
Safe Sport Act: What Does This Mean for my Organization?

In November of 2017, partially in response to high-profile abuse cases like those involving Larry Nassar, Congress passed the Safe Sport Act. As a result of this new law, abuse that occurs at any youth-related sports organization that participates in international or interstate sporting events must be reported—it is no longer optional. Additionally, reporting limitations have been extended based on when a victim recognizes that they were abused.

In practice, for the vast majority of our customers, this law simply codifies what was already standard protocol. All staff, and all volunteers, have been expected to report red flag behaviors or signs of abuse. All staff, and all volunteers, have been expected to follow and enforce rules such as no alone time, no favoritism and no inappropriate touch. And all staff, and all volunteers, have been expected to take Child Sexual Abuse Prevention training.

But by expanding the list of mandated reporters, by recognizing the fact that victims aren't always cognizant of abuse until years later, and by enforcing a higher standard of care within the youth sports industry, this law still sends a powerful message about our culture's growing awareness of, and willingness to act on, this crucially important topic.

Here's what you need to know:

- Any athlete who, while a minor, was a victim of a violation is protected under the law.
- Minor-athletes that are victims of emotional, physical or sexual abuse are covered under the law.
- Sports-related activities blanketed under the law include travel, lodging, practice, competition, and the provision of health or medical treatment.
- It is a crime to adjudicate sexual abuse accusations in-house without reporting to the police within 24 hours.
- It is the responsibility of the organization to report abuse, and not the victim to self-report.
- Child abuse prevention and reporting training is required for all adults who are in regular contact with athletes who are minors, and subject to parental consent.
- Child abuse prevention and reporting training is required for athletes who are minors, to allow a complainant to report easily to appropriate persons.
- Reporting limitations have been extended to up to 10 years after the victim has realized they were abused.
- Victims of sexual abuse are to be compensated with a mandatory minimum of \$150,000, and may be awarded additional compensation to cover legal fees associated with the case as well as punitive damages.

As always, while we believe it is important to remain aware of and compliant with the law, we are grateful to work with organizations who go well above and beyond your legal obligations to keep children safe.

Thank you for all you do.