



International
Paralympic
Committee

To:

- National Paralympic Committees
- International Sport Federations
- International Organisations of Sports for the Disabled
- Regional Organisations
- IPC Recognised International Sport Federations

Bonn, 04 October 2016

2015 IPC Athlete Classification Code and International Standards

Dear all,

It is with pleasure to inform you that the International Standards, accompanying the 2015 Athlete Classification Code have been revised and approved by the IPC Governing Board (GB) on 5 September 2016.

The International Standards are mandatory supplements to the Code and detail technical and operational requirements for classification. The Standards do not require adoption by the IPC General Assembly (GA) and are subject to an approval by the IPC GB. This allows the IPC GB to revise technical and/or operational requirements from time to time. For the sake of transparency, the International Standards, versions IPC GB June 2015, were made available to the Membership in November 2015 when presenting the Code for adoption by the GA.

Since that date, the IPC Classification Committee further engaged in Membership dialogue on these documents, and concluded that amendments were required. This resulted from:

- input IF Heads of Classification and NPC Classification experts (Girona meetings, October 2015);
- recommendations IPC Board of Appeal of Classification, resulting from cases dealt with over the past period. Some of these cases revealed the need to further consider a unique interpretation of language provisions in the International Standards;
- legal challenge (classification appeal to an IF) due to different interpretations of the wording under the current (2007) Code related documents;
- input from NPC Classification experts, gathering in London in May 2016.

International Paralympic Committee

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All the above were tabled for discussion at the June meeting of the IPC Classification Committee, in which the Committee was joined by the IPC Legal Department and IPC CEO on this agenda item. It was agreed that the IPC Legal Department would assist the IPC Classification Committee in finalizing the wording of the International Standards. This work was finalized in July and August through intensive interaction between both groups.

Finally, no substantial changes were made to the versions made available to the Membership in June 2015, but the International Standards benefitted from significant wording clarity thanks to the input of the IPC Legal Department. The summary of changes made per International Standard is enclosed to this letter.

Please be reminded that the 2015 Athlete Classification Code is effective as of 1 January 2017 with compliance required by 1 January 2018. IPC Classification Committee will announce further details on Compliance criteria, as well as model rules derived from the 2015 Code and International Standards, shortly after their next meeting in November 2016.

The IPC Classification Committee greatly appreciates the dedication and exemplary work from the International Federations and National Bodies, and from the IPC Management Team. The Committee is in full support of the improvement in language and clarity in definitions and these versions are advancing the International Standards to a new level.

We are pleased to share the International Standards with you to enable all para sports to take their classification rules to a higher level in providing the best possible athlete classification experience to para athletes. The 2015 Athlete Classification Code and the International Standards can be found in the [IPC Handbook, Section 2, Chapter 1.3.2](#) and on the [Classification webpage](#).

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Xavier Gonzalez', is positioned above the name and title.

Xavier Gonzalez
Chief Executive Officer
International Paralympic Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Hart', is positioned above the name and title.

Anne Hart
Classification Committee Chairperson
International Paralympic Committee



Summary of changes made to the International Standards, versions IPC GB June 2015

1 International Standard for Athlete Evaluation

Definitions have been added and amended, where needed.

A careful review of word choice across the whole International Standard serves the purpose of a more clear (and hopefully unique) interpretation. In that regards, content previously inserted as [comment] has been upgraded to articles in the document.

The overall process of Athlete Evaluation has two distinct elements:

- The establishing of an Eligible Impairment, and
- The assessment of Minimum Impairment Criteria and allocation of a Sport Class by a Classification Panel.

The International Standard for Athlete Evaluation addresses the second point. All detail on the assessment of Eligible Impairment has been removed from this Standard and detailed in the International Standard for Eligible Impairments.

Based on recommendations from the BAC, further clarification has been provided regarding Article 8 (Athletes who are Not Eligible), particularly when protest submissions resulted in NE decisions.

2 International Standard for Eligible Impairments

This International Standard has been improved significantly by a re-organization of the Articles and in terms of identifying where medical diagnostic documentation in support of the assessment of an Eligible Impairment might be required. This resulted from a legal challenge on the subject, which identified gaps in both 2007 and June 2015 edition of the International Standards. The Standard proposes an outline protocol whereby the existence of an Eligible Impairment can be established.

The introduction of a definition for 'Underlying Health Condition' allows for a clearer and more accessible International Standard.

Content previously inserted as [comment] has been upgraded to articles in the document.



Further clarification has been provided what happens when an athlete is allocated Sport Class NE if he/she does not have an Eligible Impairment, further to recommendations made by the BAC.

3 International Standard for Protests and Appeals

The document adds an explanation to the definitions of Protests and Appeals from the Code, allowing for a very clear operational interpretation.

It is explained in clearer terms that a Protest may not be made for an Athlete that holds Sport Class NE because the Athlete will automatically be re-assessed (following an analysis of BAC decisions in the course of the last months).

It is clarified that a Chief Classifier has a mandate to dismiss a Protest in absence of a clear rationale or in absence of a specific rule(s) alleged to have been breached.

Following legal consultation, it is also agreed that a protest panel should have access to the assessment files of the first classification panel.

Appeal rights are an exclusive mandate of the National Body or National Paralympic Committee.

4 International Standard for Classifier Training and Personnel

Amendments restricted to a language check and clarity in wording inserted, where required.

Classifier independence and impartiality has been emphasized.

5 International Standard for Classification Data Protection

Compliance with German legislation has been introduced in the provisions that apply to classification research (Article 4).