



USPA Safety Rules for Spotters / Loaders

General:

1. All spotters / loaders shall work together as a team and should be neatly dressed in clean, appropriate attire, including the official meet T-shirt, if provided by the Meet Director.
2. It is the spotters / loaders responsibility to establish a rapid, efficient pace that will keep the meet moving, but one that is safe at all times.
3. Lifters will have painfully wrapped their knees or wrists and any delay could have a negative effect on their lift. If the delay is caused by platform personnel, the lifter could be awarded additional time and further delay the meet.
4. Every spotter / loader should be routinely rotated out or into different positions so they have some personal time. This will ensure they stay alert while on the platform, at all times, possibly averting any potential accidents that could happen due to fatigue.
5. The loaders should listen to the Head Referee for the correct plates that will be needed for each lift. They can visually verify if the load is correct if a bar loading program with a projector and screen are being used.
6. It is important that the Platform Manager listens to the announcer for the rack and safety heights so that the announcer does not have to repeat himself (which would cause delays or errors and result in the lifter having to re-lift at the end of the round).
7. The spotters / loaders should never touch the bar during the performance of the lift unless either the lifter requests their assistance, the Head Referee has instructed the lifter to “rack”, or it is obvious to the spotter (in that split second) that the lifter is in serious trouble and at risk of possible injury.
8. When lifters prepare for their attempt, the spotters / loaders may assist them in removing the bar from the racks. They may also assist in replacing the bar after the attempt; however, they shall not touch the lifter or the bar during the actual attempt (i.e. during the period of time that elapses between the commencement and completion signals).
9. During the performance of all three lifts there should never be any unnecessary movement around the bar or platform by any official or spotter / loader that could distract the lifter.
10. All spotters / loaders must report any equipment malfunctions at once to the Head Referee so that he or she may assess the problem and take the necessary action to rectify it.
11. At any time should there be a question about any load or safety issue, it must be brought to the Head Referee’s attention immediately!

Platform / Bars/ Plates:

1. The platform is to be kept free from any objects being set on or near it at all times. This includes plates of any size, water bottles, snacks, towels, brushes, etc.
2. The first plate must always be loaded facing in. All others will be loaded facing out, followed by the required collars.
3. For squats and bench, once the bar has been loaded it is the head spotter / loader’s job to ensure that the bar is centered on the rack and is ready for the lifter. For the deadlift, the bar shall be centered side-to-side and parallel on the platform.
4. The collars must be tightened during every load, even if the same weight will be attempted by the next lifter. This includes spinning and tightening the inside collar so that there are no gaps between any plates or the bars inside collar.

5. The deadlift bar must be cleaned using a wire brush and wiped down, prior to each flight or at the request of the Head Referee. The lifter or lifter's coach may also request it to be cleaned, prior to the platform being declared ready.

6. When cleaning the deadlift bar, it should be moved to a portion of the platform not used during any lifters performance so that the chalk or baby powder dust does not get on any lifter's shoes. It may be necessary to clean off the platform, after cleaning the bar, if there is a concern that the chalk or baby powder dust could remain an issue for any lifter.

7. At any time during the meet, should any lifter, coach, official, or spotter / loader see any blood or other foreign material on the bar or platform, the meet must be stopped immediately so that the bar or platform can be properly sanitized with the required solution.

Squat:

During the performance of the squat there may be up to five spotter / loaders on the platform. Back spotter - While back spotting for the squat, your hands should never be around the lifters side, protruding out the front, or holding the chest. The back spotter should be directly behind the lifter, with their arms bent up at the elbows, just behind the lifters back, and their hand height just below the lifters armpits. The back spotter's body should follow the lowering and raising of the lifters body during the lift.

Should the lifter get into trouble, the back spotter is to immediately come under the lifters arm pits with their arms (at a 90° angle) taking control of the lifter, while returning the bar to the rack. The back spotter should position his hands to provide the critical support, but not to obstruct the side referees view of the depth of the squat.

Side-spotters - The side spotters should stabilize the weights during a failed squat attempt, and help re-rack the bar. If the back spotter has his arms protruding under the lifters arms, and the lifter suddenly dumps the weight for what ever reason, this could result in very serious injury to the back spotters arms or wrists.

Bench:

1. The center hand-off person must lift the bar to full arms extension to avoid a "soft hand-off". He or she must immediately step completely off of the platform after the hand-off. (If there is a camera set up to film the event, the center spotter must exit the opposite side of the camera).

2. The center spotter shall remain close to the platform and lifter in case of emergency so they may re-enter and assist with the bar.

3. Both side spotters must keep their eyes on the bar at all times and both hands directly under the bar.

Deadlift:

1. The bar loader apparatus must be moved completely off of the platform in between lifts, and off to the side, so that it is not in the way of the lifters, in the event they lose their balance and fall on it.

2. The center spotter / loader should stand directly behind the lifter (on or off the edge of the platform) to assist the lifter should they start to lose control or fall.