



OPERATIONAL POLICY:	COMPLIANCE WITH 'FAIRNESS AND SAFETY IN SPORT ACT'
DATE ISSUED:	September 1, 2025
LAST UPDATED:	N/A

PURPOSE:

In compliance with the Government of Alberta's [Fairness and Safety in Sport Act](#) and its associated Regulation, Hockey Alberta will promote fairness and safety in sport by applying the eligibility guidelines established by the Government of Alberta to govern participation in female-only hockey programs. This policy reflects the legislative requirements and is intended to ensure consistent application across sanctioned activities. It does not constitute legal advice and should not be interpreted as a statement of Hockey Alberta's independent position on the legislation.

DEFINITIONS:

In this policy the following definitions will apply:

- (a) "the Act" means the *Fairness and Safety in Sport Act* and the associated *Fairness and Safety in Sport Regulation*, as enacted by the Government of Alberta.
- (b) "Applicant" means an individual who submits a written, confidential challenge to an athlete's eligibility to participate in a Hockey Alberta female-only program, and who is one of the following:
 - i. A current President, General Manager, Executive Director, or equivalent of a Hockey Alberta Member Organization.
- (c) "Athlete" means a participant who is registered in programming that is sanctioned by Hockey Alberta.
- (d) "Birth registration document" means a document as defined under Alberta's [Vital Statistics Act](#), or a comparable document issued outside of Alberta, that includes the following information about an athlete:
 - i. The athlete's full name;
 - ii. The date and place of the athlete's birth;
 - iii. The sex of the athlete.

Note: A birth certificate is not considered a valid form of a birth registration document.

- (e) "Challenge" means the formal procedure through which an athlete's eligibility to participate in a Hockey Alberta female-only program may be contested.
- (f) "Female-only program" means a team, league or division within Hockey Alberta-sanctioned programming that is intended to be composed exclusively of athletes whose sex assigned at birth is female.
- (g) "Sex at birth" means the sex designation recorded on an athlete's birth registration document at time of their birth.



APPLICATION:

This Policy, together with the Act, applies exclusively to athletes who are 12 years of age or older and who seek to participate in female-only programs sanctioned by Hockey Alberta.

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES:

This Policy, together with the Act, establishes the criteria for athlete participation in Hockey Alberta female-only programs.

- (a) An athlete whose sex at birth is female is eligible to participate in female-only programs.
- (b) An athlete whose sex at birth is not female is not eligible to participate in female-only programs.

CONFIRMATION OF ELIGIBILITY:

- (a) Prior to participating in a female-only program, an athlete (or their parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age) must confirm, through a waiver process located in the athlete's HCR profile, the following:
 - i. That they understand the eligibility guidelines set out in the Act and this policy; and
 - ii. That they meet the eligibility guidelines set out in the Act and this policy.
- (b) For athletes 12 years of age and older, confirmation of eligibility is required annually at the time of registration for participation in a Hockey Alberta female-only program.
- (c) Failure of an athlete (or their parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age) to confirm eligibility through the waiver in their HCR profile at the time of registration will render the athlete ineligible to participate in female-only programs until such a time as eligibility is confirmed.

**Confirmation of Eligibility guidelines, as set out in the Act and this policy, will be required when registering for the 2026-2027 season, and beyond.*

CONFIDENTIAL CHALLENGES TO ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY:

The eligibility of an athlete currently participating in a female-only program may be confidentially challenged by an applicant, provided that all of the following conditions are met:

- (a) The applicant is a current President, General Manager, Executive Director, or equivalent of a Hockey Alberta Member Organization;
- (b) The challenge is brought forward in good faith;
- (c) There are reasonable grounds to believe that an athlete is ineligible under the Act and this policy. Reasonable grounds may include, but are not limited to:
 - i. The athlete's sex at birth does not meet the eligibility guidelines;
 - ii. The athlete's participation in a female-only program poses a significant risk to the ongoing safety of themselves, their team or their opponents.
- (d) The challenge is submitted in writing to the Hockey Alberta President and CEO (or designate) at safesport@hockeyalberta.ca.



-
- (e) The written challenge includes:
- i. The name of the applicant;
 - ii. The name of the Member Organization the applicant represents, and their position within that organization;
 - iii. The name of the athlete, the Member Organization the athlete is registered with, the team the athlete plays for, and the athlete's age, division, and league of play;
 - iv. Detailed information supporting the grounds for the challenge.

CHALLENGE PROCESS:

- (a) Upon receipt of a confidential challenge to an athlete's eligibility under the Act and this policy, the Hockey Alberta President and CEO (or designate) will:
- i. Confirm receipt of the challenge; and
 - ii. Notify the Minister of Tourism and Sport, without disclosing any personal identifying information, within three (3) business days.
- (b) The Hockey Alberta President and CEO (or designate) may dismiss the challenge, if, in their opinion, reasonable grounds do not exist. In such cases:
- i. The applicant will be notified of the dismissal; and
 - ii. The Minister of Tourism and Sport will be notified of the dismissal, without personal identifying information, within 30 business days of the challenge.
- (c) If the challenge is not dismissed:
- i. The applicant and the athlete whose eligibility is being challenged will be notified that the challenge is proceeding;
 - ii. The athlete (or their parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18) must provide the Hockey Alberta President and CEO (or designate) with a copy of the athlete's birth registration document.
- Note: As per the Vital Statistic Act, a birth certificate is not considered a valid birth registration document.*
- iii. Fees associated with obtaining the birth registration document are eligible for reimbursement by the Government of Alberta.
- (d) The athlete may continue to participate in their registered female-only program during the challenge process.
- (e) Failure to provide the required birth registration document within 30 business days will render the athlete ineligible to participate in female-only programs until the document is provided.
- (f) Upon receipt of the birth registration document, the Hockey Alberta President and CEO (or designate) will verify the athlete's eligibility under the guidelines of the Act and this policy.



- (g) If the challenge is upheld and the athlete is determined to be ineligible:
 - i. The applicant and the athlete will be notified; and
 - ii. As outlined in the Act, the athlete will be permanently ineligible to participate in Hockey Alberta-sanctioned female-only programs.
- (h) If the challenge is dismissed and the athlete is determined to be eligible:
 - i. The applicant and the athlete will be notified; and
 - ii. The athlete will be permanently eligible to participate in Hockey Alberta-sanctioned female-only programs.
- (i) The Hockey Alberta President and CEO (or designate) will notify the Minister of Tourism and Sport of the final decision, without personal identifying information, within 30 business days of the challenge being made.

INVALID CHALLENGES:

As referenced in '*Challenge Process*', above, the Hockey Alberta President and CEO (or designate) may determine that reasonable grounds do not exist for a challenge. This may include, but is not limited to, situations where:

- (a) A previous challenge involving the same athlete has already been resolved by Hockey Alberta;
- (b) Insufficient information has been provided to proceed with the challenge; or
- (c) The challenge is deemed to have been made in bad faith.
 - i. *Determining Bad Faith* - Factors that may indicate a challenge was made in bad faith include, but are not limited to:
 - 1) The applicant's prior history of conduct;
 - 2) Assumption about the athlete's ineligibility based on body, appearance, or dress;
 - 3) A pattern of inappropriate behavior or repeated unfounded challenges under this Policy;
 - 4) The ages of the athletes involved; and
 - 5) Use of the challenge process as a retaliatory act or as a form of maltreatment, bullying, or harassment toward the athlete or their family.

REVIEW OF INVALID CHALLENGES:

- (a) Right to Request a Review - An applicant may request a review of the dismissal of a challenge under this Policy by submitting a formal request.
- (b) The following requirements must be met to submit a Request for Review:
 - i. Submitted in writing and within seven (7) calendar days of receiving the dismissal decision;
 - ii. Includes a copy of the dismissal decision being reviewed;
 - iii. Includes supporting facts; and
 - iv. Is submitted to the President and CEO (or designate) of Hockey Alberta at safesport@hockeyalberta.ca.
- (c) Review Process - The request will be reviewed by the Hockey Alberta President and CEO (or designate), who may:



-
- i. Accept the request and proceed to a review;
 - ii. Request additional information, or
 - iii. Dismiss the request if it is deemed frivolous, vexatious, or made in bad faith.
- (d) Final Decision - The outcome of the review is final and binding within Hockey Alberta's jurisdiction.

PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION:

All information and data relating to an athlete whose eligibility has been challenged will be treated as sensitive personal information and handled in accordance with Alberta's *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)* and other applicable privacy laws.

This information will be used solely for the purpose of determining athlete eligibility and will not be disclosed or used for any other purpose.

RECORD KEEPING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All documentation related to eligibility confirmations, challenges, and decisions will be securely stored by Hockey Alberta in accordance with Alberta's *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)* and applicable data retention laws. Access to these records will be restricted to authorized personnel involved in the administration of this Policy.

Records will be retained only for as long as necessary to fulfill the purposes of this Policy and any legal or regulatory obligations. Upon expiry of the retention period, records will be securely destroyed or anonymized.

Individuals may request access to or correction of their personal information in accordance with PIPA.

ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

Hockey Alberta and our Member Organizations are responsible for administering this Policy in accordance with the *Fairness and Safety in Sport Act*. Failure to comply with the requirements of this Policy, including eligibility confirmation, documentation submission, or misuse of the challenge process, may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to:

- Suspension from participation in sanctioned programming;
- Revocation of eligibility; or
- Referral to the appropriate disciplinary body within Hockey Alberta.

ASSISTANCE WITH THIS POLICY

Hockey Alberta will implement and administer athlete participation in accordance with the eligibility requirements set out in this Policy and as required by the Act.

Individuals seeking clarification or assistance regarding the application of this Policy should contact: Carlia Schwab, Manager - EDI and Safe Sport at cschwab@hockeyalberta.ca.



For questions related to the *Fairness and Safety in Sport Act* or its associated Regulation, individuals may contact the Ministry of Tourism and Sport at SPAR@gov.ab.ca.

POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATES

This Policy will be reviewed annually by Hockey Alberta, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, organizational needs, or direction from the Government of Alberta.

Updates or amendments will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders and published through official Hockey Alberta channels.