

POLICY

DC-POL-27-REFEREE HARASSMENT	
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Approved By: Board of Directors	
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CONTEXT

Retaining officials is as much, if not more, of a challenge for sporting associations as attracting them in the first place. In 2012, a report published in the Clinical Journal of Sports Medicine — titled Violence in Canadian Amateur Hockey: The Experience of Referees in Ontario — found that more than 90 percent of the 632 referees who responded to their survey said they were recipients of aggression and anger. Around 46 percent said that referees are threatened by physical violence. Verbal and physical abuse of game officials and poor sportsmanship has led to a shortage of referees.

This policy has been developed to address the growing (and unfortunate) trend of referee abuse in amateur sports. The policy, as set forth below, is simple: Any physical, verbal, or written abuse of referees is unacceptable.

In addition to this specific policy, the Code of Conduct and Ethics and the Harassment Policy and Procedures continue to apply to all participants.

A plea of ignorance to this policy shall not excuse behavior that violates this policy. It should be obvious to all those involved with sports that referee abuse of any type is not acceptable.

APPLICATION

This policy applies to all Individuals.

POLICY

- It is unacceptable to address any member of the referee crew in a negative manner – physically, verbally or with gestures – during or after a game.
- It is unacceptable to make any comments to any referee suggesting making a call or to comment on a call made or not made.
- Complimenting a referee briefly after a game is acceptable, and probably appreciated. However, sitting back and watching the game unfold while letting the referees do their job to the best of their ability is the best approach. No interaction with the referees equates to no issues.
- This policy is not intended to suggest that referees are always correct. Referees are human and will make mistakes. This is particularly true with respect to our developing referees who are learning how to officiate games and are sometimes asked to referee games at a higher level than they may be comfortable officiating.
- It is never acceptable to abuse or criticize a game official, verbally or otherwise, in any situation.
- It is unacceptable to contact referees after an event to discuss or debate calls made or not made.

REPORTING VIOLATIONS

Anyone may report violations of this policy by sending an e-mail to a member of the Board of Directors, or through their Provincial Sport Organization. If a report contains sufficient information, the Board of Directors will review the situation and, if appropriate, impose disciplinary sanctions on any persons who are found to have violated this policy. The Board of Directors will not reveal the identity of any person reporting a violation of this policy while investigating a report.

DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

The Board of Directors may, in its discretion, impose disciplinary sanctions on any spectator it finds to have violated this policy. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, warnings, game suspensions and, in egregious cases, suspension for the remainder of the season, suspension for multiple seasons, and a permanent ban from Dodgeball Canada activities. Egregious cases include repeated or multiple incidents of abuse, physical contact with a referee and exceptionally inappropriate behavior directed toward a referee.