



State of Idaho
Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses
Athletic Commission

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Sanctioning Permits for Contests, Exhibitions, and Sparring Events

The Idaho Athletic Commission is responsible for protecting the health and safety of combatants and the public at boxing, kickboxing, martial arts, professional wrestling, and other regulated unarmed-combat events held in Idaho.

Idaho law generally requires contests and exhibitions to be conducted under a sanctioning permit issued by either:

1. The Idaho Athletic Commission; or
2. For an entirely amateur event, an amateur athletic sanctioning organization approved by the Commission.

A sanctioning permit authorizes a promoter to conduct a particular program of contests or exhibitions at a specific venue. The statutory exemptions for certain school, college, military, and properly sanctioned amateur events, as set forth in Idaho Code 54-406(3), continue to apply.

Ordinary Training, Same-Gym Sparring, and Charity Matches

The Commission recognizes that routine instruction and sparring are essential parts of training in combat sports. A sanctioning permit is not required for ordinary training or sparring matches conducted exclusively between members of the same gym¹.

This includes a charity sparring match at which the gym collects suggested donations at the door, provided that the donations are genuinely voluntary and no payment is required as a condition of entering or watching the match.

This same-gym position does not apply when any combatant is not a member of that gym or when combatants from two or more gyms participate. Subject to the statutory exemptions described above, those contests require a sanctioning permit regardless of whether admission is charged, donations are requested or collected, or money otherwise changes hands.

¹ Participation is limited to individuals with active, ongoing gym memberships and cannot include individuals who obtain memberships solely for the day of the event or attend on a drop-in basis.

Required admission charges, ticket sales, required donations, special event fees, or compensation to combatants also require a sanctioning permit, even when all combatants are members of the same gym.

This position applies only to legitimate training and same-gym sparring activities. Calling an event “sparring,” a “smoker,” an “interclub,” or a “practice match” does not remove the sanctioning requirement when it involves a nonmember, combatants from multiple gyms, or any other activity requiring sanctioning under this statement.

Events Requiring Sanctioning

Subject to the statutory exemptions described above, a sanctioning permit is required whenever a contest, exhibition, sparring program, or similar event includes a nonmember or combatants from two or more gyms, or involves a required payment or other commercial exchange. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Including any combatant who is not a member of the gym conducting the match, or combatants from two or more gyms;
- Charging admission at the door or selling tickets;
- Requiring a donation or other payment to enter or watch;
- Charging spectators or participants a special event fee;
- Paying combatants or providing them with purses, prizes, travel payments, or other compensation;
- Selling access to a livestream or broadcast; or
- Otherwise using the contests or exhibitions to generate revenue or promote a commercial event, except for the voluntary suggested donations permitted for same-gym charity sparring matches as described above.

The required sanctioning permit may be issued by an amateur athletic sanctioning organization that has been approved by the Idaho Athletic Commission. An event is not properly sanctioned merely because a national or private organization is involved; the organization must be recognized or approved as provided by Idaho law.

Contact the Commission Before the Event

Gyms, combatants, promoters, and sanctioning organizations should contact the Idaho Athletic Commission before conducting a contest involving a nonmember or combatants from multiple gyms; charging admission; selling tickets; requiring donations or other event-related payments; compensating combatants; or conducting any other activity that may require sanctioning.

This statement describes the Commission’s general interpretation and enforcement position. It does not amend Idaho law, create an additional statutory exemption, or replace the requirements and exemptions established in Idaho Code, title 54, chapter 4. The Commission will evaluate each event based on its actual organization and operation rather than the name used to describe it.