

## **Guidelines for Association Bylaws**

The *Code of United States Diving Inc.* requires that Local Diving Associations adopt bylaws for their own governance that are consistent with the *USD Code* (240.2(b)).

LDA bylaws need not be complex but must describe clearly how the LDA is organized and operated. Any USD member within an LDA should be able to obtain a copy of the LDA bylaws upon request and easily determine from that document how to participate in the LDA. The LDA bylaws also should state how they can be amended (requiring a super majority of 2/3 or even 3/4 is typical).

All LDAs must comply with the *USD Code*. These *Code* requirements are mandatory - an LDA may not waive or overrule them. Actions taken by LDAs that do not comply with the *USD Code* will be declared null and void if challenged. Protection of athlete rights, as described in the *USD Code*, USOC Bylaws, and the federal Amateur Sports Act, is essential.

Specific USD Code requirements that must be reflected in LDA bylaws include:

- (a) **Meeting frequency** - each LDA must hold an annual meeting to elect officers, elect delegates to the USD annual meeting, and distribute funds. (240.2(d))
  
- (b) **Meeting notice** - The LDA membership must be informed in writing at least 15 days in advance of any meeting. (240.2(d))
  
- (c) **Athlete representation** -
  - (1) Athlete representatives must comprise at least 20 percent of all governing boards and committees within United States Diving Inc. This includes LDAs. (245.5(d)(1))
  - (2) LDA athlete representatives must be currently registered, active J.O. or Senior athletes who have:
    - (i) competed at least in the Association or Regional Championship, or
    - (ii) finished in the top half of Senior Nationals within the past two years, or
    - (iii) represented the United States in the Olympics, Pan-Am Games, or World Championships. (245.5(d)(2))
  - (3) Athletes must select/elect their own representatives. (245.5(d)(2))

(d) **Registrations and Sanctions** - Procedures for registering athletes and sanctioning events should be consistent with Articles 60 and 61 of the *USD Code*.

(e) **Boards of Review** - LDAs must provide for creation of a board of review that includes not less than three people and at least 20% athlete representation. (470.2(a))

## **FAQs**

**Q.** Do LDAs need the same structure as USD?

**A.** No. LDAs are free to adopt the organizational structure that best suits their needs. The number of officers, their duties, and terms and terms limits can all be determined by the LDA.

**Q.** Can LDAs have more than one meeting a year?

**A.** Yes. Most have at least two, and many meet quarterly. The requirement for at least 15 days' written notice must be observed for all meetings.

**Q.** Do we have to send meeting notices to all members?

**A.** Yes. All registered coaches, officials, and unattached athletes should receive individual notices. Do not overlook USD life members. Notice to athletes training with club teams can be satisfied by posting the notice on a team bulletin board or via individual handouts. The club coach or administrative representative should be specifically informed by the LDA of the club's responsibility to notify its athletes.

**Q.** Does email satisfy the "written notice" requirement?

**A.** Yes, for all those members who have email. For any others, a traditional mailing is required. An LDA cannot mandate the ability to receive email as a condition of membership, nor can it rely on a website posting to satisfy the notification requirement.

**Q.** Can the chair of an LDA appoint delegates to the annual meeting?

**A.** No. The USD Code specifies that a meeting be held to elect delegates. If an insufficient number of delegates results from that meeting, additional delegates may be recruited/appointed consistent with procedures set forth in the LDA Bylaws.

**Q.** What if we can't get enough athletes at meetings to make the 20 percent requirement?

**A.** Weighted voting (multiplying the number of athlete participants by a number that ensures them 20 percent of the vote) is acceptable.

**Q.** Can a coach appoint the athlete representative?

**A.** No. Athletes must choose their own representatives. It is recommended that athletes hold closed meetings (athletes only) specifically for this purpose.

**Q.** Why do LDAs need Boards of Review?

**A.** An LDA might never need to convene a Board of Review, but it must be prepared for the possibility. The *USD Code* assigns to LDAs the primary jurisdiction over denial of membership, disciplinary actions such as suspension or expulsion, and disputes arising between members of the same association. (470.2)

A generic set of bylaws has been created by United States Diving Inc. to assist LDAs in drafting their bylaws.