

About CKC's Gender Inclusion Policy

Context

The Sport of Canoe Kayak has traditionally been organized in a binary manner where biological gender is officially and widely used as a classification. It is prudent to anticipate questions and confusion in the early days of implementing this policy which speaks to how we organize ourselves at this fundamental level.

The key to understanding this policy is to be guided by CKC's Vision 2024 Strategic Plan and its declaration on inclusion:

"We create a safe environment for all people. We welcome all abilities and all disciplines connecting our diverse cultures and perspectives. We promote lifelong healthy active living"

It is also important to keep in mind that the lived experience for many Trans Canadians is a difficult one. Being able to participate and compete in sport may be the one place that trans people feel included, safe, and welcomed. Looking at all your club or PTSO's operations through a lens of inclusion and ensuring the sport experience is open to as many people as possible is the best place to start and to fall back on when difficult situations arise. The CCES and CAAWS documents linked below are a good place to start for education for staff and to share with athletes and parents.

Full Policy

<http://canoekayak.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Gender-Inclusion-Policy-March-2018.pdf>

Understanding the Policy

- At both recreational and competitive levels in competition under CKC's jurisdiction, an individual may participate in the gender category of their choosing.
- Individuals are not required to disclose their gender identity or history to the Association or any of the Association's representatives
- Policy reflects Canoe Kayak Canada's value of **inclusion** with the intention of ensuring our community is a welcoming, inclusive place for all participants.
- Policy developed with guidance from the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) Working Group report "Creating Inclusive Environments for Trans

Participants in Canadian Sport”, and developed with assistance from CCES Staff.

- Policy has been approved by Canoe Kayak Canada’s Athlete Council.
- Canoe Kayak Canada will offer educational opportunities for Coaches, Administrators, Athletes and the wider community to better understand and implement this policy.

Key Terms

“*Cisgender*” - People whose gender identity aligns with the biological sex they were assigned at birth

“*Gender*” - The socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a society assigns to masculinity or femininity

“*Gender Expression*” - The manner in which an individual represents or expresses gender to others - through behaviour, hairstyles, activities, voice, mannerisms, etc.

“*Gender Identity*” - An individual’s deeply held sense or knowledge of their own gender

“*Gender Confirming Surgery/Gender Affirming Surgery/Gender reassignment (now a less frequently used term)*” - medically-supervised program of treatment to transition a person’s body to align with their gender identity through hormone therapy and/or surgery

“*Intersex*” - Refers to a combination of features that distinguish male and female anatomy

“*Sex*” - An individual’s biology that is generally categorized as male, female, or intersex

“*Trans or Transgender (now less frequently used)*” - People whose gender identity differs from the biological sex they were assigned at birth. To align their bodies with their sense of gender, some trans individuals undergo gender confirming surgery.

“*Trans Female/Transgender Female*” - Someone who was assigned the male sex at birth, but whose gender identity is female

“*Trans Male/Transgender Male*” - Someone who was assigned female sex at birth, but whose gender identity is male

Key Resources

The key guidance document and resource for implementation of this policy is the CCES working group report which is available here: <https://cces.ca/sites/default/files/content/docs/pdf/cces-transinclusionpolicyguidance-e.pdf>

Position Statement from Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport regarding Trans inclusion in Sport
https://www.caaws.ca/e/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/CAAWS_Position_Statement_Trans_Inclusion_in_Sport.pdf

Q and A: Implementation of the CKC Gender Inclusion Policy

1. What does this policy mean for registration?

This means that for any competition that falls under CKC's jurisdiction, participants will compete in the gender category with which they identify.

2. What changes do I need to make to my club's registration process and language?

Very little. This policy guides participants to be invited to share the gender with which they identify at the time of registration, though they are not required to do so. It is also important to note that Administrators or Coaches will not inquire, question or make further interventions relating to an individual's gender identify or gender expression. It is also critical to keep in mind that gender identity is private information, disclosing this identity with out an individual's permission could put that person at risk and would constitute a breach of their privacy.

3. Is there anything that administrators or coaches need to do if they believe that a participant identifies as trans? For instance, if someone registers as a female, and I think they were born a male, what steps should I take as an administrator or coach?

There are no steps to take, as the policy simply states that you accept that participants can compete in the gender category they identify with. Leave it up to the participant to raise the topic of their gender identify or gender expression if they wish to do so. Remember that this policy is directing those working with participants to actively treat all participants the same, respecting the gender identity and gender expression with which they registered.

4. If a participant chooses not to identify with any gender, what do I do as an administrator or coach?

The first step is to think about why and when a gender identity matters when providing programs and organizing competitions. For programming and competition where gender is not used in classification, there is no need to have a participant identify their gender. For competitions where gender is a critical classifier, then coaches and administrators should work with the participant to explain the categories that are offered and offer the opportunity to register in the category in which they are most comfortable.

5. Our club has traditional change rooms and washrooms. How do we offer an inclusive option?

Having gender neutral change and washrooms available is the ideal situation, as this allows participants to choose the facilities with which they are comfortable. This option is not currently available for most clubs. One solution available if there is a single person washroom in your building, could be to designate it as gender-neutral bathroom/change room. Regardless of the type of facilities at your club, it is important not to police who uses what change room. It is also important to use the lens of mind creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all participants when creating signage and when communicating with membership in general .

6. How can I support a Trans Athlete who wants to compete at a high performance competitive level?

Navigating the higher performance levels of the sport, where International Canoe Federation (ICF) eligibility guidelines supersede those of CKC, are more challenging for Trans athletes. In situations where an athlete is comfortable sharing their Trans identity with coaches and administrators, CKC can work with the athletes and their support team to help them understand the ICF Guidelines and any CCES mandated policies. For those who do not wish to disclose their identity, CCES policies and ICF eligibility apply, and will be available in the same communication channels as they are to all athletes.

For additional support, please contact Ian Mortimer (imortimer@canoekayak.ca) at CKC or the CCES (info@cces.ca).