



SOFTBALL SASKATCHEWAN SAFE SPORT DECISION & AWARENESS GUIDE

Purpose of This Guide

This tool helps participants in softball in Saskatchewan - including athletes, parents, coaches, officials, volunteers, and administrators - to:

- Understand what maltreatment is, and what it is not.
- Recognize early warning signs before harm escalates.
- Identify the appropriate resolution pathway.
- Understand when a concern must be reported under the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS.)
- Use the Independent Third Party (ITP)

Not every concern is a Safe Sport complaint, but every concern deserves to be taken seriously.

Commitment to Respectful Processes

Individuals who raise concerns will be treated respectfully and without judgment. The ITP is committed to fair, trauma-informed processes that prioritize safety and dignity.



STEP 1 - IS ANYONE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER?

ASK:

- Is anyone at immediate risk of harm (physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, or neglect)?

IF YES

Contact Police or Child & Family Services immediately. Then notify your organization

IF NO

Continue to Step 2.

MINOR & DUTY TO REPORT



In situations involving minors, additional legal reporting obligation may apply under Saskatchewan Law



STEP 2 - WHAT TYPE OF CONCERN IS THIS?

Most confusion in sport occurs here.
The key distinction is:



Normal Sport Conflict



Poor Practice/Early
Warning Signs



Maltreatment



A. Normal Sport Conflict

**Issues governed/managed by
Softball SK:**

- Playing time disagreements
- Team selection disputes
- Coaching decisions about strategy
- Personality clashes
- Scheduling concerns
- Constructive performance feedback

**These issues may feel unfair or
upsetting, but they are not
automatically maltreatment.**

Recommended Action:

- Use the 24-hour rule
- Speak directly (when safe and appropriate)
- Raise with local association leadership
- Escalate through leadership

**The ITP is not typically the appropriate forum
for these concerns.**



B. POOR PRACTICE/EARLY WARNING SIGNS

Examples:

Potential breaches of the Code of Conduct or UCCMS

- Playing favourites
- Ignoring minor athlete concerns
- Overly harsh or negative feedback
- Failing to respond to minor conflicts
- Blurring coach/athlete boundaries

Recommended Action:

- Document concerns
- Follow your local association/Softball Saskatchewan complaint procedures
 - Report suspected Code of Conduct or UCCMS breaches to the ITP

Prevention is a shared responsibility.





C. Maltreatment

The Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS), which Softball Saskatchewan has adopted, outlines prohibited behaviours. If the behaviour fits these categories, it may require reporting through the ITP. In certain circumstances, participants may have a duty to report suspected maltreatment under the UCCMS or applicable law.

PSYCHOLOGICAL MALTREATMENT

- Repeated humiliation
- Degrading comments
- Threats
- Manipulation
- Intimidation
- Public shaming

SEXUAL MALTREATMENT

- Sexual comments or jokes
- Inappropriate touching
- Sexual relationships involving power imbalance
- Sexual exploitation

NEGLECT

- Withholding medical care
- Failing to provide basic care

PHYSICAL MALTREATMENT

- Forcing participation through injury
- Physical punishment
- Hitting, grabbing, shaking

RETALIATION

- Punishing someone for reporting concerns

GROOMING

- Gradual boundary testing
- Secretive communication
- Isolating an athlete
- Building trust for the purpose of future exploitation

DISCRIMINATION

- Harassment based on race, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, etc.



STEP 3 - DOES THIS FALL UNDER THE ITP

Softball Saskatchewan's Independent Third Party, administered through its designated provider, is the independent complaint mechanism for reporting and addressing concerns that may fall under the UCCMS or Softball SK Code of Conduct.

The ITP is Softball Saskatchewan's Independent complaint mechanism, provided by Sask Sport

The ITP applies when:

- The behaviour falls within the defined prohibited conduct
- The incident occurred within the scope of sports activities (as defined in policy)
- Conduct that occurs outside formal sports activities (including online or social media activity) may still fall under the ITP if it impacts the sport environment or participant safety

The ITP may not apply to:

- Pure performance disputes
- Team Selection Appeals
- Technical rule violations
- Matters already handled by police or courts (though parallel processes may occur)

Anonymous reports are permitted, but may limit the ability to investigate.

Intentionally false allegations are prohibited under the UCCMS



STEP 4 - CHOOSE THE RIGHT PATHWAY

TYPE OF CONCERN	RECOMMENDED PATHWAY
Immediate Danger	Police/Child Services
Normal sport conflict	Local association/Softball Saskatchewan process
Code of Conduct Breach/Maltreatment	ITP Report
National-level issue	NSO or relevant national mechanism

WHEN IN DOUBT



Individuals are encouraged to review the UCCMS and Softball Saskatchewan's policies to better understand whether conduct may fall within the scope of the ITP



RECOGNIZING & FLAGGING BEHAVIOURS

RECOGNIZING RED FLAGS EARLY

Safe sport is not just about reporting, it is about prevention



Isolation Behaviour

- Discouraging parental presence
- one-on-one travel without transparency



Emotional Manipulation

- "You owe me."
- "If you report this, your career is over."



Boundary Rift

- Late-night texting
- Private social media contact
- Gifts or special privileges



Culture of Silence

- "That's just how it is."
- Fear of speaking up
- Protecting reputation over safety

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- **Reporting is not punishment - it is a process.**
- **Maltreatment must meet defined thresholds.**
- **Early communication prevents escalation.**
- **Confidentiality and privacy are protected.**
- **Retaliation is prohibited.**

