

THE NEW NFL PERSONAL CONDUCT POLICY

The NFL has developed a new Personal Conduct Policy that applies to all NFL personnel — owners, coaches, players, other team employees, game officials and league office employees. The policy was developed after discussions with more than 150 experts from across the country — including domestic violence and sexual assault experts, advocates and survivors, law enforcement officials, academic experts, business leaders, current and former players and the NFL Players Association.

HOW DOES IT WORK? The policy establishes clear standards of behavior for all NFL personnel. Clubs are obligated to promptly report any potential violation of the policy that comes to their attention and must fully cooperate with any related law enforcement and NFL investigations. When a potential violation occurs, the NFL will provide evaluation and counseling services for the player or employee, as well as resources to assist victims and families. The NFL will follow a fair and predictable process for investigating the incident and ultimately taking disciplinary action if a violation has occurred. Here is how the process works:

POSSIBLE VIOLATION OF PERSONAL CONDUCT POLICY OCCURS

NFL INVESTIGATION

Any time the league becomes aware of conduct that may violate the policy, it will undertake an investigation conducted by the NFL Special Counsel for Investigations and Conduct, who will oversee the NFL's investigatory procedures and issue initial discipline for violations of the policy.

LAW ENFORCEMENT INVESTIGATION

In cases also being investigated by law enforcement, the NFL will avoid any interference and may await the outcome of law enforcement proceedings before completing the NFL investigation.

WHAT IS THE NFL CONDUCT COMMITTEE?

The NFL Conduct Committee is a panel of nine NFL owners responsible for reviewing the policy at least annually and recommending changes to the policy going forward. Subject-matter experts, former players and executives will advise the Conduct Committee and the Commissioner and his staff on both education and discipline.

PAID LEAVE (COMMISSIONER EXEMPT LIST)

An individual may be put on paid leave if formally charged with a violent crime or sexual assault, or if the NFL investigation finds sufficient credible evidence that it appears a violation of the policy has occurred. Paid leave will last until the completion of the NFL investigation or disposition of a criminal charge.

ONGOING CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

NFL INVESTIGATION / CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDE

NFL DISCIPLINARY DECISION

An individual is subject to discipline under the policy if the person is determined to be guilty of a criminal charge or if the NFL investigation demonstrates the person engaged in conduct prohibited by the policy. Depending on the nature of the violation and the person's record, discipline may be a fine, suspension, community service, or a combination of the three. Violations involving assault, battery, domestic violence or sexual assault will result in a baseline six-game suspension without pay, with more if aggravating factors are present, such as the use of a weapon or a crime against a child.

A second offense will result in banishment from the NFL.

RESOURCES FOR VICTIMS AND FAMILIES

In cases of domestic violence, child abuse, or sexual assault, league and club-level Critical Response Teams will provide immediate support to assist victims and families, from counseling to medical attention to social and other services. All league and club personnel will receive education on these issues on an ongoing basis.

RESPONSE OF INDIVIDUAL

The individual is given notice of proposed discipline and can choose to appeal the decision while remaining on paid leave during the duration of the appeal. In cases of a criminal conviction, the underlying conviction can not be challenged and the court's judgment and factual findings are binding for the purposes of the NFL disciplinary process.

NFL EXPERT PANEL HEARING

The appeal process will include a review panel of three outside experts to make recommendations to the Commissioner or his designee on an appeal ruling that will be decided by the Commissioner or his designee.

FINAL DECISION

The Commissioner or his designee reviews the panel's recommendations and makes a final decision on disciplinary measures.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CLUBS IN DISCIPLINE?

Clubs must report any potential violation that comes to their attention whether through law enforcement, a witness, a victim or other source. The responsibility to report is required and will be strictly enforced. Failure to report an incident will be grounds for disciplinary action.

Individual clubs may set specific standards of conduct for their players and personnel so long as those policies do not contradict or supersede the NFL Personal Conduct Policy. Clubs may elect to take other additional measures, including the imposition of fines, suspensions and terminating a player's contract.

ADDITIONAL VIOLATIONS OF THE PERSONAL CONDUCT POLICY CAN RESULT IN BANISHMENT FROM THE NFL.