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US Sailing Background check FAQs

This FAQ is intended to answer basic questions about US Sailing background checks. For more detailed information, please refer to US Sailing's Policy on Background Checks for Race Officials, located on the US Sailing SafeSport & Race Officials web page.

Q. Why do I need a background check?

A. The purpose of background checks is to ensure the safety of all participants in our sport. US Sailing will use the results of criminal background checks when evaluating requests to certify race officials and instructors who have regular contact with or authority over athletes. This policy conforms to standard practices within the National Governing Body (NGB) community, which are also in line with broader societal expectations and are mandated by federal law and United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) policy. US Sailing believes that this policy will enhance the safety and welfare of the sailing community, both youth and adult.

Q. What is US Sailing looking for?

A. US Sailing will decline certification to individuals with any disposition other than "not guilty" to a felony offense involving violence against a person, a felony or misdemeanor offense involving harm to a minor, or a felony or misdemeanor sexual offense. Registration on any sex offender list will automatically preclude the candidate from consideration. Other serious offenses will result in applications for certification being placed in review status.

Q. What records will be searched, and how far back will the background check look?

A. All full background check screens (conducted every 2 years) will include the following search components: Social Security Number validation; name and address history records; multi-Jurisdictional Criminal Database searches covering 50 states plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico; Federal District Courts search for each name used and district where the individual currently lives or has lived during the past seven years, going back the length of time records are available and reportable; County Criminal Records for each name used and county where the individual currently lives or has lived during the past seven years, going back the length of time records are available and reportable for each county searched; National Sex Offender Registry database search of all available states, plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico; Multiple National Watch Lists;

SafeSport Disciplinary Records; NCSI Homeland Security Search or an internationals records search equivalent for individuals who have lived outside of the United States for six consecutive months within the past seven years. Individuals who are on a current U.S. visa to enter the United States are exempt from this requirement.

Supplemental background checks (conducted every other year) will include the following search components: Multi-Jurisdictional criminal database covering 50 states plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico; Sex Offender Registry database searches of all available states, plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico; and SafeSport Disciplinary Records

Q. Who will conduct the background check?

A. US Sailing's background check vendor is The National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI). NCSI complies with all applicable federal and state laws in its conduct of criminal background checks.

Q. Why are there references to credit, consumer reports and investigative consumer reports in the acknowledgements?

A: The Fair Credit Reporting Act, which governs credit reporting and consumer reporting agencies, also governs how background checks are administered and what may be reported. Some of the language in the acknowledgements that US Sailing race officials and candidates must complete before initiating their background check is legally required and may not be changed.

The "consumer reports" completed by NCSI for US Sailing are background checks used for credentialing purposes and include the components listed above in the descriptions for full and supplemental background checks. Because "consumer reporting agencies" include background screening companies such as NCSI, they are required to include this language.

US Sailing does not require consumer or credit information for certified officials and NCSI will not conduct a credit check on you.

Q. Why do I have to sign all these forms for a background check?

A: When companies request a background check for employment or volunteer certification, they need to tell you that the background check may be done. That information is contained in the "Disclosure Regarding Background Investigation." The company must also get your permission to run the check. That information is contained in the "Acknowledgment and Authorization for Background Check."

Q. Why do I need to provide my Social Security Number?

A. The Social Security Number (SSN) is a critical identifier used to ensure the accuracy and completeness of a background screening. It allows NCSI's team to confirm an individual's identity, develop address history, and ensure that any records returned are matched to the correct person, especially in cases where individuals may share the same name or date of birth. This helps reduce errors, avoid delays, and ensures a more thorough and reliable screening process.

Q. How will US Sailing and NCSI ensure the confidentiality of personal information?

A. US Sailing and NCSI exercise the greatest care to keep members' personal information secure. We understand that this is sensitive information, and NCSI takes data security seriously. SSNs and all personal information are handled with strict safeguards in place, including identity verification controls, limited access to authorized personnel only, and systems designed to detect and prevent unauthorized activity. Information is used solely for legitimate screening purposes and is managed in compliance with applicable privacy and consumer reporting regulations. NCSI's systems are continuously monitored and maintained to ensure data remains secure throughout the process.

Personally identifiable information is redacted in reports provided to US Sailing. Report information is made available to only two people at US Sailing; if the relevant staff director is consulted, he or she will not be informed of the applicant's identity.

You can read more in NCSI Privacy Policy here: https://solutions.ncsisafe.com/privacy-policy/

Q. How often do I need to have a background check?

A. Background checks are effective for 24 months, with an included 12-month interim check.

Q. How much does the background check cost?

A: US Sailing will cover the cost of background checks for certified race officials and candidates for certification.

Q. How will US Sailing use the information gathered from a background check?

A. If a background check yields reportable information, the US Sailing Compliance Manager and US Sailing's independent human resource professional will make an initial determination as to the member's eligibility for certification. If their decision is to deny certification, a pre-adverse action notification will be sent informing the member of the decision, inviting him or her to correct any substantive error and to provide additional information explaining or mitigating the disqualifying incident or charge. The Compliance Manager and the human resource professional will then make a final decision on certification.

Q. What if I disagree with the decision US Sailing makes based on my background check?

A. A member may challenge a decision by US Sailing to decline, suspend, or terminate certification based on reportable information in a criminal background check by submitting a grievance to the US Sailing Review Board. Any matter that comes before the Review Board will be handled pursuant to Section 15.04 of the US Sailing Regulations.

Q. May I get a copy of my background check once it's done?

A. Yes. Contact NCSI at 866-996-7412 or by email at support@ncsisafe.com and they will supply it to you at no charge.

Q. What if I think something is incorrect on my background check?

A. Contact NCSI at 866-996-7412 or by email at support@ncsisafe.com, and they'll re-investigate information you believe is incorrect. Also email your request for correction to US Sailing's Compliance Manager at Compliance@USSailing.org.

Q. What if I need more information about US Sailing certification background checks?

A. You may contact US Sailing's Compliance Manager at Compliance@USSailing.org for any questions regarding background checks.

Rev. 6/26/2026