

Guide to the New Evidence Standards for Judges

At the Fall 2016 WDCA meeting, rules were passed that changed the evidence standards and procedures. Though officially binding on only the state tournament, local tournaments may choose to use these rules.

As a judge, there are some important things you need to know and do.

If a team makes an allegation, you must ask them if it is informal or formal. If it's an informal allegation, continue the round and evaluate it as you would any other issue or argument raised in the debate.

If the allegation is a formal one, you **MUST** follow these directions:

1. Upon confirmation that the team is making a formal allegation of an evidence violation, **STOP THE ROUND**. There will be no more speeches given.
2. The team making the allegation needs to identify which type of violation they are alleging (distortion, non-existent evidence, clipping, straw argument).
 - a. Distortion occurs when the evidence contains added and/or deleted words that substantially alter the original conclusions of the author(s).
 - b. Non-existent evidence is one or more of the following:
 - i. The debater citing the evidence is unable to produce it when requested by the opposing team, judge or tournament official.
 - ii. The source provided does not contain the evidence cited.
 - iii. The evidence is referenced parenthetically but lacks an original source to verify the information.
 - iv. The debater has the original source but refuses to provide it to their opponent, the judge or a tournament official, in a timely fashion as outlined in these rules.
 - v. The debater fails to present a full citation when requested.
 - c. Clipping. When a debater claims to have read more of a piece of evidence than was actually read in the round.
 - d. Straw Argument. Intentionally reading evidence that argues a position that the primary author(s) presents for the purpose of refuting it, while, in fact, advocating for a different position.
3. For non-existent evidence, use the following procedures:
 - a. The evidence requested must be made available at the time of presentation. If it needs to be found, deduct that time from prep time in LD/Policy. In PF, the team is allowed a reasonable period of time.
 - b. If the evidence is not produced or the team refused to produce it, they are guilty of a non-existent evidence violation.
4. For non-existent evidence or clipping violations, evaluate the evidence in question and make a ruling based on the allegation. For straw arguments that are made inadvertently, resume the round.
5. You may indicate to the teams what your decision is, but are not required to.
6. You must immediately bring your ruling to the Tournament Director. Your job judging the round is now complete, though you may be asked to remain closeby to answer any questions.