



2026-2027 SONG/POM, SONG/JAZZ & PEP/SHORT FLAG SAFETY RULES

All updates and changes for the 2026-2027 season are denoted in **red text**.

Routines must also follow the rules listed in “2026-2027 Spirit Rules & Regulations” and the “2026-2027 High School Song/Pom, Song/Jazz and Pep/Short Flag Division Limitations”. Please refer to the “2026-2027 High School Song/Pom, Song/Jazz and Pep/Short Flag Glossary of Terms” for rules and skills terminology. All documents listed can be found within the Competitions tab under Divisions, Rules & Scoring for Spirit Divisions.

Song/Pom, Song/Jazz and Pep Flag videos and any specific skill and safety questions that pertain to the 2026-2027 Division Limitations or 2026-2027 Safety Rules should be submitted using the following form: [USA Song/Pom Legality Inquiry Form](#)

Competition Routine Guidelines

1. For Song/Pom divisions, a school uniform or a costume may be worn. Costuming is allowed but not required.
2. When standing at attention, apparel must cover the midriff (front of the body). If a violation occurs, a deduction will be incurred (Please refer to USA Spirit Rules & Regulations - General Rules).
3. All participants must wear soft-soled, non-marking shoes on one or two feet while competing. Shoes must have a solid sole and cover the toe and heel.
 - a. Exception: Half-sole shoes/dance paws/turners are acceptable in the Song/Pom and Song/Jazz categories. Performers who wear half-sole shoes/dance paws/turners while performing do so at their own risk. Shoes that cover the toe and heel are required at all other times when not directly performing). If damage to any floor occurs, the performing school will be responsible for any charges that may result due to these damages.
4. Jewelry and accessories are allowed, provided they are secured appropriately to the dancer.
5. Support braces, etc., which are hard and unyielding or have rough edges or surfaces must be appropriately covered.
6. Props are not allowed. A prop is any physical object used to enhance the overall effect and or theme of the routine. (Exception: pom or pep/short flag)

7. Hands Free Poms: The use of hands-free poms will be allowed. Hands-free Poms are specifically made so that performers do not have to hold the poms but rather the poms are affixed to the performers' hand. "Proper use" means bars cannot be in palm of the hand and only an elastic band can be between the supporting hand and performance surface making it possible to safely execute skills. A hair tie, rubber band, or tying pom strings/pieces together will not be counted as a hands-free pom.

Executed By Individuals - Inverted Skills & Tumbling

Please note that any or all inverted skills and tumbling are not required in any category. If choreographed into routine, please be sure to follow the guidelines below.

1. Inverted Skills: Non airborne skills are allowed (Example: Headstand).
2. Skills with hip over head rotation:
 - a. With hand support are not allowed while holding poms or props in supporting hand(s).
 - i. **Example: headspring, cartwheel, front/back walkover**
 - ii. Exception: Forward rolls, backward rolls and skills executed with the proper use of hands-free poms. See "Hands Free Poms" competition routine guidelines #7.
 - b. Non airborne skills are allowed and are limited to 3 connected skills. Example: 3 consecutive cartwheels are allowed; 4 consecutive cartwheels are not allowed.
 - c. Airborne skills with hand support may not be airborne in approach but may be airborne in descent if the approach is non-airborne.
 - i. **Example: Round offs and front handsprings are permitted but cannot be connected to any other skill.**
 - ii. Exception: Standing back handsprings are only permitted in the Advanced Song/Pom, Advanced Song/Jazz and Song/Pom Game Day All In One divisions but cannot be connected to any other skill.
 - iii. Dive rolls are not allowed.
 - d. Airborne skills without hand support are not allowed.
 - i. Exception: Aerial/Side Somis, Front Aerials & Butterfly Aerials are only permitted in the Advanced Song/Pom, Advanced Song/Jazz and Song/Pom Game Day divisions but cannot be connected to any other skill.
 - ii. If a team chooses to use non hands-free poms for Aerial/Side Somis & Front Aerials they **must be moved to one hand**. If a dancer fails to move both poms to one hand or touches down with the hand that holds both poms during the skill, a penalty will be assessed.

3. Simultaneously hip over head rotations are not permitted in any division level.
4. Simultaneous tumbling over or under another dancer that includes hip over head rotation by both dancers is not allowed.
5. Dropping (from being completely airborne) to the knee, thigh, back, shoulder, seat, front or head onto the performing surface are not allowed unless the dancer first bears weight on the hand(s) or foot/feet.
6. Landing in a push up position onto the performance surface from a jump in which the legs are in front of the body and swing behind are not allowed.
7. Airborne skills without hip over head rotation may not jump from a standing or squatting position with backward momentum landing onto the neck, shoulders and hands.
 - a. Any kip up motion must initiate from the back/shoulder area touching the ground.
 - b. Kip ups are not allowed while holding poms or props.
 - i. Exception: The proper use of hands-free poms for kip ups is allowed. See “Hands Free Poms” competition routine guidelines #7.

Executed By Groups or Pairs - Lifts and Partnering

Please note that any or all lifts and partnering are not required in any category. If choreographed into routine, please be sure to follow the guidelines below.

1. Lifting with poms or pep/short flags are allowed.
2. The Executing Dancer must maintain contact with a Supporting Dancer who is always in direct contact with the performance surface.
 - a. Exception: Kick Line Leaps).
3. When a skill is above hip level, at least one Supporting Dancer must maintain contact with the Executing Dancer until the Executing dancer returns to the performance surface.
4. Hip over-head rotation of the Executing Dancer(s) is allowed provided contact between the Executing Dancer and at least one Supporting Dancer(s) must be maintained until the Executing Dancer returns to the performance surface or is returning to the upright position.
5. Elevators, thigh stands, shoulder sits, and chair sits are allowed.
6. Extensions, pyramids, and basket tosses are not allowed.

7. A Vertical Inversion is allowed provided contact between the Executing Dancer and at least one Supporting Dancer(s) must be maintained until the Executing Dancer returns to the performance surface or is returning to the upright position.
 - a. When the height of the Executing Dancer's shoulders exceeds shoulder-level there is at least one additional dancer to spot who does not bear the weight of the Executing Dancer.
 - i. Exception: When there are 3 Supporting Dancers an additional spot is not required.

Groups & Pairs - Dismounts to The Performance Surface

Please note that any or all dismounts to the performance surface are not required in any category. If choreographed into routine, please be sure to follow the guidelines below.

1. Dismounts are allowed provided:
 - a. At the highest point of the dismount, the Executing Dancer's hips may not elevate above head level and the Executing Dancer must land on their foot/feet.
 - b. The Executing Dancer's hips may not cross the vertical axis while airborne and inverted.
(Clarification: while free of contact from both the performance surface and other performers.)
 - c. The Executing Dancer is not supine or inverted when released.
2. Toe pitches are not allowed.

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Any additional questions may be sent to USADanceRules@varsity.com.