

**USA KARATE
POLICY MANUAL FOR USA KARATE OFFICIALS**



*Member
United States Olympic Paralympic Committee*

Effective January 1, 2024

USA KARATE REFEREE COMMITTEE VALUES STATEMENT

- Transparency
- Accountability
 - Integrity
 - Supportiveness
- Commitment to JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion)
 - Pursuit of Excellence

USA KARATE REFEREE COMMITTEE VISION STATEMENT

Be the world's most prestigious leader in sports officiating.

SECTION 1.

USA KARATE REFEREE COMMITTEE DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1.1. Duties & Responsibilities

The USA Karate Referee Committee has the duties and responsibilities listed in the USA National Karate-Do Federation, Inc (USA-NKF or USA Karate) By-Laws Section 8.18 Referee Committee. These duties include:

- a. The recruitment and education of referee corps members, including the development and implementation of educational programs, materials, and activities to provide members with access and opportunity to achieve knowledge and skills with competence, confidence, and professionalism.
- b. Maintain and publish on the website standards for referee certifications and participation on the local, national, and international levels and administer the same.
- c. Provide, when necessary, a draft of the USANKF Rules and Regulations for competitions for board approval, including updates as necessary upon consultation with other committees as outlined in these policies.
- d. Develop and administer Referee certification exams.
- e. Recommend to the CEO members of the referee corps for consideration on a referee task force for various tournament operations.
- f. Bring matters of concern of the referee corps to the board's attention.
- g. Provide an annual report of all activities to the Board of Directors by March 1st of the succeeding year.

Section 1.2. Member Requirements, Selection, and Removal

- a. The Referee Committee members, including the Committee Chair, are appointed by the USA Karate Board Chair upon approval by the Board of Directors, per USA Karate By-law Section 8.18.a.
- b. The Referee Committee and task force members, compensation policy is per USA Karate by-laws Section 8.11 policy.
- c. The Referee Committee and task force members, policy for resignation, removal, and vacancies is that of USA Karate by-laws Section 8.7.
- d. The Referee Committee meetings policy shall reflect the USA Karate by-laws Sections 6.14-6.25, substituting as appropriate equivalent terminology for the Board of Directors to the Referee Committee and its members.

SECTION 2. GENERAL RULES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR USA REFEREES AND JUDGES

Section 2.1. Requirements for USA Officials

- a. Current USA Karate Membership.
- b. Current Safe Sport Training (annually).
- c. Current Background Screening (valid for two years).
- d. Review and sign the Official's Code of Conduct (annually).
- e. Review and sign Conflict of Interest Disclosure (annually).
- f. Written tests are via USA Karate online resources unless otherwise indicated below or announced. Online test scores must be passed within 30 days before a new certification date to be valid. The written test constitutes 10% of the total evaluation score.
- g. Officials testing to elevate their certification at a Signature Event may not coach at that Signature Event. They are required to attend the entire event each day, which includes the initial and daily briefings.

Table 2.1. Certification Categories for USA Karate Officials

USA KARATE KATA CERTIFICATION	USA KARATE KUMITE CERTIFICATION	
Kata Judge A, B, C, D, E	USA Karate Kumite Judge A, B, C, D	USA Karate Kumite Referee A, B, C, D

Table 2.2. Age, Rank, and Testing Requirements for USA Officials

Certification	Age	Rank	Written Exam % Requirement	Practical Exam
<u>Kumite</u>				
USA Karate Kumite Referee: A	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	90% at a Signature Event	At Signature Event
USA Karate Kumite Referee: B	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	90% at a Signature Event	At Signature Event
USA Karate Kumite Referee: C	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	90%	Pass
USA Karate Kumite Referee: D	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	90%	Pass
USA Karate Kumite Judge: A	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	90%	Pass
USA Karate Kumite Judge: B	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	90%	Pass
USA Karate Kumite Judge: C	16+	1 st Kyu/Brown Belt	80%	Pass
USA Karate Kumite Judge: D	14+	1 st Kyu/Brown Belt	80%	Pass

<u>Kata</u>				
USA Karate Kata Judge: A	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	90% at a Signature Event	At Signature Event
USA Karate Kata Judge: B	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	90% at a Signature Event	At Signature Event
USA Karate Kata Judge: C	18+	Shodan/Black Belt	90%	Pass
USA Karate Kata Judge: D	16+	Shodan/Black Belt	80%	Pass
USA Karate Kata Judge: E	14+	1 st Kyu/Brown Belt	80%	Pass

Section 2.2. Participation and Recertification - Annual Requirements

- a. Officials with USA Karate Referee “A” or “B” certifications must attend one Signature Event referee seminar annually and participate as an official in at least one Signature Event yearly to maintain their certification level.
- b. Signature Events are the USA Karate National Karate Championships and the USA Karate US Open/Junior International Cup for this requirement. Attendance at a Signature Event includes the initial briefing the day before the competition days, daily briefings, and the entire day until officials are officially dismissed at the end of the day. Officials who fail to attend the whole event or leave a Signature Event before the final dismissal will not have met the Signature Event attendance requirement. Permission to leave an event early does not constitute an approved Absence Exception Request, though it may be retroactively approved.
- c. To maintain their current certification status, all other officials, USA Karate Referee “C” and below, must attend at least one online or in-person referee seminar annually given by a USA Karate certified instructor. The official must participate in at least one tournament as an official each year and with a USA Karate certified instructor in attendance at the same competition, signing the official’s USA Karate passport. Alternatively, the chief referee at the competition, if at least a USA Karate certified Referee A, may document the participation of the USA Karate official.
- d. If an official fails to meet the above requirements, they may recertify at their prior level by attending the appropriate seminar and passing the written and practical exams.
- e. All officials are required to comply with the Officials’ Code of Conduct.
- f. Failure to comply with these requirements may lead to suspending the official’s certification or other corrective action.

Section 2.3. Participation and Recertification Exemptions

Exemptions to attend all or part of a USA Karate Signature Event are available to those officials who are engaged in conducting authorized business for USA Karate or as otherwise provided by the terms of this policy.

a. Officials with WKF/PKF Certification

- i. Officials with WKF/PKF certification must actively support USA Karate Signature Events, among other considerations set forth by the Referee Committee. Eligibility of USA Karate officials for international competitions and events, World Karate Federation (WKF) or Pan-America Karate Federation (PKF), includes the appropriate level USA Karate certification and participation in the two USA Karate Signature Events in the 12 months immediately prior, among other possible considerations by the USA Karate Referee Committee, subject to the exemption policy.
- ii. Failure to participate as a referee or judge in a USA Karate signature event that an official with WKF/PKF certification attends may result in the forfeiture or suspension of the individual's USA Referee/Judge certification or other corrective action.
- iii. An official whose USA Karate certification is not current or in good standing is ineligible for USA Karate financial support to participate in WKF or PKF competitions or events.

b. Absence Exception Request

- i. Absence exception requests for the "Participation and Recertification - Annual Requirements" section must be submitted in writing and received by the USA Karate Referee Committee no later than 30 days before the subject USA Karate Signature Event.
- ii. The applicant must submit the Absence Exception Request Form to the USA Karate Referee Committee Secretary and send a copy to the Board of Directors Chairperson with supporting documentation.
- iii. For an exception to be approved and issued, most USA Karate Referee Committee members must agree and support the applicant's request, providing a written response to the applicant.
- iv. In case of a medical emergency, natural disaster, or an unplanned employment demand preventing attendance at a Signature Event, the official must submit the Absence Exception Request Form to the USA Karate Referee Committee Secretary as soon as possible.

Section 2.4. Officials' Review and Evaluation Process

- a. The USA Karate Referee Committee is responsible for reviewing and evaluating the performance of all officials participating in the USA Karate Signature Events. The Referee Committee shall collect feedback from the designated Tatami Managers and will also collect information through their direct observations of officials' performances during the Signature Events. If the USA Karate Referee Committee deems that an official's performance should receive a personal evaluation, the USA Karate Referee Committee Chairperson, along with at least one other member of the Committee, shall meet with the official in a private location to discuss any comments or concerns. At their discretion, the USA Karate Referee Committee members who met with the official in question may submit a written

recommendation to the USA Karate Referee Committee as a whole for review and perhaps a reassessment of the official's certification or the requirement for additional training or testing to maintain their status.

- b. The USA Karate Ethics Committee is responsible for evaluating an official's compliance with the USA Karate Officials' Code of Conduct. The Ethics Committee may recommend sanctions against an official found violating the USA Karate Officials' Code of Conduct. The USA Karate Referee Committee and the USA Karate Board of Directors will evaluate such recommendations for action.

Section 2.5. Conflict of Interests

In compliance with the Officials Code of Conduct, all officials with USA Karate National Kata Judge A or Kumite Referee A, PKF, and WKF certifications may not serve as a coach at the USA Karate Signature Events.

SECTION 3. WKF CERTIFICATION UPGRADE TEST PRIORITY LIST ADVANCEMENT PROCESS

Section 3.1. When an official receives their first World Karate Federation (WKF) certification, either Kata Judge B or Kumite Judge B:

- a. The official cannot upgrade their certification again in the same calendar year.
- b. The official is then at the last position on the USA Karate Officials Certification Upgrade Test Priority List (Priority List). The official will be eligible to upgrade the year after receipt of their first WKF certification.

Section 3.2. USA Karate will submit ALL eligible names on the Priority List. The WKF will either confirm the officials or reject a portion of the officials on the Priority List.

- a. If an official can test and pass, they remain on the Priority List at a priority level based on their new certification level. Higher certified officials have priority over officials with a lower certification.
- b. If an official is allowed to test and fails, they are at the bottom of the Priority List. Their seniority date is the date of the failed test.
- c. If an official cannot test due to WKF quotas, they will remain in the same position on the Priority List.
- d. If an official declines to test, they will be at the bottom of the Priority List. Their seniority date is the date of the tournament not attended.

Section 3.3. Officials with a WKF Kata Judge A or WKF Kumite Referee A certification are no longer on the Priority List.

- a. Officials with a WKF Kata Judge A or WKF Kumite Referee A certification must maintain their renewal license fees (PLR) every four years.
- b. Failure to maintain a certification in good standing places an official at the bottom of the Priority List if they want to renew their certification. The official will progress up the List the same as other candidates.

Section 3.4. Maintaining an official's status on the Priority List is dependent on current good standing with USA Karate, including:

- a. Attendance and participation at two USA Karate Signature Events in the 12 months immediately before participating in a WKF or PKF event.
 - i. Per USA Karate's Exception policy, one of the two required Signature Events may be waived.
- b. Current USA Karate membership.
- c. US Olympic and Para-Olympic Committee SafeSport compliance.
- d. Authorized Background Check.
- e. A current and signed Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct forms.

Section. 3.5. If the number of test slots available for a WKF testing opportunity is insufficient to accommodate all officials eligible on the Priority List, priority starts:

- a. At the top of the Priority List.
- b. PKF officials with PKF Kumite Referee A and Kata Judge A are top priorities.
- c. Each official's priority ranking is by the date they received their PKF A certification for that Priority List, kata or kumite.

Section 3.6. If more than one official receives their PKF certification on the same date, the priority for selection goes to the candidate who earned their USA Karate National A certification for Kata or Kumite first, as applicable.

- a. If a tie still exists, then, in this order, the tie is broken.
 - i. The earlier date that the official earned both of their USA Karate Kumite Referee A and Kata Judge A certifications.
 - ii. The earlier date that the official earned both of their PKF Kumite Referee A and Kata Judge A certifications.
 - iii. The USA Karate Referee Committee will decide the order.

**SECTION 4. REQUIREMENTS FOR USA KARATE REFEREES AND JUDGES RE
PAN-AMERICAN KARATE FEDERATION (PKF)**

Section 4.1. Pan-American Categories for Kata and Kumite Certifications

Table 4.1

PKF Kata	PKF Kumite	
Judge	Judge	Referee
Judge A	Judge A	Referee A
Judge B	Judge B	Referee B
Judge C	Judge C	

Section 4.2. General Requirements

- a. All PKF officials must comply with all requirements for USA Karate officials, as noted above.
- b. An official whose USA Karate certification is not current or in good standing is ineligible for USA Karate support to participate in PKF competitions or events.
- c. USA Karate officials who have a USA Karate National Kata Judge “A” Certification or their USA Karate National Referee “A” certification are eligible to test for PKF certification.
- d. PKF officials must be at least 21 years of age and have a USA Karate rank of 2nd Dan in Karate or per PKF minimum age and rank requirements.
- e. Upon passing or recertifying for any PKF certification, the official must send a photocopy of the certificate (passing test) or entry in their Karate Passport (recertifying) to the USA Karate Referee Committee Secretary.
- f. Subject to the Absence Exception Policy, USA Karate officials must have participated as an official in the two USA Karate Signature Events in the 12 months immediately prior, before participating in a PKF event.

**SECTION 5. REQUIREMENTS FOR USA KARATE REFEREES AND JUDGES RE
WORLD KARTE FEDERATION (WKF)**

Section 5.1. World Karate Federation Categories for Kata and Kumite Certification

Table 5.1

WKF Kata	WKF Kumite	
Judge	Judge	Referee
Judge A	Judge A	Referee A
Judge B	Judge B	Referee B

Section 5.2. General Requirements

- a. All WKF and PKF officials must comply with all requirements for USA Karate officials, as noted above.
- b. An official whose USA Karate certification is not current or in good standing is ineligible for USA Karate support to participate in WKF competitions or events.
- c. USA Karate officials who have PKF Kata Judge “A” certification or PKF Karate Referee “A” certification are eligible to test for a WKF certification.
- d. All WKF officials must be at least 25 years of age and have a USA Karate rank of 3rd Dan in Karate or per WKF minimum age and rank requirements.
- e. Upon passing the Kata or Kumite test or recertifying, officials must send a photocopy of the certificate (passing test) or entry in the Karate Passport (recertifying) to the USA Karate Referee Committee Secretary.

Subject to the Absence Exception Policy, USA Karate officials must have participated as an official in the two USA Karate Signature Events in the 12 months immediately prior, before participating in a WKF event.

SECTION 6. SELECTION OF OFFICIALS FOR USA TEAM TRIALS

The USA Karate Selection Committee will give the procedures to select officials for these events.

SECTION 7. REFEREE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Section 7.1. All USA Karate Referee Committee members are required to attend the following and other additional requirements that may arise:

- a. Anti-Retaliation Training
- b. Conflict of Interest Session

SECTION 8. COMPLAINTS REGARDING CONDUCT OF OFFICIALS

The Complaint and Hearing Procedures posted on the USA Karate Website shall address a complaint alleging a violation of the USA-NKF Articles of Incorporation, By-laws, Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest Policy, Gift Policy, Whistleblower Policy, SafeSport Policy, USA-NKF Minor Athletes and Officials Abuse Prevention Policies, USOPC By-laws, Ted Stevens Act, or any other USA Karate rule.