

ALBERTA TEAM HANDBALL FEDERATION

HARASSMENT POLICY

The Alberta Team Handball Federation (ATHF) is committed to a harassment free environment for its athletes, coaches, officials and administrative staff. ATHF has developed a policy to prevent harassment of any type towards any individual and to deal quickly with any incident that may occur.

I. Policy Statement

ATHF is an equal opportunity organization and as such abides by the Alberta Human Rights Act.

ATHF members will treat all other members, officials, coaches and administrative staff with respect and will maintain a training environment that is free from discrimination, including harassment.

Treatment based on dignity and respect will apply to all aspects of Handball, including, but not limited to: recruitment, selection, placement, training and development and competition.

ATHF will not tolerate, and all members should not allow discrimination, including harassment.

II. Definitions

Discrimination

treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit (taken from www.dictionary.com)

Harassment

disturbing, pestering, or troubling repeatedly (www.dictionary.com) .

- *sexual harassment*: unwelcome sexual advances made by an employer or superior, especially when compliance is made a condition of continued employment or advancement (www.dictionary.com)
- *personal harassment*: Personal harassment can be any activity done to make another person feel uncomfortable in an environment. It can sometimes be called workplace bullying. (www.ask.com).
- *abuse of power*: act is originally condoned, but is extended beyond that initially conceived (www.wikipedia.org). (This would be relevant to coaching staff and officials).

III. Rights and Responsibilities

1. Of all members:

- right to a harassment-free environment
- right to be treated with respect
- right to be listened to and have concerns dealt with promptly
- right to file a harassment complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Act
- right to a complaint process that is as confidential as possible in keeping with the law and the requirements on any investigation
- responsibility to treat other members including athletes, coaches, officials and administration with respect
- responsibility to speak up when harassment occurs
- responsibility to report harassment to the appropriate person
- responsibility to check for harassment policy and procedures

2. Of ATHF:

- set a good example by treating all members with respect
- refuse to tolerate harassment and put a stop to it if it occurs
- report or investigate all complaints and correct the situations promptly
- discipline appropriately anyone found guilty of harassment
- post the harassment-free environment policy and educate members
- provide a clear procedure for reporting harassment, including the correct person to which reports should be made and the timeline for the steps in the procedure
- maintain confidentiality of complaints and investigations
- monitor for harassment in the handball environment and create an environment where it is safe to come forward and discuss harassment

IV. The Law

According to the Alberta Human Rights Act any discrimination based on the following will not be tolerated

- “removal of children from sports teams or activities based on the conduct of their parents
- denial of service based on sexual orientation, race, ancestry, or any other protected ground, except age
- denial of volunteer opportunities based on gender, place of origin or family status (Under human rights law, volunteering may be considered to be a form of employment. “

V. Complaint Procedure

Direct Action by the Person Experiencing Harassment

As a member, you may be able to stop the harasser by speaking up or writing to the harasser indicating that the behavior is unwelcome and offensive and needs to stop. You should keep a copy of the letter or record the date when you took action. Tell someone you trust what is going on. Also record all unwelcome or harassing behaviors and include what happened, when, where, how often, who else was present, and how you felt about it.

If the harassing behavior continues, occurs again or you are unable to deal with the person harassing you, report it to the person designated to receive complaints. See the section "Formal Complaints".

Informal Complaint

You may want to ask the designated person below to help you to communicate with the other person, or to speak to them on your behalf, without going through mediation or a formal complaint.

An individual who believes that he/she has been harassed should ask for help from the Acting President within 5 business days of the alleged harassment. This person can give you advice on how to proceed such as;

- helping you write a letter or start a conversation with the alleged harasser
- they may be able to approach the person being accused of harassment to communicate your concerns about the harassing behavior

In an informal complaint no investigation, report or official decision is provided. **We encourage you to choose an informal approach first.**

The complaint will be considered within 5 business days of receiving the complaint. Follow up will occur within 3 days.

Formal Complaint

If the informal complaint route does not resolve the harassing situation, ATHF supports members to file a formal complaint.

Filing a Complaint

- A formal complaint can be emailed to the acting president of the ATHF

Investigating the Complaint

- The investigator will interview the complainant, the alleged harasser, and any witnesses. All members have the responsibility to cooperate with the investigation and to maintain the confidentiality of the information regarding the investigation.
- The complaint will be investigated by:

The Acting Chairperson on the Board of Directors within 7 days of receiving the complaint. (Should the acting chairperson be unavailable the acting Director of Communications will complete the investigation)

- The investigation will involve:
 - gathering all relevant information from the complainant
 - informing the alleged harasser of the details of the complaint and getting his/her response
 - interviewing any witnesses
 - deciding whether the harassment took place
 - recommending appropriate remedies, penalties or other action

Reporting the Findings

- the findings will be reported via email within one week of the investigation terminating
- the findings will be provided to the complainant, the alleged harasser, the acting president of the ATHF, and the police (where there is evidence of physical or sexual assault)

Decision Making

- Final decisions regarding a complaint will be made by the Acting Chairperson (or the acting Director of Communications should the designate be unavailable).
- If higher authority is required to make a decision (Board of Directors), forward all relevant material as soon as possible and advise all parties of the action taken.

The Appeal Process

- Members who are unhappy with the results of a formal complaint can put forward their reasons and have them reviewed.
- Appeals may be made to any member on the Board of Directors who has not already been involved in the investigation within 48 hours of the final decision.

VI. Corrective Action

If the investigation reveals evidence to support the complaint of harassment, appropriate action will be taken. Any corrective action will be determined and carried out by the Acting President of ATHF.

Corrective action may include, but not be limited to:

- Written reprimand which would remain on the members file
- Suspension from participation in any handball play, length of which is determined by the President of ATHF.
- The member shall be put in bad standings with the ATHF and will therefore will be prohibited from play. If the alleged harasser is a parent or spectator, then the associated athlete shall bear the punishment.

- Should an administrative person with the ATHF be the alleged harasser, they may lose their position with the Federation.

VII. Safeguards

The ATHF will not tolerate retaliation against members who complain of harassment, or who provide information in an investigation.

A complainant's or alleged harasser's name, or any circumstances related to the complaint will not be disclosed to anyone, except as necessary to investigate the complaint or take disciplinary action related to a complain, or require by law.

No record of the complaint, investigation or decision would go into the members personal file that made the complaint, if the complaint was made in good faith.

If the investigation fails to find evidence to support the complaint, there will be no documentation concerning the complaint kept or placed in the file of the alleged harasser. If harassment was found to occur, the incident and the discipline imposed on the harasser will be recorded in the harasser's file.

If the investigation finds that the complainant did not act in good faith and fabricated the complaint, this will result in disciplinary action against the complainant.

VIII. Miscellaneous

Alberta Team Handball's Harassment Policy will be posted and available to all members on the ATHF website (www.teamhandball.ab.ca).

Alberta Team Handball's Harassment Policy will be reviewed annually.

The acting President for the 2012/2013 Handball season is Dan Stetic. He can be reached via email at dstetic@shaw.ca should there be a need to contact him.

Written and Adapted in September 2012 from “BUILDING AND MAINTAINING SAFE, HEALTHY AND RESPECTFUL WORKPLACES: A HARASSMENT PREVENTION STRATEGY” Developed by the Yukon Human Rights Commission Feb 2009.