

# UVRF SafeSport Athlete Safety Program 2024

## Introduction

Upper Valley Rowing Foundation (UVRF) is a non-profit sports organization run by volunteers. Its mission is to create a community for the sport of rowing by offering a wide variety of opportunities for area residents to row on the Connecticut River. UVRF offers instructional and recreational programs, competitive opportunities for Masters and Junior rowers, and promotes education about the sport. UVRF is a member of USRowing.

Beginning in 2015, all USRowing member organizations must have athlete safety policies in place to safeguard children and adult club members. Organizations need to certify that they can provide USRowing with a copy of their policy and update their policy annually. The primary aim of the Safe Sport policy is to protect children from sexual abuse and harassment. The UVRF Board appoints a Safety Officer annually who is charged with implementing this SafeSport program and ensuring all members are aware of its existence and provisions for dealing with abusive situations.

As of 2023, all USRowing *Relevant Adult Participants* are required to take the 90-minute SafeSport Trained course. Three 30-minute Refresher courses are available as parts of this 4-year repeated series after the initial training has been completed. **Any member who is not defined as a Relevant Adult Participant is not required to complete any form of SafeSport training.**

## Sections:

1. [Relevant Adult Participants](#)
2. [Prohibited Conduct](#)
3. [Education and Awareness Training](#)
4. [Applicant Screening](#)
5. [Reporting and Enforcement](#)

## Relevant Adult Participants

The following "Relevant Adult Participants" are required by the [USRowing Safe Sport Policy](#) and the U.S. Center for SafeSport to take SafeSport training:

- Any employee, board member, committee member, coach, or administrator of USRowing or one of its Member Organizations
- Any USRowing licensed Referee
- Any current or potential National Team athlete with the goal to participate in National Team selection such as development camp, trials, or selection camp
- Any person(s) authorized, approved, or appointed by USRowing or its Member Organizations to have Regular Contact with or authority over Minor Athletes. This may include coaches, volunteers, medical staff, trainers, chaperones, monitors, contract personnel, bus/van drivers, or officials who have Regular Contact\* with a Minor Athlete, staff, board members, and any other individual who meets the Adult Participant definition
- An adult athlete who has Regular Contact\* with any Minor Athlete

- Individuals in a position of power, including but not limited to coaches, staff, chaperones and board members, are required to take SafeSport training regardless of the total number of instances they have with minors.

\*Regular Contact Is defined as ongoing interaction where an Adult Participant is in a role of direct and active engagement with any amateur athlete who is a minor. **USRowing defines ongoing interactions as five (5) or more instances of In-Program Contact during a 12-month period.** For purposes of this definition, a competition is considered a single instance of In-Program Contact regardless of duration.

## Prohibited Conduct

Misconduct in sport includes:

- Bullying
- Harassment (including sexual harassment)
- Hazing
- Emotional misconduct
- Physical misconduct
- Sexual misconduct (including child sexual abuse)

Coaches, club members, and volunteers are required to report abuse or misconduct. To do so fairly, reporters should have a basic understanding of sexual abusers and the "grooming" strategies they use to seduce their victims. With a combination of attention, affection, gifts, or preferential treatment, sexual offenders select a child, win their trust (and the trust of their parents or guardians), manipulate the child into sexual activity, and keep the child from disclosing abuse.

Bullying, harassment, and hazing can involve acts of emotional, physical or sexual misconduct. Emotional misconduct often involves non-contact behaviors that verbally abuse an athlete or deny attention or support.

Physical misconduct may or may not involve actual contact, if it threatens or creates a fear physical harm. Physical misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athlete performance.

Contact offenses include but are not limited to behaviors that involve any physical injury, provision of alcohol or illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications that may result in harm to the athlete, or permitting an athlete to return to play prematurely after an injury.

Non-contact offenses include but are not limited to behaviors that may isolate an athlete as an act of coercion or punishment, forcing a painful stance or position, or withholding or denying adequate hydration or medical attention.

Sexual misconduct can include assault, harassment, abuse or any other intimacies that exploit an athlete.

**In New Hampshire and Vermont persons under the age of 16 years old cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult, and all sexual interaction between an adult and a person under 16 is strictly prohibited.**

Sexual misconduct can occur even without contact and represents an abuse of authority and trust implicit in the coach-athlete relationship. Especially in the case of minors, coaches must be aware of misinterpretation of overly personal interaction. Non-contact offenses include but are not limited to: a coach discussing their sex life with an athlete or asking an athlete about his or her sex life, requesting or sending inappropriate photos or sexually explicit or suggestive messages, deliberately exposing an athlete to nudity (except in shared changing areas), initiating, inviting or responding to sexual solicitation, or any other unwelcome or offensive behaviors that are sexual in nature.

Adults in positions of power, like coaches, must be aware that minors may misinterpret or misreport or even fantasize what might seem to the adult to be casual or harmless remarks that are sexual in nature. Coaches are looked up to for guidance in improving rowing skills, for training and race preparation, and they control coveted boat and seat assignments. They must be cognizant of this power they wield, and manage the trust relationship with their athletes with heightened sensitivity and maturity. Coaches cannot always be "best friends" with their athletes, just as parents, at times, cannot expect to be best friends with their children and parent effectively.

## **Education and Awareness Training**

All UVRF members 18 years of age or older who fall in the category of "relevant adult participant", all coaches (paid and volunteer), and all parent volunteers who fall into the category of "relevant adult participant" are required to be SafeSport trained. For each relevant adult member, this means:

- Completing an initial comprehensive **free** online training core course offered by the U.S. Center for Safe Sport; and
- And in the following 3 years, completing a shorter online **free** "refresher" course.

The SafeSport course teaches about the nature of misconduct in sport and provides actionable information to better protect athletes. You can visit the website <https://safesporttrained.org/> when you are ready to do the training, but it is preferred that you access it from USRowing.

**TIP #1:** *Access the training from your USRowing account (see the SafeSport icon on your home profile page). This will ensure it is linked to your USRowing account.*

**TIP #2:** *Use the same email address for USRowing, SafeSport, and RegattaCentral accounts.*

**TIP #3:** *If you have current SafeSport credentials from coaching or participating in another sport, you can apply the certificate to your USRowing account. You do NOT need to repeat the training.*

## Choosing the Appropriate Course

There are several courses that you can choose from on the training website:

- **SafeSport Trained Core Course:** This 90-minute course is designed for competing adults, coaches, board members, and other adults in authority roles or are "relevant adult participants in our organization.
- **Core Refresher Courses:** For subsequent years, there are three distinct 30-minute courses available (for people who have completed the Core Course). "Refresher 1" should be completed the year after the "core" course; "Refresher 2" should be completed the year after that; "Refresher 3" should be completed the year after that. The year following "Refresher 3", the cycle begins anew.
- **SafeSport Training for Adult Athletes:** This 30-minute course is useful for adults who do not meet the relevant adult participant definition

Other courses are also available for health-care professionals, athletes with disabilities (and those who work with them), and young athletes between the ages of 13 and 18 and their parents.

## Starting the Training

From USRowing, you will be redirected to the official SafeSport training site, <https://safesporttrained.org/>.

### For members who have been trained at any time in the past:

- If you have done any SafeSport training in the past, you should have an account on safesport.org or athletesafety.org, and USRowing will have a record of your progress. Begin by logging into USRowing and hitting the SafeSport icon on the left side in your home profile
- Click **Login** in the upper right, enter your email address as your Username, and click Forgot Password. This will send a password reset notification to your email address. Follow the instructions to create a new, secure password and log into the training site.
- Choose the course that is appropriate for you and begin the training.

### For members who have not done any training in the past:

- If you do not have an account on safesport.org, go to <https://safesporttrained.org/> and select **Enrollment Key** on the landing page. When prompted, enter the following key: **NGBUSR-RFKt8f**. Fill out the form with all the required information and your new account will be created.
  - If you are unsure if you have an account or not, follow the instructions for members who have been trained in the past. Test any possible email addresses you may have used. If the system cannot find you, follow the steps outlined here for members who have not done any training in the past.

- The SafeSport site will ask for your USRowing number. If you do not remember your member number, go to the [Membership Portal](#) to find it. If you are still having trouble, contact USRowing at (609) 751-0700 or [members@usrowing.org](mailto:members@usrowing.org). Even if you are only a Basic Member (which is required to complete the USRowing online waiver for your UVRF membership) you will have been issued a USRowing number.
- Once your account has been set up, choose the course that is appropriate for you and begin the training.

Note that you may pause the training at any time and resume it later. Your place will be saved.

If you are a coach, save a PDF copy of the completion certificate and email it to your head coach or the UVRF Safety Officer ([uppervalleyrc@gmail.com](mailto:uppervalleyrc@gmail.com), subject: For Safety Officer)

## **Applicant Screening**

Coach employment screening with UVRF includes an application, interviews, reference checks, and criminal background checks. Each applicant has an affirmative duty to disclose his or her criminal history. Failing to disclose or intentionally misrepresenting an arrest plea or conviction history in an application or any other information provided by the applicant during the screening process is grounds for non-employment, or revocation or restriction of employment, volunteer duties and/or UVRF membership, regardless of when the offense is discovered.

Information that could disqualify an applicant includes, but is not limited to, arrests, pleas of no contest, and criminal convictions—especially if the underlying criminal behavior involved sex or violence. No decision will be made on an individual's eligibility for work if they have a pending court case for any of the potentially disqualifying offenses until the pending case concludes.

Any applicant who has been banned from another sports organization or educational institution, temporarily or permanently, must disclose this information. Failure to disclose is a basis for disqualification from employment with UVRF.

## **Criminal Background Checks**

All UVRF coaches are required to submit a background check with the National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI) and show clearance on their record every 2 years prior to beginning their coaching responsibilities.

- To complete the free background check, visit the website →

<https://uppervalleyrowingfoundation.quickapp.pro/>

- Respond to all the screen prompts and several pages of acknowledgements and waivers. At the successful submission of your screening check you will receive an applicant ID. You will also receive an email confirmation with this number. You can use this ID to check the status of your clearance. UVRF also can check the status of all applicants with an administrative account. A "red light" finding means the criminal

background check revealed criminal records that suggest the applicant "does not meet the criteria" and is not suitable for employment or volunteer coaching assignment with UVRF.

## Reporting and Enforcement

**New Hampshire law requires any person who suspects that a child under age 18 who has been abused or neglected must report that suspicion immediately to the Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) (NHRSA 169-C:29-31). The number to call is (603) 271-6562. For immediate emergencies, call 911. Proof of abuse or neglect is not required to make a report.**

All reports of Sexual Misconduct should also be reported directly to the SafeSport Center at [www.uscenterforsafesport.org](http://www.uscenterforsafesport.org) or (833)-587-7233. No statutes of limitation apply to reports of incidents of Sexual Misconduct. All such reports received by USRowing will be forwarded to the Center. **Reporting such conduct to the Center does not satisfy an Adult Participant's obligation to report to law enforcement or other appropriate authorities consistent with federal and state law.**

Any report received by USRowing or a Member Organization of an allegation that falls within the Center's jurisdiction must be referred by USRowing or the Member Organization directly to the Center immediately and no later than within 24 hours.

UVRF coaches, club members, and volunteers shall report suspicions or allegations of violations, misconduct, and physical or sexual abuse. Reports should be made to the UVRF President, Vice President, Safety Officer or other UVRF Officers or Directors. The current serving Board officers can be found on the club website under the tab menu "About - UVRF Governance - UVRF Board". The URL is:

[https://www.uppervalleyrowingfoundation.org/?page\\_id=1258](https://www.uppervalleyrowingfoundation.org/?page_id=1258)

UVRF will take a report in the way that is most comfortable for the person initiating a report including an anonymous, in-person, verbal, or written report. Regardless of how you choose to report, it is helpful to UVRF for individuals to provide, at a minimum, (1) the name of the complainant(s), (2) the type of misconduct alleged and the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct, and (3) the approximate date(s) of misconduct.

Please note that anonymous reporting may make it difficult for UVRF to respond or properly address allegations. As noted above, all suspicions of child physical or sexual abuse must be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

If, for any reason, you are not comfortable or satisfied with the above methods for reporting, or with the results of that reporting, you may file a report directly with USRowing at

[https://usrowing.org/sports/2018/4/13/18827\\_132107104230772015.aspx](https://usrowing.org/sports/2018/4/13/18827_132107104230772015.aspx)

or USRowing SafeSport Hotline: (609) 751-0713, USRowing SafeSport e-mail: [USRowingSafeSport@usrowing.org](mailto:USRowingSafeSport@usrowing.org)

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:**

**UVRF does not investigate suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations as a precondition to reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities.**