



# 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. This document serves as a summary of the new international clearance processes, which are effective immediately.

Per FIFA Regulations, the international clearance (ITC) process is required for any player over the age of 10 wishing to register with an affiliated club/team/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.

The ITC process is only required for players registering with a club that has a professional affiliation (i.e., legal, financial, or de facto ties to a professional club). Note: Clubs with teams participating in MLS Next are considered by U.S. Soccer to have a professional affiliation.

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 submitting ITC requests to U.S. Soccer on behalf of players, parents, and club administrators.

International clearance forms and supporting documents should be submitted by email to MSYSA at [itc@michiganyouthsoccer.org](mailto:itc@michiganyouthsoccer.org). Attachments must be in PDF format. Please provide the player's name in the email subject line.

U.S. Soccer has outlined several processes or 'routes' by which players may apply for and obtain ITC clearance. On the following page, MSYSA has provided an "ITC Process Chart" to help identify which process is applicable, given the player's specific circumstances. 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. As you proceed through the questions on the chart, you will reach the ITC Process that is applicable to the player. Relevant links pertaining to each ITC Process are shown on Page 3, and each link contains detailed instructions along with the required form.

Previously, the Prior-to-10 (P10) Process was applicable to certain players over 10 years old. Due to recent changes from U.S. Soccer, the 'P10 Registration' process is now limited to players 9 years old or younger. Alternative options for obtaining ITC clearance for players over 10 years old are outlined in the chart on Page 2.

Note: Per FIFA Regulations, players taking part in an academic foreign exchange program can seek clearance to register to play soccer in the country where they are studying. However, the club that the exchange student registers with may not have any professional affiliation (legal, financial, or de facto links to a professional club). Thus, MSYSA has excluded the "Exchange Student Exception" process here, as exchange students may not register with a 'pro affiliated' club.

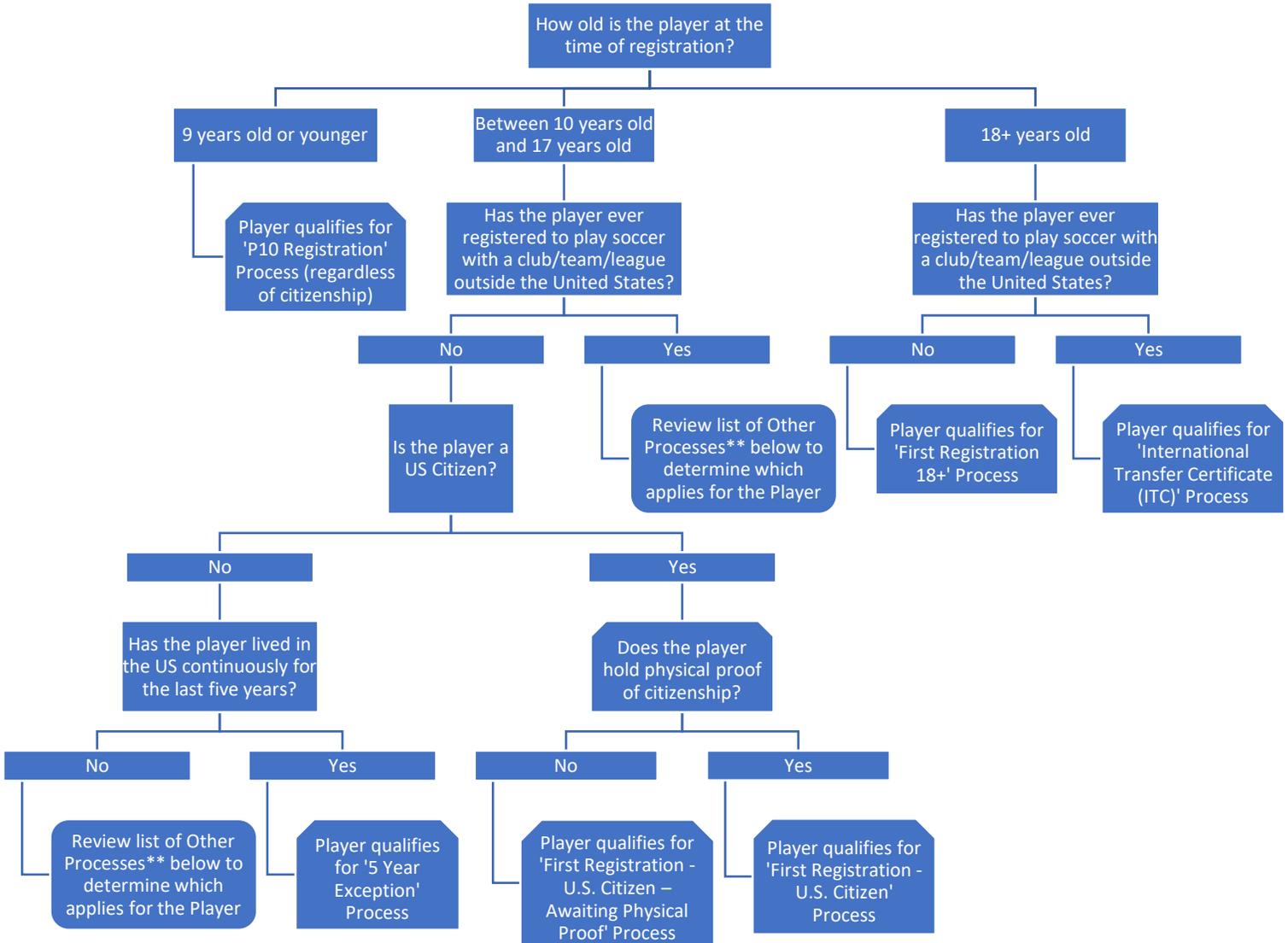
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## ITC PROCESS CHART



**\*\*Other Processes:** If the player does not otherwise meet the criteria for the processes outlined above, there are several other routes by which the player may apply for and obtain ITC clearance.

- **'Parents Move Exception' Process** – The player’s parent(s) moved to the US for reasons not linked to soccer; this includes US citizens returning home after studying abroad.
- **'50km/31mi Exception' Process** - Both the player and the club are within 50km/31mi of their common national border; the distance between the two is less than 100km/62mi.
- **'Accompanied Refugee Exception' Process** - The player is moving for humanitarian reasons with their parent(s).
- **'Unaccompanied Refugee Exception' Process** - The player is moving for humanitarian reasons without their parents.

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## ITC PROCESSES & FORM LINKS

Click the name of each ITC Process (in the left column of the table) to access a link which includes required documents, submission instructions, form instructions, and the form to be filled out.

<b>MINORS (Players who are 17 years old and younger)</b>	
<a href="#">P10 Registration</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International clearances and first registrations for any player nine (9) years of age and younger at the time of registration regardless of citizenship.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">First Registration - U.S. Citizen</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. citizens born outside the United States who have never been registered at any level to play soccer in any other country.</li> <li>Holds physical proof of citizenship.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">First Registration - U.S. Citizen – Awaiting Physical Proof</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. citizens born outside the United States who have never been registered at any level to play soccer in any other country.</li> <li>Does not currently hold physical proof of citizenship but according to the United States government, is a U.S. citizen.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">5 Year Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Player is registering for the first time and has lived continuously in the United States for the last five years.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Parents Move Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The parents of the player moved to the United States for reasons not linked to soccer.</li> <li>Includes United States Citizens returning home to their family after studying abroad.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">50km/31mi Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both the player and club are within 50km (31 miles) of their common national border and the distance between the two is less than 100km (62 miles).</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Accompanied Refugee Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The player is moving for humanitarian reasons with their parents.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Unaccompanied Refugee Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The player is moving for humanitarian reasons without their parents.</li> </ul>
<b>ADULTS (Players who are at least 18 years old)</b>	
<a href="#">First Registration</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any player born outside of the United States who has never been registered at any level to play soccer in any other country.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">International Transfer Certificate (ITC)</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any player over the age of 18 who has been previously registered to a club in another country cannot be registered to a club in the United States until U.S. Soccer has received an International Transfer Certificate (ITC) from the player's former association.</li> </ul>

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## BEST PRACTICES & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

As part of U.S. Soccer's updates regarding the international clearance process in July 2021, they also 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](mailto: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, kindly refrain from submitting emails requesting status updates as those specific requests will not receive a response.

*\*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.*

### 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.*

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**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: 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.*

**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.*