

UNDERSTANDING JURISDICTION



Jurisdiction describes who has the official power to investigate and respond to an allegation of abuse or misconduct. The U.S. Center for SafeSport has the authority to investigate allegations of misconduct in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement (“the Movement”). Let's review the kinds of jurisdiction you may hear about during SafeSport's [Response and Resolution process](#).

Personal Jurisdiction

The Center has **personal jurisdiction**, or authority, over members and Participants in the Movement. This means that for us to investigate, the Respondent (i.e., a person reported to have caused harm) must be a member or Participant of one of the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) within the Movement. NGBs all have different definitions for membership and participation. They help determine if the Center has personal jurisdiction over a Respondent.

Jurisdictional Holds

Sometimes a Respondent is not considered a Participant at the time we receive a report, but they were before. In that case, the Center will put the report on a **Jurisdictional Hold**. This means we will not investigate the allegations unless or until the Respondent tries to renew their membership or rejoin the Movement. The NGB will notify the Center if the Respondent attempts to return to the Movement.

Subject Matter Jurisdiction

Subject matter jurisdiction is also important to an investigation. This means the allegations, if true, are violations of the [SafeSport Code](#). There are two categories of subject matter jurisdiction.

Exclusive Jurisdiction

Exclusive Jurisdiction is when only the Center has the authority to hear a SafeSport case. The Center has Exclusive Jurisdiction over allegations of:

- Sexual Misconduct
- Criminal Charges or Dispositions involving Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct
- Misconduct related to reporting Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct
- Aiding and Abetting (i.e., helping or encouraging a Participant to violate the Code), Abuse of Process, or Retaliation when it relates to the Center's process

Discretionary Jurisdiction

Discretionary Jurisdiction means the Center can decide whether to hear a case. The Center has Discretionary Jurisdiction to investigate:

- Non-Sexual Child Abuse
- Emotional Misconduct (e.g., Harassment and cyberbullying)
- Physical Misconduct (e.g., Stalking, Bullying Behavior, and Hazing)
- Non-Sexual Criminal Charges or Dispositions not involving Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct
- Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP) violations

If the Center decides not to claim Discretionary Jurisdiction, we typically refer the case to the NGB for them to resolve using their own policies and procedures. When a report goes to the NGB, it is not a rejection. It helps us balance the workload so that every report gets timely attention.

Contact Us

Our Process Navigators can answer questions about jurisdiction in both English and Spanish.

- **Send us an email:** 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.

