



*CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION  
MANUAL*

Revised November 2003

---

193 Water St. West, Suite 402, P.O. Box 2209, Prescott, Ontario K0E 1T0  
Tel (613)925-1441 Fax: (613)925-1314 e-mail: [eos@bellnet.ca](mailto:eos@bellnet.ca) [www.skate-eos.on.ca](http://www.skate-eos.on.ca)



## CONFLICT RESOLUTION MANUAL

---

### INTRODUCTION

This conflict resolution manual has been created to assist the clubs with resolution of problems as they relate to parents, skaters, coaches and club executive.

All clubs should have a conflict resolution policy for their own protection. This will allow clubs to identify and resolve matters before they go too far. Please use this information as is appropriate in your club. Also remember that should you require any assistance or other information, please feel free to contact your Region Representative or other member of the Skate Canada - Eastern Ontario Board of Directors.

## POLICIES

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES/STEPS OF APPROACH CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Acknowledgments of authority – Skate Canada clubs as all sport organizations, are independent and autonomous. As such, they can write their own rules and define rights and responsibilities of its members.
- If legal counsel is sought by either side, the Section is not to be involved.
- Define roles and parameters - who has the authority to make decisions, and who communicates with whom – this authority must be recognized by all parties.
- Ensure that clubs have effective constitutions in place and encourage clubs to establish conflict resolution guidelines and committees.
- Clubs should have effective contracts with coaches.
- Early acknowledgment that there is a problem is important - unresolved conflict leads to harassment in 70% of cases.
- Encourage the people involved (i.e. who have the problem) to solve the problem internally before seeking external help (e.g. Skate Canada - Eastern Ontario).
- Set appropriate time lines.
- Identify the problem – define the issues, not the personalities. Often personality conflicts cannot be resolved, but issues can be resolved – accept this.
- Declare conflicts of interest.
- Are the parties ready to have the issues resolved?
- Allow time for reflection – time for discussion and proper presentation of the issues. Ensure that both (all) sides have an opportunity to present their cases.
- Document the steps of the process.
- **Be positive. Focus on improvements.**



## CONFLICT RESOLUTION MANUAL

---

### TYPES OF COMPLAINTS

Some people will complain more than others. It is important to establish whether or not the person complaining is just “sounding off”. Ask them if they wish to make a complaint, and if they do, ask them to put it in writing and sign it - anonymous complaints will not be entertained.

#### **INFORMAL (club / internally)**

Usually verbal or via e-mail, requesting advice - many complaints can be resolved by verbal communication offering advice and recommendations.

#### **FORMAL (club / Section / National Office)**

Written or via e-mail – may be the result of the inability to resolve at the informal level; or, may be an initial and serious concern. Must be responded to in a written manner. This can be done either in the form of a written letter or via e-mail.

#### **SOURCES:**

Sources of complaints can originate from many areas: club/coach; coach/coach; club executive/parent; club member/club member; parent/coach; officials/coach; club/skater; coach/coaches rep; parent/Section; Harassment (sexual or civil rights). **Harassment** (sexual or civil rights) must be dealt with by Skate Canada (National Office - see Skate Canada policy).

#### **GROUNDS FOR COMPLAINTS:**

- a) Personal Harassment: improper conduct making an individual uncomfortable.
- b) Abuse of Power: Improper use of authority which endangers or limits the job or performance of an individual. May include verbal, psychological or physical behaviour, which is demeaning or embarrassing.
- c) Behaviour that takes place at or during a Skate Canada activity or event, or outside such an event, and which adversely affects Skate Canada, a member club, or individual.

## PROCESS

Bearing in mind the type of complaint, you should encourage the parties involved to settle their differences in an amicable way. Also, it should be explained that when a complaint in writing is received, a process will be put in motion. The person against whom the complaint is made will be advised that a complaint has been received, and they will have the right of rebuttal.

Clubs are expected to attempt to resolve issues at the club level, and only forward issues that have failed to be resolved to the Section. Prior to considering an issue for resolution, the Section Conflict Resolution Committee expects to receive full documentation of the process at the club level. This documentation should include a clear definition of the issue(s), the process that was followed including dates of meetings, as well as minutes from the meeting.

The following is the process which should be used to resolve complaints that are received.

1. Receipt of complaint.
2. Acknowledge receipt of complaint to the complainant
3. Define the issues and gather information
4. Define time lines of the process
5. Communicate the procedure and time lines to the complainant
6. Advise the respondent of the complaint and communicate the procedure, time lines and request further background information. An apology can be requested which might lead to immediate resolution.
7. Summarize the facts and identify any contradictory statements
8. Consider the information and consult with resources when applicable
9. Formulate a plan of action with recommendations
10. Inform the parties providing rationale for decision

*“Make the form fit the fuss.” Decide on an appropriate resolution process. Do not enter into a formal process if it is not required. Do not make the resolution process become the problem.*

If the initial complaint is received in writing, all procedural steps should be documented in writing. If, however, a verbal resolution approach is adopted, a written record of events and conversations should be maintained in the event that resolution is not achieved, and a more formal procedure is adopted.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION MANUAL

---

### **CONSIDERATIONS IN FORMULATION OF ACTION PLAN**

- What is the nature of the alleged conduct?
- Does the alleged conduct involve any physical contact? Was there any injury? (Possible Skate Canada or police intervention)
- Is the alleged offense is an isolated incident or an on-going pattern?
- What is the nature of the relationship between the complainant and the respondent?
- What are the respective positions and ages of the involved parties?
- Has the respondent been involved in similar complaints?
- Has the respondent attempted to retaliate against the complainant?
- Has the respondent admitted responsibility?
- Are there any existing applicable club policies?
- Does it seem that the alleged conduct was premeditated, or was it a heat-of-the-moment reaction?

### **TYPES OF SANCTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Apology – written or verbal
- Revoking, temporarily or permanently, membership privileges
- Change of policy or procedures

## **OBLIGATIONS OF A MANAGEMENT TEAM**

### **DISCLOSURE:**

If the allegations are against an individual, the individual is entitled to know the nature of the complaint.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Discretion is sometimes necessary in order to allow the complainant to be more comfortable, but it should be noted that it cannot always be guaranteed.

### **NEUTRALITY:**

Do not prejudge. Avoid personal conflicts of interest. Remain impartial and be understanding of all sides of the issue.

**PROCEDURES**

**WHO CAN RESOLVE COMPLAINTS?**

The following are recommended to facilitate the resolution process:

(note: - bold numbers refer to chart below)

- a) Club Executive/President **(1)**
- b) Section - Section Judges Chairman **(2)**  
 Section Accountants Chairman **(2)**  
 Section Region Rep **(3)**  
 Region Coaches Rep **(4)**  
 Section Coaches Rep **(5)**  
 Section Vice Chair **(6)**  
 Section Chair **(7)**
- c) Skate Canada\* **(8)**

\* Only those issues which cannot be resolved at the club or Section level should go to Skate Canada unless they are issues relating to the Skate Canada Harassment Policy (included in the rulebook). The Harassment Policy concerns sexual harassment as well as discrimination issues of a civil rights nature, and these complaints should be forwarded directly to Skate Canada.

| <b>Types of conflict</b>   | <b>Primary Mediator</b> | <b>Secondary</b> | <b>Resource</b> |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Club/coach                 | 1                       | 3,4,             | 5,6             |
| Coach/coach                | 1                       | 4                | 5,6             |
| Club/parent                | 1                       | 3                | 6               |
| Club members               | 1                       | 3                | 6               |
| Parent/coach               | 1                       | 3,4              | 5,6             |
| Official/coach             | 2,5                     | 6                | 7               |
| Club/skater                | 1                       | 3                | 6               |
| Club Coach/ Club coach rep | 4                       | 5                | 6               |
| Parent/Section             | 6                       | 3                | 7               |
| Harassment                 | 8                       |                  |                 |



## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF SECTION MANAGEMENT TEAM**

If the issue is addressed at the club level and is not resolved there, but goes to the Section, the recommended conflict management team should be set in place to address the issue. The club should be advised that if a meeting is necessary, that the club may be responsible for mileage or other expenses. The Section should set the time, date and agenda for the meeting, as well as invite the appropriate individuals. This must be done in a timely fashion. A member of the Section's team should be responsible for taking the minutes.

### **SECTION LINES OF COMMUNICATION**

Any member of the Board who receives a call of complaint or concern, and knows the correct answer, should provide the answer with any recommendations. It is also important that the appropriate Region Rep is made aware of any complaints or concerns. Escalation should be prevented and can be avoided in many cases by simple clarification of policies. Conflict Management Teams (at the club or Section level) are put into place when recommendations are not accepted and if issues cannot be resolved on the initial contact.

## **CONDUCTING AN INVESTIGATION**

The following are some questions that you should be asking when you are conducting the investigation for a complaint that you have received.

### **WHO**

- Caused the incident
- Is involved
- Witnessed the incident
- Needs to be talked to

### **WHEN**

- Did the incident occur
- Did you first become aware of it
- Time - date- place

### **WHERE**

- Did the incident occur
- Were the people involved
- Were you
- Were the witnesses

### **WHY**

- Did the incident occur
- Are you involved
- Do you want to take action

### **WHAT**

- Club rule has been breached
- Does past practice state
- Is the problem arising from the incident
- Parts of the organizational policies been breached
- Steps do you need to take
- Are mitigating factors

*Hill Advisory Services copyright 2001*