



New Umpire Field Guide

[1-Man Mechanics \(available at socalofficials.org\)](http://socalofficials.org)

New Umpire Field Guide

Professional Expectations, Logistics, and Game-Day Standards

Bottom line:

Good umpires don't just make calls.

They are **reliable, prepared, early, calm, and professional.**

1. Managing Your Schedule (Your Reputation Starts Here)

Arbiter

- Preseason: Set blocks and travel limits
- The goal is to only be assigned games that you are available to work

Accepting Assignments

- **Only accept games you can 100% work**
- Check:
 - Date, Start time, Location, & Level (Varsity / JV / Frosh)
- If you're unsure, **decline immediately**—late cancellations damage trust.

Calendar Best Practices

- Put games into your calendar **the moment you accept**
- **Best practice:** Connect Arbiter Calendar to Google or Apple Calendar
- Include:
 - Site name
 - Address
 - Game level
 - Partner(s), if assigned
- Set **two reminders**:
 - 24 hours before
 - 2–3 hours before (departure reminder)

If a Conflict Arises

- **Contact the assigner immediately**
- Do NOT:
 - Wait
 - Try to “figure it out later”
 - Ask other umpires *before* notifying the assigner
- **Early honesty > late scrambling**

2. What Every Baseball Umpire Should Keep in Their Car

Core Gear (Non-Negotiable)

These items should **always** be in your car, even if you're "working the bases."

- Plate mask (with throat guard)
- Chest protector (properly sized)
- Shin guards
- Protective cup
- Plate shoes (clean, polished)
- Plate brush and indicator
- Ball bags (at least one; two is better)
- Plate pants (These have wider pant legs—"combos" are ok.)
- Base pants (These have standard width in the legs)
- Plate hat (any stitch number) **and** base hat (6-stitch or more)

Core Base Gear

- Base shoes (or turf shoes if approved locally)
- Something to write on to support partner with notetaking.
- Sunglasses "optional" (neutral lens, not mirrored if possible)

Backup Items (Quiet Lifesavers)

- Extra umpire shirts
- Extra socks
- Extra belt
- Extra hat

Protective & Safety Backups (For You *and* Partners)

These are the items that turn you into “the prepared umpire.”

- Extra cup (yes—this happens more than you think)
- Extra mask pads or chin straps
- Extra shoelaces (plate shoes especially)
- Athletic tape
- Small first-aid kit (band-aids, antiseptic wipes)
- Sunscreen
- Lip balm

Game Management Tools

- Game notecards—LB unit provides these for you (multiple)
- Pens (at least 2–3; black or blue)
- Pencil (works in rain)
- Small notebook or index cards as backups
- Rule/Case book (physical or downloaded offline)
- Conference/DH cheat sheet (if you have one)

3. When to Arrive

- **One-man game:** arrive **45–60** minutes before first pitch
- **Two- or three-man:** arrive **60–75** minutes early

Being early means:

- Calm setup
- Proper inspection
- No rushing
- No excuses

If you arrive “on time,” you are already late.

4. Upon Arrival at the Site

First 10 Minutes

1. Park smart

- Don't block gates
- Don't take staff or ADA spots

2. Check in with both coaches, confirm start time

3. Confirm presence of the field administrator

- Athletic Director
Assistant AD
Site supervisor

4. Change into uniform (or be nearly ready)

How to Introduce Yourself:

Simple and professional:

“Hi, I'm the umpire for today's game. Just wanted to check in and see if there's anything I should know.”

This builds goodwill and solves problems early.

5. Field & Equipment Inspection (Non-Negotiable)

Field Safety Check

- Holes near bases
- Loose bases
- Unsafe fencing
- Wet or muddy areas
- Screens, tarps, or loose equipment

If something is unsafe:

- **Notify site admin**
- Do NOT “just deal with it”
- Player safety is your responsibility

Game Balls

- Confirm legal baseballs
- Ask: how many baseballs are available?

6. Uniform & Appearance (You Are the Standard)

Required Look

- Clean umpire shirt (tucked in)
- Clean gray pants (no stains)
- Black belt and black ball bag
- Black shoes (polished if possible)
- Black socks
- Proper CIF cap

Grooming Matters

- Shave or neatly trimmed facial hair
- Hair under control
- No sunglasses on your head during live play
- No jewelry (except medical alert)
- No cell phone

Coaches judge credibility **before the first pitch.**

7. Pre-Game Plate Meeting (One-Man Focus)

When

- **5 minutes before game time**

Who

- Head coaches only (unless assistant is filling in, if this is the case, they become the head coach for this game)
- Captains (If schools practice this)

What to Cover (Keep It Short)

- Introductions / Lineups (including DH status) *Take home team lineup first
- Ask if players are properly/legally equipped
- Ground rules (confirm with site)
- Sportsmanship reminder
- Use the LEGS acronym to remember topics: lineup, equipment, ground rules, sportsmanship

Keep it short and then leave.

8. Managing Weather, Rainouts & Cancellations Before Leaving Home

- **Do NOT assume a game is canceled**
- Always wait for:
 - Assigner communication **or**
 - Site confirmation
- Call home team school at 1pm to verify game is on-speak directly to AD whenever possible

Who to Contact

1. **Assigner** (primary)
2. **Athletic Director / Site Admin** if instructed
3. Partner (if applicable)

At the Site

- If weather worsens:
 - You do **not** cancel games alone
 - Suspension/postponement decisions are made with site admin
- Your role:
 - Provide safety input
 - Enforce delays correctly
 - Document what happened

If a Game Is Canceled Late

- Still check in with assigner
- Confirm pay procedures

9. Communication During the Game with Coaches

- Be calm
- Be brief
- Be confident
- Don't argue

If questioned:

- Answer once
- If they persist:
 - "That's enough, coach." [Remember 5 stages to an ejection](#). Aim to "de-escalate)
 - 5 stages: Ignore, Acknowledge, Warn, Restrict, & Eject

With Players

- Explain matter-of-factly, not sarcastic
- Correct behavior early
- Don't lecture

With Fans

- **Never engage**
- Ignore completely
- Let site admin handle it

10. Handling Problems (When Things Go Sideways)

Arguments

- Listen briefly
- State ruling - Use decisive language “by rule” and “in my judgement”
- End conversation

Warnings & Ejections

- Use progressive discipline
- Personal or profane comments → act decisively
- Stay calm; don't match emotion

After an Ejection

- Immediately write down name, number (if player) and brief description of what happened, include score, inning, outs, player at bat
- Resume game promptly
- Do not discuss further

11. After the Game

Immediate Tasks

- Confirm final score if required
- Secure equipment
- Leave the field professionally
- If after an ejection you are parked near parents or students, and feel that there is potential for confrontation, move your car to a different location before changing out of uniform.

Reporting

- Submit required reports:
 - Ejections
 - Injuries
 - Unusual incidents
- Do this **the same day and notify the president or the instructional chairman prior to submission**
- Document everything afterward, include rule reference (File report on Arbiter. Password is 123)

Reflection (Quietly)

Ask yourself:

- Was I early?
- Was I prepared?
- Did I stay calm?
- Did I protect safety and fairness?

That's how umpires improve.

12. Professional Habits That Separate Good Umpires from Struggling Ones

Do This

- Be early
- Dress sharply
- Communicate clearly
- Admit mistakes privately
- Learn one thing each game

Avoid This

- Complaining about assignments
- Talking rules to fans
- Making excuses
- Blaming partners or players
- Oversharing on social media

Final Thought for New Umpires

Nobody expects you to be perfect. Everyone expects you to be **professional**.

If you:

- Show up early
- Look the part
- Stay calm
- Apply the rules honestly

You will earn trust faster than you think.