



WFTDA OFFICIATING CUES, CODES AND SIGNALS

UPDATED DECEMBER 2018

These are the standardized verbal cues, hand signals, penalty codes, and whistles that participants should use with *The Rules of Flat Track Roller Derby*. This policy should not be considered the only communication Officials should use when communicating during a roller derby game, but they should use these cues as closely as possible. When there isn't standardized language, Officials should make sure communication to all participants is professional and respectful. Don't assume any participant's gender identity. For example, an Official should never casually refer to Skaters as "girls," "women," or "ladies." Instead, use the team name or color, or communicate directly with them by using their Skater Number or speak to their Captain or Alternate.

Unless specified below, all verbal and nonverbal cues are performed by Officials at the time of the communication or penalty. Officials should also use cues and signals to communicate with each other. You may adjust the position of the hand signal to more effectively communicate or to accommodate special needs. If you adjust a hand signal dramatically, make sure to inform relevant parties before the game begins. Minor adjustments that do not affect the identifiability of the signal do not need to be communicated and should not be considered impactful.

You may also stack hand signals to communicate more information. For example, after each signal of Not Lead, a Jammer Referee could signal the No Earned Pass to communicate why their Jammer did not earn lead. Hand signals and verbal cues should be performed in a calm and clear manner so that Skaters and Officials understand them.

Always deliver the Team Color, Skater Number, and any standardized cues in English. If Officials feel comfortable delivering additional communication in languages other than English, they may do so as long as it was agreed upon by both teams during the pre-game meeting.

Position Status Communication

An Official should proactively communicate information about a Skater's position status to maintain the flow of the game if:

- A. It is before the five second warning for the Jam. **Or,**
- B. The action is penalty-worthy. However, an Official isn't required to warn a Skater if the act is deliberate. Officials should use discretion to determine what is deliberate in the context of the game. **Or,**
- C. A Skater asks about their position status.

Position status is defined as the act of taking a position in the game by means of physical location at the start of the Jam, or possessing or wearing a helmet cover.

Communication should always be concise, factual, and without instruction. Unless using a standardized cue, an Official should not include instructions on how to fix the issue, only what the issue is.

ACCEPTABLE

- Your star is not visible.
- You are not wearing a helmet cover.
- You are not the Jammer.

UNACCEPTABLE

- Pull the back of the cover down.
- Your cover came off in Turn 2.
- The Jammer is in the box for a penalty.

Officials should attempt to warn a Pivot who is not the Jammer but acting like the Jammer.

PENALTIES

When a Skater commits a penalty, direct them off the track and to the Penalty Box with the appropriate whistle, verbal cue, and hand signal. Officials must use standardized language from this policy to call Skaters off the track. If they are expected to report immediately to the Penalty Box, include the "Report to the Box" signal after each hand signal.

Announce and report Skater penalties exclusively by the Skater's team color and uniform number, followed by a standardized verbal cue for the penalty. Skater numbers should be reported as individual digits. For example, 11 should be reported as "one one," not "eleven." The Head Officials should establish the colors used for the cues in the pre-game meeting with the teams.

Some penalty types have additional standardized verbal cues. Officials should always attempt to also give the most specific cue possible. If an Official wants to use language that isn't standardized, they should make sure to include the general cue for the penalty before they communicate with non-standardized language. Officials should give additional information when they feel it does not interfere with their primary responsibilities and facilitates the flow of the game.

Example A

- ★ "Gold, one-zero, Illegal Procedure"
- ★★ "Gold, one-zero, Star Pass Violation"
- ★★★ "Gold, one-zero, Star Pass Violation, report as the Jammer"

Example B

- ★ "Gold, one-zero, Illegal Procedure"
- ★★★ "Gold, one-zero, Illegal Procedure, mouthguard"

If an illegal action violates multiple rules simultaneously, issue the penalty you feel most confident. If you feel equally confident in all possible calls, use this hierarchy:

1. Misconduct (4.3)
2. Illegal Target Zone (4.1.1)
3. Illegal Blocking Zone (4.1.2)
4. Illegal Contact (4.1.3)
5. Multiplayer Block (4.1.4)
6. Illegal Position (4.2.1)
7. Gaining Position (4.2.2)
8. Interference (4.2.3)
9. Illegal Procedure (4.2.4)

If you're completing paperwork that requires a Penalty Code, use the given codes to denote each penalty type.



REPORT TO THE BOX

SIGNAL:

1. With your index finger extended, point forward with your arm, bent at the elbow.
2. In a relaxed motion, straighten your arm in a swooping motion with a slight angle towards the outside of your body.

Use the "Report to the Box" hand signal after each round of a penalty verbal cue and hand signal, or when you are asking a queued Skater on the track to report to the Penalty Box.



MULTIPLE PENALTIES

SIGNAL:

1. Extend your arm forward ending in a fist with palm down.
2. Use two (or more) fingers of the other hand to tap the wrist of the extended arm twice.
3. Show the fingers towards the Penalty Box Officials.

REPEAT IF NECESSARY.



Use the "Multiple Penalties" hand signal towards the Penalty Box Officials to communicate when a Skater has to serve more than one penalty. The number of fingers used for the tap should equal the number of penalties the Skater has to serve. If it is not possible to use fingers to communicate the number of penalties, use a way that works best for your crew.



4.1 CONTACT PENALTIES

Gaining position on an opponent, or causing an opponent to lose position to another teammate, due to illegal contact is always considered to have sufficient impact on the game.

Learn more about penalty-worthy contact defined in 4.1.

4.1.1. Impact to an Illegal Target Zone

Learn more about penalty-worthy contact defined in 4.1.1.

B Back Block

SAY:

“
[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Back Block
”

SIGNAL:

1. Start with your arms forward, bent at a 90-degree angle, palms forward.
2. Straighten your elbows and extend your arms forward in a push motion.



A High Block

SAY:

“
[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
High Block
”

SIGNAL:

1. Hold your forearm vertically in front of your chest, palm closed in a fist and facing inward, with your fist at chin level.
2. Move your forearm down, ending with your fist at chest level.



L Low Block

SAY:

“
[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Low Block
”

SIGNAL:

1. Fold your arm, bent at the elbow, diagonally across your chest. Your hand should touch just below your opposite shoulder.



4.1.2. Impact with an Illegal Blocking Zone

Learn more about penalty-worthy contact defined in 4.1.2.

H Head Block

SAY:

“
[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Head Block
”

SIGNAL:

1. Hold your hand, palm open, on the back of your helmet. Your elbow should be bent out to the side.



F Forearm

SAY:

“
[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Forearm
”

SIGNAL:

1. Hold up your forearm vertically in front of your body, with your elbow bent at a 90-degree angle. With the opposite hand, touch the middle of your forearm.



E Leg Block

SAY:

“
[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Leg Block
”

SIGNAL:

1. Hold your hands over one shoulder with bent elbows, forearms parallel and fingers extended and facing in direction of the forearms.
2. Move the arms across the body to the opposite hip, straightening your elbows.



4.1.3 Other Illegal Contact

Learn more about penalty-worthy contact defined in 4.1.3.

C Illegal Contact

SAY:

“
**[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Illegal Contact**
”

Or use one of these
standardized cues:

“ **Illegal Assist** ”

“ **Early Hit** ”

“ **Late Hit** ”

“ **Out of Play Block** ”

SIGNAL:

1. Extend one arm in front of your body, parallel to the floor and perpendicular to your torso. Your palm should be facing up, fingers together.
2. With your other hand, palm facing inward, make a chopping motion into your other palm.



D Direction

SAY:

“
**[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Direction**
”

Or use this
standardized cue:

“ **Stop Block** ”

SIGNAL:

1. Hold your arm out, forearm extended, palm up.
2. Keep your elbow stationary and slowly rotate your forearm a full 180 degrees back and forth.



4.1.4 Multiplayer Blocks

Learn more about penalty-worthy contact defined in 4.1.4.

M Multiplayer

SAY:

“
[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Multiplayer
”

SIGNAL:

1. With elbows bent and to the sides, hold your forearms horizontally in front of you. With your palms facing each other and fingers together, hook the fingers of both hands together.



4.2 GAME STRUCTURE PENALTIES

When the basic rules of the game are violated in a manner that would give a team an advantage, the individual or team who violates the rule should be penalized.

Learn more about game structure penalties as defined in 4.2.

4.2.1 Illegal Positioning

Learn more about position penalties as defined in 4.2.1.

P Illegal Position

SAY:

“
[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Illegal Position
”

SIGNAL:

1. Hold your arm out with the elbow bent and hand up at a 90-degree angle in the direction of the offending Skater(s).
2. Drop the arm in a chopping motion. The chop is done once per signal.



Or use one of these
standardized cues:

“ Destruction ”

“ Skating Out of Bounds ”

“ Failure to Reform ”

“ Failure to Return ”

“ Failure to Yield ”



CONTINUED: 4.2.1 Illegal Positioning

LEARN MORE:

Some infractions require Officials to issue a warning and allow Skaters an appropriate amount of time to react before issuing a penalty.

THESE INFRACTIONS ARE:

- "Failure to Reform" following a "No Pack" warning
- "Failure to Return" following an "Out of Play" warning
- "Failure to Yield" following a "False Start" warning

No warning is necessary before issuing a "Destruction" or "Skating Out of Bounds" penalty.

4.2.2 Gaining Position

Learn more about position penalties as defined in 4.2.2.

X Cut

SAY:

“
**[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Cut**
”

Or use this
standardized cue:

“ **Illegal Re-Entry** ”

SIGNAL:

1. With your arms bent at the elbows, cross your forearms in front of your body.



4.2.3 Interfering with the Flow of the Game

Learn more about game interference as defined in 4.2.3.

N Interference

SAY:

“
**[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Interference**
”

Or use this
standardized cue:

“ **Delay of Game** ”

SIGNAL:

1. Hold one arm out straight, aimed at the floor at an angle.
2. Place your other hand at the top of your shoulder, palm down, all fingers extended. Move your hand down the length of your outstretched arm.



4.2.4 Other Illegal Procedures

Learn more about illegal procedures as defined in 4.2.4.

I Illegal Procedure

SAY:

“
**[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Illegal Procedure**
”

Or use one of these
standardized cues:

“ **Star Pass Violation** ”

“ **Star Pass Interference** ”

SIGNAL:

1. Hold your fists in front of your chest with forearms parallel to the floor and one another.
2. Rotate your forearms around one another.



LEARN MORE:

When you issue an Illegal Procedure penalty, always try to give concise communication to explain cause of the penalty.



4.3. PENALTIES FOR UNSPORTING CONDUCT

"All participants in a game of roller derby must be respectful of one another. This includes but is not limited to Skaters, Team Staff, Officials, mascots, event staff, and spectators. When Skaters or Team Staff behave in an unsporting manner, their misconduct should be penalized accordingly."

Learn more about penalties for unsporting conduct as defined in 4.3.

G Misconduct

SAY:

“
**[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Misconduct**
”

**Or use this
standardized cue:**

“ **Insubordination** ”

SIGNAL:

1. Place one hand on the opposite shoulder, just below the clavicle, palm facing inwards.
2. Sweep that hand across your collarbone.



LEARN MORE:

When you issue a Misconduct penalty, always try to give concise communication to explain cause of the penalty.

Expulsions

SAY:

“
**[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Gross [Penalty
Verbal Cue]**
”

SIGNAL:

1. If you're signalling an expulsion mid-Jam, first use the signal for the penalty.
2. After you complete the signal for the penalty, make a fist with your thumb out.
3. Move your fist over your shoulder, with your thumb pointing back.



LEARN MORE:

In this case, "Gross ____" is a modifier. Use this modifier when you are issuing an expulsion mid-Jam.

When explaining that a Skater is being expelled between Jams, don't feel you need to use a formal verbal cue. Instead, speak to them professionally and explain that their penalty is being upgraded to an expulsion and the reason why. Use the thumb signal when you deliver the expulsion, or when leaving the conversation to communicate to other invested parties. Use discretion when you apply this signal to avoid escalating any conflict.



OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

Warnings

Show the Star

SAY:

“
**[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Show the Star**
”

LEARN MORE:

Use this warning when a Skater is holding their helmet cover in their hand but you don't feel it is visible enough. If you're confident a Skater is intentionally concealing their Star, Officials should issue a penalty without a warning. This warning is not accompanied by a whistle.

False Start

SAY:

“
**[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
False Start**
”

LEARN MORE:

Use this warning when a Skater is partially lined up in an illegal starting position during the Jam-Starting Whistle. This warning is not accompanied by a hand signal or whistle.

If the situation appears before the "Five Seconds" warning and you have the capacity to do so, try to avoid these situations by giving a warning to the Skater or team.

No Pack

SAY:

“
No Pack
”

Or use this
standardized cue:

“ **No Pack, Split** ”

LEARN MORE:

Use this warning in case of a No Pack situation. Hold the warning as long as no pack exists on the track and repeat the verbal cue as needed. This warning is not accompanied by a whistle.

SIGNAL:

1. Raise both arms, elbows bent at a 90-degree angle, so that your forearms are vertical. Your palms should be open and facing inside.



CONTINUED: Warnings

Pack Definition

SAY:

“

Pack is here

”

SIGNAL:

1. Extend both arms with palms open and facing inward. Use your hands to indicate the front and back of the pack.



LEARN MORE:

When necessary, adapt this cue to specify where the pack is. For example "Pack is front," "Pack is back," or "Pack is all." This communication is typically intended for other Officials, but it should not be discouraged if Skaters are within earshot.

Out of Play

SAY:

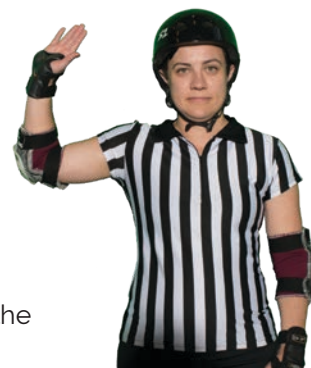
“

Out of Play

”

SIGNAL:

1. With the arm closest to the Skaters who are out of play, hold your arm out with the elbow bent at a 90-degree angle in the direction of the offending Skaters. Hold the arm in this position until all Skaters have returned in play.



LEARN MORE:

If needed, add information about where the Out of Play is occurring. For example, "In the front" or "In the back."

When cancelling the warning is complete, try not to drop the arm in a manner that can be confused for the penalty hand signal. When necessary give an accompanying cue like "in" or "in play" towards other Officials when cancelling the warning. This communication is typically intended for other Officials, but it should not be discouraged if Skaters are within earshot. This warning is not accompanied by a whistle.



CONTINUED: Warnings

Directing Skaters On and Off the Track

SAY:

“

**[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Stay on the track**

”

OR

“

**[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Return to the track**

”

OR

“

**[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Go to your bench**

”

SIGNAL:

When directing a Skater to remain on or return to the track:

1. Hold your arm slightly extended from your body with your palm facing your body.
2. Pull the arm into your body by bending your elbow.



When directing a skater off the track:

1. Hold your arm perpendicular to your body with your palm open.
2. Straighten your elbow and extend the arm away from the body in a push motion. Your palm should indicate the direction that you are directing the Skater.

Jammer Communication

Lead Jammer

1. Extend your right arm and point your index finger toward the Lead Jammer.
2. At the same time, hold your left arm straight up in the air and make an “L” shape with your index finger and thumb.
3. When the Jammer reaches the rear Engagement Zone in their first scoring trip, drop your left arm.
4. Keep your right arm extended until the Jammer loses Lead Jammer status, or the Jam ends.



Not Lead Jammer

1. Hold your arms nearly perpendicular to the floor and wave them back and forth across the center of your body with palms facing inward.
2. Repeat this motion until the Jammer reaches the rear Engagement Zone in their first scoring trip.



No Earned Pass

1. Hold both hands in fists with index fingers extended. Your fists should be side by side in front of your body in a manner that they are visible to the addressee.
2. Move one hand in an half circle around the stationary hand. Repeat as needed.



LEARN MORE

You can show how many Skaters have been passed by the Jammer without earning the pass by straightening up more than one finger on the stationary hand.

Star Pass Complete

SAY:

“
Star Pass Complete
”

SIGNAL:

1. Touch your head with the flat palm of your open hand. Keep your fingers together.
2. Lift the hand up into the air away from your head.



Repeat as needed.

Incomplete Star Pass

SAY:

“
**[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
You are not the Jammer**
”

LEARN MORE:

Use this warning if the Pivot has control of the Star as a result of an unsuccessful Star Pass or other means (for example, picking up a Star that had fallen to the ground). This warning is not accompanied by a hand signal or whistle.

Penalty Box Communication

Stand

SAY:

“
**[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Stand**
”

OR

“
**[Team Color],
[Skater Position],
Stand**
”

OR

“
**[Skater Position],
Stand**
”

LEARN MORE:

Instruct a Skater who has 10 seconds remaining in their penalty time to stand up by stating the Skater's team color first, then uniform number, followed by the one-word instruction, "Stand." The last word of the verbal cue, "Stand," should be timed with exactly 10 seconds remaining on the Skater's penalty time. If you need to instruct multiple Skaters who should stand at the same time, you may use position instead of number or color.



Time Stoppage

SAY:

“
”

Time stopped, [Team Color], [Skater Number], [additional information]

LEARN MORE:

The Penalty Box Officials will instruct a Skater that they have stopped their penalty time by stating “Time Stopped.” If you have the ability to, tell the Skater what they need to do to resume timing.

Done

SAY:

“
”

**[Team Color],
[Skater Number],
Done**

OR

“
”

**[Team Color],
[Position],
Done**

OR

“
”

**[Position],
Done**

LEARN MORE:

The Penalty Box Officials will instruct a Skater that they have finished serving their penalty time and may return to the track. The last word of the verbal cue, “Done,” should be timed exactly as time expires on the Skater’s penalty time.

Jam Start and Ending

Five Seconds

SAY:

“
”

Five Seconds

SIGNAL:

1. Facing the pack, use the hand closest to the track and extend your arm up in the air. Stretch all fingers out to indicate the number five.

LEARN MORE:

The Jam Timer should announce this loud enough for the Skaters and Officials to hear. The first word of the verbal cue, “Five,” should be spoken exactly five seconds before the next Jam starts.



Jam Start

WHISTLE: 

[One short whistle blast]

SIGNAL:

1. Starting from the "Five Seconds" warning lower your hand and point to the track area in front of the foremost Blocker. Hold the signal until all Skaters appear to have understand that the Jam has begun.



Jam Ending

WHISTLE:    

[Four short whistle blasts]

SIGNAL:

1. Place your hands on your hips with your elbows facing outwards.
2. Lift your hands from your hips, then return them. Repeat the motion through all Jam-ending whistles.



Play Stoppages

Team Timeout

SAY:

“
**Timeout,
[Team Color]**
”

SIGNAL:

1. Create a "T" shape with hands.
2. Captains and Designated Alternates also use this hand signal to request a Team Timeout.



Official Timeout

SAY:

“
Official Timeout
”

SIGNAL:

1. With elbows extended at shoulder height, tap the tops of your shoulders with your fingertips.



Official Review

SAY:

“

**Official Review,
[Team Color]**

”

SIGNAL:

1. Bring your hands together to form an “O” with your fingers and thumbs. A properly-formed signal is round, not oval or triangular. This signal should be held up so it is clearly visible to the Officials.



LEARN MORE:

Captains and Designated Alternates also use this hand signal to request an Official Review.

Whistles

Use these whistle types when officiating roller derby.

WHISTLE: 

[One Short Blast]

SOUNDS LIKE (click to hear):



>>> Use this to indicate the Jam is starting.

WHISTLE: 

[Two Rapid, Short Blasts]

SOUNDS LIKE (click to hear):



>>> Use this with the Lead Jammer signal to indicate the Lead Jammer status has been awarded to your assigned Jammer.

WHISTLE: 

[Four Rapid, Short Blasts]

SOUNDS LIKE (click to hear):



This whistle has two uses. When used by itself, it stops the Period Clock. Use this to signal time stoppage for a Timeout, Official Timeout or Official Review.

Use this with the Jam-Ending hand signal to indicate the Jam is over. A Jam is not over until the final whistle of the first set of four blasts. When Officials are signalling the Jam over, this signal is repeated three times.

If a Lead Jammer calls it off, the Jammer Referee assigned to them should be the first to signal this and then all Officials with whistles should echo it twice.





[One Long Blast]

SOUNDS LIKE (click to hear):



>>> Use this to indicate that you are about to assess a penalty.



[Rolling Whistle]

SOUNDS LIKE (click to hear):



>>> Use this to indicate the end of a timeout or the end of a period.

LEARN MORE:

If it is the end of the period, wait until the final Jam is over. If either team has an Official Review available, wait until the Head Referee has confirmed neither team wants to use their review, or until 30 seconds after the final Jam ends. Then use this whistle to officially end the period.