

GUIDELINES | TRAVEL

Travel guidelines direct how minors will be supervised during travel to and from practice and competitions and provide two-deep leadership and minimize one-to-one interactions.

During travel, athletes are often away from their families and support networks, and the setting – new changing areas, locker rooms, workout facilities, automobiles and hotel rooms – is less structured and less familiar. Athletes are most vulnerable to misconduct during travel, particularly overnight stays. This includes a high risk of athlete-to-athlete misconduct.

Adherence to travel guidelines helps to reduce the opportunities for misconduct.

As part of U.S. Figure Skating's commitment to SafeSport, U.S. Figure Skating encourages its clubs and programs to have published practices for travel, when applicable. Travel is defined as overnight travel to a skating activity that is planned and supervised by the member club or program. Travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all members, parents, coaches and others involved.

Clubs should include the following in their Travel Guidelines:

- Club travel guidelines must be signed and agreed upon by all members, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.
- Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling of that particular athlete).
- When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have written permission from a parent or legal guardian in advance to travel alone with the coach.

Individual Travel

The nature of figure skating and competition means that individual athletes may sometimes need to travel overnight without other athletes. Under these circumstances, we encourage:

1. Traveling with an additional coach or chaperone;
2. Inviting parents/guardians to travel with their athlete (for athletes under age 18).

When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have either of his or her parent's or legal guardian's written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach.

Team Travel (i.e. - Synchronized and Theatre On Ice teams)

Team travel is overnight travel that occurs when the club or team sponsors, coordinates or arranges for travel so that skaters can compete locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. Because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers and chaperones will often travel with the athletes. However, no coach, staff member, or volunteer will engage in team travel without the proper safety requirements in place, including valid drivers' licenses, proper insurance, well-maintained vehicles and compliance with all state laws.

Appropriate adult-to-athlete ratios will depend on the age of athletes and other participants. Evaluate your program to determine your supervisory needs. The club or team shall make every effort to provide adequate supervision through coaches and other adult chaperones.

For team travel, hotels and air travel will be booked in advance. Athletes will share rooms, with 2-4 athletes assigned per room depending on accommodations. The club or team will also notify hotel management should any special arrangements be warranted. For instance, ask hotels to block pay per view channels and request an additional large room or suite so that members and athletes may socialize as a group. Meetings do not occur in hotel rooms. Reserve a separate space for adults and athletes to socialize.

Encourage family members who wish to stay in the team hotel to do so. If family members do not stay in the team hotel, encourage all athletes to contact parents and guardians regularly and allow for any unscheduled calls by either the athlete or parent/guardian.

Mixed Gender and Mixed Age Travel

The club or team may be made up of male and female ath-

letes across various ages. Athletes will only share a room with other athletes of the same sex and age group. Athletes will also be grouped by age and sex for the purposes of assigning an appropriate chaperone. Make every effort to provide these groups at least one chaperone of the same sex. Regardless of gender, a coach should not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling of that particular athlete).

Chaperone Responsibilities

Chaperones ensure that the athletes, coaches, staff, and volunteers adhere to all policy guidelines. While these include the travel policy, it also includes all other relevant policies contained in club or team's Participant Safety Handbook.

Chaperones should monitor the activities of all coaches, staff members, volunteers and athletes. Specifically, chaperones may:

- familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before team travel;
- monitor for adherences to club policies during team travel;
- encourage minor athletes to participate in regular, at least daily, scheduled communication with their parents/guardians;
- monitor athletes for adherence to curfew restrictions set based on age and competition schedule as listed in travel itinerary;
- ensure athletes comply with hotel room restrictions based on gender or age requirements;
- not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing duties;
- make certain that an athlete is not alone in a hotel room with any adult apart from a family member (this includes coaches, staff and chaperones);
- Immediately report any concerns about sexual and physical abuse, misconduct or policy violations to an administrator or the club's Club SafeSport Compliance Chair.

*Please refer to the Team Manager's Manual on the Synchronized homepage for more information.
