



American Endurance Ride Conference

The American Endurance Ride Conference (AERC) supports U.S. Center for SafeSport™ standards. The purpose of this document is to inform and provide resources to our membership regarding the implementation of SafeSport protocols in AERC events. The legal applicability of the federal regulations regarding SafeSport to AERC are evolving and we will update this document as the AERC SafeSport Task Force acquires the pertinent information.

AERC Commitment to SafeSport Goals

Overview

In the event that any member or volunteer observes inappropriate behaviors, suspected physical or sexual abuse, or misconduct, it is the personal responsibility of each member and volunteer to immediately report his or her observations to the Executive Director of AERC, Kathleen Henkel (executivedirector@aerc.org or 866-271-2372).

Members and volunteers should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of the misconduct. Complaints and allegations will be addressed by the Executive Director. AERC recognizes that the process for training and motivating our riders will vary, but it is nevertheless important for everyone involved in sport to support the use of motivational and training methods that avoid misconduct.

Inappropriate Conduct

Riders, volunteers, and supporters shall refrain from all forms of misconduct which include, but are not limited to, those contained in Rule 12 of the AEC Rules and Regulations of AERC (revised December 1, 2018), and all other actions which may be of a criminal nature. Some examples include:

- Bullying
- Hazing
- Physical misconduct
- Harassment
- Emotional misconduct
- Sexual misconduct

Reporting

Riders, volunteers and supporters of AERC shall follow the reporting procedures set forth below and/or contained in the AERC Rules and Regulations. AERC does not investigate suspicions or allegations of abuse, or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations, as a condition of reporting suspicions or allegations to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Reporting Procedure to Address SafeSport-Related Matters

To Whom to Report

Members, supporters and volunteers may report to:

1. Executive Director of AERC
2. Ride Manager
3. Where applicable, appropriate law enforcement authorities

How to Report

AERC will take a report in the way that is most comfortable for the person initiating a report, including an anonymous, in-person, verbal or written report. Regardless of how you choose to report, it is helpful to AERC for individuals to provide, at a minimum, (1) the name of the complainant(s), (2) the type of misconduct alleged, and (3) the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct.

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Confidentiality

To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, AERC will keep confidential the complainant's name on request, not make public the names of potential victims, the accused perpetrator or the people who made a report of physical and sexual abuse to the authorities.

Anonymous Reporting

AERC recognizes it can be difficult for an athlete, teammate, friend or family member to report an allegation of misconduct, and strives to remove as many barriers to reporting as possible. Anonymous reports may be made without the formality of completing an Incident Report Form by expressing concerns verbally, electronically, or in writing to the Executive Director of AERC.

“Whistleblower” Protection

Regardless of outcome, AERC will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. AERC will not encourage, allow or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish, allow or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith. Such actions against a complainant will be considered a violation of our guidelines and grounds for disciplinary action.

Bad-Faith Allegations

A report of abuse, misconduct or policy violations that is malicious, frivolous or made in bad faith is prohibited. Such reports will be considered a violation of AERC Rules and Regulations and grounds for disciplinary action. Depending on the nature of the allegation, a person making a malicious, frivolous or bad-faith report may also be subject to civil or criminal proceedings.

How Reports Are Handled

Notification

At AERC's discretion, as appropriate, and after consultation with counsel, AERC may notify its volunteers and/or athletes of any allegation of abuse or other criminal behavior that (1) law enforcement authorities are actively investigating; or (2) that AERC is investigating internally. Advising others of an allegation may lead to additional reports of abuse and other misconduct.

SafeSport Rules and Regulations

While AERC endeavors to provide support and guidance to members on a day-to-day basis, it is also important for AERC to have a formal procedure for fulfilling its obligation to address alleged violations of SafeSport matters. As of April 20, 2019, AERC formed a SafeSport Task Force to further implement SafeSport protocols throughout the organization.