



USATF[™]
CERTIFIED OFFICIAL
Safety Training



PURPOSE

- This Safety Training is designed to educate and inform USATF Certified Officials on the safe conduct of competitions under their supervision. This training is a beginning point for safety protocols and cannot cover all possible scenarios that may occur at a competition. Officials must use their wisdom and experience in every competition.
- If an official becomes aware of an unsafe situation, they should report the situation to those who can take action, such as the Head Official, Referee, Marshal, or Meet Director. The official should also take whatever immediate action is appropriate.
- The information found on the [Safety and Liability](#) page of the USATF NOC Best Practices Library can be helpful in recognizing unsafe situations.



Three-Pronged Approach to Safety

- Safety is managed by a three-pronged approach
 1. Engineering Controls: This consists of things like:
 - For Vertical Jumps: A PV box collar for USATF youth meets, as well as in some other jurisdictions; PV and HJ pads of the appropriate size, shape, thickness, material
 - For Throws: Cages of the correct height, size, wing dimensions and position, cage material and condition, sector flagging
 - For Horizontal Jumps: Correct flagging to control access, sand depth/softness, board material, position, and stability
 - For Track events: Flagging or access control to prevent collisions, track surface condition (tears or bubbles), hurdle types and conditions, water jump surrounds, etc.



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2. Administrative Controls: This includes following the appropriate rule book, safety briefings to crews/volunteers, venue specific concerns, scheduling, etc.

- Officials should brief their crew, volunteers, media, and spectators in the competition area regarding safety issues and protocols.
- Scheduling can save lots of potential problems: De-conflict adjacent or overlapping venues to minimize the chance of a discus landing on a PV pit or LJ runway, run Javelin during the straightaway sprints so that long throws don't skip onto the track during a lap race, etc.



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3. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): PPE is always the last line of defense. Personal Protective Equipment can include such things as:

- Water/sponges: these should be provided depending on weather conditions for longer races on the track or for road races
- Infield water: hydration stations for athletes and officials located near each competition venue can be crucial when the heat index is high
- Marshals: Competent and properly positioned marshals can prevent accidents because they are the safety eyes and ears of the competition



Inspection

- Start by performing an inspection of your venue prior to the start of warm-ups and competition. The [Venue Inspection Checklist](#) can provide a starting point for this inspection.
- If there are safety concerns, report them to the Head Official, Referee, Marshal, or Meet Management. Record to whom and when you reported your concerns and what mitigation efforts were made.



Event Checklists

The following pages contain event/venue specific checklists for your use.

Remember, when utilizing these checklists if you become aware of an unsafe situation, you should report the situation to those who can take action, such as the Head Official, Referee, Marshal, or Meet Director. You should also take whatever immediate action is appropriate.



General Throws Safety Checklist

- Determine if the venue is adequately marked with fencing/roping to keep spectators out.
- Determine if other events adjacent to the throwing area are in danger of stray implements.
- Determine if the landing area is smooth with no bumps or holes.
- Determine if there is a reasonable possibility that athletes, officials, media, or spectators could cross the landing area.
- Determine if the spectator area is a safe distance behind cage and away from the sector/runway.



General Throws Safety Checklist

- Determine if the throwing area will have adequate Marshal supervision during warm-ups and competition.
- Determine if there is a possibility that thrown implements will land/skip onto the track.
- If temporary sector lines are in use, determine if they are anchored so they will not move and people do not trip over the anchors. Make sure the circle, cage, and sector are clear of all loose material.
- Make sure implements are on a cart or in ONE area near the circle but outside the cage or throwing area.



General Throws Safety Checklist

- Make sure that implements are only in the hands of the active thrower and the on-deck athlete.
- Make sure officials are controlling the circle/runway and sector during warm-ups and competition.
- Make sure that officials, volunteers, athletes, media, and any other persons who are close to the throwing area are given safety instructions, including such things as not using electronics or phones, not turning your back to the circle or runway, not throwing implements back to the throwing area, and more.
- Make sure that officials and/or volunteers do not congregate in or near the landing area during warm-ups or competition.
- Make sure media has been given instructions as to safe areas for their work.



Throwing Cage Safety Checklist

- Determine if the height of the cage is sufficient per the appropriate rulebook.
- Determine if there are any holes in the netting larger than 44mm.
- Determine if there are any weak spots in the netting.
- Determine if the net can stop a hammer without rebounding toward an athlete.
- Determine if the netting is securely fastened.
- Make sure the netting is pulled to determine its stretch and establish a safe zone **AT LEAST** one meter beyond the stretch point.
- Determine if the cage is at least 3.5m from the center of the ring for hammer and 2.5m for weight.



Throwing Cage Safety Checklist

- Determine if there is a way to anchor the door in both the open and closed positions.
- Make sure there is a mark for each door at both the open and closed positions.
- Make sure the rim is rounded with no jagged edges.
- If the circle is wood/portable, make sure it is secured so it will not slide when used.
- Make sure the area outside the circle is clear of obstructions.



Javelin Safety Checklist

- Determine if the runway is smooth with no holes or bumps.
- Make sure the runway is flagged (coned or marshaled on track) to control access.
- Make sure the area around the runway is clear of obstructions.
- Make sure that javelins are carried vertically.
- Make sure there is adequate supervision of all warm-up procedures.



Vertical Jumps Safety Checklist

- Determine if the pits are at least the minimum size required for that level of competition and compliant with the latest rules from the appropriate rule book.
- Determine if there are any holes in the pads.
- Determine if there is a possibility that a crossbar or pole will be knocked onto the track/another runway.
- Determine if an exiting athlete could obstruct running events.
- Determine if the approach comes off of the track, cross a drain, or changes surface.
- Determine if there is a reasonable possibility that a non-competitor could cross the runway.
- Make sure the pads are positioned correctly and securely.



Vertical Jumps Safety Checklist

- Assign an official to monitor the position of the landing pads throughout warm-ups and competition.
- Make sure the pads are free of debris.
- Make sure the standards are placed correctly.
- Make sure the area surrounding the pit is clear of obstructions.
- If weighing the athletes is required, make sure there is a location and a scale to check vaulter and pole weights.
- If required, determine if the Pole Vault box collar meets required specifications and is it placed correctly and securely.
- If a box collar is required, assign an official to monitor its position throughout warm-ups and competition.



Horizontal Jumps Safety Checklist

- Make sure the sand is raked, soft, and free of debris.
- Make sure the area surrounding the landing area is clear of obstructions.
- Make sure that additional rakes and other tools are placed in such a way as to avoid injury.
- Make sure that media personnel are in a safe area for themselves, athletes, and officials.
- Make sure that the takeoff board is smooth, level with the runway, and secure.



Horizontals Safety Checklist

- If the pit is surrounded by drainage plates, determine if these plates are unbroken and secure.
- Determine if raking will potentially obstruct the running events.
- Determine if an exiting athlete could obstruct running events. Determine if there are other events taking place at the same time in the same area that could impact the runway/landing area.
- Determine if there is a reasonable possibility that a non-competitor could cross the runway or landing area.



Track Safety Checklist

- Make sure the clerking area has easy and safe access to venues.
- Determine if the surface is level without bumps, bubbles, holes or gaps.
- Make sure there is an obstacle-free zone on the inside and outside of the track at least one meter in width.
- Make sure the track is properly cordoned off to control entrance to venues.



Track Safety Checklist

- Make sure the track is clear of obstructions.
- Make sure that blocks are stored on a cart or at least clear of the start and finish areas and at least one meter inside or outside of the track.
- Make sure that hurdles are properly stacked on carts or piles one meter from the inside or outside of track.
- Make sure that steeplechase barriers are securely fastened and at the proper height.



Incident Report

If any injuries are sustained at a USATF sanctioned meet, you will need to work with the Meet Director to complete a USATF Incident report form. That form can be found at: <http://www.usatf.org/Products---Services/Event-Sanctions/Resources/USATF-Incident-Report-Form-16-17.aspx>.



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