

**Alberta Society of Pipers and Drummers**  
Rules for Pipe Band Competition

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## **1 - INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 - Objectives**

1.1.1 The objectives of the Alberta Society of Pipers and Drummers (the "Society") with respect to solo piping competitions are as follows:

- To devise and administer comprehensive rules governing pipe band competitions;
- To preserve, promote and encourage proficiency in musical performance;
- To ensure that competitions are run according to the Society's rules for pipe band competitions in a fair, respected, and beneficial manner to the Competitors, the Competition Committee, and the Society; and
- To promote and encourage participation at Highland Games and Scottish Cultural events for the benefit of the Competition Committee and Highland Games attendees.

### **1.2 - Geographical Area and Registering**

1.2.1 The geographical area where the Society registers pipe band competitions is the Province of Alberta. Registering is a cooperative agreement between the Society and the various organizations sponsoring pipe band competition committees ("Competition Committee") to ensure that competitions are run according to the Society's rules for pipe band competitions in a fair, respected, and beneficial manner to the Competitors, the Competition Committee, and the Society.

### **1.3 - Integrity of the Rules**

1.3.1 Pipe band members of the Society and members of the Society's approved Adjudicators panel should not take part in any competition which would cause the Society's rules to be compromised to the significant detriment of the Society, the Competition Committee or the Competitors. It shall be the responsibility of the Society's Board of Directors (the "Executive") to inform members and adjudicators of any such competitions.

### **1.4 - Affiliated Associations**

1.4.1 Officially recognized Pipe Band Associations affiliated with the Association are:

- Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association,
- Atlantic Canada Pipe Band Association;
- British Columbia Pipers' Association,
- Prairie Pipe Band Association of Manitoba,
- Pipers and Pipe Band Society of Ontario,
- Saskatchewan Pipe Band Association,
- Eastern United States Pipe Band Association,
- Midwest (U.S.) Pipe Band Association,
- Southern United States Pipe Band Association;
- Western United States Pipe Band Association,
- Australian Pipe Band Association,
- Royal New Zealand Pipe Band Association Inc.,
- Irish Pipe Band Association.

## **2 - COMPETITION RULES**

### **2.1 - The Competition Committee, Chief Steward and Chief Scorer**

2.1.1 The Highland Games Association member and therefore, Games Sponsor shall designate a Competition Committee, which shall manage and run the competition activities on the Highland Games day. The Competition Committee shall designate a Chief Steward and a Chief Scorer.

2.1.2 Highland Games Association members must register on or before the first of April of the year in order to be included in the Provincial Champion program.

2.1.3 Repealed October 1, 2010.

2.1.4 The Chief Steward shall be responsible for ensuring a regular and orderly stream of Pipe Band competitors to the event's competition area, and overseeing the assignment of Stewards to individual events.

### **2.2 - Minimum Number of Players**

2.2.1 All Pipe Bands entering competitions shall consist of a minimum of six (6) pipers, two (2) side drummers, one (1) tenor, and a bass drummer in all grades with the exception of Grade 4 and Grade 5 bands, which would not be required to have a tenor drummer.

2.2.2 All miniature bands entering competition shall consist of six (6) pipers, two (2) side drummers, one (1) tenor drummer and a bass drummer.

### **2.3 - Player Overage**

2.3.1 Miniature bands competing with more members than specified in Clause 2.2 shall be disqualified by the Chief Steward of the competition.

### **2.4 - Player Shortage**

2.4.1 Pipe Bands or miniature bands entering a contest with fewer numbers than indicated in Clause 2.2 shall be penalized two ranking placements lower, by every Adjudicator, for each piper or drummer that they are short. (Example: if a band, playing one piper short obtains the following rankings from the Adjudicators 1, 2, 4, and 3, then their adjusted rankings shall be 3, 4, 6, and 5.

### **2.5 - Use of Higher Grade Players**

2.5.1 Pipe Bands shall be divided into the following grades:

- Grade 1;
- Grade 2;
- Grade 3;
- Grade 4; and
- Grade 5.

2.5.2 A higher grade player is a player registered in a band of a higher grade of ability (ie. a player registered with a Grade 1 Pipe Band versus a player registered with a Grade 4 Pipe Band).

2.5.3 Pipe Bands may add a higher-grade drummer provided that they are registered as their drum Instructor. The higher-grade drummer may play as the Lead Drummer.

2.5.4 Pipe Bands may add a higher-grade piper provided they are registered as their piping Instructor. The higher-grade piper may play as the Pipe Major.

2.5.5 In the event of a bass drummer being unable to perform with their band, a substitute may be chosen by lot from among the other bass drummers of other bands of the same Grade if they are so willing.

## **2.6 - Acceptable Highland Dress**

2.6.1 In all competitions and massed bands performances, Pipe Band members and Adjudicators shall be attired in officially recognized and properly worn highland dress for pipers and drummers. Acceptable highland dress includes:

- Head dress: feather bonnet, glengarry or balmoral,
- Collared shirt and tie. More formal dress may include a military doublet (for which a shirt will not apply), Prince Charlie jacket, police/military jacket or vest,
- Kilt with sporran or trews,
- Knee-length hose (not applicable to trews), and
- Oxford-style shoes or ghillie brogues.

2.6.2 Military uniforms may also be worn by Pipe Bands and Drum Majors.

2.6.3 Drum Majors may wear full ceremonial highland dress or the aforementioned acceptable highland dress.

## **2.7 - Competition Areas**

2.7.1 The Competition Committee shall select and mark off a competition area according to the following specifications:

- (a) The Pipe Band competition circle shall be a radius of 12 feet. The Adjudicators circle shall be a radius of 21 feet. The Pipe Band competition circle and the Adjudicators circle shall share the same centre point. The starting line for the Pipe Band shall be 45 feet from the centre of the Pipe Band competition circle.
- (b) Pipe Bands shall form a circle on or within the Pipe Band competition circle. The Adjudicators shall adjudicate the Pipe Band from inside the Adjudicators circle. Crowds shall not be permitted any closer than 33 feet from the centre of the Pipe Band circle.

2.7.2 Bands must leave the contest field immediately upon completing their contest selection and are prohibited from further playing on the contest field until all contests are completed, unless requested otherwise by the Chief Steward.

## **2.8 - Final Tuning Areas**

2.8.1 The Competition Committee shall select and mark off a Final Tuning Area (“FTA”), which shall be in the close proximity to the competition area without causing conflict with the ongoing competition. All bands are expected to use the FTA or to be ready to move from the FTA when their competition time has arrived.

2.8.2 Bands shall be granted access to the FTA one at a time and no other band shall intrude on the tuning area until the band assigned has either moved to the competition field or the Chief Steward directs the band to make use of the Final Tuning Area.

## 2.9 - Band Formation

2.9.1 Subject to the local competition rules, as provided in Clause 2.14, a Pipe Band shall march to the Start Line properly dressed (see Section 2.6), halt and await instructions from the Chief Steward. After being notified by the Ensemble Adjudicator that the Adjudicators are ready for their performance, the Pipe Band shall start its performance, march toward the Adjudicators and form one complete circle on or within the Pipe Band competition circle. The formation of the circle shall be at the discretion of the Pipe Major.

2.9.2 Once a Pipe Band has stopped marching at the Start Line, no players shall be dropped from the performing band.

## 2.10 - Music Requirements

2.10.1 The music requirements for the various grades are given in the [Alberta Society of Pipers and Drummers Music Requirements for Pipe Band and Drum Major Competition](#) as posted on the Society's website.

2.10.2 The names of all tunes comprising the Sets and Medleys for a Pipe Band shall be submitted as part of the Highland Games entry form. Any change to the list of submitted tunes shall be submitted to the Chief Steward at least three (3) hours prior to the start of the competition. Barring submission it shall be at the Chief Steward's discretion to disqualify the offending Pipe Band.

2.10.3 For events in which more than two Sets or two Medleys are required, the choice of the Set or Medley shall be done by the Chief Steward, or designate, by draw when the Pipe Band is at the starting line. The Chief Steward, or designate, with the Ensemble Adjudicator present, shall inform the Pipe Major of which Set or Medley has been drawn and shall gain their understanding by confirming the first three tunes to be played.

2.10.4 The Chief Steward or their designate shall record the actual band performance times in timed events and report any failure of bands to play within the required time period for an event to the Chief Scorer for disqualification of the band. The beginning of the performance is the Pipe Major's command to commence and the ending is the last sound produced by the band. The decision of the Chief Steward in this matter is final.

## 2.11 - Order of Play

2.11.1 The order of play shall be determined by the Competition Committee prior to the competition.

2.11.2 The posted order of play shall include the starting time for each band.

2.11.3 The relative interval starting times between consecutive competing bands in the same grade shall be the times shown in the following table.

Grade	Minimum Duration (in minutes)	Maximum Duration (in minutes)
5	8	10
4	8	10
3	8	10
2	9	11
1	10	12

2.11.4 When a delay causes the posted time of play to be invalid by more than ten (10) minutes, the Competition Committee should notify all Pipe Bands remaining to compete as soon as possible and provide them with the new time of play. However, the new time of play shall not be any earlier than the original time of play, unless agreed to by all the Pipe Bands in the grade.

2.11.5 Any band refusing, or failing to play within five (5) minutes of the allotted time or the completion of the previous Pipe Band's performance, whichever is later, shall be subject to disqualification. This decision shall be made by the Chief Steward.

## **2.12 - Band Representative Duties**

2.12.1 Competition entry forms should include the name of a Pipe Band Representative, who shall be the person responsible for the duties described in this section. Bands may provide an alternate person on Highland Games day to perform these duties provided that the Competition Committee is notified of this change.

2.12.2 It is the responsibility of a Pipe Band's Representative to:

- On arrival at the Games, report the location of the band to the Chief Steward,
- Obtain the time of play for their band from the Chief Steward,
- Be aware of the start time for the band, location of the Final Tuning Area (FTA) and changes to the start time,
- Ensure that their band arrives at the starting position at the time given for their band, and
- Inform the Competition Committee if the band withdraws from the competition.

## **2.13 - Society Representative**

2.13.1 A member of the Executive, or their designate, shall be in attendance as the Society's Representative at all registered competitions and shall be available to the Competition Committee for that day.

2.13.2 The Society Representative shall monitor the competitions for compliance and fairness, provide answers to questions on the competition rules, and provide advice (if requested) to the Competition Committee on complaints, disputes and protests relating to the competition.

## **2.14 - Local Competition Rules**

2.14.1 Local competition rules will be in accordance with rules established by ASPD. Local competition rules shall be published by the Competition Committee as part of the entry form for the competition.

## **2.15 - Conduct of Players**

2.15.1 Any member(s) of a registered band who interferes with, threatens, or uses abusive language towards anyone attending or participating in the games shall cause themselves and/or their band to be liable for suspension from further competitions for as long as the Society Executive deems is necessary in the circumstances.

2.15.2 The same penalty shall apply to situations involving abuse of private property at the Highland Games site.

### **3 - MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTRATION**

#### **3.1 - General Requirements**

3.1.1 Each member of a Pipe Band or miniature band, residing in the registering area and desiring to compete in registered competitions must be firstly, a member of the Society, or secondly, a member of an officially recognized Pipe Band Association affiliated with the Society, as per the list provided in Section 1.4.

3.1.2 Unless otherwise agreed by all parties involved, in the event that a Pipe Band or miniature band chooses to join an Association other than where the Pipe Band or miniature band resides, the Pipe Band or miniature band shall pay to the Association of choice the membership fee of either the Association of residence or the Association of choice, whichever is greater.

3.1.3 Notwithstanding Clause 3.1.1, all Pipe Bands or miniature bands which are not members of the Society or an officially recognized Pipe Band Association affiliated with the Alliance of North American Pipe Band Associations (“ANAPBA”) shall pay to the Competition Committee a fee of \$50 CDN in addition to the published entry fee, to compete in the Pipe Band events at that particular Highland Games.

3.1.4 Members of Trios and Quartets are not required to hold an individual membership in the Society when they are members of the same Pipe Band and are in good standing with their local Association. The Quartet name must include the name of the registered Pipe Band.

3.1.5 Members of Drum Corps Fanfares are not required to hold an individual membership in the Society when they are members of the same Pipe Band and are in good standing with their local association. The Drum Corps Fanfare name must include the name of the registered Pipe Band.

#### **3.2 - Registration of Bands and Their Members**

3.2.1 By April 1 of a registration season, each Pipe Band shall register with the Society and furnish a complete list of the members registered with the band.

3.2.2 This period of registration shall run from April 1 to September 30.

3.2.3 No person shall be allowed to play with a Pipe Band in a competition unless they are a registered member of that Pipe Band, except as provided for in Clause 2.5.

3.2.4 No person shall be allowed to play in more than one Pipe Band or in more than one Grade at a competition, except as provided for in Clause 2.5.

3.2.5 A person is permitted to register in more than one Pipe Band on the following conditions:

- they cannot register as a player of the same instrument for each band registration unless one of the registered Pipe Bands is a non-competing band, and,
- they cannot register as a player in the same Grade for each Pipe Band registration.

3.2.6 Any Pipe Band member registered as both a piper and a drummer shall be permitted to play either instrument in a competition.

#### **3.3 - Addition of Players**

3.3.1 Notwithstanding 3.4.2, if a Pipe Band wishes to add a player(s) to their roster, either by transfer or new addition, they must submit their name(s) to the Registrar of the Society in advance of the competition in which the new player(s) is intending to compete. Once submitted,

the identified player shall not compete with any other Pipe Band in any registered competitions within the Society's registration jurisdiction, or any registered competitions covered by a Pipe Band Association affiliated with ANAPBA.

### **3.4 - Transfer of Players**

3.4.1 A player registered with one Pipe Band may, within the period of registration, transfer only once to another Pipe Band of any Grade.

3.4.2 Any registered Pipe Band member, who plays in a competition with a Pipe Band who they are not registered in, shall be deemed to have transferred to that band and shall not be allowed to play in their previous band for the duration of the period of registration, except as provided for in Clause 2.5.

3.4.3 In certain unique circumstances, a player who has previously transferred once to another Pipe Band may request the Society to grant an exception and allow a second transfer of bands. The request shall be in writing and disclose the nature of their special circumstances. No transfer shall be allowed unless it is approved by the Executive.

3.4.4 Pipe Bands are encouraged, where possible, to finalize rosters well in advance of the competition season and to actively avoid the practice of “poaching” players from other bands.

### **3.5 - Penalties**

3.5.1 Any Pipe Band member registering concurrently with more than one Pipe Band shall be liable for suspension for further Pipe Band competitions until the conflict is resolved.

3.5.2 A similar penalty shall apply to any Pipe Band that submits a false registration with the Society.

3.5.3 Any Pipe Band member who plays in more than one Pipe Band or in more than one Grade except as provided for in Clause 2.5 shall cause each Pipe Band to be disqualified from that competition.

### **3.6 - Visiting Bands**

3.6.1 Any Pipe Bands from outside the Society's registering jurisdiction, as defined in Clause 1.2, which desire to compete at a registered competition within the Society's registering jurisdiction shall be a member of or registered with a Pipe Band Association officially recognized by and affiliated with ANAPBA.

3.6.2 Any Pipe Band not a member of or not registered with a Pipe Band Association officially recognized by and affiliated with ANAPBA must register with the Society.

## **4 - GRADES AND GRADING**

### **4.1 - Grades**

4.1.1 The Society has set the following categories for Pipe Band competitions in descending order of ability: Grade 1; Grade 2; Grade 3; Grade 4 and Grade 5.

### **4.2 - Grading**

4.2.1 The Society shall designate the responsibility and authority to determine the grading of a band to the Music & Grading Committee.

4.2.2 The Music & Grading Committee shall have the authority to re-grade, either up or down, any Pipe Band at any time during the registration year on the advice of Adjudicators.

4.2.3 All new Pipe Bands in or out of the Society's registering jurisdiction which apply for membership or registration with the Society shall be assigned a Grade determined by the Music & Grading Committee based on the Pipe Band's demonstrated playing ability.

4.2.4 Any Pipe Band, which is a member of, or registered with Pipe Band Association officially recognized by and affiliated with ANAPBA, shall compete in the Grade assigned by that Pipe Band Association.

4.2.5 Any Pipe Band may enter an open event regardless of grading.

### **4.3 Challenging Up a Grade**

4.3.1 A Pipe Band may play up to a higher grade in one event for a selected competition provided all the following criteria are met:

- On the entry form, the Competition Committee has indicated that challenging up is permitted,
- On submitting their entry form, the Pipe Band enters all the events in its regular Grade for the competition and the event the Pipe Band is challenging up,
- The Competition Committee determines that there is time available for the Pipe Band to compete in the challenged up Grade's event, and
- The Pipe Band meets the music requirements for the challenged up grade's event.

4.3.2 Challenging up for adjudication only does not entitle the entrant to a placing or prize money.

4.3.3 A True challenge up allows the entrant to place in the higher grade and accept prize money in the higher Grade, but forfeits the lower Grade prize and placing for that competition unless indicated by the Music & Grading Committee.

4.3.4 Other Pipe Bands in the lower Grades will retain their placing as judged.

4.3.5 In the event that a Pipe Band wishes to challenge up a Grade, but did not comply with the requirements of 4.3.1, entry into the higher Grade competition will be at the discretion of the competition committee solely.

## **5 - ADJUDICATORS**

### **5.1 - Authority**

5.1.1 Within its sanctioning jurisdiction, the Society shall have the responsibility and authority to determine people qualified to adjudicate piping, drumming and ensemble in registered pipe band competitions and to maintain an [approved Adjudicators List](#) of these qualified people.

5.1.2 The Society shall provide current copies of the aforementioned approved Adjudicators List to the relevant Competition Committees.

### **5.2 - Selection of Adjudicators**

5.2.1 The Adjudicators for registered competitions shall be drawn from:

- the approved Adjudicators List of the Society, or

- the approved Adjudicators List of piping/Pipe Band Associations officially recognized by and affiliated with ANAPBA.

5.2.2 Highland Games proposing to use an Adjudicator who is not on an approved Adjudicators List identified in Clause 6.2.1 shall obtain approval by the Society prior to the engagement.

### **5.3 - Number of Adjudicators**

5.3.1 The minimum number of adjudicators shall comply with the [ASPD Rules for Adjudicators](#).

### **5.4 - Conduct of Adjudicators**

5.4.1 Adjudicators shall comply with the conduct requirements as laid out in the aforementioned ASPD Rules for Adjudicators.

### **5.5 - Disbursement of Adjudication Sheets and Tally Sheets**

5.5.1 The original Adjudicator's sheets shall be given to the Pipe Bands after the distribution of the prizes.

5.5.2 The Chief Scorer shall compile a summary of event results, and distribute a copy to each competing Pipe Band at the same time as they distribute the original Adjudicator's sheets. A copy of each Pipe Band tally sheet shall be provided to the Society.

## **6 - METHOD OF DETERMINING WINNING POSITIONS**

### **6.1 - Method**

6.1.1 Winning positions are based on the Adjudicator's placing method (Adjudicators' score ranking method) as follows:

- Each adjudicator's score shall be ranked in order from highest placing to lowest placing with one (1) point awarded for first, two (2) points awarded for second, three (3) points awarded for third, etc.
- Adjudicators shall not tie bands.
- The lowest total of the sum of all the ranking positions wins 1st place, the second lowest wins 2nd place, third lowest wins 3rd place, etc.

6.1.2 For Pipe Band Aggregate awards, the lowest total of the sum of all the ranking positions for all the Adjudicators in the aggregated events wins 1st place, the second lowest wins 2nd, third lowest wins 3rd place, etc.

### **6.2 - Breaking Ties**

6.1 Ties shall be broken according to the following methods:

1. Lowest total of the ranking points in ensemble;
2. Lowest total of the ranking points in piping;
3. Winner of the March, Strathspey & Reel event;
4. Winner of the Medley event; or
5. Conference of Adjudicators for the event(s).

### **6.3 - Best Drum Corps**

6.3.1 For each event, the best drum corps shall be announced. The awarding of a prize for the Best Drum Corps is at the discretion of the Competition Committee.

## 6.4 - Prize Monies

6.4.1 The Competition Committee shall include in their entry forms the number of prizes to award and the value of each prize.

6.4.2 The number and value of prizes that are awarded for an event shall be as published in the entry form, regardless of the number of Pipe Bands which compete in the event.

## 6.5 - Determination of Provincial Aggregate Winner

6.5.1 At the end of the competition season, the Society shall award a Provincial Aggregate Award in each grade to the Society member with the highest accumulated points at Society-sanctioned competitions in music events as listed in the Music Requirements for Piping, Drumming, and Pipe Band Competitions and adjudicated by Adjudicators selected according to Section 5.2.

6.5.2 Aggregate points shall be awarded for each event at Society-sanctioned competitions. Points will be awarded to *all* competitors who complete their performance up to and including 6 placings.

6.8.3 The points to be awarded for the calculation of Aggregate awards shall be as follows:

### Placing Aggregate Points:

First	88 Points
Second	56 Points
Third	38 Points
Fourth	25 Points
Fifth	16 Points
Sixth	10 Points

6.8.4 Ties in the Provincial Aggregate points total shall not be broken.

6.8.5 At the end of the competition season, the Society shall award a Provincial combined Piping Aggregate award in each of grades 4, 3, 2, 1, and Professional Solo Piping to the Society member with the highest total of combined Aggregate points from all light music and Piobaireachd events from Society-sanctioned Highland Games.

## 7 - MASSED BAND

### 7.1 - Required participation

7.1.1 Massed Bands is compulsory for all Pipe Bands that are competing. Non-compliance with this rule will result in the disqualification of the non-attending Pipe Band from competition standings and associated awards. Exceptions to this rule will be determined by the Society.

## **7.2 - Senior Drum Major**

7.2.1 The Senior Drum Major of the Massed Bands shall be appointed by the Competition Committee.

7.2.2 The formation of the Massed Bands shall be at the discretion of the Senior Drum Major.

## **7.3 - Music**

7.3.1 The pipe tunes for Massed Bands shall be selected from the list of [Piping & Drumming Scores for Massed Bands](#) as listed on the Society's website.

7.3.2 Drum settings shall be the recent ANAPBA approved Drum Cadences included in the list of [Piping & Drumming Scores for Massed Bands](#) as listed on the Society's website.

## **7.4 - Acceptable Highland Dress**

7.4.1 Pipe Band member or solo competitors participating in a Massed Bands performance shall be attired in acceptable highland dress as listed in Section 2.6.

7.4.2 Participants not in the acceptable highland dress shall be barred from the Massed Band by the Competition Committee as defined in Clause 2.6.

## **7.5 - Penalties**

7.5.1 In the event minimum representation in a Massed Band is a requirement for payment of any fee or award, as determined by the Competition Committee, Pipe Band representation shall be determined after exclusion of Pipe Band members not in acceptable highland dress.

7.5.2 If a Pipe Band or any member of a Pipe Band acts in any manner that disrupts Massed Bands, the Competition Committee may, at their discretion, withhold any prize monies and travel monies.

## **8 - INTERPRETATION OF RULES AND PROTESTS**

### **8.1 - Interpretation of Rules**

8.1.1 In the event of any misunderstanding or ambiguity in these rules, the Executive reserves the right to supply its own interpretation which shall be final and binding.

8.1.2 The Executive shall ensure that written records are maintained on every decision resulting from a protest or interpretation of the rules to create a list of precedents that can be available to assist in the future interpretation of the rules.

8.1.3 No member of the Executive or their designate shall be allowed to rule on a protest in which their student or family member is involved.

### **8.2 - Protests and Grievances**

8.2.1 Any protest shall be made in writing accompanied by a \$20 deposit and lodged with the Competition Committee within one hour of the posting of the results, and a copy of the written protest provided to the Society Representative by the end of the day. The deposit will be refunded should the grievance be upheld.

8.2.2 Where relevant, the complainant shall submit the original adjudication and adjudicator's result sheet, which will be verified by the Adjudicators involved and the Chief Scorer as authentic.

8.2.3 Should the aggrieved competitor disagree with the findings of the Competition Committee, they shall have the right to appeal to the Society. Pending the result of the appeal, the findings of the Competition Committee shall be accepted by all the parties concerned.

8.2.4 The Competition Committee on the day of the competition and before the distribution of prizes, being satisfied that a Competitor has willfully violated, or is willfully violating any of the rules, shall have the power to de-bar such Competitor from the prize list, suspend the decision of the Adjudicators for that Competitor, and award the prizes to the respective competitors next in the order of merit.

8.2.5 The Executive shall have the right to act similarly after the competition, if satisfied that a willful violation of the rules took place.

8.2.6 In the event of a prize being awarded to the wrong Competitor because of an error, it shall be the responsibility of the Competition Committee to re-award such prizes to the deserving Competitor as soon as possible after such discovery is made.

\*Updated March 2024