



Rule of Two Guidelines

(Aligned with Canada Soccer Standards)

Purpose

The Coaching Association of Canada and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport support sport organizations in creating safe, healthy, and respectful environments for all participants. The Responsible Coaching Movement (RCM) encourages organizations, parents/guardians, and coaches across Canada to implement responsible coaching practices based on three pillars:

1. **Background Screening**
2. **Ethics Training**
3. **Rule of Two**

The **Rule of Two** ensures that all interactions and communications with athletes are **open, observable, and justifiable**, protecting both participants (especially minors) and coaches. With limited exceptions (e.g., medical emergencies), coaches should **never be alone** with an athlete.

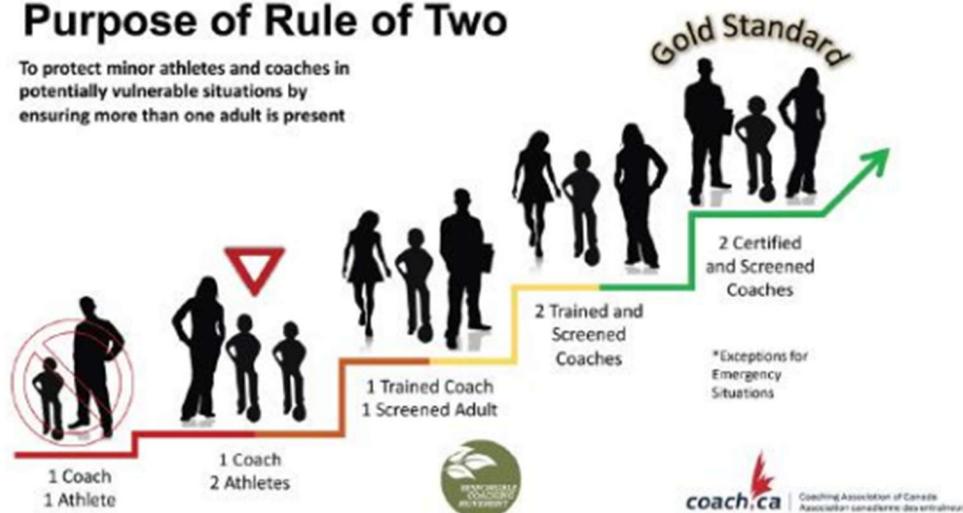
The Rule of Two states that **two screened and NCCP-trained or certified coaches** must always be present when working with an athlete in situations where the athlete may be vulnerable. When this is not possible, alternative supervision standards apply (see below).

Standards

The Coaching Association of Canada has developed standards for the Rule of Two.

Purpose of Rule of Two

To protect minor athletes and coaches in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring more than one adult is present





Standards

Canada Soccer expects organizations to work toward ensuring that **two screened and NCCP-trained or certified coaches** are always present with athletes. If this is not possible, the following alternatives may be used:

1. A screened **Person in Authority** (manager, support personnel, chaperone, board member).
2. A screened volunteer parent/guardian.
3. If no screened adult is available, another adult (e.g., parent/guardian of another athlete).
4. If no adult is available, ensure the coach is **never alone** with a single athlete (this is the minimum, not recommended).

Good Implementation Practices & Tips

Clubs and teams should consider the following when implementing the Rule of Two:

- Take the **Responsible Coaching Movement Pledge**.
- Coaches must never be alone or out of sight with a participant without another screened adult present.
- Keep training environments open and observable.
- Inform parents/guardians and players that the club aims to meet the **highest Rule of Two standard**.
- Encourage parents/guardians and players to help identify situations when the Rule of Two is not upheld.
- When transporting athletes, ensure another adult is present (see Travel Guidelines).
- Consider **gender identity** when selecting screened coaches or volunteers.
- Recruit a **Team Liaison** to help secure volunteers when two screened and NCCP-trained coaches may not be available.
- Ask parents/guardians assisting the team to complete screening and a criminal record check.
- Provide information about the NCCP to parents/guardians interested in becoming trained or certified.
- Avoid one-to-one electronic messaging—copy parents/guardians or send group messages.
- Follow requirements of the **Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program**, including:
 - A Code of Conduct to Protect Children
 - Guidelines for Appropriate/Inappropriate Conduct
 - Policies outlining what to do if inappropriate conduct is witnessed
- Adopt a **Discipline Policy** to address failures to follow the Rule of Two.

Guidelines

A **Person in Authority** is defined as an NCCP-trained or certified coach, a screened volunteer, or another adult. The *highest* standard occurs when this individual is both screened and NCCP-trained/certified.

Travel Guidelines

When traveling with athletes:



- A Person in Authority **may not** be alone in a car with an athlete unless they are the athlete's parent/guardian.
- A Person in Authority **may not** share a hotel room with an athlete unless they are the parent/guardian.
- Room/bed checks must be performed by **two** Persons in Authority.

Locker Room / Changing Area / Meeting Room Guidelines

- A Person in Authority should **not** interact one-on-one with an athlete in spaces with an expectation of privacy (locker rooms, washrooms, meeting rooms). A second adult must be present.
- These spaces should be supervised by **two Persons in Authority of the same gender identity** as the athletes when possible.
- If one Person in Authority is supervising and another is not available, they must not be alone with an individual athlete.
- If Persons in Authority are not permitted inside, they should remain **immediately available** outside.

Training & Competition Environment

Before, during, and after practices or games:

- A Person in Authority must never be alone with an athlete unless they are the athlete's parent/guardian.
- If an athlete arrives early, their parent/guardian should remain until another athlete or Person in Authority arrives.
- If an athlete may be left alone with a Person in Authority after practice, another adult should remain until all athletes have been picked up.
- Instruction, demonstrations, and drills with an individual athlete must occur **within eyesight and earshot of another Person in Authority**.

Gender Identity Guidelines

- For single-gender teams, ensure a Person in Authority of the **same gender identity** is present or available.
- For multi-gender teams (co-ed), ensure Persons in Authority of **each gender identity** are available.

Applying the Rule of Two in Virtual Settings

The Rule of Two applies equally to virtual environments.

- Two adults must be present in every virtual session (two coaches, or one coach plus one screened adult).
- One-on-one virtual sessions should not occur.
- Sessions should remain professional and focused on training—not social engagement.
- Parents/guardians of athletes under 16 should be encouraged to attend or debrief weekly.



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- Parents/guardians must be informed of session content and process in advance.
- Record sessions when possible.
- Coaches and athletes should participate from **open, observable areas** (avoid bedrooms).
- Obtain parent/guardian consent for virtual sessions.
- One-on-one electronic communication is prohibited—use group messages including at least **two adults**, ideally with parents copied.
- Coaches must not engage with athletes through social media (memes, non-training videos, etc.).

