

# Rulebook

## 2025-2026 School Year

The Texas Public Safety Association (TPSA) is committed to providing fair and competitive events for all participants. The policies outlined in this rulebook cover topics such as dress code, electronic devices, grievances, agreements, dishonesty, event check-in, and more.

It is essential that all participants follow the TPSA competition policies to maintain a level playing field and ensure a fair competition. Adherence to the policies helps to prevent any issues or disputes that may arise during the competition and ensures that all participants have a positive and enjoyable experience.

In summary, the TPSA competition policies provide structure and fairness for all participants and are an essential aspect of the competition experience. Failure to follow these policies may result in disqualification and negatively impact the competition for everyone involved.

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## **Eligibility**

### **Eligibility to Participate**

- Students participating in TPSA must be enrolled in the 8th-12th grades of a Texas public, private or charter school that offers courses within the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) LPS Pathway and at least 13 years of age.
- Competitors must be active members of the Texas Public Safety Association and in good standing with the Texas Public Safety Association in accordance with the bylaws.

### **Membership Agreements**

- All participants of TPSA activities must complete the membership agreements before attending/participating in any event.
- All members must have their agreements on file with TPSA to gain access to conference registration.

- Members who do not have an agreement on file will NOT appear in the Conference Registration System.
- Members under the age of 18 must complete the agreement with a Parent/Legal Guardian.
- Members will begin to receive emails to complete their agreements once they have been subscribed/quoted/invoiced for their membership.

## Conferences

### Regional Conference

Regional Conferences serve as initial competitions where schools within a designated region compete against each other. To qualify for the State Conference, individual competitors or teams must achieve a minimum score of 60 in their event and place in the Top 3 of their event. The top three competitors or teams, per competitive event, will be awarded medals. Advisors of these top-performing competitors or teams will also receive medals in recognition of their guidance and support.

### State Conference

The State Conference is a comprehensive event designed to foster learning, networking, and collaboration among participants. The conference agenda includes an Opening Ceremony, a Keynote Address, State-Level Competitive Events, Student-Centric Activities, and Advisor Breakout Sessions, culminating in a Closing Ceremony and Awards Presentation. This event serves as a critical platform for participants to engage in meaningful interactions, acquire new skills and knowledge, and celebrate achievements in the field of public safety. It is an invaluable opportunity for both personal and professional development, as well as for building a sense of community among future public safety professionals.

### Conference Fees

- Regional Conferences
  - Early: \$45
  - Regular: \$55
  - Late: \$65
  - Refer to specific region for dates
- State Conference
  - Regular: \$65
  - Late: \$100
  - Refer to state information for dates

### Payment Policies

- Payment must be received for each attendee registered regardless of whether the attendee attends the conference.
- Chapters that fail to submit payment for each registered attendee shall not be allowed to attend or register for any activities/conferences/events until the balance is paid.
- All payments made towards invoices are non-refundable; there are no exceptions to this policy.

## Conference Invoice Policies

- Chapter advisors understand that payment must be received for each attendee registered in the system regardless of whether the attendee attends the conference.
- Chapters that fail to submit payment for each registered attendee shall not be allowed to compete at regional or state competitions.
- Payment must be received in full 30 days from the date of invoice or 48 hours before competition, whichever comes first. Chapters not paid in full by the deadline will not be allowed to attend.
- All payments made towards invoices are non-refundable; there are no exceptions to this policy.

## Student-to-Advisor Ratio Policy

To ensure the safety, supervision, and well-being of all participants, TPSA requires a minimum 15:1 student-to-advisor ratio at all TPSA events. Each chapter must provide an adequate number of advisors or chaperones to meet this ratio before students are allowed to participate. Chapters that fail to meet the required ratio may be restricted from competing or participating until proper supervision is arranged. Advisors are expected to remain on-site and accessible at all times to provide oversight, respond to emergencies, and support student conduct in accordance with TPSA guidelines.

## Competition Practice Policy

To ensure a safe, professional, and orderly environment at all TPSA competitions:

- Regional Competitions: Competitors are not permitted to practice, rehearse, run event scenarios, or actively debrief scenarios anywhere on the premises.
- State Competitions: Competitors are not permitted to practice, rehearse, run event scenarios, or actively debrief scenarios in hallways, stairwells, or parking lots.

This policy is in place to maintain safety and preserve the integrity of all competitive events. Failure to follow this policy may result in a warning or disqualification at the discretion of the Competition Governance Team.

## Competitive Events

The Texas Public Safety Association offers a diverse range of competitive events designed to assess and enhance your readiness for careers in public safety. These events fall into three main categories: Roleplay, Skills Assessment, and Prepared Events. Whether you're acting out real-world scenarios, demonstrating specific skills, or presenting a researched project, each event type provides a unique platform to showcase your abilities. This will help you and your advisors understand what to expect in each type of event, allowing you to prepare effectively for competition.

### Roleplay

Roleplay events challenge you to apply your knowledge and skills in simulated real-world scenarios. You'll be given a situation or problem and asked to act out a solution, adopting a specific role or character.

Example: In a SWAT roleplay event, you'll be presented with a scenario requiring a SWAT response. Judges will evaluate your teamwork, communication skills, and decision-making abilities under pressure.

## **Skills Assessment**

Skills Assessment events focus on your proficiency in specific skills. You'll be tasked with completing challenges that demonstrate your mastery in a particular area.

Example: In a fingerprinting skills assessment, you'll be given a set of fingerprints to analyze. Judges will assess the accuracy and thoroughness of your analysis.

## **Prepared**

Prepared events are designed to evaluate your ability to research, plan, and execute a task. You'll be given a prompt and asked to develop a product, which you'll present to a panel of judges.

Example: In the Facility Design prepared events, you'll be tasked with designing a new public safety facility. Judges will evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of your design, as well as your presentation skills

## **Registration**

- Competitors can compete in up to 2 competitive events per conference.
- See event guidelines for the team size of team events.
- See event guidelines for the maximum number of entries per school.

## **Event Logistics**

### **Competition Governance Team**

The Competition Governance Team is a specialized body within the Texas Public Safety Association at each conference designed to ensure the integrity and fairness of all TPSA competitions. This team comprises one Board of Directors member, one Executive Council member, and a Regional Representative for regional competitions. For state-level competitions, the team expands to include two Board of Directors members and three Executive Council members. Their key responsibilities include reviewing grievances, overseeing the scoring process, and disqualifying participants when necessary. If any team member feels strongly about an issue that needs broader deliberation, they can move the matter to be escalated to the full Board of Directors and Executive Council for a comprehensive vote. This structure ensures a balanced and equitable resolution of any challenges or conflicts during competitions.

## **Scoring**

The Texas Public Safety Association (TPSA) aims to provide a fair and transparent scoring system to ensure the integrity and credibility of our competitions. This policy covers the process for scoring, handling ties, advancing to the state competition, and addressing potential integrity violations.

(a) All scores from individual judges will be averaged to determine a competitor or team's final score for each event. This process ensures fairness and objectivity in scoring.

(b) Ties are not allowed for a numerically scored event. In the event of a tie, judges are required to review and adjust their scorecards to break the tie. The revision should be based on the team or individual's overall performance, paying close attention to aspects like adherence to safety protocols, accuracy in executing tasks, professionalism, teamwork, and communication. Under no circumstances should ties be broken based on time. All options must be exhausted to break a tie, in the event that a tie is still unable to be broken the Competition Governance Team for that conference must approve a tied placement.

(c) A minimum score of 60 points is required for a team or individual to advance from a Regional Conference to the State Conference. Competitors scoring below this threshold can still receive a placement in the regional competition but will not qualify for the State Conference. In the event that a competitor or team receives an averaged score of 59.50- 59.99 and places 1st thru 3rd at Regional Conference the competitor or team shall advance to the State Conference. Competitors or teams who receive an averaged score of 59.00- 59.49 and place 1st thru 3rd shall not advance to State Conference.

## **Standard Operating Procedure for Integrity Violations**

In the event that the integrity of a competition event is compromised, the following standard operating procedure (SOP) should be followed by the onsite Competition Governance Team:

(a) Any potential integrity violations should be immediately reported to the Competition Governance Team. This can be done by a judge, TPSA official, competitor, or any other participant in the competition.

(b) The Competition Governance Team will review the incident, which may include interviewing involved parties, examining scorecards, and evaluating any available evidence.

(c) The Competition Governance Team may consult with judges, officials, and potentially independent experts to understand the nature and severity of the violation.

(d) The Competition Governance Team will decide on the appropriate response, if needed, which may be to disqualify the affected team or individual or repeat the competition event.

(e) All decisions made by the Competition Governance Team will be communicated in a timely and transparent manner to all affected parties.

This scoring policy and SOP aim to ensure fair competition, maintain the integrity of our events, and uphold the principles of the Texas Public Safety Association.

## **Awards and Recognition**

The Texas Public Safety Association takes great pride in recognizing and celebrating the achievements of its members. Our awards and recognitions are designed to honor the hard work, dedication, and skills demonstrated by competitors. Below are the details of the awards and recognition you can expect at different levels of competition.

### **Award Categories**

#### **Regional Awards**

- Competitors: Each competitor who places 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place in their event will receive a medal to commemorate their achievement.
- Advisors: One advisor per winning entry/team will also be honored with a medal, recognizing their invaluable guidance and support.

#### **State Awards**

- Competitors: Medals will be awarded to each competitor who excels in their respective events.
- Advisors: Each winning entry or team will receive a trophy to be displayed at their school, symbolizing their collective excellence and teamwork.

#### **Award Criteria**

For each competitive event, awards are awarded to 1st place, 2nd place, and 3rd place unless otherwise noted in the respective competitive events guidelines. Competitors must meet these criteria to be eligible for the aforementioned awards.

#### **Award Ceremony**

The award ceremony is an integral part of both the Regional and State Conferences. It is highly recommended that all participants and advisors attend the ceremony to celebrate the achievements of all involved.

#### **Shipping Policy for Awards**

If you choose to leave the conference prior to the award ceremony, you will be responsible for any shipping charges incurred to receive your medals or trophies. Please notify the event organizers in advance if you will be unable to attend the ceremony.

# Conduct and Ethics

## Code of Conduct

Competitors must be familiar with and adhere to the Texas Public Safety Association Bylaws and Code of Conduct.

## Scenario Secrecy

The scenario is a secret topic. Professional ethics demand that competitors **DO NOT** discuss or reveal the secret topic until after the conference has concluded. Violation of the ethics rules will result in disqualification and revocation of Texas Public Safety Association membership.

## Content Standards

### Independent Work

Except for team events, competitors must work independently, without assistance from judges, teachers, fellow students, or observers. Any attempt to gain an unfair advantage will be considered a violation of the Ethics rules.

### Content Selection

Competitors should use good judgment and discretion when planning event content. Procedures, demonstrations, displays or speeches with content that could be interpreted as insensitive or of a highly personal nature should be avoided and may not be judged.

### Changing Event Content

When advancing from one level of competition to the next (such as from regionals to state competitive events), except where expressly prohibited, competitors are allowed to change/improve their speech, notebook, portfolio, or any other event products as a part of the competitive event. All changes must be made prior to published deadlines.

### Content from Year to Year

Content for all competitive events must be unique and new each membership/school year. Content used in a previous membership year's competition may not be used again. The intent of the competition is to use new material every year. If a violation of this rule is discovered, the competitor will be disqualified.

### Academic Integrity and Anti-Cheating Policies

The Texas Public Safety Association has adopted a **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY** regarding competitive dishonesty. Competitors who have violated the integrity of a competitive event will be removed from all registered competitive events. Substitutions will not be allowed if the removed competitor is on a team; please note this will disqualify the team from their competitive event. If an advisor has violated the

event's integrity, then the school and all members will be disqualified. To report competitive dishonesty, please reference the Grievance Policy.

Plagiarism, copyright violation and falsification of information are prohibited. Any attempt to gain an unfair advantage will not be tolerated. Violation of the code of conduct or bylaws will result in disqualification.

## **Electronic Devices**

The purpose of the TPSA Electronic Device Policy is to establish the rules and conditions that Competitors, Advisors, and any individual associated with the managing or execution of competitive events must accept in order to participate in events sanctioned by the Texas Public Safety Association.

- Electronic devices are defined as cell phones and smart/electronic devices of any kind, including anything that can be used to record, transmit, or receive anything that may enable a competitor to gain an unfair advantage.
- This includes but is not limited to; phones, cameras, body cameras, smart watches, fitness trackers, GPS trackers, drones, nanotech, working radios, etc. This does not include digital watches designed to only keep track of time.
- Please note that the Executive Council reserves the right to add additional restrictions at competitions and events, these restrictions will be clearly marked with signs, tapes, barriers, etc.

## **Devices Are Permitted When**

- Competitors, Advisors, and any individual associated with the managing or execution of competitive events are located within the boundaries of the general event holding area. (e.g. Large Gym, Cafeteria, Flex Area, or any other space designated as the general event holding area)
- Used as a timing device by an event manager, moderator, or judge in the absence of a stopwatch or digital/ manual timer.
- Used as a scoring device by a judge in the absence of an iPad or laptop.

## **Devices Are Strictly Prohibited When**

- Competitors, Advisors, and any individual associated with the managing or execution of competitive events (excluding Conference Staff) are outside of the general event-holding area. (e.g. Competition/ Testing Rooms, Hallways, Restrooms, Parking Lots where a competition event is visible, etc.)

## **Storing / Sharing of Electronic Data**

- Digital Cameras utilized by competitors during their designated event time to complete the requirements of the event, must clear their memory cards of any images documenting the event prior to their exit from the event area.
  - It is the responsibility of the competitor to remove the images and notify the judge upon completion.

- Cameras are **only** permitted in events that specifically require the use of a camera in the event equipment/materials. Cellphones, tablets, or smartwatches may not be used as a camera or calculator in a competitive event.
- While electronic devices are permitted within the general event-holding areas, privacy must be respected. It is highly suggested to obtain permission from those included in photographs/videos prior to dissemination on any electronic platform.
- Sounds produced via electronic devices must be kept to a minimum. Broadcasting of music, videos, or any other disruptive material is strictly prohibited unless approved by a TPSA Board Member.

## Enforcement

Violations of the aforementioned policies shall result in review by the TPSA Executive Council in accordance with the Bylaw Grievance Process. Council decisions are final and cannot be appealed. Violations of the Electronic Device Policy may be reported by any individual to the Executive Council.

## Grievances

A grievance is a formal complaint or allegation regarding a decision, action, or condition that a competitor, advisor, or team believes to be unfair, unjust, or in violation of TPSA rules and guidelines.

## Reporting Process

1. **Submission:** All grievances must be submitted through the myTPSA portal. No grievances will be accepted through any other means.
2. **Initial Review:** Upon receipt of a grievance, the Competition Governance Team will initiate a preliminary review to determine the validity of the complaint.

## Hearing and Investigation

1. **Notification:** The Competition Governance Team will notify the party against whom the grievance has been filed, outlining the nature of the complaint and requesting a written response by a specified deadline.
2. **Hearing:** A formal hearing will be conducted where the Competition Governance Team will review all submitted materials and any additional evidence.
3. **Decision:** After thorough review, the Competition Governance Team will make a final decision and notify all parties involved.

## Time-Sensitive Nature

Due to the time-sensitive nature of grievances, especially during regional and state competitions, specific deadlines for filing and resolving grievances will be posted at each event.

## Non-Compliance

Grievances that do not follow this prescribed process and any posted time limits will not be considered.

## **Competitor Conduct**

- From demeanor to attire, competitors are expected to maintain a high degree of professionalism during the event, mirroring the standards upheld in the designated careers being simulated.
- Competitors are encouraged to take this opportunity to learn, grow, and challenge their skills in a supportive, educational environment. The focus should be on personal development and enhancement of policing skills.
- Competitors should respect and follow the event stages, from the moderator instructions through to the rubric-based evaluation.
- Competitors are expected to fully engage in the simulated scenario, treating it as they would a real-life situation.
- Respectful interaction with the judge and moderator is expected at all times. Any questions or concerns should be addressed in a courteous manner.
- Adherence to these rules and specific rules outlined per event is expected at all times.

## **Handcuffing**

The purpose of this handcuffing policy is to establish guidelines for the proper use of handcuffs by members of TPSA during training, competitive events, and demonstration activities. It is essential to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants while adhering to ethical and legal standards.

### **Authorized Personnel**

Only members who have received proper training in the use of handcuffs and have demonstrated competence in their use may be authorized to carry and use handcuffs during TPSA activities. It is the responsibility of the chapter advisor to ensure that all students permitted to use handcuffs are properly trained.

### **Legal and Ethical Compliance**

Members must adhere to any federal, state, and local laws regarding the use of handcuffs. The use of handcuffs during TPSA activities is limited to training, competitive events, and demonstrations only and must not be used inappropriately or maliciously.

### **Informed Consent**

Before any demonstration, competitive event, or training exercise involving the use of handcuffs, all participants must provide informed consent. Participants and their legal guardians (if minors) should be informed of the nature of the activity, potential risks, and safeguards in place. The chapter advisor assumes all responsibility for ensuring that parental consent has been given.

### **Safe Handling**

Members authorized to carry and use handcuffs must demonstrate proper handling techniques and safety procedures during all handcuffing activities.

## **Use of Force Continuum**

Members should be trained in the escalation of force, following the Use of Force Continuum guidelines, and use handcuffs only when necessary.

## **Minimum Necessary Force**

When handcuffs are employed, members should use the minimum necessary force to safely control the situation. Overly aggressive or excessive force is strictly prohibited.

## **Medical Attention**

Members must monitor the well-being of the individual restrained with handcuffs continuously. If there are signs of distress, injury, or discomfort, immediate medical attention must be sought. If the person being handcuffed uses the word "index" all restraints shall be removed immediately.

## **Supervision**

A qualified adult must supervise all handcuffing training, competitions, and demonstrative exercises to ensure compliance with this policy and to provide guidance as needed.

## **Disciplinary Action**

Violation of this handcuffing policy may result in disciplinary action, including the suspension or expulsion of the member involved, and reporting to appropriate school or legal authorities as necessary.

## **Review and Training**

This TPSA Handcuffing Policy shall be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with any changes in applicable laws and regulations. Members authorized to use handcuffs shall also receive ongoing training by their chapter advisor in handcuffing techniques and best practices to ensure their competence and safety.

## **Searching**

This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures for students conducting full systematic searches during roleplay competitive events at a TPSA-sanctioned event. The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for conducting full systematic searches within the context of TPSA-sanctioned competitive events.

## **Definition**

A full systematic search of a suspect refers to a thorough and methodical examination of the suspect's person with the intent to discover and collect evidence related to criminal activity or ensure the safety of all involved parties.

## **Conduct searches methodically**

Full systematic searches must be conducted methodically and with respect for the dignity and privacy of the individuals involved. Searches shall be restricted to the outside of clothing with the exception of

the waist band and collar of garments. It is acceptable to search under the straps and band of a bra from the outside of the shirt. The competitor may remove socks and shoes from the suspect for searching. Searches must be conducted in accordance with current practices in Law Enforcement. If at any point during the search, if the judge finds the search to be invasive or abusive the judge will order the search to cease. Extreme disregard for current standards in law enforcement will result in disqualification from the event. (e.g. unzipping a suspect's pants, raising the shirt to search a bra, etc.)

## **Use appropriate force and restraints**

If physical force or restraints are necessary during the search, use only the amount of force necessary to control the situation. Avoid excessive force and be considerate of the safety and well-being of the involved parties. Injuries will result in a review by the TPSA leadership team and the team or competitor may be disqualified.

## **Cross-gender searches**

In instances where a same-sex officer is unavailable to conduct a search, competitors will conduct cross-gender searches. No point deductions will occur for cross-gender searches, however, points will be deducted for searches that are not completed.

## **Failure to search**

All students participating in Law Enforcement Role Play events that require searching must complete the search. Failure to conduct searches will result in applicable point deductions. It is not an exception, that a school district does not permit their students to learn and/or practice searching techniques.

## **Consequences of Policy Violations**

Any violations of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include; termination or suspension of participation in TPSA-sanctioned activities, forfeiture of awards or recognitions, and/or removal from sanctioned event areas.

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant laws and regulations. Necessary adjustments will be made to address any emerging issues or changes in the legal landscape.

## **Competitor Safety**

- Adherence to all safety procedures, both those generally applicable and those specific to the event, are expected throughout the event.

## **Injury to Actors**

The Texas Public Safety Association (TPSA) is committed to the safety and well-being of all participants involved in its activities and competitions. This includes not only the competing students but also the actors playing various roles in simulation scenarios. Any activity that results in the physical injury of an actor due to negligence, non-compliance with safety rules, or deliberate action will not be tolerated.

These policies aim to ensure the safety and integrity of our events, promote respectful and professional behavior, and uphold the fundamental principles of our organization. The development of students into public safety professionals includes the ability to handle high-pressure situations responsibly and safely. Violating these principles not only jeopardizes the health and safety of individuals but also undermines the learning process and the public's trust in future professionals.

- (a) Any team or individual found to have directly caused the physical injury of an actor during a competition event that requires intervention by the judge will be subject to disqualification from the competition.
- (b) In the event of an injury, an immediate investigation will be launched by the TPSA officials present. The investigation will evaluate the circumstances surrounding the incident and the team's or individual's adherence to safety guidelines, established rules, and professional standards.
- (c) If the injury is found to have been preventable and was caused due to a breach of safety protocols, negligence, or deliberate action on the part of the team or individual, immediate disqualification of the team or individual will be determined by the investigating TPSA Official present.
- (d) Should a team or individual be disqualified, they will be ineligible for any awards or recognitions from the competition, and may also face additional penalties or sanctions as deemed appropriate by the TPSA Executive Council. This could potentially include prohibition from future competitions or events.
- (e) In instances where the circumstances surrounding the injury are unclear or disputed, the decision of the TPSA officials, in consultation with the Executive Council and possibly independent experts, will be final.
- (f) Appeals to the disqualification can be made in writing to the TPSA Executive Council in accordance with the grievance policy.
- (g) Any deliberate use of pressure points or techniques intended to cause pain, incapacitation, or injury to the actor, even if not resulting in a physical injury, will be treated as a serious violation of this policy. Such actions go against the principles of safety, respect, and professionalism that the TPSA seeks to promote and uphold.
- (h) Teams or individuals found to have used such techniques will be subject to immediate disqualification from the competition, irrespective of the resulting condition of the actor. In addition to disqualification, they may also face additional penalties or sanctions as deemed appropriate by the TPSA Executive Council.

This rule serves to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, promote professionalism and responsible behavior, and uphold the values of the Texas Public Safety Association.

# Attendance

## Checking in to Your Event

Competitors must check in to their event at their designated check-in time. Competitors that arrive ten (10) minutes after their designated check-in time will be marked as no-shows and not be allowed to compete out of respect for the time commitment made by our judges and volunteers.

## Substitution Policy

TPSA has enacted an emergency substitution policy to accommodate emergency situations for students on team events needing to be swapped out before the competition.

- Substitutions may only occur for emergencies up to five days before the competition. After the 5-day deadline has passed, substitutions can not be made, and the competitor must forfeit the event (teams may still be able to compete, see the Drop Policy).
- Substitutes must be active paid members of TPSA.
- Substitutions must be approved by the Executive Council
- Substitutions must be emergencies, grades are not a valid emergency.
- Substitutions can not be made for individual events. The chapter will forfeit the opportunity to compete in the event.

## Drop Policy (Felony Traffic Stop, Facility Design, Job Exhibit, Parliamentary Procedure)

This policy is currently being tested with the Felony Traffic Stop, Facility Design, Job Exhibit, and Parliamentary Procedure competitive events, and this policy only applies to these events.

- Only team members registered for the event can compete at competition, unless they are following emergency substitution policy.
- These events allow for a variable number of competitors.
- At competition, chapters can not compete with more people than they registered or less than the required minimum number of team members.
- Chapters CAN compete with less than their registered competitors as long as it is above the minimum.

## Drop Policy (All Other Events)

- Any team of 3 or more students may compete with one less than the required number of team members; however, no more than a one-member deficit is allowed.
- Teams composed of 2 or fewer members will forfeit the opportunity to compete in a particular event if a member is removed for any reason other than an emergency substitution.
- No team can compete with a deficit greater than 1 regardless of the reason.

## State Conference

- No more than 50% of any team may be substituted for a State Competition.
- The substitutes must have attended and have competed at a regional competition, not in the same event.

- Only emergency substitution requests will be considered after the close of registration.

## Equipment

### Training Weapons

Training Weapons (guns, batons, OC spray, Tasers) must be instantly and completely identifiable as a training weapon. It is unacceptable for a school to use equipment that may cause confusion as to its authenticity as a working weapon. Schools are highly encouraged to use training weapons that are rubber molded and are completely an identifiable color like Red, Orange, Green, or Blue. Training weapons are incapable of firing projectiles or releasing chemicals.

### Failure to Bring Equipment in Skill Events

Competitors who fail to bring the required material/equipment as specified in the Competitive Event guidelines for any skill used in any event will be allowed to compete but will not earn points for all or part of the skill(s) that require the missing material/equipment.

### Equipment Failure

It is the competitor's responsibility to assure that the equipment they bring to the event and use as a part of the event is in good working order. Equipment failure (when the competitor provides the equipment) may result in an inability to judge all or part of an event that involves the use of equipment. This includes battery-operated laptops/devices and flashlights.

## Professionalism and Safety Dress

At the Texas Public Safety Association (TPSA), we recognize the importance of maintaining a professional and safe environment for all participants in our competitive events. To this end, our dress code requirements are two-fold, focusing on professionalism and safety.

### Professionalism

As a career-focused organization, TPSA is committed to promoting professional behavior and attire among our members. To ensure the highest standards of professionalism during competitive events, event judges will assess participants' adherence to the professionalism dress code guidelines. Event judges will award points for compliance with the specified dress code, thus reflecting the importance of professional presentation in the public safety sector.

Students are expected to dress according to the specific career they represent during any event. For example, participants in legal studies events should adhere to professional business attire to emulate the standards of the legal field. The aim is to prepare students for their chosen career paths' real-world expectations and requirements, thereby ensuring a career-ready public safety workforce.

Team Members Must Reasonably Match, defined as matching color (not shade) and style (all in patrol, all in tactical, etc). This policy aims to teach why departments have uniforms, to promote team unity,

and to the public to be able to identify public safety personnel easily. Teams that do not all reasonably match will not receive points for dress code.

## Tops

- Tops must be modest in design, covering the chest, underarms, and midriff area completely. Low-cut blouses, tank tops, or crop tops are not considered appropriate.

## Bottoms

- Shorts, jeans (any color), or skirts above the knee are unacceptable.
- Bottoms must be fitted at the waist to prevent slippage during competitive events.

## Shoes

- No shoes outfitted with performance-enhancing devices (wheelies, cleats, springs, lights, etc.) are permitted.

## Hair

- All competitors must have naturally occurring hair color.
- For participants competing in events that do not have specific safety dress and grooming guidelines regarding hairstyles, hairstyles may be styled according to personal preference.
- All hairstyles must be clean and neat to maintain a professional appearance. The chosen hairstyle should not cause a distraction to the competitor or the judge and must not cover a significant portion of the face.

## Makeup

- Makeup should be minimal and conservative, reflecting a daytime makeup look.
- Excessive or flashy makeup is not permitted as it may detract from the overall professional appearance.

## Tattoos

Visible facial tattoos or tattoos depicting illegal activities and/or sexual, racial, or biased references are not allowed during TPSA competitive events. Tattoos on the face or not appropriate can be covered up using makeup, sleeves, etc.

## Fragrances

To accommodate a pleasant and comfortable atmosphere for all participants, perfumes or body sprays are prohibited. This guideline helps to ensure that individuals with sensitivities or allergies are not negatively affected.

## Nails

- Only single solid color nail polish is allowed.
- No embellishments such as glitter flakes, rhinestones, pierces, or objects extending from the nail's surface.

## Piercings

If competitors have piercings beyond a single stud in each ear, they must cover these additional piercings with band-aids or wear clear studs to maintain a professional appearance.

## Safety

Safety is a paramount concern at TPSA, and we strive to create an environment that prioritizes the well-being of all individuals involved in our activities. To address safety concerns associated with dress and grooming, competitors must adhere to the safety dress code guidelines upon check-in at their event. Failure to comply with the safety dress code guidelines will result in the forfeiture of the opportunity to compete.

All dress requirements about safety will be stated explicitly in the documentation for each event, ensuring that all participants are aware of the requirements well in advance. Competitors must review these guidelines thoroughly and ensure they are prepared to adhere to them before checking in to their event. By directly including the safety dress requirements in the event documentation, we aim to promote clear communication, minimize confusion, and facilitate compliance. This approach also allows for event-specific considerations and ensures that participants are fully informed regarding safety-related dress and grooming expectations.

It is the responsibility of all participants to familiarize themselves with the dress code requirements for each event and to make appropriate arrangements to meet these expectations. We encourage all members to take pride in their appearance and to understand the role that professional and safe dress and grooming plays in representing TPSA and the public safety sector as a whole.

## General Conference Dress Requirements

Advisors are responsible for ensuring that all of their students, volunteers, and co-advisors are dressed appropriately at conferences.

- Participants must comply with their respective school dress codes at all times.
- All participants are encouraged to maintain a professional appearance during all TPSA events, conferences, and activities.
- TPSA may enforce stricter dress code requirements for specific activities; these requirements will be included in the activity information released before the event.
- Students not following dress code guidelines must leave the activity and return only when properly clothed.
- Must wear a cover-up over swimsuits when traveling to and from the pool. No towels as cover-ups.
- No one may go shirtless inside hotels.
- Students attending social activities:
  - Should not wear excessively tight or excessively loose clothing.
  - Shirts may not reveal the midriff or be low cut.
  - Shorts and skirts may not reveal any portion of the buttocks/undergarments.

# Photo Identification

To ensure the integrity of our competitive events, the Texas Public Safety Association (TPSA) requires all competitors to present a valid, original, and current photo ID for admission to their competition events. This policy outlines the acceptable forms of identification and the requirements for each.

## Acceptable Photo Identification

Competitors may use any of the following forms of identification:

- A government-issued driver's license or non-driver ID card or passport.
- An official school-produced student ID card from the school the competitor currently attends. The ID must be for the current or previous academic year and in a hard plastic card format.
- Members may upload a profile picture to their myTPSA account before their regional competition. If a competitor has uploaded a profile photo to their myTPSA account, this photo will be accepted as a valid form of identification. No printed copy is required. No uploads may occur after regional competition registration closes.
- If none of the above forms of ID are available, the TPSA Competitor Identification Form may be completed and used <https://tpsa.info/competitor-identification-form>

## Identification Requirements

All forms of identification must meet the following requirements:

- The first and last name on the ID must match the name used on the competition event registration.
- The photo on the ID must be current and recognizable.

## Compliance

Competitors who do not present an acceptable form of ID as outlined above will not be eligible to compete.

## Safety and Emergency Procedures

TPSA prioritizes the safety of attendees at sponsored events. The venue host will conduct thorough venue inspections and risk assessments before the event. In addition, emergency exits will be clearly marked, and a well-stocked first aid kit will be available in a highly visible location at the venue. Event hosts will provide clear guidelines for attendees about safety protocols and emergency procedures during opening ceremonies.

TPSA has established accident reporting protocols. Should you or a member of your chapter experience an accident or injury during the event, a TPSA staff member shall be notified immediately. You will be asked to complete a comprehensive incident report form to document the accident or injury details, including location, time, and parties involved.

All TPSA participants shall have a liability release on file. This includes any individual attending a TPSA-sanctioned event regardless of membership status.

# Accommodations

## Request for Accommodation Process & Application

TPSA is committed to ensuring all members' equal access to competitive events. We will consider requests to accommodate a student with physical or mental impairments on a case-by-case basis in consultation with event organizers while adhering to the integrity and standards of TPSA event rules and policy. This approval process is worked in concert with all event partners and mirrors the UIL approval process. This process aims to establish a comprehensive, consistent and streamlined application.

### Step 1: Submitting a Request

The Advisor should submit the Request for Accommodation form with the appropriate signatures to TPSA at least 14 days before the contest in which the accommodation is sought. Requests submitted after that time, except for emergency requests, will not be granted. If there is an emergency request for accommodation (such as a student needing assistance bubbling scantrons due to a broken wrist three days before the event), it is the responsibility of the advisor to complete this process as soon as possible. TPSA aims to give responses within 7 days.

The request shall adhere to the accommodations provided by the student's Section 504 Committee and/or ARD Committee. **No student records are to be submitted to TPSA.**

The only required submission is the signed request with rationale for the accommodation. The completed form should be submitted via email to the TPSA email address listed on the last page of the application.

### Step 2: Approval Process & Basis for Decision

Once the application has been received via email, a confirmation email will be sent back, letting you know the application is being reviewed. TPSA Staff and event organizers will review the requested accommodation as quickly as possible. The ADA and Section 504 require that accommodations be provided to individuals with disabilities when certain conditions are satisfied. Each case will be decided on its own merits. In reaching its decisions, TPSA will follow applicable laws and consider the following:

- Whether the requested accommodation(s) is "reasonable";
- Whether the requested accommodations(s) is "necessary"; and
- Whether the requested accommodation(s) would "fundamentally alter the nature of" the competition, either because it would alter an "essential aspect of the contest" or give the student an unfair "advantage over others and, for that reason, fundamentally alter the character" of the competition.

### Step 3: Approval Letter

A response letter from TPSA staff granting the accommodation (in full or in part) or denying the requested accommodation will be provided to the advisor as quickly as possible after the accommodation decision has been made. The TPSA Secretary will notify the regional representative of the approval so that we can ensure the accommodations are provided at that event. It is recommended to take the approved accommodation response letter with you to the contest site in case any questions

arise. If the student advances from the Regional competition to the State level, please notify the TPSA secretary so we can ensure our state organizers are aware and prepared for the accommodation. Denial of accommodations does not qualify for an emergency substitution.

It is the responsibility of the event provider (host school), contest organizers and competitors to follow all TPSA competitive event rules to ensure the competitors' honesty and the competition's integrity.

**Service animals** can accompany the student if they are medically necessary and listed in Section III of the Request for Accommodation. If a student has a service animal that is not medically necessary, and if the site provider feels as though the animal will be a safety hazard to a portion of the event, it will be mandatory for the animal to stay with the student's advisor until the completion of the event.

If a competitor requires altering the contest dress code for religious reasons, please contact the TPSA secretary so we can notify the dress code monitors & event provider. This exception does not require you to complete this accommodation request.

## **Expectations for Students with Accommodations**

- Additional costs or equipment required for accommodations (such as: accommodations requiring translation, interpreters, braille, etc.) are the responsibility of the student/chapter/school to provide
- Student/chapter/school will assume any risk of any accommodation equipment failure.
- Accommodations should not create a distraction for other competitors.
- Contest providers will assist with monitoring accommodations as needed.

## **Accommodations will NOT**

Provide the student with any competitive edge over other competitors, including but not limited to:

- Altering a contest's scoring criteria or rules, including reducing the number of problems the student is to answer
- Granting additional time for any portion of the contest, even if the student's IEP allows him/her additional time to complete basic coursework and standardized tests.

## **Examples of accommodations that may be granted:**

- Allowing the student to bring a colored overlay for reading printed materials.
- Autistic students request to have a 'monitor' (adult) accompany them during the event, who will be there only to ease anxiety and intervene only if the student becomes anxious. The monitor will be required to abide by all non-disclosure TPSA policies.
- Timed events will not pause the timer to accommodate any intervention.

## **Examples of accommodations that will not be granted:**

- Reducing the number of multiple-choice problems that need to be answered so the student can finish the contest in the allotted time frame.
- Allowing additional time or pausing the time at any point during the event.