

## **BC Complaint Management FAQs**

**November 2024**

### **Q: What is Sport Safeguarding BC and how will it be formed?**

**A:** Sport Safeguarding BC is an independent Not-for-profit society being established to set-up and maintain a system for complaint management for amateur sport organizations in BC. It will provide an independent complaint resolution service that develops and upholds clear and enforceable standards.

An independent firm, Watson Board Advisory, is leading the recruitment of potential Board Directors for Sport Safeguarding BC based on a Board Skills and Diversity Matrix. The initial Directors will be appointed by the viaSport Board based on the recommendation from the recruitment process.

Sport Safeguarding BC will be formally registered as a Society by the Directors once they have been appointed. The Directors will be responsible for overseeing the set-up and operations of the Society.

### **Q: Why is Sport Safeguarding BC being created to handle complaints? Why isn't viaSport taking on this role?**

**A:** Following consultation with lawyers and governance experts, and in collaboration with the Province, we determined that this approach ensures independence.

We heard from individuals in the sector the importance of having an independent system that could be trusted by those making complaints. Independence is essential to mitigate biases, and ensure accountability and transparency by prioritizing fair and impartial resolution of complaints. Having a professional organization solely focused on handling complaints by qualified individuals will also ensure the professionalism of these services.

viaSport's role includes stewarding government investment in amateur sport as well as setting and evaluating/monitoring [viaSport Designation Program standards](#). Setting up a Society independent from viaSport avoids conflict of interest by eliminating any vested interests in maintaining positive and separate relationships with the Designated Organizations.

### **Q: Why do we need an independent complaint process? What is the purpose of Sport Safeguarding BC?**

**A:** Currently, complaints are handled by the sport organization where the complaint is initiated (or escalated to their parent sport organization). In most cases, these are reviewed by individuals who don't necessarily have training or experience in this area. An independent complaint process is a centralized service where participants in amateur sport can file a complaint pertaining to allegations related to the Universal Code of Conduct to Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS). Sport Safeguarding BC

will receive the complaint, and provide a professional response that is trauma-informed and free from conflict of interest. It will also help ensure that complaints across all sports are handled in the same way.

**Q: How was the amateur sport in BC sector consulted in the development of the strategy for complaint management?**

**A:** viaSport has been consulting with the sector over the past 5+ years to understand gaps and amateur sport system needs through [extensive research](#), [community summits](#) and discussions with our Safe Sport Working Group.

Over the past year, viaSport conducted further consultation with viaSport Designated Sport Organizations and sector participants to identify key success factors for an independent complaint process. This included a conference with Designated Sport Organizations, regular meetings with the Safe Sport Working Group and focus groups for sector participants (athletes, parents, officials, coaches and staff, managers and directors).

Refer to the [viaSport website](#) for reports on the findings.

**Q: What is viaSport's role in safety in sport?**

**A:** viaSport will not be directly involved in the day-to-day operations of the Society. However, viaSport will have a role in setting up Sport Safeguarding BC and is responsible for appointing the first Directors to the Board based on a roster of candidates that will be vetted through an independent recruitment process.

viaSport will continue to own and develop PlaySafe, a centralized online hub with practical tools and resources for individuals to learn how to contribute to a positive sport culture and foster safe experiences.

**Q: What jurisdiction will this cover – which sport organizations and which regions?**

**A:** The initial scope of Sport Safeguarding BC services will be for members of [viaSport Designated](#) (Accredited/Recognized/Affiliated) Sport Organizations. The intent is for this complaint management process to cover local and provincial level sport in BC. This may require a phased approach to implementation based on the different organizational structures in place within each PSO and their bylaws, rules and policies. This may also require adjustments to conform to the new approach in handling complaints for the sector in BC. Sport Safeguarding BC will strive to align to the national system where possible.

Organizations (or individuals associated with organizations) that are not part of the viaSport Designation Program will not fall under the jurisdiction of Sport Safeguarding BC at this time.

**Q: Who will pay for Sport Safeguarding BC and the associated services?**

A: The initial investment from the Province is intended to provide seed funding to establish Sport Safeguarding BC and will support the management of the services over the first few years. The long-term financial model will be determined once Sport Safeguarding BC is fully operational.

**Q: When will the services be available?**

A: The formal establishment of Sport Safeguarding BC is expected for early 2025 however it will take time before services will be available.

Sport Safeguarding BC will be responsible for onboarding of the Designated Sport Organizations as services become available.

**Q: What requirements will Designated Sport Organizations need to follow?**

A: Details related to requirements and the process for Designated Sport Organizations to be onboarded will be finalized by Sport Safeguarding BC, once Sport Safeguarding BC is established and the service provider(s) selected.

Alignment of policies and procedures will be required of all participating organizations in order to drive complaints to the new system. These will be developed collaboratively with the sports, with the goal of making them intersect as easily as possible with any national policies.

**Q: Who will be the members of Sport Safeguarding BC?**

A: Members of the Society will be individuals that have previously served as directors, committee members or employees of organizations whose purposes are similar to or beneficial to the Society as determined by the Board and whom possess the knowledge, experience and expertise that is relevant to the Society.

Once the Sport Safeguarding BC Board is established, they will determine an application process for individuals to apply to become members in accordance with the bylaws.

Individuals are not eligible to become a Member of Sport Safeguarding BC if they are currently a director, committee member or employee of any sport organization in Canada or have been a director, committee member or employee of a sport organization in Canada within the three months (for First appointed members) prior to appointment (and 12 months for all other members).

**Q: Who will be the Directors of this Sport Safeguarding BC?**

**A:** The Directors will be selected in accordance with Sport Safeguarding BC's bylaws.

Watson Advisors Inc, has been hired to conduct recruitment of Directors based on a Board Skills and Diversity Matrix.

The First Directors of the Society will be appointed by the viaSport Board of Directors based on the recommendation from the recruitment process.

Individuals are not eligible to become a Director of Sport Safeguarding BC if they are currently a director or employee of any sport organization in Canada or have been a director or employee of a sport organization in Canada within the three months (for First Directors) prior to appointment (and 12 months for anyone after the First Directors' appointments).

**Q: How is BC's approach aligned with the national system?**

**A:** The Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner (OSIC) was established to address Safe Sport issues at the National level. Each province and territory is currently responsible to establish their own approach to ensure that the needs of provincial and local sport are addressed.

Sport Safeguarding BC will align through the use of the UCCMS and this look for other opportunities to learn from, share information and align where appropriate.

**Q: What is being done to address complaints in the meantime?**

**A:** Currently in BC, sport organizations have their own complaints and dispute policies and in the event of a complaint, are directly responsible for complying with their policies. Some Designated Sport Organizations currently hire independent complaint management companies to handle their complaints. However, there is limited alignment between Sport Organizations.

The Abuse-Free Sport Helpline (1-888-837-7678) is a free, confidential referral service that can help you determine if, where and how to file a complaint. There are several factors to consider, including whether it's a criminal or child-protection issue.

viaSport provides access to resources such as conflict management training and mediation services to support organizations in implementing their policies.