

Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading Referee

Criteria	Referee Grade 8	Referee Grade 7
1. Minimum age	None	17
2. Experience (minimum cumulative career affiliated outdoor games at designated level)	Not applicable	Referee: 75 Assistant Referee: 25
a. Game level to be counted for advancement	Not applicable	U.S. Soccer Federation Games
b. Time in present grade	Not applicable	12 months as Referee Grade 8
3. Training course requirements	Successfully complete USSF Referee Training Course (or the Referee Bridge Course to upgrade from 9 to 8)	5 hours of USSF Intermediate Level Training above normal recertification clinics, i.e. intermediate, advanced, regional/pro clinics.
4. Written Examination (See Note B)	75% minimum score on USSF Referee Exam	85% minimum score on USSF Referee Exam
5. Field Evaluation by currently registered USSF Assessor	Not required. It is recommended that new referees be observed in one of their first 10 games.	Pass one evaluation as referee in an affiliated Under-17 or higher level game employing the DSC
6. Physical Fitness Test	Not required	Required (with passing score – see P. 25)
Annual Renewal Requirements		
In-Service Training	Five hours during the preceding 12 months	Five hours during the preceding 12 months
Refresher Exam	Passing Score of 75% Required	Passing Score of 85% Required
Field Evaluation	Not required	1 developmental assessment at any level designated by the state (U-17 or higher recommended), <i>if adopted by state</i>
Physical Fitness Test	Not required	Required (with passing score)

Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading State Referee

Criteria	State Referee Grade 6	State Referee Grade 5
1. Minimum age	18	19
2. Experience - minimum cumulative career affiliated outdoor games at designated level	Referee: 100 (U-19 Affiliated Competitive Leagues, or higher) Assistant Referee: 25	Referee: 150 (50 games on Adult Div. 1) Assistant Referee: 50
a. Game level to be counted for advancement	Under-19 Affiliated Competitive leagues or higher level	Of the 150 games a minimum of 50 must be on adult Division 1 league games or higher
b. Time in present grade	12 months as Referee Grade 7 prior to application	12 months as State Grade 6 prior to application
3. Training course requirements	19 hour State Referee Training Course	7 hours of In-Service State Referee Training
4. Written Examination	75% minimum score on USSF State Referee Exam	85% minimum score on USSF State Referee Exam
5. Field Evaluation by currently registered USSF Assessor (See Note C)	Pass two field assessments as referee (one must be on Div. 2 adult or higher) and one as assistant referee in Under-19 competitive league or higher.	Pass two field assessments as referee and one as assistant referee in affiliated top adult Division 1 leagues or higher.
6. Physical Fitness Test	Required (with passing score- see P. 25)	Required (with passing score-see P. 25)
Annual Renewal Requirements		
In-Service Training	Five hours during the preceding 12 months	Five hours during the preceding 12 months
Refresher Exam	Passing grade of 75% required	Passing grade of 85% required
Field Assessment (See Note C)	One assessment as a referee at Div. 2 adult match or higher.	One assessment as referee on a Div. 1 or higher game required.
Physical Fitness Test	Required (with passing score)	Required (with passing score)

Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading National Referee

Criteria	National Referee Grade 4	National Referee Grade 3
1. Minimum age	23	23
2. Experience (minimum cumulative career outdoor games at designated level)	Referee: 175* (75* must be affiliated Div. 1 adult or higher; 5 must be professional games) Assistant Referee: 100 (5 must be professional games or "other approved" matches.	Same as for grade 4. See Note 1 on page 23.
a. Game level to be counted for advancement	Affiliated Adult League or higher	Same as for grade 4. See Note 1 on page 23.
b. Time in present grade	2 years as Grade 5 prior to application date. Foreign-trained referees must have been a US Soccer Referee for a minimum of one year.	Same as for grade 4.
3. Training course requirements	Attend and successfully complete the National Referee Certification Session.	Same as for grade 4. See note number 1.
4. Written Examination	Must pass a special National Referee Examination.	Same as for grade 4.
5. Field Evaluation (See Notes D-J)	Pass 3 field assessments as referee and 2 as assistant referee. 2 of the assessments as referee and 1 as assistant referee must be on a professional game ¹ . One assessment to be done by U.S. Soccer approved National Assessor. (See Note J)	As required for renewal; see notes.
6. Physical Fitness Test	Physical Fitness Test successfully completed as per grade standards (page 25)	Physical Fitness Test successfully completed as per grade standards (page 25)
7. Citizenship	U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident	U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident

*This reflects a change in the number of games needed for upgrade to National Referee Grade 4 that was adopted at the May 26, 2005 meeting of the National Referee Committee and becomes effective for referees planning to attend the 2007 National Referee Certification Session.

¹ FIFA Referees, FIFA Assistant Referees and National Referees working a minimum of 5 Division I Professional League games should see note I.

**Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading
National Referee (Cont.)**

Annual Renewal Requirements		
Criteria	National Referee Grade 4	National Referee Grade 3
Training	Attend and successfully complete the National Referee Certification Session.	
Written Exam	Pass National Referee Exam	
Physical Fitness Test	Annual Physical Fitness Test required (passing score required)	
Field Assessment (See Notes G – J)	Pass two (2) field assessments as referee (one on professional game) and one (1) as assistant referee on professional game.	

Notes and Comments

Note 1: Grade 3 referees must meet FIFA’s eligibility criteria for nomination to the International Panel of Referees and Assistant Referees, including age, citizenship, fitness, game experience and time in grade. All other National Referees will be Grade 4.

Note A: Registration and Upgrading: Registration, annual renewal and requests for upgrading must be made through the appropriate State Referee Administrator. Referees who have previously been registered as grade 8 or higher may not re-register as grade 9.

Note B: Retaking Exams: If a person does not pass the written examination, the entire examination must be retaken after a recommended minimum waiting period of one month.

Note C: Assessments: For all referees **seeking an upgrade to the next referee level**, the assessments, if required for upgrade, should be completed within a twelve-month time period. No more than two failing assessments can occur within that time period. If a candidate for upgrade fails two assessments in that 12-month period, the referee must start the upgrade procedure over for the next registration cycle, starting with zero assessments. For all referees wishing to upgrade, a failing assessment must be made up by two passing assessments.

***For annual maintenance assessments for State and National referees:** Assessments for National Referee must be by a currently registered USSF National Assessor or an assessor approved by the Director of Assessment and the national office. They must be on games approved by the Referee Committee and played within the dates specified (Dec 1-November 30). The minimum acceptable score is 80. (See note J for additional information.)

For maintenance assessments, the first failure will require only one additional passing assessment (1 for 1). For the second, and any additional failures, the two for one criteria applies. (i.e. two passing assessments needed to offset the failed assessment). Make up assessments must be on the same level game, or higher, as the failed assessment.

National Referee candidates must get their upgrade assessments in the December 1-November 30 time period in the year prior to National Camp attendance. National Referee Candidates must receive one of their assessments as a referee by a National Assessor designated by the National Staff of U.S. Soccer.

Assessments for National Candidates and recertifying National Referees: Each assessment as a referee and each assessment done as an assistant referee, must be done by different assessors. One assessment as a referee, and one assessment as an assistant referee may be done by the same assessor. A referee may have only one assessment in a single day. Any assessments completed outside of these guidelines will be considered developmental assessments and may not be used to meet the assessment criteria for the National Referee grade.

Note D: Declaration: State Referees who wish to be assigned to professional games to receive assessments for upgrade to National Referee must complete the appropriate “New Candidate Declaration” form and submit it to the SRA. The SRA will forward the application to the National Office. Forms are accepted between December 1 and December 31 of the year prior to the year the referee will be a candidate. National Referee Candidates must attend a regional professional clinic and pass the physical fitness test to be for their National Candidate Declaration to be approved and to be eligible to receive assignments to professional games.

Note E: Professional Games: The Referee Committee may approve other games to count toward the requirement for professional games. Approved games are listed on the referee web page: www.ussoccer.com and at www.ussoccer-data.com.

Note F: Fast Track: Candidates for upgrading to National Referee must be acceptable to the US Soccer Referee Committee. Requirements other than age, game level, professional game counts and assessments may be waived at the discretion of the US Soccer Referee Committee. Former top level professional players may be fast tracked by waiving time in grade and game experience as approved by the USSF Referee Committee.

Note G: Assessment requirements for FIFA Referees: Three (3) Top National Professional League matches as a referee.

Assessment requirements for FIFA Assistant Referees: Three (3) Top National Professional League Division 1 matches as an Assistant Referee.

Note H: Assessment requirements For National Referees working a minimum of five (5) Top National Professional League matches as a Referee: Three (3) assessments as a Referee on professional league matches.

Note I: Assessment requirements For National Referees working a minimum of five (5) Division 1 Professional League matches as an Assistant Referee: Three (3) assessments as an Assistant Referee on professional league matches.

Note J: Former FIFA Referees and FIFA Assistant Referees who were retired from their respective FIFA Panels because of age, but continue to work as referees and assistant referees in the top national professional league, must meet the same assessment requirements they met as members of the FIFA Panel of Referees or Assistant Referees to maintain the national certification.

All other grade 3 and 4 referees: See chart on page 22.

Physical Fitness Test

A physical fitness test is required for registration, annual renewal and upgrading for the referee classes shown. The test can be administered by designated United States Soccer Federation Instructors. A document signed by the individual conducting the test is required. Fitness tests must be taken within a six-month period preceding the start of a new season or the date of registration.

The referee must pass all of the events that are part of the test at the same testing session. A reasonable rest period should be allowed between events. The procedure is to run the Endurance Test first.

PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST REQUIREMENTS

	Age	Referee Grade 7	State Referee Grades 5 & 6
Endurance (12 minute run-meters)	Under 38 38 – 45 Over 45	2200 meters 2000 meters 1800 meters	2400 meters 2200 meters 2000 meters
Speed Test 50 meter dash (run - once)	Under 46 Over 45	9.0 seconds 9.5 seconds	9.0 seconds 9.0 seconds
200 meter dash (run – once)	All Ages	40.0 seconds	40.0 seconds

Referee Class	Interval Testing Time to run 150 m. 10 – 14 laps	Interval Testing Time to walk 50 m 10 - 14 laps	Sprint Test 40 m. – 6 times
FIFA Referee	30 sec.	35 sec.	6.2 sec.
FIFA AR	30 sec.	40 sec.	6.0 sec.
National Referee	30 sec.	40 sec.	6.4 sec
FIFA Referee Women	35 sec.	40 sec.	6.6 sec.
FIFA AR - Women	35 sec.	45 sec.	6.4 sec.
National Referee - Women	35 sec.	45 sec.	6.8 sec.

Note: Referees wishing to be considered for MLS, MLS Reserve and USL Div. 1 Centers must pass the FIFA Referee Fitness Test at the men's standards. The FIFA Fitness test is a pass or fail test. A referee may fail one of the 6 sprints and still pass, failing two or more over the standard time results in failure. The interval testing requires that a referee be at the next segment before time is up or the referee fails the fitness test. Adopted by Referee Comm.4/12/07

Certification of National Referees

Certification of National Referees is done in accordance with the qualification criteria determined by the U.S. Soccer Referee Committee. The program is intended to give each experienced referee a fair opportunity to qualify as a National Referee.

Only registered United States Soccer Federation referees meeting the requirements specified in the “Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading National Referees”, or identified “Fast Track Referee” Candidates, are eligible to attend the National Referees Certification Session. National Referee Certification Sessions (national camps) are conducted annually and attendance is by invitation only.

The State Referee Administrator must certify, by signature, the information on the National Referee Application and Composite Record Sheet is correct. The national office verifies credentials of foreign trained referees, however, all national referees must meet U.S. Soccer requirements for National Certification, including residency requirements. In case of a dispute, appeals of game count and grade level must be made to the National Office. The candidate will submit the application to the designated authority by the date specified in the original announcement. No referee will be tested unless the proper paperwork has been completed and submitted, in advance. A check or bank money order, covering the non-refundable application fee and registration fee (made payable to the United States Soccer Federation) must accompany the form. Referees completing the requirements for National Referee the first time must also pay the prevailing registration fee for upgrading to National Referee through the State Referee Administrator (if applicable).

It is the SRA’s responsibility to give the National Office any additional administrative information they feel is pertinent to the referee’s qualifications to become a National Referee when submitting the National Referee Application form. This should be done by a cover letter sent in with the referee’s application, with a copy sent to the referee.

Assessments (see “Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading National Referees” for requirements) must be listed on the application.

Candidates for certification/recertification as a National Referee must take and pass the complete fitness test at the National Camp. Referees who are not able to take the test because of injury or illness, those who do not complete the test, and those who fail the test will be given an opportunity to be retested at later date and place set by the National Referee Office. National Referees or candidates who do not pass the complete fitness test for any reason at the National Camp shall be responsible for their costs to the national camp as well as all the expenses incurred in attending the make-up fitness testing session.

Candidates successfully completing the fitness test and the written exams will be certified as National Referees at the end of the National Referee Certification/Recertification Session.

National Referee Candidates: All referees seeking to upgrade to the National level must do the following:

- 1) Announce candidacy by submitting the National Candidate Declaration form that has been signed by the SRA to the National Office by the specified deadline (December 1- 31 of the year prior to being accepted as a National Referee Candidate).
- 2) Must provide proof of U.S. Citizenship or Permanent Resident status with National Candidate Declaration form
- 3) Attend any required clinics specified by the National Office and take the physical fitness test at a Regional/Professional Clinic.
- 4) Fulfill the assessment requirements within the designated time frame.
- 5) Complete all requirements and paperwork, including the USSF registration form, by the specified time.

Fast Track Candidates: For information about Fast Track, see note F on page 23.

Note: At the discretion of the National Office, other referees may be invited to the National Camp. These officials will participate in all camp activities; however, they will not advance to National Referee grade status during that year.

Recertification: National Referees must be re-certified each year. At this time, a refresher examination must be taken and passed. If a National Referee is not re-certified during a given year, the official will no longer be entitled to wear the National Referee badge and must be re-certified by the official's State Association at the next appropriate grade.

Requirements for Assessments for International Referees and Assistant Referees are at the discretion of the US Soccer Referee Committee.

Age deadline: National Referee Candidates attending the National Referee Testing Session must be age 23 before January 1 of the year they will be attending the National Camp.

Recertification of National Referees with Extended Disabilities

A National Referee who suffers from an extended disability preventing participation in the physical fitness test at either the national camp or at a regional/pro clinic, must have this certified in writing by a physician. The referee will then be given a one-year waiver for disability and will be allowed to register as a national referee for that year. Referees who request a waiver from the physical fitness test will be responsible for all camp costs.

A referee who receives a waiver will not be given any assignments by US Soccer until recertification is completed the following year.

(Note: This policy applies only to returning National Referees and not to National Candidates.)

Referee Emeritus

The purpose of the emeritus grade is to retire from the highest level the referee has attained. It may not be used to circumvent the testing and registration procedures of U.S. Soccer.

The emeritus grade allows a National or State Referee the option of retiring from those levels of officiating while retaining that grade and continuing to referee at a lower level.

To become an Emeritus Referee, the official must submit a personal letter of intent to the State Referee Administrator who will initiate the appropriate paperwork. The referee must have held the grade for a minimum of three years prior to the request. (The three years do not have to be consecutive or immediately preceding the request for emeritus status – but at anytime in the referee's career.)

Active Emeritus Referees must qualify each year for the level that they will be officiating and pay the published fees for that level. Emeritus Referees will receive an Emeritus Referee Badge, a card, law book and all general mailings.

An Emeritus Referee may reinstate as an active referee at the level the official retired from once all the criteria for the grade has been met.

Honorary Grade

A referee who retires from officiating completely may retain the highest grade attained as an honorary grade.

To become an honorary grade referee, the official must submit a personal letter of intent to the State Referee Administrator who will initiate the appropriate paper work.

State Referee Administrators shall note in the comment section of the official's registration form (Administrative use only) that the official requests certification as an honorary grade.

Honorary grade referees will not receive a patch, but will receive a card, law book and other materials sent with the annual registration packet.

There are no time in grade requirements to be eligible for this grade.

Honorary referees are no longer certified to officiate in any match.