



Michigan State Youth Soccer Association

INTERNATIONAL CLEARANCE

In July 2021, U.S. Soccer updated the international clearance registration forms and processes in order to reflect FIFA criteria/guidelines and streamline the international clearance process. Since that time, U.S. Soccer has occasionally revised its ITC resources, based on more recent updates & changes from FIFA. This document serves as a summary of the new international clearance processes, which are effective immediately.

The ITC process is required when a player is at least 10 years old and wishes to register with an affiliated club, team or league in the United States, if one or both of the following apply:

- Player was born outside of the United States, including U.S. citizens born abroad.
- Player previously registered to play soccer with a club/team/league outside of the United States.

U.S. Soccer is responsible for properly obtaining ITC clearance on behalf of players before they can register and participate in official matches. MSYSA is not authorized to issue ITC approvals for players. The MSYSA State Office helps coordinate the international clearance process for MSYSA affiliated players by reviewing forms and documentation, and by submitting ITC requests to U.S. Soccer on behalf of players, parents, and club administrators.

Once a player obtains clearance/approval to register to play soccer in the US, they won't have to go through the ITC process again (unless they wish to subsequently register to play soccer in a different country). **To check if a player has previously obtained international clearance to play soccer in the US, a club or league representative should email ITC@michiganyouthsoccer.org with the player's legal name and DOB.**

International clearance forms and supporting documents should be submitted by email to the Michigan State Youth Soccer Association (MSYSA): ITC@michiganyouthsoccer.org. Please provide the player's name in the email subject line. ITC requests for MSYSA affiliated players should not be submitted directly to U.S. Soccer by clubs/parents.

U.S. Soccer has outlined several processes or 'routes' by which players may apply for and obtain ITC clearance. We have included a graphic below, developed by U.S. Soccer, which helps players/parents and clubs identify which ITC process is most applicable. The primary factors impacting which process applies include the player's age, the player's country of citizenship, and whether or not the player has previously registered to play soccer outside the US.

First, proceed through the questions on the graphic (on Page 2) to determine the ITC Process that is applicable to the player. Next, look for that ITC process on the chart (on Page 3). For the "Minor Exception" types, review the bulleted information in the chart to determine which process applies. The name of each ITC Process on the chart (in the left column) is also a link to a separate resource containing detailed instructions (along with the required form for that process type). Additional form templates pertaining to the Minor Exception processes are included on the chart.

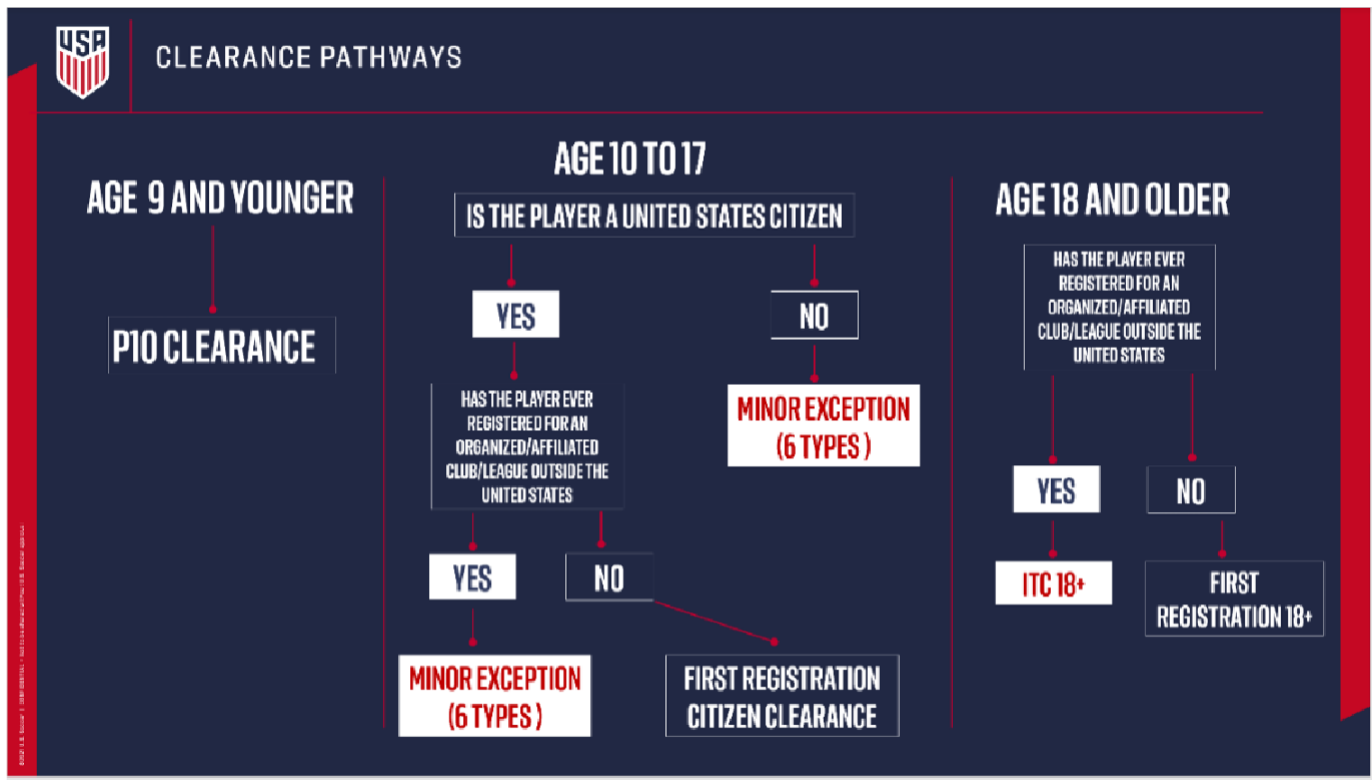
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U.S. Soccer ITC Clearance Pathways



Please review the chart on Page 3 for additional information on each process referenced in the graphic.

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ITC PROCESSES CHART

MINOR CLEARANCE FORMS (for players who are 17 years old and younger)	
<u>P10 Clearance</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International clearances and first registrations for any player nine (9) years of age and younger at the time of registration regardless of citizenship.
<u>First Registration Citizen Clearance</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.S. citizens born outside the United States who have never been registered at any level to play soccer in any other country. Player either holds physical proof of U.S. citizenship <u>OR</u> does not currently hold physical proof of U.S. citizenship and is in the process of obtaining citizenship
FIFA MINOR EXCEPTIONS (for players who are 17 years old and younger)	
<u>5 Year Exception</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Player is registering for the first time and has lived continuously in the United States for the last five years.
<u>Parents Move Exception</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The parents of the player moved to the United States for reasons not linked to soccer. Includes U.S. Citizens returning home to their family after studying abroad. Appropriate form for U.S. citizens that were born in the U.S., played under a foreign federation and are returning to play in the U.S.
<u>50km Exception</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both the player and club are within 50km (31 miles) of their common national border and the distance between the player's residence & club headquarters is less than 100km (62 miles).
<u>Exchange Student Exception</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Player is between the ages of 10 and 17 at the time of registration The registering club has PURELY AMATEUR STATUS without any legal, financial, or de facto links to ANY professional club, domestic or abroad, And, ONE(1) of the below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The duration of the player's academic study abroad program and the duration of the player's intended registration is less than one year, OR -The duration of the player's academic study abroad program is longer than one year, but the player is turning 18 in less than one year, OR -The duration of the player's academic study abroad program is longer than one year, but there is less than one year of the program remaining.
<u>Humanitarian Exception</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The player is moving for humanitarian reasons, either with <u>OR</u> without their parents.
FIFA MINOR EXCEPTIONS – ADDITIONAL FORM TEMPLATES	
<u>'Club Statement' template</u>	Required for all above 'Exception' processes
<u>'Parent/Guardian Statement' template</u>	Required for 'Parents Move Exception' process only

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ADULT CLEARANCE FORMS (for players who are at least 18 years old)

<u>First Registration 18+</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any 18+ player born outside of the United States who has never been registered with an affiliated club/league at any level to play soccer in any other country.
<u>International Transfer Certificate (ITC)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any 18+ player who has previously registered and participated with an affiliated club/league at any level outside the United States

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM MSYSA

U.S. Soccer restructured the forms to distinguish which portions should be filled out by parent/player, and which should be completed by club representatives. **Club representatives** – *not parents* – should complete the following sections: Registering Club Information, Registering Club Pro Affiliation Status (if included), Checklist, and Signature.

- The Registering Club Information section asks for **FIFA Club ID**. MSYSA has provided this information to club representatives. If your club does not know its FIFA Club ID, please email itc@michiganyouthsoccer.org.
- Under the **Registering Club Pro Affiliation Status** section, pro affiliated clubs should answer 'Yes' and indicate the name of the professional club or league through which they have a pro affiliation.

Whenever a required document is not in one of the 4 FIFA languages, a certified or notarized translation of the document is required. In that instance, both the original document and the certified translation must be submitted.

MSYSA kindly requests that club representatives carefully review each player's ITC request prior to submission to MSYSA. Club representatives should ensure the ITC form is filled out accurately and completely and should double-check that all required documents are included with the submission. Required forms/documents should be attached as separate files, in PDF format, in a single email. Each file size may not exceed 5MB. All documents should be clear and legible.

A note about 5 Year Exception & School Records: This request type requires a player's school records covering the past five **calendar** years. However, in some instances, records from the past *six* school years are actually required. For example, a 5 Year Exception application from May 2022 required school records covering May 2017 through May 2022. Thus, school records were requested from 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022.

The club and affiliated league should work together to implement appropriate processes to ensure that each player is eligible to be registered and participating. Since the need for ITC approval is often based on a player's country of birth, it's extremely important to verify proof of birth (including country of birth) for each player. For example, even if a player has a US passport, it may show that his/her place of birth was in a different country (which means international clearance is required).

Players who turn 10 years old during the soccer season need ITC approval as of their 10th birthday. Any player needing ITC approval becomes ineligible for continued participation as of his/her 10th birthday, if ITC approval has not been obtained by that time. MSYSA highly recommends that players who are 9 years old and will need ITC approval submit a "P10" application ahead of the season, to avoid a lapse in eligibility and participation.

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Players awaiting ITC clearance may participate in trainings/scrimmages but may not participate in league games or MSYSA State Cup games and may not appear on an official league roster. If desired, players awaiting ITC approval may obtain a guest passcard from the MSYSA State Office in order to participate in tournaments only (not including State Cup). For more information on obtaining a guest passcard, visit the MSYSA website [here](#).

BEST PRACTICES & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

U.S. Soccer released a series of 'Best Practices' and 'Frequently Asked Questions.' Below we have included some of the relevant information which our players, parents, and club administrators may find helpful.

If you have questions regarding the international clearance process which are not addressed here, please inquire with your local club/league or send your questions via email to itc@michiganyouthsoccer.org.

U.S. SOCCER - BEST PRACTICES

Each application has specific submission requirements. Failure to follow these requirements will lead to the withdrawal of the application from the review process. To ensure the timely processing of all applications the following instructions must be adhered to:

- Criteria is provided for each clearance type to assist the applicant in selecting the appropriate form based on the players' CURRENT status, i.e. age, first registration, international clearance, minor applications.
- Applicants are responsible to submit all required information as outlined on each form.
- Information submitted is required to be accurate and complete. Partially completed forms and/or applications missing documents **will not be processed**.
- Form and documents must be in PDF format.
- Applications must be submitted at least 30 days* prior to start of club/team/league play.

The Player Status Department will contact applicants to provide updates on applications when available and/or required. Due to the high volume of applications received, the USSF Player Status Department will not respond to emails which solely request a status update of submitted application.

**Please note submitting at least 30 days prior to the start of club/team/league play does not guarantee the player will be eligible as some processes require both FIFA and U.S. Soccer approval.*

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U.S. SOCCER – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What happens if a player participates without being cleared by U.S. Soccer or FIFA?

A: If a player is caught participating without proper clearance, U.S. Soccer and FIFA have the ability to impose fines on the Federation, Member Organization, League, as well as the Club.

Q: Why won't U.S. Soccer respond to requests for status updates?

A: U.S. Soccer is unable to respond to status updates as this takes time away from being able to clear players. If there has not been an update sent by U.S. Soccer, that simply means there is not yet one to share. Once there is an update available, we notify all relevant parties.

Q: The player previously received confirmation of international clearance from U.S. Soccer, is anything needed to register in a subsequent season or for a subsequent club?

A: International clearance is valid for subsequent seasons and subsequent clubs unless or until the player registers with a team outside the United States.

Q: The player previously played for a high school or college team, was international clearance obtained at that time?

A: High school and college soccer are not affiliated with U.S. Soccer, but are instead organized under governing bodies related specifically to high school and collegiate sports. FIFA's Regulations require international clearance and U.S. Soccer is a Member Association of FIFA.

Q: I am attempting to register to play soccer outside of the United States, but my foreign club says that I need documentation of a release from U.S. Soccer. Whom can I contact?

A: FIFA requires that international clearance go through its Member Associations. Please have your new club work with their federation in order for the federation to contact U.S. Soccer to request the player's clearance. The new federation is entirely responsible for satisfying the registration and international clearance requirements for both FIFA and their federation. There is nothing that we can do to assist until we receive a direct request from the player's new federation. Accordingly, please direct any questions to the new federation.

Q: The player has United States citizenship, why is international clearance required?

A: FIFA requires international clearance regardless of the player's citizenship.

Q: The player is registering as an amateur for a youth soccer team, why is international clearance required?

A: FIFA requires international clearance based on where the player was born or previously registered, regardless of the player's status as either an amateur or professional.

Q: What if some of the documents required for the Minors Process are not available?

A: FIFA generally requires ALL documents listed on the applicable page of U.S. Soccer's website. Effort has been made to highlight common alternative documents, where available.

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Q: The player has never played for a foreign national team or professional team, does that mean that the player is a first registrant who has never registered to play elsewhere?

A: Registering to play elsewhere refers to registration for a club team outside the United States. If the player has played in a match with a club team at any level outside of the United States (including youth, adult, amateur, professional, etc.) then the player has registered for the team. Please note that trials and friendly matches likely do not count as registrations. Additionally, international clearance does not apply to national teams; this process only applies to club soccer.