

Costume Guidelines

Practice and competition outfits should fit and not obstruct any movement of the body. It is natural to want to wear an outfit that's stylish and represents your age and reflects the music selected for your free skating program.

Comfort and safety should not be sacrificed to make a fashion statement on the ice. You are at a test session or skating in a competition to demonstrate your skating abilities, not to make a statement as a fashion model.

The judges are much more interested in what you do than in how you look. You should be neat and tidy, and you should ensure that the outfit is appropriate to your age and skating level.

The USFSA does set some minimal standards for clothing that must be followed, or deductions will be assessed during a competition. These can be found in section SSR 19.00 of the Rulebook, and are summarized below.

All clothing must be modest, dignified, not theatrical in design, and appropriate for athletic competition.

- Men must wear full-length trousers - no tights are permitted.
- Men's clothing must have a neckline, which does not expose the chest.
- Men's clothing must not be sleeveless.
- Ladies must have skirts and "pants" covering the hips and posterior.
- Unitards are not allowed.
- Bare midriffs are not permitted (female)
- Deep plunging necklines are not permitted (male and female)

Excessive decoration such as beads, sequins should be avoided, and all decorations used must be firmly fastened, so that they do not fall off on the ice.

A skater should never appear as if they have been "poured" into and cause an observer to wonder if the seams may explode exposing body parts that should be covered.

It is also important that the outfit should not be so loose or baggy that it presents a safety hazard.

Male skaters may use a stirrup to provide tensions in the legs of their outfits. If not properly secured, the straps can drag on the ice and create a serious safety hazard.

Dressing Warmly

Many rinks are exceedingly cold so skaters use a layered approach to keep warm so they can shed layers as their skating increases their body temperature.

Girls generally wear thin tights when competing. When practicing some girls prefer to wear a "jogging suit" or "sweat suit" pants over their tights. Like sweaters, these can be removed as you heat up.

Some vendors sell heavier weight tights that are much warmer and look just like the regular competition tights from a distance and girls use them for practice sessions.

The nylon windsuits that runners often wear are lightweight, and usually have a lining for warmth. The nylon tends doesn't absorb water, plus it is very slippery so it slides if you fall.

Gloves will keep your hands warm and provide some protection from ice abrasions if you fall. Purchase extra pairs because they always seem to disappear even faster than socks.

Don't store your skates overnight in an unheated rink or a car where they will be subjected to excessive heat or cold, which adversely affects the boot's leather.

If you use a local dressmaker to make your outfits, you should ensure that they have experience in designing and fitting skating outfits.

If you plan on making a skating outfit for the first time, consider some of the following hints:

- Girl's sleeves may have a loop at the end of the sleeve that can be "hooked" over a finger to keep the material from sliding up the arms.
- A boy's pants usually have a strap on the bottom that goes under the boot to keep them tidy. This strap is generally attached with "Velcro" or by a hooking device that can be tightly secured.
- Make sure that the material stretches enough to permit movement without binding, pulling, or tearing out of the seams. Some material will stretch only in one direction and the weight of the fabric can vary considerably.
- "Flesh-colored" fabric in ladies outfits is used to maintain appropriate modesty while creating the illusion of nudity".
- Hot Glue guns can be used to attach sequins and small decorations, but the use actual needle-and-thread is more secure, especially for larger decorations.
- Design your clothing so that it hides any underwear that is worn, and provides adequate support and cover for those occasions when it is not.
- All of those doodads add to the weight of the costume. Keep it lightweight!
- The design should be simple rather than too elaborate.

Sewing patterns are available to get you started on creating a skating outfit.

<http://www.denverfabrics.com/pages/statistic/ice-skating/figure-skating.htm>

<http://www.jalie.com/sewingpatterns/pdfcatalogs/skatingpatterns.pdf>

As with any project, don't wait until the last minute to get started. It will take much longer to produce your first effort, as it is a learning process.

It will stress you and your skater if you are rushing to complete the costume as they are attempting to take the ice to skate!

