

2020 – 21 USA DANCE COMPETITIONS

SAFETY RULES & GUIDELINES



VERSION 11.16.20

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Rules are designed to help dancers avoid injury, while allowing for many skills that can be executed safely with proper training by a qualified coach.
2. **We want to ensure a penalty free experience for your team.** Therefore, if you have **any** questions regarding our safety rules or would like to submit a video/music for review prior to the event, please contact mkrieger@varsity.com.

COSTUMING/FOOTWEAR/JEWELRY

1. Shoes are not required when performing, but participants that wear shoes must have soft, non-marking soles. Penalty of marking floor is disqualification. The performing school will be responsible for any charges that may occur as a result of damage to any floor. Performers who do not wear shoes while performing do so at their own risk. Shoes are required at all other times when not directly performing.
2. Costuming must be well secured and appropriate for a family friendly environment.
3. Jewelry and accessories are allowed, provided they are secured appropriately to the dancer.

ROUTINE TIMING

1. Timing begins with the first note of music or movement and ends with the last note of music or movement.
2. **Solo Routine:** Up to 2 minutes (maximum) per routine - entrance and exit up to 15 seconds each.
3. **ALL Dance, Military, Hip Hop, Jazz, Lyrical, Kick, Dance/Drill, Co-Ed Dance, All-Male and Dance/Pom divisions:** Up to 3 minutes (maximum) per routine - entrance and exit up to 30 seconds each.
4. **Character Dance:** Up to 3 minutes (maximum) per routine - entrance and exit up to 45 seconds each.
5. **Prop & Novelty:** Up to 3 minutes (maximum) per routine - entrance and exit up to 1 ½ minutes each.

LIFTS/STUNTS/PARTNERING

1. **Horizontal Lift** – A horizontal lift occurs when the lifted dancer's head is in line with his/her hips. While the base is standing on the performance floor, this type of lift **is legal if** the base(s) maintain direct contact with the lifted dancer throughout the entire skill above the bases' head level, **and** at least one base maintains direct contact with the head/neck/upper body of lifted dancer.

2. An **Upside Down Lift** occurs when the lifted dancer's head is below his/her hips. While the base is standing, this type of lift **is legal if** the base(s) maintain direct contact with the lifted dancer throughout the entire skill above the bases' head level, **and** at least one base maintains direct contact with the head/neck/upper body of lifted dancer.
3. Standing or stepping on another dancer's torso (whether directly or indirectly) is legal, as long as the lifted dancer is physically supported by at least two other dancers. The torso is defined as the front or back of the upper body area, shoulders to hips.
4. Elevators (lifted dancer's feet are being held at shoulder level by the bases with the dancer in an upright position), thigh stands, chairs sits, and shoulder sits are permitted.
5. The following **cheer based stunts are not permitted** and will result in routine **disqualification**:
 - Extended cheer stunts (the lifted dancer is extended in an upright position over the base(s) who maintain fully extended arms)
 - Pyramids and basket tosses

INDIVIDUAL SKILLS/TUMBLING

1. Front tucks, back tucks (including toe pitch back tucks) and/or layouts are not permitted.
2. Airborne skills may not jump from a standing or squatting position backwards onto the neck, back, shoulders and/or hands. Any "kip up" motion must initiate from the back/shoulder area touching the ground. (NOTE: This rule refers specifically and only to the "rubber band"/"bronco" kip up skill.)
3. If a team chooses to use non-hands free poms for aerial cartwheels they **must be moved to one hand**. If a dancer touches down with the hand that holds both poms during the skill, a 3-point penalty will be assessed.

APPROPRIATENESS

1. All routine choreography, movements, and costuming should be appropriate and entertaining for a **family friendly environment and for audience members of all ages**.
2. Any movement(s) implying something indecent, offensive, or sexual in content are not allowed.
3. Music cannot contain inappropriate words, phrases, and/or sounds, in any language; this includes direct and/or specific references to alcohol (ex: "sipping champagne"), pejorative words (ex: "damn" or "hell"), illegal activities for minors (ex: "smoking cigarettes"), acts of violence against others (ex: "put a gun to my head and took the shot"), sexual references and/or racial slurs. Inappropriate examples provided above are included to help illustrate potential violations. Violations are not limited to those specific examples.
4. It is the coach's responsibility to screen all music to ensure that it is appropriate for the students, audience, and community.
5. Explicitly inappropriate music/lyrics, costuming and/or movements will incur a **3-point penalty per infraction**.

PROPS / SETS

1. Handheld and wearable props (individually used and carried by dancers i.e. ball, box, or scarf) are permitted in ALL divisions.
2. Sets and backdrops are now only permitted in the Dance, Prop, Character and/or Novelty divisions. Sets and backdrops may no longer be used in Lyrical, Hip Hop, Kick, Dance/Drill, Co-Ed, Military, Solo, Dance/Pom, and All Male.
3. All props must be non-marking. Padding and/or rubber wheels must be used. Penalty is disqualification. The performing school will be responsible for any charges that may occur as a result of damage to the floor.
4. Any props/sets/accessories must be able to fit through a standard door measuring 7 feet high x 63 inches wide. Once your entrance and/or exit time begins, teams may start to assemble props/sets to any size they wish, but must be able to assemble all props/sets within the entrance and exit time allotted. Props may be assembled prior to entrance time and before entering the gym only if they meet the 7 feet high x 63 inches wide requirement after assembly. Otherwise, teams **cannot assemble props/sets/backdrops until they are called on to the performance floor and their entrance time begins.** All teams must enter and exit the gym with ALL props/sets at the time of performance. Storing of props/sets in the venue (before performance or after) will not be permitted, unless otherwise noted in competition information. **Penalty is 10 points per prop infraction.**
5. If a prop/set/accessory stands higher than 4 feet from the performance floor, a dancer can only jump, tumble, or fall from the prop/set/accessory at the point of 4 feet or below. USA Competition Directors reserve the right to measure assembled props.

At Varsity Spirit, the health and safety of our athletes, coaches, employees, families and friends is our top priority. We are diligently monitoring the Coronavirus/COVID-19 and closely watching official information from health authorities, such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as it relates to our larger community and our events, camps and competitions.

We understand that as we move into competition season the rules and regulations put on by your State and local government, as well as the CDC, may affect how you can approach your season and choreography. This may look very different depending on where your team is located, if you are allowed to have contact with your team, if you're required to wear masks and maintain social distancing, or any other requirements. Our suggestion is to continue to adhere to your state and local guidelines at the time of the event, including but not limited to social distancing measures when it comes to lifts/partnering, pom passes, and/or any other choreographed contact.

The United Spirit Association is taking the proper steps in training our judging panel on how this may effect what is seen on the competition floor in order in to provide the same quality experience regardless of restrictions in place for your team. This will remain in place for the 2020/21 season. We will continue to monitor the situation closely.

SAFETY RULES SUBMISSIONS

We want to help ensure a penalty free experience for your team! Submitting a video is the only way to review a routine for potential safety violation prior to them being performed at a USA competition. For all legality questions regarding specific performance elements, you may email a video that contains the skill in question.

All emailed videos must include the following:

1. Name of the **School** and **Division** in the *Subject Line* of the email
2. Videos should be in either Quicktime formats (.mov) or MPEG-4 Format (.mp4).
3. Clear, close up view of skill in question
4. **Do not send the entire routine**, only the skill(s) in question
5. Include your name, team name, division, and phone number in the body of the email
6. USA will also review any music and/or questionable lyrics prior to USA competitions.
7. All video submissions must be emailed to mkrieger@varsity.com
8. All safety video submissions for one-day events must be submitted 14 days or more prior to the competition date.

***Note that submission of a routine and/or its elements does not preclude a team from being assessed a penalty while at a specific USA competition, as performances from the video submission may differ from those executed on the competition floor. Submission of a routine does not guarantee that it can be reviewed.**

Please contact Melanie Krieger (mkrieger@varsity.com) if you need clarification on any of the above safety rules.

