



*Bowls Alberta*



## Safe Sport Complaint Protocols

Purpose:

1. To standardize the response for complaints so that impartiality may be maintained as much as possible.
2. To ensure that policies are followed in a timely manner.
3. To clarify and standardize the process.
4. To help ensure that the confidentiality of the process is maintained.

Definitions:

**Complaint** – a written submission from a club member who feels the Code of Conduct and Ethics has been breached.

**Complainant** – the person reporting the complaint

**Conflict(s) of Interest** - belonging to the same club is not necessarily a conflict. A conflict occurs when a person has a vested interest (such as relationships or personal benefit) which puts into question whether their decision making can be unbiased.

**Respondent** – the person accused of breaching the Code of Conduct and Ethics

**Independent Third Party Group (ITPG)** – a volunteer list of names made up of club SSO's and nominated volunteers chosen to be part of the group. This group functions as support for the provincial SSO and may be called upon to be part of the Discipline Panel. This group is bound by the confidentiality outlined in the Privacy Policy of Bowls Alberta.

**Outside Independent Third Party (OITP)** – an impartial arbiter chosen by the SSO from recommendations from other provincial sport SSOs or a sport lawyer.

**Discipline Panel (DP)** – made up of members of the ITPG to mediate or investigate a complaint that cannot be mediated or investigated by the SSO. This panel is appointed by the SSO.

**Discipline Panel Chair** - one member of the DP is chosen to be responsible for communicating with the parties involved and for writing the final report.

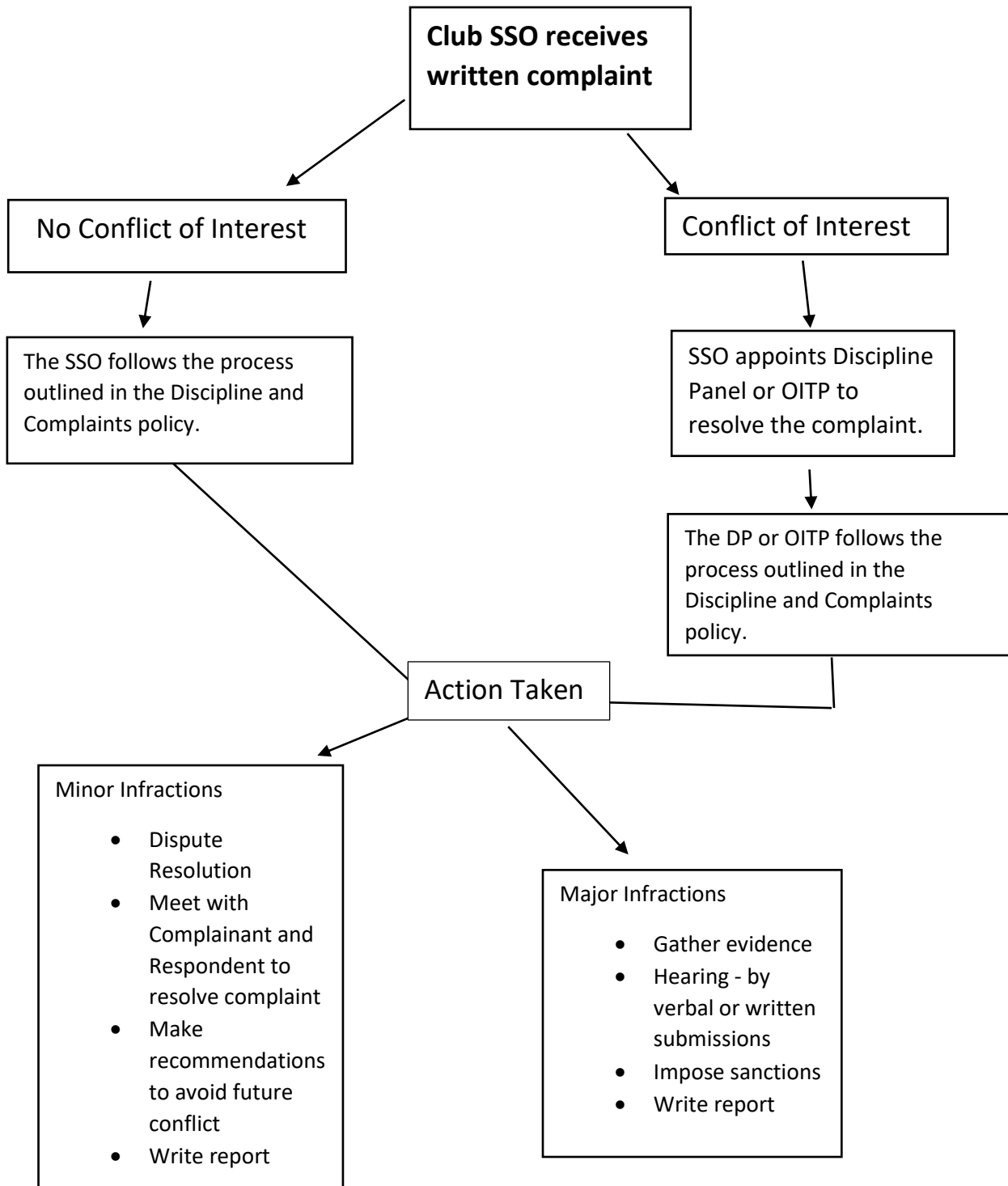
**Safe Sport Officer (SSO)** - This is a position at the club and provincial level. The SSO should be the complainant's first point of contact. The SSO reviews the complaint and determines jurisdiction. The SSO has the authority to dismiss complaints. The SSO has the authority to determine conflict(s) of interest and appoint a Discipline Panel to deal with the complaint.

Process (Flow Chart – **Appendix A**)

1. The SSO receives a complaint. If it is a verbal complaint, the SSO asks for it to be submitted in writing. The SSO informs the complainant of the confidential nature of complaints.  
The SSO is advised to respond to the complainant sympathetically but noncommittally.  
Should the Executive Director be contacted by any parties involved in the complaint, they should respond by directing them to the appropriate SSO.
2. The SSO acknowledges receipt of the written complaint via an email to the complainant and then reviews the complaint.
3. The SSO reviews all the applicable club policies regarding complaints. Bowls Alberta has a suite of Safe Sport policies that can be used. Such as:  
Code of Conduct and Ethics  
Discipline and Complaints  
Privacy  
Investigations  
Reciprocity  
Appeal
4. The SSO determines if there have been infractions of the Code of Conduct and Ethics and what they might be.  
(The SSO may consult with members of the ITPG to help make these determinations.)
5. If the SSO feels they can remain impartial and deal with the matter themselves, they send the complaint to the respondent and invite a written response. They continue to follow the Dispute Resolution procedure that is part of the Discipline and Complaints Policy of their club. See Appendix A.
6. If it is determined that a conflict of interest exists, the SSO appoints a Discipline Panel to resolve the complaint or refers the complaint to an outside independent third party (OITP).
7. The DP Chair or OITP contacts the complainant and the respondent to introduce themselves, inform them of their involvement and assure both parties that the matter will be dealt with in a timely and confidential manner.
8. The DP or OITP sends the respondent the complaint and invites them to submit a written response to the allegations.
9. The DP or OITP reviews the complaint and response to determine whether the alleged infractions are minor or major and follows the steps in Appendix A to close the matter.
10. A report (**Appendix B**) is written by either the SSO, the DP Chair or the OITP, depending on who handled the complaint. This report is given to the complainant and respondent. The club SSO must archive the report in a secure location. Recommendations or sanctions will be followed by the relevant parties involved with oversight by the Provincial and Club SSOs.  
If the findings of the DP or OITP result in the withdrawal of the complainant's status as a member in good standing, the report is sent to Bowls Alberta and

Bowls Canada. The club(s) to which the complainant belongs is sent the communication that their member is no longer in good standing due to a safe sport complaint and that the member will be reinstated upon completion of the sanctions imposed.

### Appendix A: Flow Chart of Complaints Process



## Appendix B: Report Format

The front page should contain the following information:

<p><b>STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL</b></p> <p>Report on the Complaint(s) Submitted to</p> <p>Name of Club</p> <p>Date</p> <p>Author of Report</p> <p>Position e.g., Discipline Panel Chair or SSO</p>
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The report should contain the following sections:

Overview – who is involved, some of the background and who handled the complaint and how they came to be involved.

The Complaint(s) - the report should only contain the infractions of the Code of Conduct (listed) with examples from the original complaint submissions.

Process – describes the steps taken, e.g., submissions reviewed, emails, meetings, etc.

Record of Action Taken – e.g., summary of Dispute Resolution Meeting or evidence presented at hearing

Recommendations / Sanctions

If the findings of the DP or OITP result in the withdrawal of the complainant's status as a member in good standing, the report is sent to Bowls Alberta and Bowls Canada. The club(s) to which the complainant belongs is sent the communication that their member is no longer in good standing due to a safe sport complaint and that the member will be reinstated upon completion of the sanctions imposed. Notification of the member's reinstatement is sent to clubs upon completion of the sanctions imposed.

