



# Race Walking

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## Race Walk Officials vs Race Walk Judges, What is the Difference?

Officials can currently certify either as a Race Walk Judge (USATF Rule 230), a Race Walk Official (USATF Rule 231), or both. The responsibilities, expertise, and duties for these categories are different and so it is important for Officials Coordinators, Meet Directors, and Race Walk Event Heads to understand the roles each certification type is qualified to perform.

Knowing the difference is critical, especially in the case of national championships, American or World record attempts and World Athletics (WA) events, where a specific number and/or level of certified Race Walk Judges is required. It is also important for Apprentice level officials specializing in Race Walk and their Association Certification Chair to understand the differences when selecting which certification path to pursue.

The table below shows the roles that Race Walk Judges and Race Walk Officials are qualified to perform.

Race Walk: Permitted Roles by Certification		
ROLE	RW JUDGE	RW OFFICIAL
RW EVENT HEAD	YES	NO
CHIEF JUDGE	YES	NO
JUDGE	YES	NO
CHIEF JUDGE ASSISTANT	YES	NO
CHIEF RECORDER	YES	YES
RECORDER ASSISTANT	YES	YES
POSTING BOARD ASSISTANT	YES	YES
PENALTY ZONE MANAGER	YES	YES
PENALTY ZONE ASSISTANT	YES	YES
CARD COLLECTOR	YES	YES

*NOTE: The need to fill each of these positions will depend on the event size and/or sanction. With the exception of the RW Event Head, it is preferred no individual fill more than one role.*

The basic difference is that Race Walk Judges are certified for all of the Race Walk crew roles, whereas Race Walk Officials are certified only in administrative roles. While all these roles are essential to the efficient, fair, and accurate conduct of Race Walk events, assigning officials with the proper certification to the judging panel is critical to the validity of the race. Many athletes have missed out on records because the judging panel included a Race Walk Official. The detailed duties for each of these roles can be found in the Race Walk Best Practices at "[Race Walk Crew Duties](#)".

USATF Race Walk rules specify that Judges are qualified to manage and judge the Race Walks and are specifically trained to make independent decisions on the legality of each athletes' race walk form (USATF Rule 232.2). In contrast, Race Walk Officials are qualified to perform administrative tasks, such as compiling race summaries, managing the Red Cards, and administering penalties. They are not certified to judge or make independent decisions regarding athletes but rather work under the direction of the Chief Race Walk Judge or a Certified Race Walk Judge designee such as a Chief Judge Assistant or Chief Recorder.

The Officials Coordinator together with the Race Walk Event Head/Chief Judge must verify the race walk certification type and level for each of the officials. This verification is a critical step before assigning roles to ensure that the judging panel complies with any USATF or WA event requirements for Records or WA ranking points. Every Official's certification details are available on the USATF website. Go to "[Find a Certified Official](#)" on the USATF Officials page and enter the official's name to check their Race Walk certification.

**Key points:**

1 — Know the difference between Race Walk Judges and Race Walk Officials and in what roles they are permitted to serve.

2 — Check the certification type and level of the judging panel before making final role assignments.