

# RECOGNIZING & REPORTING RETALIATION



**Retaliation** is taking (or threatening to take) any adverse action related to an allegation, a report, or an investigation of misconduct. It is prohibited by the [SafeSport Code](#). The U.S. Center for SafeSport has the jurisdiction to investigate and respond to reports of Retaliation in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement (“the Movement”).

## Understanding Retaliation

Retaliation includes adverse actions taken before, during, or after the Center’s process. It also includes retaliatory acts taken in response to inquiries and/or investigations by a National Governing Body (NGB) or clubs, gyms, and other Local Affiliated Organizations (LAOs).

### Different forms of Retaliation include:

- Threatening, intimidating, or harassing someone
- Coercing someone to drop a complaint or refuse to cooperate with an investigation
- Punishing or withholding opportunities from those who report misconduct

### Examples of Retaliation include:

- An administrator demotes a coach for participating in an investigation of Bullying Behavior.
- An athlete threatens to ruin a teammate’s reputation if they report Hazing activities.
- An athlete reports a trainer for Physical Misconduct. The next day, the coach drops the athlete from the team while saying, “We don’t like snitches here.”

When a sport environment allows retaliatory behavior, it makes it easier for abuse and misconduct to continue. For example, it may keep those who experience or witness abuse from reporting it. Adult Participants who learn of Retaliation must [report it to the Center](#).

## What if I’m Not Sure if It’s Retaliation?

Retaliation has a specific definition under the SafeSport Code. However, it isn’t the only form of adverse action prohibited by the Code. For example, harassment, emotional misconduct, and interference in an investigation are also prohibited.

**You don’t have to be able to define the type of misconduct in order to report it.**

## What Should I Do if I Experience Retaliation?

If you experience Retaliation, you could:

- Document it and save any related communications
- Report to the Center or your National Governing Body (NGB)
- Contact your NGB or Local Affiliated Organization (LAO) and ask them to put safety measures in place
- Pursue options outside our process, such as:
  - Filing police reports
  - Seeking a protective/restraining order
  - Sending a cease-and-desist letter
  - Contacting an attorney about civil action options

## How Does the Center Handle Retaliation?

We will open an investigation if there is evidence someone connected to the Movement engaged in retaliatory behavior. If we find a violation, we will impose sanctions.

In some cases, we take steps to protect those experiencing Retaliation, such as:

- Imposing Temporary Measures (e.g., changing schedules, requiring chaperones, setting temporary suspensions)
- Helping the person experiencing Retaliation create an individual safety plan

## How Do Local Affiliated Organizations (LAOs) Handle Retaliation?

If you experience Retaliation, your LAO (e.g., club, gym, team) may:

- Create an organizational safety plan
- Impose safety measures, such as limiting contact between parties or increasing supervision
- Make changes to employment, membership, or rostering



## What if I Think My Organization Is Retaliating Against Me?

After a report is made, NGBs and LAOs may make decisions around employment, membership, or rostering. We have no power over or influence over these decisions.

Usually, these decisions are not considered retaliatory. However, if you believe that your NGB or LAO is retaliating against you, [report it to the Center](#). In your report, make sure to name specific people you believe are retaliating against you. The Center can only investigate individuals for retaliation, not organizations.

## Contact Us

Our Process Navigators can answer questions about the Response and Resolution process, including Retaliation. They can also connect you with mental health, legal, and other support resources. They offer services in English and Spanish.

- **Send us an email:** [process.navigators@safesport.org](mailto:process.navigators@safesport.org)
- **Leave us a voicemail:** 720-531-9024

Emails and calls are usually returned during our business hours, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. MT. We will return all messages by the end of the next business day.

*This document is for educational purposes. It is meant to help explain the Center's legal documents and policies (e.g., the SafeSport Code). It does not replace or override them. The information in this document does not constitute legal or medical advice.*