Athletics in Canada

Officiating Policy

Policy Statement

Athletics Canada is committed to ensuring that all sanctioned competitions are officiated by trained, certified, and experienced officials who apply the rules of athletics consistently, fairly, and without bias. These officials uphold the integrity of the sport by creating safe, inclusive, and equitable competitive environments for all participants, in alignment with World Athletics, Athletics Canada and Provincial/Territorial rules and standards.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to formalize Athletics Canada's commitment to the recruitment, education, certification, and ongoing development of officials across all levels—from local to international. This policy supports the implementation of Athletics Canada's Strategic Plan by recognizing the essential role that officials play in delivering high-quality competitions. It ensures that athletes across all disciplines and stages of development are provided with fair, supportive, and well-managed competitive experiences at all Athletics Canada and Provincial/Territorial sanctioned events.

Definitions section (including acronyms)

- AC: Athletics Canada, national governing body for athletics in Canada.
- Branches: Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations (e.g. Athletics Ontario, BC Athletics)
- WA: World Athletics, the International governing body for the sport of Athletics (track and field)
- WPA: World Para Athletics, the International governing body for para-athletics.
- WMA: World Masters Athletics, the international governing body for masters athletics.
- NTO: National Technical Official
- ITO: International Technical Official
- Local/Regional Meet: smaller, often developmental competitions where results are not recognized by Athletics Canada for national rankings.
- Provincial Meet / Championships: larger, often more competitive competitions where results are recognized by Athletics Canada and World Athletics.

Application

Athletics Canada recognizes the integral role of the Provincial/Territorial Branches (the "Branches") in the recruitment, retention, preparation, and advancement of certified officials in Canada. Athletics Canada also recognizes and deeply values the tireless contributions of officials who dedicate countless hours to officiating and competition management in support of athletes across all disciplines and at all stages of development.

To ensure the highest standard of officiating and to provide a consistent and quality competitive experience for athletes, Athletics Canada develops and maintains the Athletics Canada Officials Pathway. This framework is based on the rules and regulations of World Athletics (WA), World Para Athletics (WPA), World Masters Athletics (WMA), and Athletics Canada (AC). Through this Pathway, Athletics Canada presents a clear and structured Officials Development strategy.

Athletics Canada is responsible for the development and ongoing maintenance of the content within the Athletics Canada Officials Pathway, including all four levels and Referee pathways. This ensures that the training, evaluation, and advancement of officials across the country align with national standards and international best practices, and remain current with updates from World Athletics, World Para Athletics, World Masters Athletics, and Athletics Canada's own rules and policies.

The Branches are responsible for delivering the Local, Regional, and Provincial Levels of the Athletics Canada Officials Pathway. These levels support the foundation and intermediate development of officials, advancing them from the local to the national level.

Athletics Canada manages and oversees delivery of the National Level of the Pathway and the Referee pathway in partnership with the Branches. These levels focus on the advanced development of senior national level officials and support their progression to international level certification through a structured strategy which includes mentorship and evaluation.

To facilitate the recognition, tracking and advancement of officials, Athletics Canada will maintain a National Registry of accredited and certified officials across all positions, disciplines, and levels of development.

Athletics Canada is committed to ensuring officials are treated with respect and professionalism by athletes, coaches, spectators, and other officials. All officiating activities are governed by the Athletics Canada National Safe Sport Program and the Athletics in Canada Code of Conduct. These policies exist to protect and support officials while fostering a fair and positive environment for all participants in the sport.

Responsibilities

Athletics Canada CEO:

- Ensure that all policies of the Board related to competition and officiating are aligned with Athletics Canada Strategic Plan.
- Conduct an on-going evaluation of the progress of the strategic milestones/goals/ programs of Officiating.

Athletics Canada:

- Develops and leads the overall officiating strategy in athletics in Canada.
- Assigns or hires a dedicated staff member responsible for managing officials' development and administration at the national level.
- Delegates specific officiating initiatives to an appropriate operational committee as per the committee's terms of reference.
- Communicates a strong position concerning the role and effective implementation of standards in officiating in the long-term development of athletes.
- Develops and maintains a registry, reporting and evaluation system that facilitates the development of officials in athletics in Canada.
- Develops the training (course content) and evaluation (criteria and evidence) of the Athletics Canada Officials Pathway, including the training for Master Trainers, Clinicians, Evaluators and Mentors.
- Reviews and updates the training and course content of the Athletics Canada Officials Pathway and Referee Pathway on a rolling cycle as appropriate.
- Oversees delivery of the Athletics Canada Officials Pathway for National Officials and Referees including leading and hosting clinics as well as mentorship, evaluations, and upgrading.
- Oversee the training and development of Provincial and National Technical Delegates.
- Ensures adequate evaluation opportunities for National Level officials and Referees in order to meet the recommended timeline for officials' advancement.
- Recommends officials to the World Athletics and World Para Athletics officials' pathways.
- Manages and promotes annual awards for officials at the National/International Level.
- Adopt Minimum Event Standards (Table 1) into national championship hosting requirements.
- Adopt Event Guidelines and Working Conditions (Table 2) into national championship hosting requirements.

Provincial/Territorial Branches

- Support and deliver the Athletics in Canada officiating strategy within their province/territory.
- Assign or hire a staff person responsible for officiating development and coordination within the province/territory.
- Deliver the Athletics Canada Officials Pathway for Local, Regional and Provincial Level Officials and Provincial Referees including leading and hosting clinics as well as mentorship, evaluations, and upgrading.
    - Under the direction of Athletics Canada, delivers when requested, Athletics Canada Officials Pathway National Level Officials and Referee activities.
- Ensure adequate evaluation opportunities in order to meet the recommended timeline for officials' advancement.
- Recruit, develop and retain local officials and support them through the Pathway.
- Manage and promote annual awards for officials within the respective Province/Territory.
- Nominate officials for national awards.
- Adopt Minimum Event Standards (Table 1) into provincial/territorial competition sanctioning requirements.
- Adopt Event Guidelines and Working Conditions (Table 2) into provincial/territorial competition sanctioning requirements.

Limitations

In that the control to grant competition sanctions is held by Athletics Canada and is provided to the Branches under the Technical Rules of Athletics Canada, Athletics Canada reserves the right to authorize sanction authority to a Branch contingent on the Minimum Event Standards and Event Guidelines and Working Conditions outlined herein/below.

Guidelines and recommendations for non-stadia events will be developed in the future.

Table 1: Minimum Event Standards

Type of Event	Sanctioning Body	Officials	Chief	Referees	Results Eligibility	Meet Designation for Officials Credits
Local Meet	Provincial/ Territorial Branch	No Minimum	Minimum Regional	Provincial Official	Results NOT eligible for AC rankings	L
Prov/Terr Meet	Provincial/ Territorial Branch	Minimum Local	Minimum Regional	Provincial Referee or Provincial official acting as a Referee	Results are eligible for AC & WA Rankings*	P
National Meets **World Athletics Category C, D or E Meets** **Some Provincial/ Territorial Championships****	Provincial/ Territorial Branch & World Athletics	Minimum Regional	Minimum National	Minimum 3 National Referees	Results eligible for AC & WA Rankings	N
National Championship **World Athletics Category A and B Meets**	Provincial Territorial Branch & World Athletics	Minimum Provincial	Minimum National	National Referee assigned to all event disciplines	Results eligible for AC & WA Rankings	NC

* World Athletics rankings eligibility dependent on sanctioning application

* For the purposes of evaluation, officials one level below the minimum is acceptable.

** Some provincial/territorial championships may be considered N meets, provided they meet the criteria in the Meet Designation for Officials document.

Table 2: Event Guidelines and Working Conditions

Event Guidelines	Requirement
Shift Times	Shifts shall be no longer than 8 hours per official, per day. Each 8-hour shift should have at least two short breaks and one longer break for lunch, as appropriate during the meet schedule. (*Exceptions may apply for Provincial and National Championships or equivalents and issues related to weather delays*)
Shelter	Events must provide adequate shelter for officials that protect against anticipated weather conditions, including sun, rain, and wind.
Hydration & Food	Hydration shall be readily available to officials at all times. Nutritious and energizing snacks must also be provided, with reasonable accommodations made for dietary restrictions and allergy concerns
Travel	Travel to and from the event site must be supported, within reason, to ensure safe and timely arrival and departure for officials.
Standard Uniform	Officials should be provided with one standard uniform (e.g. white polo shirt) and name tag per year or as needed to wear at sanctioned events, regardless of level.

Equipment	To perform their duties effectively and safely, officials require access to appropriate tools and equipment.
	The following standard applies:
	• **Provision of Equipment**:
	  • All standard officiating equipment required to fulfill assigned roles (e.g., flags, measuring tapes, clipboards, stopwatches, radios, rulebooks) must be provided at no cost to the official.
	  • The Provincial/Territorial Branch is responsible for ensuring the availability of this equipment through the sanctioning process.

Feedback	There must be an opportunity for officials to provide feedback as part of the sanctioning process.

Definitions of officiating roles

1. **Technical Delegates**
    a. Ensure technical arrangements conform to rules and regulations.
    b. Approve event timetables, entry standards, and equipment.
    c. Issue technical regulations to competing members.
    d. Control entries and reject them for technical reasons.
    e. Determine qualifying standards and arrange event rounds.
    f. Handle unforeseen matters and deviations during the competition.
    g. Chair technical meetings and brief technical officials.
    h. Submit written reports before and after the competition.
2. **Gold Referee (Formerly International Technical Officials (ITOs)**
    a. WA to appoint a Chief ITO and assign ITOs to events.
    b. Ensure competition conforms to rules and regulations.
    c. Act as Referees for assigned events.
3. **International Race-Walking Judges (IRWJs)**
    a. Appointed for International Competitions.
    b. Must be World Athletics Level or Area Level International Race-Walking Judges.
4. **International Starters and International Photo Finish Judges**
    a. International Starter: Start races, supervise the Start Information System.
    b. International Photo Finish Judge: Supervise Photo Finish functions and act as Chief Photo Finish Judge.
5. **Jury of Appeal**
    a. Deal with appeals and competition matters referred to them.
    b. Consists of 3, 5, or 7 members, with a Chair and Secretary.
6. **Referees (Track, Throws, Jumps)**
    a. Ensure rules and regulations are observed.
    b. Rule on protests, objections, and unforeseen matters.
    c. Decide placings in races (competition) if judges cannot.
    d. Warn or exclude athletes for unsporting or improper behavior.
7. **Umpires (Running and Race-Walking Events)**
    a. Assist Referees by observing competition and reporting rule violations.
    b. Supervise relay race takeover zones.
8. **Section Head**
    a. Oversee a smaller scale group of officials in a particular area.

9. **Lap Scorers**
    a. Record laps completed by athletes in races longer than 1500m.
    b. Maintain a display of laps remaining and signal the final lap.
10. **Chief**
    a. Oversee officiating team in a particular area.
    b. Manage and appoint tasks of the judges/umpires in their respective discipline.
11. **Judges**
    a. Confirm order of finish in track and road events.
    b. Judge and record trials in field events.
12. **Start Coordinator, Starter, and Recallers**
    a. Start Coordinator: Allocate duties, supervise start team, ensure readiness for start.
    b. Starter: Ensure fair and equitable starts, control athletes on their marks.
    c. Recallers: Assist Starter and recall races for rule infringements.
13. **Starter's Assistants**
    a. Check athletes' readiness and ensure compliance with rules.
    b. Assemble athletes behind the start line and ensure readiness for the start.
14. **Call Room Judges**
    a. Ensure athletes comply with uniform, bib, and equipment rules.
    b. Supervise transit between Warm-up Area and competition area.
15. **Timekeepers, Photo Finish Judges, and Transponder Timing Judges**
    a. Timekeepers: Record times manually as backup for automatic systems.
    b. Photo Finish Judges: Operate Fully Automatic Timing and Photo Finish Systems.
    c. Transponder Timing Judges: Operate Transponder Timing Systems.
16. **Wind Gauge Operator**
    a. Measure and record wind velocity in applicable events.
17. **Measurement Judge (Scientific)**
    a. Supervise electronic or video distance measurement equipment.
    b. Ensure accurate measurements and certify equipment accuracy.
18. **Technical Manager**
    a. Ensure field event competition areas and equipment comply with rules.
    b. Oversee placement and removal of equipment.
    c. Check and mark personal implements permitted for competition.
19. **Competition Secretary and Technical Information Centre (TIC)**
    a. Collect and record event results.
    b. Ensure smooth communication between team delegations, organizers, and competition administration.