



Advice for New Referees

Welcome to the U.S. Soccer Referee Community

Congratulations on becoming a member of the United States Soccer Federation (USSF). There are about 140,000 referees in the country, and that number grows every year. There are more than 5000 referees just in Massachusetts! When you step onto the field for your first match, you may think you are all alone, but you have a very good team behind you. The Massachusetts State Referee Committee (MSRC) is responsible for delivering the referee program in our state. This document contains useful information and some advice to help new referees navigate the system.

Understanding the Laws of the Game

- Read and know the [Laws of the Game](#) and work to learn the correct interpretations.
- Know the generally accepted mechanics approved by the USSF and found in the [Guide to Procedures for Referees, Assistant Referees and 4th Officials](#). You should have received this booklet in your entry level course.
- Read the [Advice to Referees](#). More than just telling you what the Laws of the Game are, this book gives practical advice on *how* to referee.
- Know the local Rules of Competition. You can usually get this from your assignor.
 - Length of halves
 - Size of ball
 - Number of players
 - Substitutions
 - Penalty kicks or no penalty kicks
 - Direct free kicks allowed or only indirect free kicks
 - Offside, no offside
 - What you do with the game report
 - Uniform requirements
- As an inexperienced referee, you will not make all the right decisions. You will learn from experience and from working with more experienced referees.



Dress and act professional

- The MSRC has teamed with [The Soccer Spot](#) to provide special prices on referee gear. Complete kits and all accessories are available at discounted prices.
- [Official Sports](#) is a sponsor for the referee program of USSF.

Getting referee assignments

- Initial assignments will likely come from a youth league assignor and will be in the lower level games.
- Make sure you received the name of your local assignor during the entry level course. If you didn't, contact your instructor for the course and ask how you [find out who the assignor is](#) in your area. (There is a place to note your assignor's contact information at the end of this document.)
- When accepting more than one assignment in a day, make sure you allow enough time to travel to the next game.
- Make sure you let your assignor know what your game schedule looks like if you are playing and if you have any conflicts of interest with other teams, such as family members playing on or coaching teams in the same league.
- If you are interested in working as a referee at tournaments in your state, watch for a listing on the [Mass Youth Soccer website](#). The referee assignors for tournaments are usually listed, as well as a way to get in touch with them.
- Game fees: The game fees paid to referees vary from state to state, and sometimes even from league to league. You will be able to find out what the game fees are and how you get paid from your assignor and/or your area (district) referee administrator.



Things you will need to have

- You may need your 16 digit USSF identification number for tournaments. You will find this number on your referee account in the [State Referee Committee website](#), and on the ID card you receive in the mail after you have taken the course and registered. You will get a new card each year, but the number will always be the same. If you need your ID number before you receive your card, please contact your area referee administrator or your SRA. If they don't have it, then you may contact U.S. Soccer.
- A referee bag that should contain the following:
 - A watch with stopwatch functions – two watches is preferred, one for starting and stopping and one for keeping a running time in case you forget to start the first one.
 - Pens/pencils,
 - Notebook
 - Red and yellow cards
 - Tossing coins
 - Whistles – always have an extra in your bag
 - Flags for the Assistant Referees or Club Linesmen (if you are working alone)
 - Cold weather gear when the time of year makes it necessary
 - Street shoes and dry socks
 - A large plastic trash bag (to put your ref bag inside in case of rain)
 - Sunscreen
 - Snacks (energy bars are great!) if you are going to be doing more than one game.
 - Rubber bands or baggies to hold and separate player/coach cards for each team.
 - Water – don't forget to bring water.
- At the conclusion of the game, you may need to fill out a [game report](#). The report is typically mailed to the league where the match is played. Your assignor should be able to tell you where to send the report.

Staying up to date with annual Recertification

- Referees must register each year with U.S. Soccer through their State Referee Committee. Referees may need to meet some annual requirements in order to be recertified. The [Referee Administrative Handbook](#) tells you what you need to do to recertify.
- The email addresses for all Area Referee Administrators can be found at the [state website](#).
- Recertification takes place in the fall and winter months before the start of the spring playing season. Information about recertification and a link to pre-enroll in a clinic can be found at the [state website](#).
- Eventually you may wish to be considered for an [upgrade](#). You can find the criteria for upgrading from grade to grade in the [Referee Administrative Handbook](#), which you should receive at your entry level clinic.
- If you miss a year or more of registration, you may need to take a recertification course before being allowed to reregister. Contact the [State Director of Instruction](#) for guidance.

Resources

- [Laws of the Game](#) (and Laws of the Game Made Easy)
- [Guide to Procedures for Referees, Assistant Referees and 4th Officials](#)
- [Referee Administrative Handbook](#) – you will find the criteria for upgrading here, along with how to write misconduct reports and other valuable information about the Referee Program
- [Advice to Referees](#)
- Offside Made Easy
- [Position papers](#) – Most important ones are available at the [state website](#).
- [You Make the Call](#)
- [Ask a Referee](#)
- Many other training presentations are available at ussoccer.com/Referee Programs/Referee Development



Do You Need Questions Answered or Additional Advice?

Talk to your [State Referee Administrator](#), [State Youth Referee Administrator](#), [State Adult Referee Administrator](#), [State Director of Instruction](#), [State Director of Assessment](#) and [State Assignor Coordinator](#) for their guidance, as they are there to help you.

Information I Need to Have

The assignors for my area are:

_____ email: _____ phone: _____

_____ email: _____ phone: _____

My entry level instructors were:

_____ email: _____ phone: _____

_____ email: _____ phone: _____

My Area Referee Administrator is:

_____ email: _____ phone: _____

The State Referee Administrator is:

_____ email: SRA@massref.net phone: _____

The State Youth Referee Administrator is:

_____ email: SYRA@massref.net phone: _____

The local referee website is: http://www.massref.net

I can recertify for next year beginning (date) November (see website)

If I don't hear anything about recertification, I should contact:

My Area Administrator email: _____ phone: _____

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