

AOA Conflict of Interest Policy

AOA adopted Orienteering Canada's (OC) conflict of interest policy in 2019.

The standard of behavior at the Alberta Orienteering Association (AOA) is that all staff, volunteers and board members scrupulously avoid conflicts of interest between the interests of the AOA on one hand, and personal, professional and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding potential and actual conflicts of interest, as well as perceptions of conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest include both financial and non-financial interests.

This policy is to protect the integrity of the AOA's decision-making process and to protect the integrity and reputations of volunteers, staff and board members.

Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:
 - a. *"Conflict of Interest"* – Any situation in which a Representative's decision-making, which should always be in the best interests of AOA, is influenced or could be influenced by personal, family, financial, business, or other private interests
 - b. *"Pecuniary Interest"* - An interest that an individual may have in a matter because of the reasonable likelihood or expectation of financial gain or loss for that individual, or another person with whom that individual is associated
 - c. *"Non-Pecuniary Interest"* - An interest that an individual may have in a matter which may involve family relationships, friendships, volunteer positions or other interests that do not involve the potential for financial gain or loss
 - d. *"Representatives"* – Individuals employed by, or engaged in activities on behalf of, AOA

Background

2. Individuals who act on behalf of an organization have a duty first to that organization and second to any personal stake they have in the operations of the organization. For example, in not-for-profit organizations, board members are required, by law, to act as a trustee (in good faith, or in trust) of the organization. Board members, and other Representatives, must not put themselves in positions where making a decision on behalf of the organization is connected to their own personal interests. That would be a conflict of interest situation.

Purpose

3. AOA strives to reduce and eliminate nearly all instances of conflict of interest at AOA – by being aware, prudent, and forthcoming about the potential conflicts. This Policy describes how Representatives will conduct themselves in matters relating to conflict of interest, and will clarify how Representatives shall make decisions in situations where conflict of interest may exist.
4. This Policy applies to all Representatives.



Obligations

5. Any real or perceived conflict of interest, whether pecuniary or non-pecuniary, between a Representative's personal interest and the interests of AOA, shall always be resolved in favour of AOA
6. Representatives will not:
 - a. Engage in any business or transaction, or have a financial or other personal interest, that is incompatible with their official duties with AOA, unless such business, transaction, or other interest is properly disclosed to AOA and approved by AOA
 - b. Knowingly place themselves in a position where they are under obligation to any person who might benefit from special consideration or who might seek preferential treatment
 - c. In the performance of their official duties, give preferential treatment to family members, friends, colleagues, or organizations in which their family members, friends, or colleagues have an interest, financial or otherwise
 - d. Derive personal benefit from information that they have acquired during the course of fulfilling their official duties with AOA, if such information is confidential or not generally available to the public
 - e. Engage in any outside work, activity, or business or professional undertaking that conflicts or appears to conflict with their official duties as a representative of AOA, or in which they have an advantage or appear to have an advantage on the basis of their association with AOA
 - f. Without the permission of AOA, use AOA property, equipment, supplies, or services for activities not associated with the performance of their official duties with AOA
 - g. Place themselves in positions where they could, by virtue of being a AOA Representative, influence decisions or contracts from which they could derive any direct or indirect benefit
 - h. Accept any gift or favour that could be construed as being given in anticipation of, or in recognition for, any special consideration granted by virtue of being an AOA Representative

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

7. Representatives shall disclose real or perceived conflicts of interest to AOA Board of Directors immediately upon becoming aware that a conflict of interest may exist.

Minimizing Conflicts of Interest in Decision-Making

8. Decisions or transactions that involve a conflict of interest that has been proactively disclosed by a AOA Representative will be considered and decided with the following additional provisions:
 - a. The nature and extent of the Representative's interest has been fully disclosed to the body that is considering or making the decision, and this disclosure is recorded or noted
 - b. The Representative does not participate in discussion on the matter
 - c. The Representative abstains from voting on the decision
 - d. For board-level decisions, the Representative does not count toward quorum
 - e. The decision is confirmed to be in the best interests of AOA

9. For potential conflicts of interest involving employees, the AOA Board of Directors will determine whether there is there a conflict and, if one exists, the employee will resolve the conflict by ceasing the activity giving rise to the conflict. AOA will not restrict employees from accepting other employment contracts or volunteer appointments provided these activities do not diminish the employee's ability to perform the work described in the employee's job agreement with AOA or give rise to a conflict of interest.

Conflict of Interest Complaints

10. Any person who believes that a Representative may be in a conflict of interest situation should report the matter, in writing (or verbally if during a meeting of the Board of Directors or any AOA committee), to AOA Board of Directors which will decide appropriate measures to eliminate the conflict. The Board of Directors may apply the following actions singly or in combination for real or perceived conflicts of interest:
 - a. Removal or temporary suspension of certain responsibilities or decision-making authority
 - b. Removal or temporary suspension from a designated position
 - c. Removal or temporary suspension from certain AOA affairs, events and/or activities
 - d. Expulsion from AOA
 - e. Other actions as may be considered appropriate for the real or perceived conflict of interest
11. Any person who believes that a Representative has made a decision that was influenced by real or perceived conflict of interest may submit a complaint, in writing, to AOA to be addressed under *AOA's Dispute Resolution Policy*.
12. Failure to comply with an action as determined by the Board of Directors will result in automatic suspension from AOA until compliance occurs.
13. The Board of Directors may determine that an alleged real or perceived conflict of interest is of such seriousness as to warrant suspension of designated activities pending a meeting and a decision of the Board of Directors.

Conflict Resolution

All real or perceived conflict of interest will be disclosed to the AOA board of directors for resolution.



Conflict Resolution

Conflict can be a part of human interaction and if managed well, can be productive and, depending on its nature, may be resolved without formal complaint filing. AOA is committed to treating all members fairly and with respect and has policies and procedures that provide internal and external alternatives to support appropriately transparent and timely resolution of conflicts.

AOA Dispute Resolution and Appeal Policy encompasses a process that provides internal options before external alternatives to ensure that issues can be resolved with appropriate transparency and timeliness, and in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.

Resources for understanding and resolving conflict:

[5 Approaches to Conflict Management](#) – Coaching Association of Canada

[Main Causes of Disputes and Prevention Strategies: A Must for Sport Administrators](#) – Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (CRDSC)

Reporting Services

Instances of abuse, harassment, bullying or discrimination can be reported by following the process outlined in the [Harassment Policy](#).

Concerned about a potential incident of abuse, harassment, bullying or discrimination? Contact:

Independent investigations of major issues contact:

Canadian Sport Helpline: 1-888-83-SPORT (77678), info@abuse-free-sport.ca, <http://abuse-free-sport.ca/en/>.

Medium and minor issue investigations and outcome decisions will be led by (an) individual(s) appointed by AOA as outlined in the Harassment policy.