

PSA Canada Host Club Instructions
Hosting International Judges, Decoys & Specialist Event Officials

Protection Sports Association (PSA)

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Purpose

These instructions are intended for Canadian PSA clubs hosting sanctioned events that require judges, certified decoys, or other approved specialist event officials to travel to Canada from another country.

The purpose is to provide host clubs with a standardized process for preparing the event and traveling officials for entry into Canada.

Following these procedures does not guarantee admission to Canada. The final determination regarding entry remains with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) officer at the port of entry.

1. Apply for CBSA Recognition of the Event

Canadian host clubs should submit their sanctioned PSA event information through the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) International Events and Convention Services Program and request recognition.

CBSA has advised PSA that, when a Canadian club already has multiple events scheduled at the same location during the year, the club may submit one registration request covering those events rather than submitting a separate request for each event.

When registering multiple known events at the same location, enter the first event date in the “Date of event” field and list all additional known event dates in the “Information on the event/meeting” section.

Most PSA clubs host only one event per year. If only one event is currently scheduled, simply register that event. Clubs should not list speculative or unconfirmed future event dates.

If an additional event is scheduled after a recognition letter has already been issued and it is unclear whether the existing recognition applies, the club should contact the CBSA International Events and Convention Services Program for guidance rather than assuming the new event is covered.

CBSA International Events and Convention Services Program Recognition Application:

[CBSA International Events and Convention Services Program Recognition Application](#)

The application should accurately identify:

- The Canadian host organization
- Protection Sports Association as the international amateur sporting association
- The name and nature of the sanctioned PSA competition
- Event dates and location
- Anticipated international participation
- International judges, certified decoys, or other specialist event officials expected to attend
- The functions those officials will perform
- Appropriate Canadian event contact information

When describing international PSA officials, use their actual PSA certification or position and clearly explain their function.

For a certified decoy, an appropriate description is:

“Certified PSA Decoy – a specialist event official responsible for safely and consistently presenting prescribed protection exercises to competitors under the direction of the presiding PSA judge.”

Do not assume that the person reviewing the application is familiar with the term “decoy.”

2. Obtain and Distribute the CBSA Letter of Recognition

If CBSA issues a Letter of Recognition, retain the letter with the club's event records and provide it only to appropriate individuals identified as attendees who require it in connection with their travel.

CBSA has specifically instructed that its Letter of Recognition should not be posted on the internet or provided to anyone who is not on the attendee list.

The recognition letter should therefore not be posted on:

- The PSA website
- Club websites
- Public social-media pages or groups
- Public event pages
- Other publicly accessible locations

Traveling international officials who are provided a copy should be advised that it is for use in connection with their travel to the recognized event and should not be redistributed.

Provide a complete copy to every international PSA official traveling to Canada for the event.

Officials should be instructed to carry the recognition letter with their other entry documentation and keep it readily accessible when crossing the border.

A CBSA Letter of Recognition assists in documenting the event and applicable procedures but does not constitute individual pre-approval or guarantee admission to Canada.

3. Prepare an Individual Invitation Letter for Each Official

The Canadian host club should prepare an individualized invitation letter for each international judge, certified decoy, or other specialist event official.

IRCC provides guidance concerning information that should be included in invitation letters:

[IRCC Guidance – Letter of Invitation](#)

PSA recommends using the standardized PSA Canadian Host-Club Invitation Letter template.

Each invitation should accurately identify:

- Official's full name
- Home address and country of residence
- PSA certification or official position
- Purpose of the visit
- Specific PSA event
- Canadian host organization
- Event location
- Event dates
- Anticipated arrival and departure dates
- Relationship between the official and host club
- Whether the official is receiving compensation
- Expenses the host club will pay or reimburse
- Canadian host contact information
- Confirmation that the individual is expected to leave Canada following the event

For certified decoys, identify the person by both the recognized PSA certification and the descriptive function:

“Certified PSA Decoy / Specialist Event Official”

or, when applicable:

“Senior PSA Decoy / Specialist Event Official”

4. Request a PSA Appointment & Credential Verification Letter

The host club should ensure each traveling international official obtains a PSA Official Appointment & Credential Verification Letter.

This is separate from the host-club invitation.

The Canadian host invitation establishes that the club is hosting the event and has invited the individual.

The PSA credential letter establishes that the individual:

- Holds the stated PSA certification
- Is in good standing
- Has been selected or appointed to the particular event
- Is qualified to perform the assigned official duties
- Is serving in the stated capacity
- Is not an employee of the Canadian host club
- Is serving without compensation when that is the actual arrangement

The PSA letter also provides organizational contact information should CBSA or IRCC wish to independently verify the person's credentials or appointment.

5. Accurately Document Compensation and Expenses

Host clubs must accurately describe all financial arrangements with international officials.

When an official receives no wages, professional fee, instructor fee, honorarium, or other compensation, the invitation should say so.

If the club is paying or reimbursing reasonable travel expenses, identify that separately.

Examples may include:

- Airfare or mileage

- Hotel accommodations
- Meals
- Rental vehicle
- Local transportation
- Other reasonable travel expenses

Do not characterize compensation as “expense reimbursement” if the individual is actually being paid for services.

Likewise, do not characterize legitimate reimbursement of travel expenses as salary or wages.

The documentation should accurately reflect the actual arrangement.

6. Distinguish Officiating From Seminars or Training

The standardized PSA Canada officiating documentation is intended for individuals traveling to perform the official functions described in their appointment and invitation.

If the individual will also:

- Teach a paid seminar
- Provide paid dog training
- Conduct private instruction
- Receive an instructor fee or honorarium
- Provide other professional or commercial services

the host club should not assume that the same immigration provisions applicable to officiating cover those additional activities.

Determine the applicable Canadian immigration requirements before the person travels.

If an official will participate in unpaid mentoring, evaluation, certification, or instructional activities in addition to officiating, accurately disclose those activities and seek guidance when there is uncertainty about their treatment.

7. Certified Decoys and Protective Sporting Equipment

International certified decoys may travel with personally owned specialized protective sporting equipment necessary for their official competition duties.

This may include:

- Protective bite suits
- Protective sleeves
- Hidden/concealed sleeves
- Other specialized protection-sport equipment

The host invitation and PSA documentation should make clear that this is personal protective sporting equipment required for the official's competition role.

When accurate, the documentation should establish that the equipment:

- Is required for the safe performance of the decoy's duties
- Is personally owned by the official
- Is not merchandise
- Is not being imported for sale, rental, or commercial distribution
- Will leave Canada with the official after the event

The existence of specialized equipment should not be concealed or minimized. Its purpose should be clearly and accurately explained.

8. Understand the Applicable Officiating Framework

R186(m) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations addresses judges, referees, and similar officials involved in international amateur sports competitions who may perform those functions without a work permit.

IRCC's published guidance concerning this provision is available here:

[IRCC – Judges, Referees and Similar Officials Working Without a Permit](#)

For PSA documentation, the relevant factual framework is:

- Protection Sports Association is the international amateur sporting association.
- The Canadian PSA club is the Canadian host organization.
- The sanctioned PSA trial is the international amateur sporting competition.
- PSA judges perform recognized judging functions.
- Certified PSA decoys perform prescribed specialist event-official functions under the direction of the presiding judge.
- Competitors participating in PSA amateur competition are not paid to compete.

Host clubs should establish these facts accurately rather than attempt to make an immigration determination themselves.

The ultimate determination regarding entry and the application of Canadian immigration requirements remains with the examining CBSA officer.

9. Provide the Complete Travel Packet to the Official

Before the official travels, the host club should verify that the individual has received or obtained:

- CBSA Letter of Recognition
- Individual Canadian Host-Club Invitation Letter
- PSA Official Appointment & Credential Verification Letter
- Certified PSA Decoy / Specialist Event Official Role & Equipment Explanation, when applicable
- Event premium or schedule
- Event venue information

- Hotel/lodging information
- Canadian host contact information
- Information accurately explaining expense reimbursement
- PSA Canada Travel Checklist & Instructions

Do not wait until the official is traveling or has reached the border to assemble these materials.

10. Designate a Canadian Event Contact

The host club should designate a knowledgeable person who can be reached while international officials are traveling.

That person should:

- Have access to the event documentation
- Understand why the international official has been invited
- Know the official's role
- Understand the compensation/expense arrangement
- Have access to the CBSA Letter of Recognition
- Be prepared to verify the event if contacted by CBSA or IRCC

Provide the international official with the contact person's direct telephone number and email address.

The contact should monitor their telephone while the official is expected to be crossing the border.

11. Keep Descriptions Consistent

The CBSA recognition application, host invitation, PSA appointment letter, event premium, and official's explanation at the border should describe the same activity.

For an unpaid certified decoy appointed solely to officiate a PSA competition, consistent terminology may include:

“Certified PSA Decoy / Specialist Event Official”

“Unpaid volunteer sporting official”

“Sanctioned international amateur PSA sporting competition”

“Prescribed competition duties performed under the direction of the presiding PSA judge”

“Personally owned protective sporting equipment”

Do not coach travelers to provide misleading answers. The objective is accurate and consistent communication.

12. Recommended Timeline

As soon as the international official is selected:

- Confirm the official's full name, PSA certification, contact information, anticipated travel dates, and compensation/expense arrangements.
- Begin the CBSA International Events and Convention Services Program recognition process.

After CBSA recognition is received:

- Provide the Letter of Recognition to the traveling officials.
- Prepare individualized host-club invitation letters.
- Request PSA appointment and credential letters.

Several weeks before travel:

- Verify that the official has received the complete documentation packet.
- Confirm lodging, return travel, and Canadian host contact information.
- Confirm whether specialized equipment will be transported.

Several days before travel:

- Reconfirm the traveler's documentation.

- Ensure the Canadian event contact knows approximately when the official will cross the border.
- Ensure the contact will be reachable if CBSA needs event verification.

Host Club Final Check

Before an international official departs for Canada, the host club should be able to answer “yes” to each of the following:

- Did we register the club’s applicable event(s) with the CBSA International Events and Convention Services Program?
- Did we provide the official with the CBSA Letter of Recognition once issued?
- Did we prepare an individualized invitation letter?
- Is the official's PSA certification and role accurately described?
- Did the official obtain a PSA appointment and credential verification letter?
- Are all compensation and expense arrangements accurately documented?
- If the official is a decoy, is the specialist role clearly explained?
- If the decoy is bringing a bite suit or other equipment, is its purpose documented?
- Does the official have the event schedule/premium and return-travel information?
- Does the official have a Canadian contact who will be reachable during entry?
- Are the descriptions in all documents consistent?
- Have any paid seminars, instruction, or other activities been separately evaluated rather than assumed to be covered by the officiating documentation?

Questions or Credential Verification

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