

## Youth Sports Child Abuse Prevention

With Congress' recent passing of the *Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017*, training program requirements for parents, youth athletes and coaches of youth sports leagues have been made Federal Law and must be implemented. The law also updated methods of reporting sexual abuse. The goal is to minimize the opportunities in which adults can abuse youth athletes in settings that are unobservable to league coaches or other authorized adults. When reading the law it can be interpreted that even league officials and officers who may only have limited contact with the actual athletes will need to be aware of and comply with the law's requirements.

The policies outlined in this act will make these practices mandatory for all youth leagues throughout the United States whether they be run locally, through church, or non-profit leagues. The following points outline several main aspects of the new Act.

1. **Mandatory Reporting.** The Act now mandates that any authorized adult that interacts with amateur athletes at any event or facility is responsible for reporting any instances. If these authorized adults have any suspicions of abuse, they are to report it to the US Center for Safe Sport and appropriate law enforcement agencies based on state and federal law.
2. **Prevention Training.** All youth sports organizations are now required to train child abuse prevention and reporting to any authorized adult who is in regular contact with the amateur athletes (17 and under). Prevention training is meant to be more proactive than reactive by recognizing behaviors and situations that would indicate a child at potential risk. Training to recognize these circumstances allow adults to act before the child is abused.
3. **Prevention Policy Requirement.** All youth sports organizations are required to implement prevention policies that limit one-on-one encounters between an adult and a minor youth athlete that is not in an observable setting and is within range for another adult to interrupt the interaction.

Additional information regarding the changes in safe sports policies and child abuse prevention can be found at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/534/text?format=txt>