

Rule of Two Guidelines

Sport is a vulnerable to incidences of harassment and abuse for multiple reasons, including:

- it is primarily volunteer based
- coaches are in positions of authority and trust
- there is often minimal parental involvement
- contact with athletes can occur outside of program hours
- the environment often creates vulnerable situations (e.g. locker rooms, travel and accommodation for out of town competitions)

Therefore, the Rule of Two aims to simultaneously address these vulnerabilities and reinforce standards of safety within the sector.

Rule of Two means that a responsible adult is never alone with or out of sight of any one athlete. Best practice is for two NCCP trained or certified coaches to always be present with an athlete (especially minors). All one-on-one interactions between a coach (official, volunteer or sport administrator) and an athlete must take place within view of the second screened adult. One coach/volunteer/adult should also reflect the genders of the athletes participating when possible.

The Rule of Two is not black and white and therefore can be a challenge to uphold in certain circumstances. Acting confidently in a grey area can be challenging therefore, this document was created as a tool to support sport leaders that are facing challenges with everyday implementation. It provides a starting point for the questions you can ask yourself when faced with a potentially vulnerable situation.

Where do I start?

The Rule of Two exists to protect everyone and effort should be made to incorporate it into day-to-day operations where possible. Self-identify situations that may put you or your athletes in a vulnerable situation and consider ways to avoid or alter the environment. Invite team members, including your athletes, to brainstorm solutions to implementation.

Situations to Avoid

- Private or one-on-one situations
 - If you find yourself alone with an athlete, leave the door open or remain in part of the facility that's within eyesight of others.
 - Ensure another adult (i.e. a coach and official or coach and assistant coach) is in eyesight.
- Change room environments when possible
 - If you must enter, knock and announce yourself first.
 - Move conversations to an open environment.
 - Avoid use of mobile devices.

- Unaccompanied travel with a child (i.e - driving in a car)
 - If required to do so, obtain written permission from the child's parent or legal guardian. The athlete should sit separate from the adult (in the back seat).
- Contact with athletes outside of program hours (i.e. - inviting or having children/athletes to your home).
 - Ensure parents and/or other program staff can be present as well.
 - Obtain written permission from each child's parent (or legal guardian) if not attending.
- Sharing a hotel room with a child, other than your own.
 - When selecting coaching teams for travel, consider the demographics of your athletes to ensure appropriate composition of staff. Pair athletes by gender and age.
 - If the athlete is not old enough to room by themselves, require that a parent or legal guardian travel with the athlete.

Scenarios:

1. The sport practice has ended and one parent is late to pick up their child, leaving the coach alone with the athlete.
 - Attempts should be made to contact the child's parents. If an adult is required to wait with the child until their parents arrive, ensure they are waiting in an open space.
2. Only one athlete on the team has qualified to compete in an international event and the club cannot afford to send more than one coach.
 - Request that the parents travel with the athlete.
 - In the event that parents are not able to travel with the athlete obtain written permission for the athlete to travel alone with the coach.
 - Ensure the organization and parents are aware of all travel arrangements, including but not limited to transportation and accommodation.
 - The coach and athlete should find a "buddy" coach or volunteer to associate with during the competition and away from the venue. Example - identify if another Canadian coach/athletes are attending the event
3. An athlete has requested one-on-one training in order to improve their skills.
 - Ensure the arrangement is transparent with club administrators and parents.
 - One-on-one coaching should be in the same location, follow the same format and rules pertaining to regular training.
 - Allow the practice environment to be open to observation by others (e.g. parents).
 - Share gym space with another coach/team.
4. As one of two coaches on a team, you notice that the other coach and an athlete are missing from the group.
 - Upon return, approach the adult and ask if they were aware they are not following the Rule of Two. Do this with the intention of educating them rather than accusing them of wrongdoing.

- If you find yourself in a similar situation but you do not know the individual, report the incident to a senior staff from their organization.
- 5. An athlete is injured in a practice or competition and needs to be transported to a medical facility. The parents are not present and the other coach must stay behind with the rest of the team.
 - Contact the athletes' parents as soon as possible to inform them of the situation, any decisions made and to gain consent if possible.
 - Ensure that the transporting coach/staff have been appropriately screened the athlete is comfortable with the individual.
- 6. Parents or relatives cannot collect an athlete from training. Therefore, an athlete can only get home if a coach or other parent is able to drive them.
 - The parents should be informed and agree to how the athlete will get home. The athlete should sit in the back seat (even if there are only two passengers in the car). Consider (open) communication as the primary tool for athlete safety.

If you find yourself in an unavoidable situation, ask yourself?

- Is this the most appropriate time and environment for this activity?
- Is there a more open space available?
- Who should be informed that I will be alone with this athlete?
- What permissions should I seek out?
- What changes could be made to avoid this situation in the future?
- How can I safely separate myself from the athlete (e.g. the athlete is in the back seat)?