

2008

PERSONAL CONDUCT POLICY

All persons associated with the NFL are required to avoid “conduct detrimental to the integrity of and public confidence in the National Football League.” This requirement applies to players, coaches, other team employees, owners, game officials and all others privileged to work in the National Football League.

For many years, it has been well understood that rules promoting lawful, ethical, and responsible conduct serve the interests of the League, its players, and fans. Illegal or irresponsible conduct does more than simply tarnish the offender. It puts innocent people at risk, sullies the reputation of others involved in the game, and undermines public respect and support for the NFL.

Standard of Conduct:

While criminal activity is clearly outside the scope of permissible conduct, and persons who engage in criminal activity will be subject to discipline, the standard of conduct for persons employed in the NFL is considerably higher. It is not enough simply to avoid being found guilty of a crime. Instead, as an employee of the NFL or a member club, you are held to a higher standard and expected to conduct yourself in a way that is responsible, promotes the values upon which the League is based, and is lawful.

Persons who fail to live up to this standard of conduct are guilty of conduct detrimental and subject to discipline, even where the conduct itself does not result in conviction of a crime. Discipline may be imposed in any of the following circumstances:

- Criminal offenses including, but not limited to, those involving: the use or threat of violence; domestic violence and other forms of partner abuse; theft and other property crimes; sex offenses; obstruction or resisting arrest; disorderly conduct; fraud; racketeering; and money laundering;
- Criminal offenses relating to steroids and prohibited substances, or substances of abuse;
- Violent or threatening behavior among employees, whether in or outside the workplace;
- Possession of a gun or other weapon in any workplace setting, including but not limited to stadiums, team facilities, training camp, locker rooms, team planes, buses, parking lots, etc., or unlawful possession of a weapon outside of the workplace;

- Conduct that imposes inherent danger to the safety and well being of another person; and
- Conduct that undermines or puts at risk the integrity and reputation of the NFL, NFL clubs, or NFL players.

Evaluation, Counseling and Treatment:

Apart from any disciplinary action, persons arrested, charged or otherwise appearing to have engaged in conduct prohibited under this policy will be required to undergo a formal clinical evaluation. Based on the results of that evaluation, the person may be encouraged or required to participate in an education program, counseling or other treatment deemed appropriate by health professionals. The evaluation and any resulting counseling or treatment are designed to provide assistance and are not considered discipline; however, the failure to comply with this portion of the Policy shall itself constitute a separate and independent basis for discipline.

Discipline:

Upon learning of conduct that may give rise to discipline, the League will direct an investigation which may include interviews and information gathering from medical, law enforcement, and other relevant professionals. The League will promptly advise the NFLPA of any investigation of a player, as well as of the results of the investigation. As appropriate, the employee will also have the opportunity, represented by counsel and/or a union official, to address the conduct at issue. Upon conclusion of the investigation, the Commissioner will have full authority to impose discipline as warranted.

Discipline may take the form of fines, suspension, or banishment from the League and may include a probationary period and conditions that must be satisfied prior to or following reinstatement. The specifics of the disciplinary response will be based on the nature of the incident, the actual or threatened risk to the participant and others, any prior or additional misconduct (whether or not criminal charges were filed), and other relevant factors.

Unless the case involves significant bodily harm, a first offense will generally not result in discipline until there has been a disposition of the proceeding (or until the investigation is complete in the case of employee or workplace misconduct).

With respect to repeat offenders, the Commissioner may impose discipline on an expedited basis. In such cases, the timing and nature of the discipline will be determined by the Commissioner based on several factors including but not limited to: the severity of the initial charge and later charge; the facts underlying the later charge; the length of time between the initial offense and later charge; and the player or employee's compliance with counseling and other programs. Following a full investigation and/or resolution of the proceedings, the Commissioner will review the matter and make any appropriate adjustments.

Hearing Rights:

Following the imposition of discipline, the affected person will have the right to appeal the decision. (For players, discipline imposed during the period beginning with the Hall of Fame Game and ending with the Pro Bowl must be appealed within ten (10) calendar days following the decision.) Persons filing an appeal shall be entitled to a prompt hearing pursuant to Article XI of the Collective Bargaining Agreement and the NFL Constitution and Bylaws, to be conducted by the Commissioner or his designee. In cases involving players, the NFLPA will be entitled to participate in the hearing.

Reinstatement:

Any person suspended indefinitely or for at least one year may seek reinstatement beginning one month prior to the one-year anniversary of the suspension. As part of his consideration of the application for reinstatement from a player, the Commissioner will seek the views of the NFLPA, Player Advisory Council, and may consult medical, law enforcement, and other relevant professionals.

Other Provisions:

Covered Persons--This policy applies to all players under contract; all coaches; all game officials; all full-time employees of the NFL, NFL clubs, and all NFL-related entities; all rookie players once they are selected in the NFL college draft; and all undrafted rookie players, unsigned veterans who were under contract in the prior League Year, and other prospective employees once they commence negotiations with a club concerning employment. Clubs are strongly encouraged to communicate this policy to independent contractors and consultants and to make clear that violations of this policy will be grounds for terminating a business relationship.

“Disposition of a Criminal Proceeding”--includes an adjudication of guilt or admission to a criminal violation; a plea to a lesser included offense; a plea of nolo contendere or no contest; or the acceptance of a diversionary program, deferred adjudication, disposition of supervision, or similar arrangements.

“Probationary Period”-- Persons found to have violated this policy may be placed on a period of probation as determined by the Commissioner. During such period, restrictions on certain activities, limitations on participation in Club activities, or other conditions may be imposed.

Repeat Offenders-- Persons who have had previous violations of law or of this policy may be considered repeat offenders. When appropriate, conduct occurring prior to the person’s association with the League will be considered.

Reporting of Incidents--The League must be advised promptly of any incident that may be a violation of this policy, and particularly when any conduct results in an arrest or other criminal charge. Players and club employees must report any such incident to the club, which must then report it to NFL Security at (800) NFL-1099. Failure to report an incident will constitute conduct detrimental and will be taken into consideration in making disciplinary determination under this policy. Clubs are also required to report incidents that come to their attention.

Assistance--Players and employees are encouraged to consult with their Player Development Directors or with the League’s Player and Employee Development Department to obtain access to educational, counseling, and other programs and resources that will help in avoiding misconduct that may result in discipline.