



REFEREE TESTING: REQUIREMENTS & PROCEDURES

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Background

This manual describes and defines the requirements for all referee ranks in USA Powerlifting. Additionally, the procedures for the written exam (taken online via a computer) and practical exam are specified. In order to serve as a referee at any event, all of the following are required:

1. Current USA Powerlifting membership
2. SafeSport completion on file with National Office
3. Background check on file with the National Office

Any referee, regardless of referee rank, who is inactive as a referee in USA Powerlifting for a period of 4 years (i.e., 48 months) or more will have their referee status changed from “active” to “inactive.” Inactive referees who want to have their referee status reactivated must submit a written request to the Technical Committee. This request must provide both of the following:

1. Compelling reason as to why they were inactive for a prolonged period
2. Justification for why they should be reinstated at their previous rank despite a prolonged period of referee inactivity

Upon recommendation of the Technical Committee and final approval by the President of USA Powerlifting, the inactive referee may be reinstated at their previous rank or a lower rank. Certain requirements may be imposed (e.g., retaking and passing of a particular written and/or practical exam) and must be met prior to referee reactivation. If the request to be reinstated at the previous referee rank is denied, the individual must start the entire referee certification process over again beginning at the state referee level. Any questions pertaining to this document may be sent to the chair of the technical committee at: tc@usapowerlifting.com.

Referee Levels/Ranks

The following are the four levels/ranks of referee in USA Powerlifting listed in order of rank from lowest to highest: state, national, category 2, and category 1. The table below shows the roles/assignments that each rank of referee is eligible to fulfill at various levels of USA Powerlifting competition.

Referee Rank ↓	Doping Control	Scoring Table	Equipment Check	Weigh-In	Technical Controller	Side Referee	Chief Referee	Jury
State	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R	L/S	---
National	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R*, N*
Category 2	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P
Category 1	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P	L/S, R, N, P

Abbreviations: L/P: local/state events; R: regional events; N: national events; P: pro events

Note (*): If there is not a sufficient number of category 1 and/or 2 referees to fill a jury, the technical secretary of a regional or national event may assign national referees to perform this duty.

State Referee

State Referee: Requirements, Procedures, and Maintenance of Certification

Requirements:

1. At least 18 years old
2. Involved with USA Powerlifting for at least one year (i.e., 12 months) in one of the following capacities: athlete, coach, meet director, and/or scoring table official
3. Current USA Powerlifting member in good standing
4. Approval of state chair to sit for exam
5. Pass open-book (i.e., may use USA Powerlifting rulebook) written exam with a score of at least 80%
6. Pass practical exam with a score of at least 90%
7. Complete SafeSport training (completed after passing written and practical exams)
8. Complete background check (completed after passing written and practical exams)

Procedures:

1. [Contact state chair](#) to confirm that requirements 1-3 above have been met and get state chair approval
2. Arrange testing schedule with state chair
3. Take online open-book written exam
4. Take practical exam (can be administered at any full power meet)
5. Complete SafeSport training and background check
 - Completed after passing written and practical exams
 - National Office will send instructions for SafeSport training and background check
 - Note: If the candidate has completed SafeSport and/or a background check outside of USA Powerlifting, the candidate should contact the National Office to determine if one or both of these need to be completed again

Maintenance of State Referee Certification:

1. To maintain the state referee rank, the referee must serve as a scoring table official, technical controller, or platform referee for a full session at two (2) events every four-year certification cycle (current certification cycle: January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2025)
 - a. State referees certified in 2022 and 2023 must serve as a platform referee or technical controller for a full session at one (1) event prior to January 1, 2026
 - b. State referees certified in 2024 and 2025 will automatically be recertified for the next four-year certification cycle regardless of number of events worked as a referee - these referees are encouraged but not required to serve as a scoring table official, technical controller, or platform referee for a full session at one or more events prior to January 1, 2026
 - c. State referees not meeting the recertification requirements stated in Item 1 above will lose their referee status and must re-start the entire exam process over (i.e., Items 3-8 in the "Requirements" section)

State Referee Exam: Procedures for Administration

General Requirements:

- Candidates must be current members of USA Powerlifting to begin the exam process
- Candidates must meet all eligibility requirements listed on Page 4 of this document
- Candidates must pass the written exam prior to sitting for the practical exam

Part 1: Written Exam

- The written exam has 100 multiple choice questions, is open-book, is not proctored, and is limited to 2 hours
 - Candidates are allowed to use the USA Powerlifting rulebook during the test
 - Other than the rulebook, no other resources are allowed during the test
- Upon receiving approval from their state chair to sit for the state referee exam, the candidate and state chair will arrange a date and 2-hour block of time to take the online exam
- At the scheduled date and time, the state chair will email the link for the state referee exam to the candidate and the candidate will take the exam on his or her own electronic device at a location of their choosing
 - Notes about the online written exam:
 - The 2-hour allotted time begins when the candidate opens the exam link
 - Prior to starting the exam, the candidate is required to enter the following information:
 - Copyright and use acknowledgement: "I acknowledging that sharing the exam content/exam link with anyone other than for the purposes of taking the USA Powerlifting State Referee written exam will result in any of a number of penalties (e.g., suspension from USAPL, monetary fines including attorney's fees)"
 - Name
 - Email address
 - Mailing address
 - Candidate status; options include:
 - "first time taking exam"
 - "retaking the exam"
 - "taking the exam as a refresher"
 - USA Powerlifting member number
 - USA Powerlifting member expiration date
 - State chair's name
 - A 2-hour countdown clock will run at the top of the screen for the duration of the exam
 - A reliable and constant internet connection is required for the duration of the exam
 - If the internet connection is intermittent/interrupted during the exam, the content entered up to that point (i.e., answers to questions) may be lost and not retrievable which will necessitate starting the entire exam over from the beginning
 - Note: If a state chair needs the link for the state referee exam, they should contact the chair of the Technical Committee at: tc@usapowerlifting.com.
- Candidates may not submit exam results more than once per exam "attempt"
 - Once candidates begin the exam, there will be a digital record of it; candidates who submit more than one set of exam results will automatically fail the exam and may be subject to additional penalties/restrictions
- Results of the exam are usually sent to the candidate by the National Office via email within 24 to 48 hours
- If the candidate receives a passing score of 80% or better, they will work with their state chair to schedule a meet at which the practical portion of the exam will be administered
- If the candidate does not achieve a passing score, they are eligible to retake the exam but must wait a minimum of 6 weeks before retaking the exam
 - Candidates who do not pass the written exam must wait to take the practical portion until they successfully pass the written exam retake (there is no limit to the number of retakes allowed)

State Referee Exam: Procedures for Administration (con't)

Part 2: Practical Exam

- The practical portion of the state referee exam must be taken at a full power event
 - Any level of event may be used for a state referee practical exam (local/state, regional, national, or pro) though local/state events are the most common
- Candidates must be dressed similar to the referee uniform
 - Candidates dressed in a way that significantly departs from the referee uniform (e.g., jeans, leggings, workout pants, shorts, T-shirt, tank top, etc.) will not be allowed to take their practical exam
- As part of the state referee practical exam, candidates must observe the following non-competition components: equipment check, weigh-in, drug testing; observation times will be coordinated by the state chair or their appointed representative at the event
 - Note: No minimum amount of observation of the above areas is required but it should be sufficient to ensure that the candidate clearly understands and is comfortable with all of the processes/procedures involved
- The state chair will assign an examiner (or examiners) to administer the practical portion of the exam
 - The examiner for the state referee practical exam must be a national, category 2, or category 1 referee
 - State chairs may serve as practical examiners (provided they meet the criteria described above) but they are not required to serve as examiners
- An examiner is limited to testing one candidate at a time (i.e., an examiner may not administer the practical portion to two or more candidates simultaneously)
- The candidate and examiner should meet in the platform vicinity 5-10 minutes before the start of lifting to introduce themselves and discuss the testing process
- The practical exam consists of the candidate observing and making decisions on 40 squats, 30 bench presses, and 30 deadlifts for a total of 100 graded attempts (90% agreement across all 100 attempts is the passing score)
 - For each lift, the candidate must indicate to the examiner whether or not they would give the attempt a white light (i.e., good/passed lift) or a red light (i.e., no/failed lift) and indicate what rule infraction(s) occurred if a red light was decided upon
 - For each attempt, the candidate must make their decisions known to the examiner before the decisions of the platform referees are known via the referee lights
- During a state referee practical exam, the candidate must never be in control of an official referee light controller nor may they make official competition decisions
- For the purposes of the exam and grading each attempt, the decision of the examiner will serve as the standard against which the candidate's decision will be compared
 - Decisions of platform referees and/or jury members (not serving as examiners) are not to be used in the official grading process
 - For example, if the two side referees gave white lights on a squat attempt but the examiner believed the squat was high (i.e., red light), the candidate's decision will only be compared to that of the examiner
- The state referee exam must be given from the side referee position (chief referee and jury table positions are not allowed) with the examiner and candidate sitting side-by-side; there are two ways in which this may be done:
 - The examiner may serve as a side referee making official decisions with the candidate seated beside them
 - The examiner and candidate may be seated behind and to the side of the official side referee
- The examiner will keep track of the number of correct and incorrect calls via the official scoresheet
 - Examiner notes:
 - Examiners will keep track of correct and incorrect calls via an official scoresheet which can be downloaded and printed from the [Technical Committee website](#)
 - If the candidate correctly indicated a red light (i.e., no lift) but gave the wrong reason(s) for the red light, this is to be considered a missed/incorrect attempt by the examiner

State Referee Exam: Procedures for Administration (con't)

- Examiners may allow a few [non-graded] practice lifts (for each discipline: SQ, BP, DL) to familiarize the candidate with the process and determine the best viewing position
 - The examiner must let the candidate know when official grading is to begin
 - When deciding on the number of “practice lifts,” the examiner must be conscience of the number of lifters in the flight/session (also keeping in mind that several failed/non-gradable attempts are likely) so as to ensure there will be a sufficient number of graded attempts
- Any round of attempts may be used for exam purposes including opening/first attempts
- Attempts in which the lifter clearly failed and there is no judgment to be made are not to be counted as graded lifts for the practical exam and are not to be recorded on the exam scoresheet
 - Examples of non-graded attempts include: spotters needing to assist the lifter/bar up and into the racks for the SQ and BP and lifters not getting to the finished position in the DL
- It is preferred that all graded attempts for an exam occur within a single session of lifting; however, if there is not a sufficient number of attempts within a single session of lifting, the exam may be extended across multiple sessions of lifting at the same event (i.e., same event sanction number)
 - A single practical exam may not be extended across multiple events
- It is preferred that the same referee serve as the examiner for the entire test; however, if necessary, different referees may serve as examiners for the three different disciplines (SQ, BP, DL) provided they meet the examiner criteria described above
 - Unless absolutely necessary, there should not be more than one referee serving as an examiner for a given discipline (SQ, BP, DL); for example, one referee should not be the examiner for the first 20 graded squats and a different referee grades the next 20 squats
- Although this is an exam, it is also intended to be a learning experience for the candidate; in-between official attempts and decisions, the candidate and examiner are encouraged to have discussions in which the candidate asks questions and/or the examiner provides advice and insight based on their experiences as a referee
 - These discussions should not be audible to the platform referees so as not to distract them
- In the interest of fostering a learning environment, the examiner should let the candidate know if they agreed or not on each lift (as it occurs) so that a discussion can be had on why the lift was good or bad
- Once the required number of graded attempts has been achieved for a given discipline (SQ, BP, DL), that portion of the practical exam is officially over; however, in the interest of maximizing the learning experience, the examiner and candidate are encouraged (not required) to continue observing and discussing the remaining attempts
- The practical exam is officially over after: 1) all 100 attempts have been graded and 2) all other requirements have been met including observation of equipment check, weigh-in, and drug testing
- After the event, the state chair will submit the exam results online via the official State Referee Practical Exam form
 - Note: If a state chair needs the link for the official State Referee Practical Exam form, they should contact the chair of the Technical Committee at: tc@usapowerlifting.com
- If the candidate does not achieve a passing score on the practical exam, they are eligible to retake the exam but must wait a minimum of 6 weeks before retaking the exam; there is no limit to the number of retakes allowed
- If the candidate passes the practical portion of the exam, they are officially a state referee (and eligible to serve as a referee in competition) once all of the following requirements are met:
 - Individual receives the official results from the National Office
 - Individual successfully completes SafeSport training as confirmed by National Office
 - Individual successfully passes background check as confirmed by National Office

National Referee

National Referee: Requirements, Procedures, and Maintenance of Certification

Requirements:

1. At least 20 years old
2. State referee for a minimum of 2 years (i.e., 24 months)
3. Current USA Powerlifting member in good standing
4. Platform referee (side or chief) for a full session in at least 6 different (i.e., different event sanction numbers) full power events (note: single- or two-lift events do not count for national exam requirements) within the most recent 4-year period
 - a. Note: Working more than one session at a single event only counts as one event for the purposes of the national exam requirements
5. Chief referee for a full session in at least 2 different full-power events within the most recent 4-year period
 - a. Note: Rotating between chief and side referee within a session does not count for the purposes of the chief referee requirement for the national exam
6. Candidates must have demonstrated proficiency in all referee duties including equipment check, weigh-in, score table, platform judging, and drug testing (by approving candidate, state chair attests these requirements are met)
7. Current with SafeSport and background check requirements
8. Approval of state chair and Technical Committee to sit for exam
9. Pass closed-book written exam with a score of at least 90%
10. Pass practical exam with a score of at least 90%
11. The national rank is granted under one of the following two scenarios:
 - a. If the national exam is taken, and passed, at a **national event**, the candidate will be granted the national referee rank if and when they judge a full session at that same event (after passing both exam portions)
 - b. If the national exam is taken, and passed, at a **local, state, or regional event**, the candidate will be granted the national referee rank if and when they judge a full session at a national event within 12 months of passing the national referee exam
 - i. If the candidate fails to judge a full session at a national event within 12 months of the passing of the national exam, they will remain a state referee and must re-start the entire exam process over (i.e., Items 3-11 above)

Procedure:

1. Ensure requirements #1-7 above have been met and [contact state chair](#) to get approval
2. Complete and submit [national referee application](#) at least 30 days prior to exam
3. Receive Technical Committee approval to take national exam (exam can be administered at any full power meet)

Maintenance of National Referee Certification:

1. To maintain the national referee rank, the referee must serve as a scoring table official, technical controller, platform referee, or jury member for a full session at four (4) regional, national, and/or pro events every four-year certification cycle (current certification cycle: January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2025)
 - a. National referees certified in 2022 and 2023 must serve in one or more of the roles listed in #1 above for a full session at two (2) events (eligible events listed in #1 above) prior to January 1, 2026
 - b. National referees certified in 2024 must serve in one or more of the roles listed in #1 above for a full session at one (1) event (eligible events listed in #1 above) prior to January 1, 2026
 - c. National referees certified in 2025 will automatically be recertified for the next four-year certification cycle regardless of number of eligible events worked as a referee
2. National referees not meeting the recertification requirements stated in Item 1 above will lose their national referee status and will be reduced in rank to the state referee level (if they meet the state referee recertification requirements). Referees who are reduced in rank due to a failure to meet recertification requirements are eligible to pursue promotion but must re-start the entire national exam process over (i.e., Items 3-11 in "Requirements" above)

National Referee Exam: Procedures for Administration

General Requirements:

- Candidates must be current members of USA Powerlifting to begin the exam process
- Candidates must meet all eligibility requirements listed on Page 5 of this document
- Candidates must pass the written exam prior to sitting for the practical exam

Part 1: Written Exam

- The national referee written exam has 100 multiple choice questions, is closed-book (i.e., no resources are allowed to be used while taking the exam), is proctored, and is limited to 2 hours
- Upon receiving approval from the Technical Committee to sit for the national referee exam, the candidate and chair of the Technical Committee will decide on the event at which the written exam will be taken
 - Notes:
 - It is not a requirement that the written and practical exams be taken at the same event but the written exam must be passed before the practical exam can be taken
 - It is recommended but not required that the written exam be taken at an event venue in conjunction with said event
 - With the approval of the chair of the Technical Committee, the written exam may be taken at a location and date/time separate from an event (e.g., a library, place of business, etc.) provided the following requirements are met:
 - A proctor approved by the Technical Committee is willing and able to oversee the exam
 - The time, date, and location are mutually agreeable to the candidate and proctor
 - Reliable and uninterrupted internet access will be available for the entire 2-hour exam period
 - The location of the exam is quiet and free of distractions for the entirety of the exam
- Prior to the exam date and time, the proctor will be given instructions on how to access the national referee written exam
- The written exam must be administered on a computer (laptop or desktop)
 - The proctor will provide a computer or one will be provided to the proctor for this purpose
 - The written exam may not be taken on a phone or other mobile device
 - The written exam may not be taken on a computer belonging to the candidate
- The location of the exam must be quiet and free of distractions for the entirety of the exam
- Candidates may not submit exam results more than once per exam “attempt”
 - Once candidates begin the exam, there will be a digital record of it; candidates who submit more than one set of exam results will automatically fail the exam and may be subject to additional penalties/restrictions
- Results of the exam are usually sent to the candidate by the National Office via email within 24 to 48 hours
- If the candidate receives a passing score of 90% or better, they are eligible to sit for the practical exam
- If the candidate does not achieve a passing score, they are eligible to retake the exam but must wait a minimum of 6 weeks before retaking the exam
 - Candidates who do not pass the written exam must wait to take the practical portion until they successfully pass the written exam retake (there is no limit to the number of retakes allowed)

National Referee Exam: Procedures for Administration (con't)

Part 2: Practical Exam

- The practical portion of the national referee exam must be taken at a full power event
 - Any level of event may be used for a national referee practical exam (local/state, regional, national, or pro)
- Candidates must be dressed in their referee uniform
- The chair of the Technical Committee will assign an examiner (or examiners) to administer the practical exam
 - The examiner for the national referee practical exam must be a category 1 or 2 referee
 - In the event that a category 1 or 2 referee is not available to administer the practical exam, the chair of the Technical Committee may, but is not required to, appoint a national referee to administer the practical exam
 - Under no circumstances may a state referee administer a national practical exam
 - Being a category 1 or 2 referee does not guarantee approval as an examiner
 - It is the responsibility of the national referee candidate to provide names of category 1 or 2 referees who have indicated availability to serve as examiners at the event for which the exam is being requested
 - Referee candidates may reach out to the meet director and/or state chair for assistance with this
 - If the chair of the Technical Committee is unable to identify a qualified examiner for a particular event, the candidate will have to wait to take the practical exam at an event at which a qualified examiner will be present (i.e., meeting the candidate requirements and identifying an event for the exam does not guarantee the practical will be able to be conducted at said event)
- The practical exam requirements and administration (e.g., number of graded judgments/decisions/calls, location in which the exam is conducted [i.e., side position], etc.) are identical to that of the state referee practical exam (see Pages 9-10 of this document) with the following differences not already identified above:
 - If the exam is being conducted at a local, state, or regional event, the candidate may be an active platform referee in the side position adjudicating attempts
 - In this case, the examiner would sit beside the candidate and would not be officially adjudicating attempts and there would be no “practice lifts” (i.e., every decision made by the candidate will be graded for exam purposes)
 - There are no requirements for observation of equipment check, weigh-in, and drug testing
- After the event, the examiner (or one of the examiners if more than one was involved) will submit the exam results online via the official National Referee Practical Exam form
 - It is also acceptable for the examiner(s) to give the hard copy version of the exam scoresheet to the event technical secretary (if the event has a technical secretary) for them to officially submit the exam results
 - Note: If an examiner needs the link for the official National Referee Practical Exam form, they should contact the chair of the technical committee at: tc@usapowerlifting.com
- If the candidate does not achieve a passing score on the practical exam, they are eligible to retake the exam but must wait a minimum of 6 weeks before retaking the exam; there is no limit to the number of retakes allowed
- If the candidate passes the practical exam, one of the following two scenarios will apply:
 - If the national practical exam is taken, and passed, at a **national or pro event**, the candidate will be granted the national referee rank if, and when, they judge a full session at that same event
 - If the national practical exam is taken, and passed, at a **local, state, or regional event**, the candidate will be granted the national referee rank if, and when, they judge a full session at a national event within 12 months of passing the national referee exam
 - Note: If the candidate fails to judge a full session at a national event within 12 months of the passing of the national practical exam, they will remain a state referee and must re-start the entire exam process over

Category 2 Referee

Category 2 Referee: Requirements, Procedures, and Maintenance of Certification

Requirements:

1. Current USA Powerlifting member in good standing
2. National referee for a minimum of 2 years (i.e., 24 months)
3. Platform referee (side or chief) for a full session in at least 4 different full power national and/or pro events within the most recent 4-year period
4. Chief referee for a full session in at least 2 different full-power national and/or pro events within the most recent 4-year period
5. Current with SafeSport and background check requirements
6. Approval of state chair and Technical Committee to sit for exam
7. Pass closed-book written exam with a score of at least 90%
8. Pass practical exam with a score of at least 90%

Procedure:

1. Ensure requirements #1-5 above have been met and [contact state chair](#) to get approval
2. Complete and submit [category 2 referee application](#) at least 30 days prior to exam
3. Receive Technical Committee approval to take category 2 exam (exam can be administered at any full power national or pro event)

Maintenance of Category 2 Referee Certification:

1. To maintain the category 2 referee rank, the referee must serve as a scoring table official, technical controller, platform referee, or jury member for a full session at four (4) national and/or pro events every four-year certification cycle (current certification cycle: January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2025)
 - a. Category 2 referees certified in 2022 and 2023 must serve in one or more of the roles listed in #1 above for a full session at two (2) events (eligible events listed in #1 above) prior to January 1, 2026
 - b. Category 2 referees certified in 2024 must serve in one or more of the roles listed in #1 above for a full session at one (1) event (eligible events listed in #1 above) prior to January 1, 2026
 - c. Category 2 referees certified in 2025 will automatically be recertified for the next four-year certification cycle regardless of number of eligible events worked as a referee
2. Category 2 referees not meeting the recertification requirements stated in Item 1 above will lose their category 2 referee status and will be reduced in rank to the national referee level (if they meet the national referee recertification requirements) or the state referee level (if they meet the state referee recertification requirements). Referees who are reduced in rank due to a failure to meet recertification requirements are eligible to pursue promotion to the next rank but must begin the certification process from the beginning
 - a. For example, a former category 2 referee who was reduced in rank to the state referee level may begin the process to become recertified as a national referee but may not directly advance from the state rank to the category 2 rank despite having previously held the category 2 rank
 - b. When a reduction in rank occurs and the referee wants to pursue promotion to the next rank, the time in rank and referee requirements for the next higher rank (i.e., number and type of meets worked and referee positions worked) begin on the date that the new [lower] rank started

Category 2 Referee Exam: Procedures for Administration

General Requirements:

- Candidates must be current members of USA Powerlifting to begin the exam process
- Candidates must meet all eligibility requirements listed on Page 6 of this document
- Candidates must pass the written exam prior to sitting for the practical exam

Part 1: Written Exam

- The category 2 referee written exam has 100 multiple choice questions, is closed-book (i.e., no resources are allowed to be used while taking the exam), is proctored, and is limited to 2 hours
- Upon receiving approval from the Technical Committee to sit for the category 2 referee exam, the candidate and chair of the Technical Committee will decide on the event at which the written exam will be taken
 - The written exam must be taken at a national or pro event
 - It is not a requirement that the written and practical exams be taken at the same event but the written exam must be passed before the practical exam can be taken
- The written exam will be administered by a member of the Technical Committee or, in the absence of an available Technical Committee member, an approved designee of the Technical Committee
- The written exam components (i.e., 100 multiple choice questions), administration (e.g., approved computer, quiet and distraction-free environment, supervision by a proctor, 2-hour time limit, etc.), and passing score (i.e., 90% or higher) are identical to that of the national referee written exam (see Page 11 of this document)
- If the candidate receives a passing score of 90% or better, they are eligible to sit for the practical exam
- If the candidate does not achieve a passing score, they are eligible to retake the exam but must wait a minimum of 6 weeks before retaking the exam
 - Candidates who do not pass the written exam must wait to take the practical portion until they successfully pass the written exam retake (there is no limit to the number of retakes allowed)

Part 2: Practical Exam

- The practical portion of the category 2 referee exam must be taken at a full power national or pro event
- The practical exam requirements and administration (e.g., number of graded judgments/decisions/calls, location in which the exam is conducted [i.e., side position], etc.) and submission of results are identical to that of the national referee practical exam (see Page 12 of this document) with the following differences not already identified above:
 - As part of the practical exam, the candidate must run the weigh-in for the session in which they are testing
 - This must be done in consultation with the event technical secretary (or technical secretaries)
 - This portion is graded as pass/fail and must be passed prior to taking the rest of the practical exam
 - The candidate must be an active platform referee in the side position adjudicating attempts
 - The examiner will sit beside the candidate and will not be officially adjudicating attempts; there will be no “practice lifts” (i.e., every decision made by the candidate will be graded for exam purposes)
 - The practical exam will be administered by a member of the Technical Committee or, in the absence of an available Technical Committee member, a category 1 referee approved by the Technical Committee
 - Note: In the event that a category 1 referee is not available to administer the practical exam, the chair of the Technical Committee may, but is not required to, appoint a category 2 referee to administer the practical exam
 - Under no circumstances may a state or national referee administer a category 2 practical exam
 - Practical exam results are submitted online via the official Category 2 Referee Practical Exam form
- If the candidate does not achieve a passing score on the practical exam, they are eligible to retake the exam but must wait a minimum of 6 weeks before retaking the exam; there is no limit to the number of retakes allowed
- If the candidate passes the practical exam, they are immediately granted the category 2 referee rank

Category 1 Referee

Category 1 Referee: Requirements, Procedures, and Maintenance of Certification

Requirements:

1. Current USA Powerlifting member in good standing
2. Category 2 referee for a minimum of 4 years (i.e., 48 months)
3. Chief referee or jury member for a full session in at least 4 different full power national and/or pro events within the most recent 4-year period
4. Current with SafeSport and background check requirements
5. Approval of state chair and Technical Committee to sit for exam
6. Pass closed-book written exam with a score of at least 95%
7. Pass practical exam with a score of at least 90%

Procedure:

1. Ensure requirements #1-4 above have been met and [contact state chair](#) to get approval
2. Complete and submit [category 1 referee application](#) at least 30 days prior to exam
3. Receive technical committee approval to take category 1 exam (exam can be administered at any full power national or pro event)

Maintenance of Category 1 Referee Certification:

1. To maintain the category 1 referee rank, the referee must serve as a scoring table official, technical controller, platform referee, or jury member for a full session at four (4) national and/or pro events every four-year certification cycle (current certification cycle: January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2025)
 - a. Category 1 referees certified in 2022 and 2023 must serve in one or more of the roles listed in #1 above for a full session at two (2) events (eligible events listed in #1 above) prior to January 1, 2026
 - b. Category 1 referees certified in 2024 must serve in one or more of the roles listed in #1 above for a full session at one (1) event (eligible events listed in #1 above) prior to January 1, 2026
 - c. Category 1 referees certified in 2025 will automatically be recertified for the next four-year certification cycle regardless of number of eligible events worked as a referee
2. Category 1 referees not meeting the recertification requirements stated in Item 1 above will lose their category 1 referee status and will be reduced in rank to the national referee level (if they meet the national referee recertification requirements) or the state referee level (if they meet the state referee recertification requirements). Referees who are reduced in rank due to a failure to meet recertification requirements are eligible to pursue promotion to the next rank but must begin the certification process from the beginning
 - a. For example, a former category 1 referee who was reduced in rank to the national referee level may begin the process to become recertified as a category 2 referee but may not directly advance from the national rank to the category 1 rank despite having previously held the category 1 rank
 - b. When a reduction in rank occurs and the referee wants to pursue promotion to the next rank, the time in rank and referee requirements for the next higher rank (i.e., number and type of meets worked and referee positions worked) begin on the date that the new [lower] rank started

Category 1 Referee Exam: Procedures for Administration

General Requirements:

- Candidates must be current members of USA Powerlifting to begin the exam process
- Candidates must meet all eligibility requirements listed on Page 7 of this document
- Candidates must pass the written exam prior to sitting for the practical exam

Part 1: Written Exam

- All aspects of the category 1 referee written exam are identical to those of the category 2 written exam (see Page 13 of this document) with the only difference being that a score of 95% or higher must be achieved to pass the category 1 written exam

Part 2: Practical Exam

- All aspects of the category 1 referee practical exam, including a score of 90% or higher to pass) are identical to those of the category 2 practical exam (see Page 13 of this document) with the following differences:
 - As part of the practical exam, the candidate must supervise the overall running/management of the equipment check/weigh-in portion of the session in which they are testing
 - Competency in the following areas will be assessed by the examiner:
 - Arriving on time (i.e., at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start of equipment check and weigh-in)
 - Being properly attired in the referee uniform
 - Correctly assigning referees for equipment check, weigh-in, and other duties (if applicable)
 - Managing, organizing, delivering, and collecting required paperwork
 - All required paperwork will be given to the candidate by the examiner or event technical secretary
 - Ensuring the overall process runs smoothly and efficiently and adheres to all rules
 - Appropriately answering questions, solving problems, and resolving disputes (if applicable)
 - Note: The above must be done in consultation with the event technical secretary (or technical secretaries)
 - This portion is graded as pass/fail and must be passed prior to taking the rest of the practical exam
 - The candidate will be a sitting referee in the chief position (i.e., adjudicating lifts) and will be evaluated by a jury made up of three category 1 referees
 - All three jury members serve as examiners
 - In order for a candidate to get credit for a decision (i.e., correct answer for exam purposes), the majority of the jury (i.e., two or three members) must agree with the candidate's call
 - Each member of the jury will maintain a hard copy record of the practical exam results
 - When the exam is over, the final results are to be tabulated by one of the jury examiners (the jury can decide on which of the three will perform this task and when) on a new practical exam form that will serve as the final results keeping in mind the following:
 - A failed/non-completed lift in which no "judgment" needed to be made is not to be officially counted for exam purposes and should not be recorded on the practical exam form
 - In order to maintain consistency on the exam scoresheet so each item (#1-100) can be compared side-by-side across the three scoresheets after the exam is over, the three examiners must make sure they are not recording failed/non-completed lifts

Category 1 Referee Exam: Procedures for Administration (con't)

- For each of the 100 scored judgements, all three scoresheets must be examined side-by-side to determine if the candidate was correct or incorrect
 - If two or three jury members recorded an item number as correct, the candidate will receive credit for that judgement and it must be indicated as a correct answer on the final scoresheet
 - If two or three jury members recorded an item number as incorrect, the candidate will not receive credit for that judgement and it must be indicated as an incorrect answer on the final scoresheet
- Practical exam results are submitted online via the official Category 1 Referee Practical Exam form
- If the candidate does not achieve a passing score on the practical exam, they are eligible to retake the exam but must wait a minimum of 6 weeks before retaking the exam; there is no limit to the number of retakes allowed
- If the candidate passes the practical exam, they are immediately granted the category 1 referee rank