

Certifying PAVO Referees

The primary purpose of a PAVO Affiliated Board is to recruit, train, rate, and certify officials (referees, line judges, and scorers) to service officiating needs in the board's geographical area. PAVO has developed training materials (Training Manuals, PowerPoint presentations and online learning systems such as *iREF*), exams, rating and certification procedures and standards, and criteria to evaluate multiple levels of ability and experience for officials' certification.

These general policies apply to the referee certification process:

A referee candidate can take no more than two theoretical exams and two practical (on-court) evaluations in a single membership year (June 1 to May 31).

A second on-court evaluation should be administered only if recommended by the on-court evaluation committee.

All exams and evaluations in a single season must be administered by the same Affiliated Board.

In unusual circumstances, exceptions to the policies above must be obtained from the PAVO President.

Affiliated Boards may not make changes in the NCAA/PAVO exams or rating and certification procedures when awarding Local or State certifications. Ratings and certifications procedures must be based on current NCAA women's volleyball rules regardless of the rules used when officiating for other organizations.

Referee Certification Levels

PAVO has established five progressive certification levels for referees. Each referee certification level is earned by meeting a set of criteria specific to that designation. Following are PAVO referee certifications and the level of competition that the holder of the rating is qualified to officiate:

CERTIFICATION	LEVEL OF COMPETITION
Apprentice	Matches that may be adequately managed by a competent, but inexperienced referee.
Local	Interscholastic and intercollegiate matches requiring a competent and experienced referee.
State	Any match within the state or area of the Affiliated Board jurisdiction where the certification is awarded.
National <i>(earned only through the PAVO NRT process)</i>	Any match in the United States. This certification is for the most highly skilled and experienced referee. (See National Referee Certification).
Retired National	Allows referees who no longer actively referee at the national level to remain active as trainers, raters, and/or observers within their Affiliated Board jurisdiction. (See <i>Criteria for Retired National Referees</i>).

Referee Rating and Certification Criteria

Each referee certification level has a specific set of criteria for earning that designation. PAVO Affiliated Boards are authorized to award Apprentice, Local, and State certification. To earn a National referee certification, referees must attend one of PAVO's National Rating Team (NRT) sites that are conducted around the country each year.

Each PAVO Affiliated Board can establish minimum requirements for Apprentice referees according to the needs and resources of the Affiliated Board. The Affiliated Board can develop minimum scores for theoretical exams and for on-court evaluations.

PAVO establishes minimum requirements for Local and State referee certifications. The table below lists the minimum criteria for each certification that can be awarded by a PAVO Affiliated Board. Criteria for the Apprentice certification can be established by the Affiliated Board; thus, the Apprentice certification information (exam, evaluation, and *iREF* criteria) provided in the table below is only a recommendation from PAVO.

Certification	THEORETICAL (WRITTEN) EXAM*	ON-COURT EVALUATION*	iREF ONLINE TRAINING
Apprentice	Pass Form C or Form A corrected to 100%, prior to each collegiate season	Pass with a minimum score of 75	iREF 100 Level Course
Local	Pass Form A or Form B corrected to 100%, prior to each collegiate season	Pass with a minimum score of 80	iREF 100 & 200 Level Courses
State	Pass Form A or Form B corrected to 100%, prior to each collegiate season	Pass with a minimum score of 85	iREF 100-300 Level Courses

* Please review the section on *Theoretical Exams* which begins on page 20.

Renewing a Referee Certification

All referee certifications that are awarded by an Affiliated Board expire annually on June 1, along with individual PAVO membership. PAVO has established the minimum renewal requirements below for each certification level so that referees can demonstrate their ability to continue officiating at a certain level or be considered for a higher certification.

National referee certifications expire every four years, and the renewal process is addressed in another section of this handbook, [Earning and Maintaining a National Certification](#) (pg. 25). The table below lists minimum requirements for renewing each referee certification that is awarded by a PAVO Affiliated Board:

Certification	THEORETICAL EXAM (RENEWAL)	ON-COURT EVALUATION (RENEWAL)
Apprentice	Pass Form A corrected to 100%	Pass within each two-year period with minimum score established by the Affiliated Board.
Local	Pass Form A or Form B corrected to 100%	Pass within each two-year period with minimum score of 80.
State	Pass Form A or Form B corrected to 100%	Pass within each two-year period with minimum score of 85.

Referees who want to renew an Apprentice, Local, or State certification and remain at their current levels are required to undergo a formal on-court evaluation every other year. However, they should be able to demonstrate that they can still officiate at their certification level on an annual basis.

In some circumstances, an Affiliated Board may not have the resources to conduct a formal rating session that provides the opportunity to renew certifications as well as evaluations for new certifications. For current renewals, acceptable alternatives to a formal rating session are:

- Officiate a minimum of three intercollegiate matches while being observed by a minimum of five different evaluators. The evaluators must include at least three PAVO referees, while the others may be coaches or referees. Referee evaluators must have certifications comparable to or higher than that of the renewing referee. Prior to evaluation, the candidate asks coaches or referees to complete an evaluation form (See [Sample Documents](#) on pg. 35) that is pre-addressed to the Affiliated Board's on-court evaluation committee chair. If an average of 3.5 is scored, the candidate maintains the current certification, provided that the theoretical exam process is also successfully completed.
- Undergo evaluation through unannounced observations. Prior to the season in which evaluations are required, candidates provide the on-court evaluation committee chair with their officiating schedules. The on-court evaluation committee chair then distributes evaluation forms to partners and select coaches of the referees who is scheduled for certification renewal/advancement, but candidates do not know who will evaluate them prior to any of their matches. Observers return their evaluations to the on-court evaluation committee chair after each match.
- Undergo an informal observation early in the season. An evaluator can be a referee partner, Board Chair, coach, or other designated observer.

If an Affiliated Board receives complaints or concerns from coaches or administrators about a referee who has been renewed by an alternate method, the referee should be evaluated using a more formal method.

These renewal policies determine the effective date of a certification:

- The most recently renewed certification becomes effective immediately.
- If a referee attempts to renew or upgrade a current certification, the level of certification achieved in that attempt will immediately replace the previously held certification.
- When attempting to renew or upgrade a current certification, receiving scores on the practical evaluation that are lower than the candidate's current certification means that the candidate will receive the lower certification.

Transferring a Referee Certification

Apprentice certifications cannot be transferred to other Affiliated Boards because the minimum criteria for these certifications may vary from one Affiliated Board to another. Referees who earn an Apprentice certification as a member of one Affiliated Board must undergo a new evaluation process if they transfer membership to a new Affiliated Board. However, a member's new Affiliated Board can also choose to waive the evaluation process if they feel their rating criteria closely match the criteria of the referee's previous Affiliated Board.

Local, State, and National referee certifications are transferable because the minimum rating criteria are established at a nationwide level by PAVO. Referees who are certified as a Local, State, or National Referee can retain their certification when they transfer membership to a new Affiliated Board, provided they meet all the membership requirements of the new Affiliated Board.

These are PAVO's member transfer policies:

- It is recommended that referees join the geographically closest Affiliated Board.
- Referees who move to a new locality can immediately join the Affiliated Board that services that area and need not take a theoretical exam or on-court evaluation with the second board until the current certification has expired.
- The Board Chair of each of the Affiliated Boards involved should communicate and agree that the transferring member is in good standing with the original board at the time of transfer.

Theoretical Exams – Referees

Theoretical exam materials for referees are prepared by the PAVO/USA Volleyball Exams Committee and are electronically accessible to PAVO Standard members whose annual dues have been paid via the PAVO member registration process. All theoretical exams are subjected to statistical analysis to determine the validity of individual test questions. PAVO establishes these policies regarding exam materials:

- Exams are copyrighted, and may not be printed and/or circulated except to personnel who are authorized by the Affiliated Board to conduct practice-exam sessions for entry-level referees.
- Exam results will become a permanent part of each member's database record.
- Exam materials are made available only to members of those Affiliated Boards that have met all other annual requirements.
- All PAVO referees are required to take a theoretical exam each year. The Form A/B exams (see table below) are only available online, except for accommodations for special circumstances. The Form C exam (see table below) is available either online or in printed form.
- The theoretical exam is a way to test a referee's knowledge of new and current rules, rule interpretations, and officiating techniques. Affiliated Board meetings or clinics provide a valuable opportunity for your members to interact and discuss questions and issues that are raised during the exam. Current detailed instructions for administering the theoretical exam are available to Board Chairs as a part of the annual board chair packet. Please read and follow those instructions.

The NCAA/PAVO Exam Committee develops three versions of the referee exam:

TEST VERSION	TEST DESCRIPTION	CERTIFICATIONS APPROPRIATE FOR THE TEST
Form A	Tests an experienced referee's knowledge and application of the rules and techniques.	Available for all certifications; required annually for Local, State, National Referees
Form B	Alternate to Form A and tests for the same knowledge.	National Referees – used if Form A score is not 90%; other certifications – practice exam or per Affiliated Board policy.
Form C	Tests a less experienced referee's knowledge and application of the rules and techniques.	Required for non-certified referees or Apprentice certifications.

PAVO recommends that non-National Referees first take the theoretical exam without access to rules books or resources. Each referee should then use the current rules book and other resources provided by PAVO to correct the test to 100%, noting the rule references. At clinics or meetings of the Affiliated Board, members can discuss exam questions that were missed.

The annual exam criteria for National Referees to retain certification are:

- Take the Form A/B theoretical exam by September 1 each year without using a rules book or other resources.
- Take the exam with a 90-minute time limit, and obtain a minimum score of 90%

The exam criteria for National Referee candidates to attend an NRT site are:

- Take the Form A/B theoretical exam by September 1 and at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of their rating session without using a rules book or other resources.
- Take the exam within a 90-minute time limit and obtain a minimum score of 90%

If a National Referee or National Referee candidate does not obtain at least 90% on Form A, the referee can review and discuss the missed questions and take Form B of the exam. Form B must also be taken without a rules book or other resources and within the 90-minute time limit.

Administering On-Court Evaluations – Referees

Conducting a practical, or on-court, evaluation is the primary way to assess a referee's level of competence. Therefore, it is important for Affiliated Boards to conduct practical rating sessions, if possible. On-court evaluations require time and effort to establish and conduct. However, the opportunity to observe how a referee performs in an actual match setting provides more valid information about a referee's ability than any other method.

Criteria for Raters

An Affiliated Board's rating session depends on access to facilities, teams, and referees who are qualified to act as raters. So that Affiliated Boards can accurately award referee certifications, PAVO establishes minimum rater requirements as follows:

CERTIFICATION AWARDED	MINIMUM NUMBER OF RATERS	MINIMUM RATER REQUIREMENTS
Apprentice	Affiliated Board establishes criteria.	Affiliated Board establishes criteria; recommended that one rater have Local Certification or higher.
Local	Two	One rater must have Local Certification or higher.
State	Three	One rater must have State Certification or higher; others must have Local Certification or higher.

It is important to standardize the procedures for on-court rating sessions so that every candidate is evaluated according to the same criteria. Board Chairs are urged to meet with all raters and establish the criteria for each certification that is to be awarded. New PAVO Affiliated Boards must follow these PAVO rating requirements to maintain affiliation:

- For the first two years of a board's affiliation, raters are not required to have a PAVO certification, but the board may only award Apprentice and Local Certifications. After the initial two-year period, at least two raters with Local Certification are necessary to administer ratings and

certifications. However, if a new Affiliated Board has a State or National Certified Referee as a member, it may also award State certifications.

- After an Affiliated Board has been awarding State Certifications for two years, the Affiliated Board must have at least one State or National Certified Referee as one of its raters.

PAVO strongly recommends that raters hold a Local Certification or higher for at least two years before they are assigned to rate other officials. New raters should have at least three practice ratings before their rating scores are considered valid. Whenever possible, experienced referees should be examined by referees of similar or greater experience.

Affiliated Boards may borrow referees from nearby Affiliated Boards to grant higher certifications than the Affiliated Board is currently authorized to award. Referees from one Affiliated Board may attend another board's rating session to attain a higher certification than the referee's own board is qualified to grant.

Conducting a Formal Rating Session

Preparation is the key to conducting a successful referee rating session that meets the needs of the members. PAVO provides a checklist of the items needed for consideration when establishing a formal rating session:

- Determine how many referees need to be evaluated and estimate their certification levels.
- Arrange a rating site that provides a level of play that is appropriate for the level of certifications your Affiliated Board is authorized to award. High school play is not recommended for any certification higher than Apprentice. Inter-squad college scrimmages or USA Volleyball competition at a playing level equivalent to women's collegiate play is appropriate. Verify that there are enough matches for the number of referees who are to be rated.
- Review the previous section, *Criteria for Raters* (pgs. 21–22), to determine the number and qualifications of the raters that will be needed, based on the number of candidates and their potential certifications. Be sure to consider time factors, since only a limited number of referees can be rated in any time period.
- Conduct a raters' meeting before the rating session and review how to use the Joint PAVO/USA Volleyball Rating Form. Instructions on using the rating forms are included in the annual PAVO Affiliated Board Chair Packet.
- Allow candidates to review the on-court rating form before the rating session.
- Each candidate should be evaluated both as a first referee and as a second referee for a minimum of one set each. A full match at each position is preferable. The match should be challenging enough to provide an adequate test of the candidate's abilities, or an additional rating session should be scheduled.
- Raters should evaluate how a candidate conducts pre-match and post-match procedures as well as the candidate's officiating during play. Raters should observe from different physical locations around the court and should not converse with each other during the match.
- If more than one rater evaluates the same candidate, the raters should meet after the on-court session and come to a consensus before deciding to pass or fail the candidate.
- Constructive criticism should be given immediately after the rating session, whether the candidate passed or failed. A candidate who has failed should practice for some time before undergoing a second rating session.
- On-court evaluations may be repeated once in a twelve-month period to obtain a higher certification level.

Using Alternative Rating Sites

Sometimes it isn't possible for the Affiliated Board to set up an ideal rating site to award certifications. PAVO allows these alternatives:

- Use an existing college tournament if it is agreeable to the tournament director. The match fee normally paid to the referees can be paid to the raters or to the board instead.
- Use USA Volleyball tournaments that provide a level of play that approximates women's collegiate play. In the post-match discussion, include any differences in rules or techniques that are pertinent to the match.
- Establish an observer system during the college season. A number of designated observers who hold at least a State Certification can evaluate referees at a scheduled match. The match fee normally paid to the referees can be paid to the raters or to the Affiliated Board instead. If possible, an observation system should be concentrated in the early part of the season.
- Reciprocate with USA Volleyball certifications as defined in the current PAVO/USA Volleyball Reciprocity Agreement.

You can view/download a copy of the Reciprocity Agreement on the PAVO website at <https://pavo.org/Certifications> or by contacting the PAVO Central Office at pavo@pavo.org.

Certifying New Referees

When an Affiliated Board has new referee members who have little or no experience, PAVO provides a way to help get them started. New referees can qualify for their first Apprentice certification by completing PAVO's *iREF* 100-level referee course of study, pass Exam C with a minimum score of 75 (or higher if so determined by the Affiliated Board), and by meeting one of the following criteria:

- Attend a series of structured clinics or rule-interpretation meetings organized and/or arranged and approved by the member's Affiliated Board. The number of clinics and/or meetings is specified by the member's Affiliated Board.
- Secure a passing grade and the recommendation of the instructor in a college-level officiating course or workshop (the course must be pre-approved by the Affiliated Board).
- Attend officiating courses offered by another organization or institution. Candidates must secure a recommendation from the course instructor and the course must be pre-approved by the Affiliated Board.
- Work with more experienced referees for a number of matches specifically designated by the Affiliated Board.

Certifying Experienced Referees

Referees who have been certified by other organizations or have officiating experience outside of PAVO may also want to seek certification from your Affiliated Board. You will want to assess their level of competency while acknowledging their prior experience. New PAVO candidates who have officiating experience can be awarded their first PAVO certification after completing all of the following requirements:

- Complete the appropriate level(s) of PAVO's *iREF* referee course(s), and
- Attain the required score on the appropriate PAVO Theoretical Exam, and
- Demonstrate the use of appropriate officiating techniques. This requirement can be fulfilled at a formal on-court rating session, by observations during the college season, or through the PAVO/USA Volleyball Reciprocity Agreement (<https://pavo.org/Certifications>).

Criteria for Retired National Referees

A PAVO National Referee may choose to take retired status and maintain membership with PAVO in order to remain active as a trainer, rater, or observer for an Affiliated Board. PAVO has established the following criteria:

- Hold a National Referee Certification for at least two four-year terms.
- Maintain PAVO membership (Affiliate, Associate, or Standard)

A written request for retired status must be submitted to the NRT Director by the date when annual National Referee surveys regarding points earned are due. The request must be signed by the applicant and the current Chair of the referee's Affiliated Board.

Retired National Referee status is not intended for actively working referees. A Retired National Referee who intends to actively referee is considered to hold State certification, and must meet all requirements to maintain that certification.