Climbing Policies](#)
- [USA Climbing Grievance Policy](#)

Terminology

See the USA Climbing rules and regulations.

Approvals / Dates

Approved	USA Climbing CEO 2026-09-22
Effective	2026-09-22
Review	Yearly

Revision History

Date/Version	Changes
20251114	Initial version (moved from Rulebook and updated)
20260922	Updates to authority delegation and notification process