

A SANCTIONS PRIMER

For U.S. Figure Skating Clubs and their Members

So, you've been asked to skate at a "Community Ice Festival" or do a synchronized skating team exhibition during a hockey game intermission, or skate as a guest in a skating show. What a wonderful opportunity! Any figure skater would be anxious for that chance to demonstrate their skills and talents to an appreciative audience after many long hours of practice.

If you are a registered member of U.S. Figure Skating, your appearance in exhibitions is governed by a set of rules that protect your eligibility for competitions, tests, and other U.S. Figure Skating governed activities. These are called Sanctions Rules. They are spelled out in great detail in the U.S. Figure Skating rulebook. They apply to every U.S. Figure Skating skater from the most basic beginner to World and Olympic champions. Most U.S. Figure Skating member clubs have a sanctions chair who is in charge of sanction regulations for your club and its members.

PERFORMANCE SANCTIONS

Sanctions are issued by U.S. Figure Skating to protect the eligibility of its members. The rules of the Sanctions and Eligibility Committee govern all carnivals and exhibitions held by member clubs. Each club has a U.S. Figure Skating sanction officer and alternate assigned to them each season, and it is their job to approve all performance sanctions submitted by member clubs. Each member club also may have someone designated as their club sanctions officer. The club sanction officer prepares performance sanctions and submits them to the U.S. Figure Skating sanction officer for approval.

With few exceptions, all carnivals, exhibitions, appearances or entertainment of any kind where U.S. Figure Skating eligible skaters participate must be sanctioned. Sanctions are required when any of the following conditions apply:

1. Admission is charged or admission is contingent upon a donation.
2. The sponsor or promoter is a recipient of some pecuniary benefit.
3. Skaters, other than those who are members of the host club, have been invited to participate.
4. Ineligible persons in skating have been invited to participate.
5. The performance is held at a location other than the principal skating headquarters of the host club.
6. The event is advertised or the public is invited to attend.
7. Skaters or synchronized skating teams exhibit at hockey games.

All forms of advertising, announcement, program or notice, including on the internet/web, of any sanctioned carnival or exhibition must state that the event is presented by the sponsoring club and sanctioned by U.S. Figure Skating.

When you are invited to skate in ANY exhibition or demonstration that is not sponsored by your home club, you must ask the following questions.

1. **Is the event sanctioned by U.S. Figure Skating?**
 - A. If the event is a show or exhibition that is being held by another U.S. Figure Skating club, then it probably is sanctioned. That host club should contact an officer in your club to confirm the sanction and formally ask for permission for you to skate. The host club may

- request a signed permission letter.
- B. If the organization holding the event has never heard of U.S. Figure Skating nor has no idea what a "sanction" is then you need to take responsibility for the sanction.
- 2. You and your club need basic information about the event and the organizers.**
- A. Who is organizing the event and why? Get a full name, address and phone number of someone in authority for the event.
- B. When and where is the event being held?
- C. Is the event free to the public or is admission being charged?
- D. What are the figure skaters expected to do as part of the event?
- 3. Getting an event sanctioned.**
- A. A U.S. Figure Skating member club fills out a performance sanction application at least 30 days prior to the event. This application describes the event and its participants.
- B. The application is then forwarded to a U.S. Figure Skating sanctions officer for inspection and approval, and it is then forwarded to U.S. Figure Skating Headquarters. While the Sanctions & Eligibility Committee is printed in the directory, the sanction officers are broken down into different geographic areas for approvals. Please refer to the mailing sent each July to member clubs or contact U.S. Figure Skating Headquarters.
- C. Headquarters records the event and returns the sanction certificate to the club.

Performance sanctions are issued to member clubs, U.S. Figure Skating individual members (those persons who do not belong to a club as a home club member), registered independent synchronized skating teams or Theatre on Ice teams (application by the team managers of record only). **Please see SR 3.01.** A coach, parent or arena manager cannot request a sanction.

COMPETITION SANCTIONS

Except as specified, all U.S. Figure Skating competitions held in the United States must be sanctioned by the chair of the Competitions Committee or by the appropriate sectional or regional vice chair. The Competitions Committee approves competition sanctions **ONLY**. Do not send your performance sanctions to these committee people.

The Skater's (and Parent's) Responsibilities

1. To obtain a current U.S. Figure Skating rulebook and become acquainted with the eligibility rules for skaters.
2. To question whether a skating event is properly sanctioned for U.S. Figure Skating members.
3. To contact your club for a letter of permission to skate, and to make certain it is mailed or taken to the club organizing the event.

The Member Club's Responsibilities

1. To apply for sanctions for its own events in a timely manner.
2. To confirm the sanction status of other clubs' events to which members have been invited and provide letters of permission to skate.
3. To formally invite guest skaters to a club event that is sanctioned.
4. To check on the details of unsanctioned events to which its members have been invited and to apply for a U.S. Figure Skating sanction if appropriate.
5. To provide a posted notice at sanctioned events that the event is "Sanctioned by U.S. Figure Skating," and to arrange for this information to be stated in any printed material.

The Club Officers' Responsibilities

1. To question the sanction status for all events when your members have been invited to either exhibit or demonstrate as guest skaters for other clubs, schools or any skating events.
2. To sign permission letters for your club's skaters for events that have been appropriately sanctioned.

CARNIVALS

Carnivals are gala performances where skating furnishes the principle entertainment for spectators. Performers are predominantly eligible skaters. Member clubs hosting carnivals must apply for a performance sanction. In carnivals, there are typically costumes, props, music, solo and group events. While it is common to hear carnivals referred to as "ice shows", club officers must be aware that the performance sanction application refers to this event as a carnival.

A club may elect to host a carnival for many reasons:

1. They are fun and exciting events for skaters.
2. They raise funds for the club.
3. They promote figure skating.
4. They demonstrate how much skaters have improved during the year.
5. They provide an opportunity to spotlight local and guest skating talent.

The carnival should be promoted to draw as large an audience as possible. Posters, radio, internet/web posting on club websites and/or television announcement, and newspaper advertising are commonly used.

Carnivals require long months of planning. Some of the committees that may be established are:

1. **Costumes** – Responsible for the design and acquisition of skating attire for the event. Many clubs assess a small fee to the skaters to assist in

paying for the costumes.

2. **Music** – Responsible for the selection of music including practice and performance tapes. This committee could also be charged with playing the music at the performances.
3. **Script/Announcer** – Responsible for the preparation of the script. The committee could also arrange for an announcer for each performance.
4. **Monitors** – Responsible for providing persons to oversee performers, making sure they are properly costumed and where they are supposed to be at the appointed time.
5. **Props** – This committee provides props and could arrange for placing the props on the ice, removing them after each number and storing them between performances. Stage or curtain considerations could also be assigned to this committee.
6. **Technical** – Responsible for the lighting and sound systems used. This committee could arrange for any lights which may be needed and provide for an appropriate sound system.
7. **Program** – Responsible for the design and preparation of the published program and for selling advertisements printed therein. The committee may also oversee the distribution and sale of the program before and at the performances.
8. **Tickets** – Responsible for preparation of the tickets and arranging for their sale before and at the performances. The committee may also be responsible for ticket collection at the event.
9. **Refreshments** – Responsible for the sale of refreshments at performances. The committee may establish pricing structure and provide for product availability, distribution and cleanup at the performances.

In addition to regularly scheduled ice, it may be necessary to obtain additional ice time for dress rehearsal and perhaps for the technical crew to set up or take down lights, speakers, etc.

EXHIBITIONS

An exhibition is a skating performance by an eligible person(s) by itself or as part of some other entertainment. Exhibitions usually involve eligible skaters. The member club hosting an exhibition must apply for a performance sanction. There normally are no props or special costumes. There may be solos and/or group events. In many clubs, exhibitions take place between the periods of a hockey game, or at the conclusion of a skating season. They are also common after a major competition, such as our U.S. Figure Skating Championships.

Clubs may host exhibitions:

1. To provide an opportunity to promote figure skating.
2. To provide an opportunity for selected skaters and/or groups to perform

before an audience in preparation for a competition.

Approved Contracts

U.S. Figure Skating has provided the Eligible Skaters Compensation Agreement (ESCA) to enable eligible athletes to receive payment for their participation in non-sanctioned skating performances or commercial endorsements while protecting their eligibility to compete in U.S. Figure Skating, ISU and/or Olympic competitions.

Eligible skaters may make personal appearances, participate in non-sanctioned skating performances or permit their name or photograph to advertise any commercial product, service or enterprise for financial compensation, provided that they have obtained approval through the ESCA.

U.S. Figure Skating advises that the athlete or his/her representative agree to the terms of the activity with each sponsor or promoter through the means of a written contract. U.S. Figure Skating requires that athletes are compensated a minimum of \$50.00 per activity. These payments to the athletes are not tax deductible.

Please note that an ESCA is not required when athletes accept financial “gifts” in any amount from family members, friends or businesses, provided that the athlete does not perform or provide any reciprocal service to the private sponsor/donor. There is no tax advantage to the private sponsor/donor for providing such a gift, and athletes are not required to notify U.S. Figure Skating of any such gifts.

U.S. Figure Skating athletes may participate in non-sanctioned skating performances or commercial endorsements and NOT receive compensation, BUT the ESCA must still be obtained to protect the athletes’ eligible status.

The ESCA has a processing fee attached to it that must be sent in prior to the ESCA being approved: 10% of what the athlete is being paid, but not over \$150. If the athlete is not receiving compensation there is a \$5 processing fee.

To receive an ESCA, please contact U.S. Figure Skating Headquarters at 719.635.5200 or download from www.usfigureskating.org.