

VOLLEYBALL CANADA GUIDELINES

OPEN AND OBSERVABLE ENVIRONMENTS (RULE OF 2)

Volleyball Canada (VC) endorses the Coaching Association of Canada's (CAC's) Responsible Coaching Movement and all participants of VC events, activities, and meetings are encouraged to adhere to these best practice guidelines.

(www.coach.ca/responsiblecoaching)

Open, observable, and justifiable interactions and communications are strongly recommended to foster safety, enhance protection, and help reduce vulnerability of both the athlete and adult(s) in a position of trust.

CAC's **Rule of Two** states that there will always be two screened and safety-trained adults with a participant, especially a minor athlete, when in a potentially vulnerable situation.



Vulnerable situations include but are not limited to:

- Closed doors meetings
- Medical treatments
- Travel to and from trainings, competitions, events, or activities
- Any training or competitive environments without a second coach or responsible adult present (in the gym, in the weight room, etc.)
- Electronic communications

VC's Open and Observable Environments:

“Open and Observable Environments” is VC’s version of Rule of 2. As in Rule of 2, this practice still involves making meaningful and concerted efforts to avoid situations where a person in authority (coach, official, staff member, IST member etc.) might be alone with an athlete and/or vulnerable individual.

The name refers to the fact that interactions between an individual and an individual who is in a position of trust/authority should be in an environment or space that is both “open” and “observable” to others.

What is an 'open' environment?

- An open environment is an environment that is not closed or concealed from others.
- Interactions should not take place behind closed doors or in secluded locations.
- Others should be aware the interaction is taking place.

What is an 'observable' environment?

- An observable environment is a space where others can see or take note of the interaction.

Before interacting with someone ask yourself:

- Is this an open interaction?
- Are we in a closed or secluded place?
- Who knows this meeting/interaction is taking place?
- Does the athlete (or individual in a position of lesser power) have an easy and accessible exit path?
- Is this interaction observable?
- Is anyone else with us?
- Can anyone see us?
- What about hear us?

At the national level, Volleyball Canada is committed to creating open and observable environments at all national team events, including training camps and competitions, as well as at high performance centres. Closed-door meetings can only take place if there are two screened persons in authority with an individual as per the Rule of 2.

Good General Implementation Practices:

- A person in authority is never alone and out of sight with an individual without another screened person (coach, parent, staff member or volunteer) present.
- Allow the training environment to be open to observation.
- Ensure a minor participant rides in a vehicle with two screened adults present.
- Consider the gender of the participant(s) when selecting the screened coaches, staff and volunteers who are present for a closed meeting.
- **Eliminate one-to-one electronic messaging.** Ensure that all communications are sent to the group and/or include parents (for minors) or other certified coaches and/or staff members.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What are some of the ways that I, as an adult in a position of trust, can help support VC's Open and Observable Environments?

- Recognize collective responsibility and collaborate with others to ensure an environment that is safe and inclusive for all participants.
- Ensure an open, observable, and justifiable environment throughout all interactions between adults in a position of authority and athletes, including but not limited to training, competition, and travel.
- Establish, monitor, and reinforce clear, appropriate, and consistent boundaries with athletes of all ages.
- Eliminate one-to-one electronic messaging. Ensure that all communications are sent to the group and/or include a parent, coach, and/or team staff.
- Self-identify situations during training, competitions or other volleyball activities that may put yourself or athletes in a vulnerable position and consider ways to avoid or alter the environment to promote safety.
- When travel is necessary, try to avoid situations where there is only one coach, integrated support team member, or other relevant personnel with a single athlete and consider the demographics of your athletes to ensure appropriate composition of staff.
- Shared accommodations (i.e., hotel room) between an athlete(s) and their coach, integrated support team member, or other relevant personnel is not appropriate or permitted.

How can a coach have a private conversation with an athlete?

Coaches and athletes can have a one-to-one conversation in an open and observable environment such as in the corner of the gymnasium, in a café, in a glass-walled office, outside the gymnasium in an open location, as just a few examples. If the topic is sensitive in nature, the coach should include another coach, support staff member or parent in the meeting with the athlete. A closed-door meeting can take place if a second safety trained adult is present at all times.

My athletes like to communicate with me directly electronically?

If an athlete sends a coach a message directly, the coach should include another coach, parent, or support staff member in the response. A good practice is to pre-establish a message group with coaches and support staff already included and provide this to athletes for sending communications to coaches.

How does this apply for medical treatments?

While there are circumstances where one on one medical treatment may be necessary due to the injury or treatment type, when at all possible medical staff should have their interactions take place in open and observable spaces.