

USNF Misconduct Investigation Process

The USNF will take all allegations of abuse or misconduct seriously and will promptly, thoroughly, and equitably investigate whether misconduct has taken place. The USNF will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory/protective service agencies.

Making a Report

Any member of the USNF should report suspected misconduct policy violations to any USNF board member. The person receiving the report must then relay the report to the USNF Executive Committee within 24 hours.

USNF members may submit a report here: <https://forms.gle/84DHWNZsBvbtPJmW6>

Investigative Body

In general, the Executive Committee will form the investigative body for all reports. However, any member of the Executive Committee who has firsthand knowledge of the incident being reported or has a conflict of interest in the case will not form part of the investigative body. The investigative body must include at least three members. In the event that fewer than three members of the Executive Committee are eligible to serve on the investigative body, the USNF Board of Directors shall have the authority to decide, by majority vote, the remaining members of the investigative body.

Upon Receipt of a Report

In receiving a report, the USNF Executive Committee will engage in proper and necessary investigation within the limits of the law unless the report includes a crime as defined by the state in which the incident occurred.

If, at any point during the investigative process, the Executive Committee determines that the report may involve criminal activity, the Executive Committee will refer the matter to law enforcement.

Throughout the investigative process, the Executive Committee will attempt to maintain confidentiality of the complainant(s), victim(s), and accused. However, at the point that the Executive Committee presents a recommendation to the board for disciplinary action, the Executive Committee may need to divulge details of the complaint to the board to ensure a fair decision by the board.

- Board meetings at which complaints are discussed will be closed
- To the extent possible, names and/or sensitive information in written evidence will be redacted before being shared with the board
- Board members will be asked to maintain confidentiality as much as possible

There may be instances where the USNF is no longer able to maintain confidentiality of any involved parties, such as when law enforcement or attorneys become involved.

Steps for the USNF Executive Committee for resolution of the report:

1. The Executive Committee will notify the complainant, the victim(s) (if different from the complainant), and the accused of the receipt of a report, the specific misconduct violation, and the investigative steps.
2. The Executive Committee will review the report to determine whether or not there is a basis for investigation.
 - a. If the Executive Committee determines an investigation is warranted, the Executive Committee will inform the USNF board that a report of misconduct has been made and an investigation will be conducted.
 - b. If the Executive Committee determines an investigation is not warranted, the Executive Committee will inform the USNF board, the complainant, the victim(s) (if different from the complainant), and the accused that a report of misconduct has been made and the Executive Committee determined no further investigation was warranted.
3. The Executive Committee will conduct an investigation, which may include but is not limited to: interviewing the complainant, the victim(s) (if different from the complainant), the accused, and any witnesses with firsthand knowledge; and reviewing evidence presented.
4. If the Executive Committee finds evidence of misconduct, the Executive Committee will make a recommendation to the USNF board for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of membership.
5. The USNF board will determine appropriate disciplinary action based on the report and recommendations given. The board will make a decision by the end of the meeting where the report is made.

6. The Executive Committee will notify the complainant, the victim(s) (if different from the complainant), and the accused of the decision of the USNF board within 24 hours of the Board's decision.

Appeals Process

Either party may appeal the Board's decision only once. The request to appeal shall be submitted in writing to the USNF Office within 14 days of notification of the Board's decision and shall be detailed as to why the appeal is warranted.

The appeal shall be presented to the full USNF Board of Directors at a specially convened meeting. The meeting will be scheduled as soon as reasonably possible following procedures outlined in the USNF Bylaws. Meetings at which appeals are discussed will be closed.

Each party will have the right to speak before the Board, submit a written statement, and/or present additional evidence. The Board will decide the final resolution based on the evidence presented.

Following the closure of the appeal process, the resolution is final and binding on all parties. All parties will be notified in writing of the final decision within 24 hours.