

ASLA SAFE SPORT DECISION & AWARENESS GUIDE

Purpose of This Guide

This tool helps athletes, parents, coaches, officials, volunteers, and sport administrators in Alberta:

- Understand what maltreatment is, and what it is not
- Recognize early warning signs before harm escalates
- Identify the appropriate resolution pathway
- Understand when a concern must be reported under the AB UCC
- Use the Alberta Safe Sport Complaint Mechanism (ABSSCM) appropriately

Not every concern is a Safe Sport complaint – but every concern deserves to be taken seriously.

Commitment to Respectful Processes



Individuals who raise concerns will be treated respectfully and without judgment. The ABSSCM is committed to fair, trauma-informed processes that prioritize safety and dignity.



STEP 1 — IS ANYONE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER?



Ask:

- Is someone at risk of immediate physical or sexual harm?
- Does this involve a child who may be unsafe?
- Has a criminal offence potentially occurred?

IF YES

Contact Police or Child & Family Services immediately. Then notify your organization.

IF NO

Continue to Step 2.

Minor & Duty to Report



In situations involving minors, additional legal reporting obligations may apply under Alberta law and the AB UCC.

STEP 2 — WHAT TYPE OF CONCERN IS THIS?

Most confusion in sport occurs here.
The key distinction is:

-  Normal Sport Conflict
-  Poor Practice / Early Warning Signs
-  Maltreatment (AB UCC Threshold)

A. Normal Sport Conflict

Examples:

- Playing time disagreements
- Team selection disputes
- Coaching decisions about strategy
- Personality clashes
- Scheduling concerns
- Constructive performance feedback

These issues may feel unfair or upsetting, but they are not automatically maltreatment.

Recommended Action:

- Use the 24-hour rule
- Speak directly (when safe and appropriate)
- Follow club or PSO complaint procedures
- Escalate through leadership

ABSSCM is not typically the appropriate forum for these concerns.

B. Poor Practice / Early Warning Signs

Examples:

- Public shaming
- Excessive yelling
- Ignoring or isolating an athlete
- Favouritism
- Inappropriate jokes
- Boundary-blurring behaviour
- Excessive private communication

These behaviours may not yet meet the AB UCC definition of maltreatment, but they increase risk.

Recommended Action:

- Document concerns
- Raise with club leadership
- Encourage education and corrective action
- Monitor patterns

Prevention is a shared responsibility.

C. Maltreatment (AB UCC Threshold)

The Alberta Universal Code of Conduct outlines prohibited behaviours. If the behaviour fits these categories, it may require reporting through ABSSCM- In certain circumstances, participants may have a duty to report suspected maltreatment under the AB UCC or applicable law.

Psychological Maltreatment

- Repeated humiliation
- Degrading comments
- Threats
- Manipulation
- Intimidation

Sexual Maltreatment

- Sexual comments or jokes
- Inappropriate touching
- Sexual relationships involving power imbalance
- Sexual exploitation

Neglect

- Withholding medical care
- Failing to provide basic care

Retaliation

- Punishing someone for reporting concerns

Physical Maltreatment

- Forcing participation through injury
- Physical punishment
- Hitting, grabbing, shaking

Grooming

- Gradual boundary testing
- Secretive communication
- Isolating an athlete
- Building trust for purpose of future exploitation.

Discrimination

- Harassment based on race, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion etc.

STEP 3 — DOES THIS FALL UNDER ABSSCM?

Alberta's independent complaint mechanism administered by ASLA .

The ABSSCM is Alberta's independent complaint mechanism administered by ASLA .

ABSSCM applies when:

- The organization has adopted the AB UCC and ABSSCM
- The behaviour falls within defined prohibited conduct
- The incident occurred within the scope of sport activities (as defined in policy)
- Conduct that occurs outside formal sport activities (including online or social media activity) may still fall under ABSSCM if it impacts the sport environment or participant safety.

ABSSCM may not apply to:

- Pure performance disputes
- Team selection appeals
- Technical rule violations
- Matters already handled by police or courts (though parallel processes may occur)

Anonymous reports are permitted but may limit the ability to investigate .

Intentionally false allegations are prohibited under the AB UCC .



STEP 4— CHOOSE THE RIGHT PATHWAY

Type of Concern	Recommended Pathway
Immediate danger	Police / Child Services
Normal sport conflict	Club or PSO/MSO process
Poor practice	Club leadership
AB UCC violation	ABSSCM Report
National-level issue	NSO or relevant national mechanism

When in Doubt



Individuals are encouraged to review the AB UCC and their organization's policies to better understand whether conduct may fall within the scope of the ABSSCM.

Recognizing & Flagging Behaviours

RECOGNIZING RED FLAGS EARLY

Safe sport is not just about reporting it is about prevention.



Isolation Behaviour

- Discouraging parental presence
- One-on-one travel without transparency



Emotional Manipulation

- "You owe me."
- "If you report this, your career is over."



Boundary Rift

- Late-night texting
- Private social media contact
- Gifts or special privileges



Culture of Silence

- "That's just how it is."
- Fear of speaking up
- Protecting reputation over safety

Important Reminders



- Reporting is not punishment – it is a process.
- Maltreatment must meet defined thresholds.
- Early communication prevents escalation.
- Confidentiality and privacy are protected.
- Retaliation is prohibited.