

APPROVED CHANGES\* TO  
**ASSOCIATION OF BOXING COMMISSIONS UNIFIED RULES OF MMA**  
EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2017

\*Approved at the 2016 ABC Convention via general membership vote of 42-1 with two abstentions

**REGARDING CAGE ATTIRE:**

**Female Clothing:**

Female competitors must wear a short sleeved (above the elbow), or sleeveless, and form fitting rash guard style top or sports bra. In order to promote uniformity in the sport and avoid potential safety risks, loose fitting tops are not allowed. And also, due to the large number of styles, wrestling singlets are no longer permitted. Female competitors will also follow the same requirements for bottom coverings as the male competitors, minus the requirement for groin protection.

**EXAMPLES**



**ALLOWED**



**ALLOWED**



**ALLOWED**



**NOT ALLOWED**



**NOT ALLOWED**

**REMOVED AS A FOUL:**

**Heel Strikes to the Kidney(s)**

It is no longer a foul to direct heel kicks to the kidneys (usually occurring while the fighters are in the guard position). This is consistent with the kidneys being a legal target for other strikes at all other times during the contest.

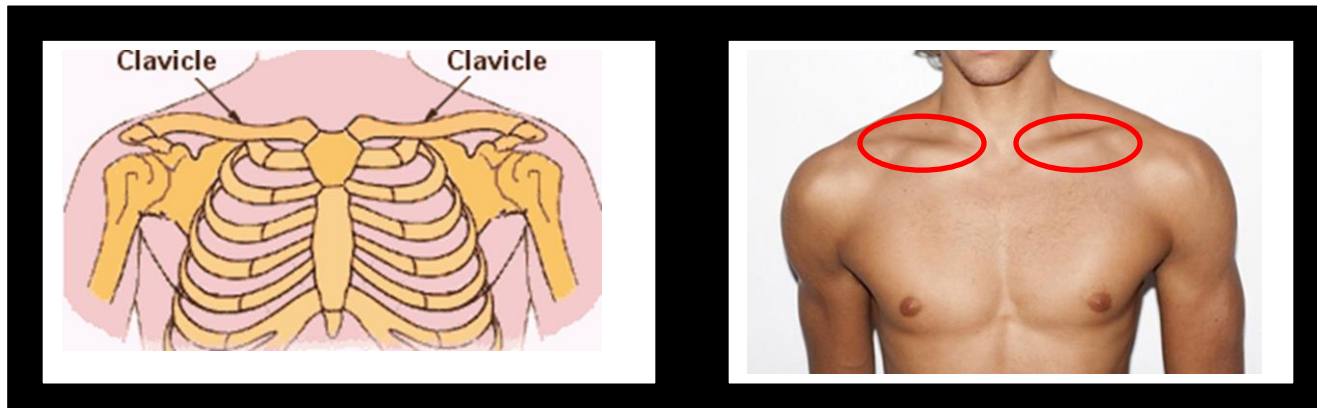


Referees must pay special attention to **insure that heel kicks are not striking the spine**. Heel kicks from the guard to an opponents legs, buttocks and back (other than the spine and one inch surrounding both sides of the spine) remain legal.

## REMOVED AS A FOUL:

### Grabbing the Clavicle

It is no longer a foul to grab the clavicle of an opponent



**It is still a foul however to claw, pinch, or twist the flesh:**

*Any attack that targets the fighter's skin by clawing at the skin or attempting to pull or twist the skin to apply pain is illegal.*

## ADDED AS A FOUL:

### Fingers outstretched toward an opponent's face/eyes

In the standing position, it is a foul for a fighter to extend their arm toward their opponent's head with their hand open, fingers pointing at the opponent's face.



Referees are to **prevent this dangerous behavior by communicating clearly** to fighters. Fighters should be directed to close their fists or point their fingers straight in the air when reaching toward the direction of their opponent's face. Referees may caution fighters without stopping the action. The fighting action may be stopped by the referee to issue an official warning or to deduct points if warranted.

## FOULS REDEFINED:

- Kneeing and/or Kicking the head of a grounded opponent
- Stomping of a grounded fighter

What constitutes a “grounded fighter” has been properly redefined.

*A grounded fighter is now defined as when:*

Any part of the body  
OTHER THAN  
**A single hand and the soles of the feet**  
Are touching the fighting area floor

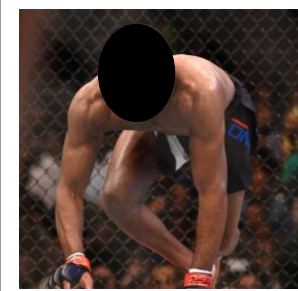
*If a fighter has only a single hand down and the soles of their feet touching the fighting floor then they are considered a standing fighter (not grounded)*

*To be considered a grounded fighter:*

*Either*  
**Both hands (palms or fists) need to be down**  
*and/or*  
**Any body part(s) other than the soles of the feet are touching the fighting area floor**

*Any time a knee, arm, hip, buttocks, back, chest, head, leg etc. is in contact with the fighting area floor that fighter is considered grounded.*

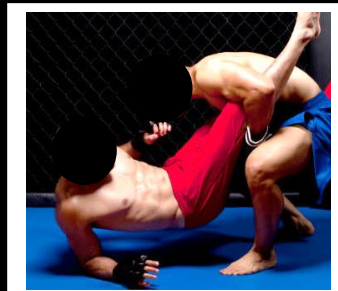
### EXAMPLES



**TWO HANDS DOWN:  
THIS FIGHTER IS  
GROUNDED**



**A KNEE DOWN:  
THIS FIGHTER IS  
GROUNDED**



**AN ARM DOWN:  
THIS FIGHTER IS  
GROUNDED**



**ONLY ONE HAND DOWN:  
THIS FIGHTER IS  
**NOT GROUNDED****

**Kneeing and/or Kicking the head of a grounded opponent is still a foul and Stomping a ground fighter is still a foul.**

**But what constitutes a “grounded fighter” has been redefined to more appropriately reflect the concept of a “grounded fighter” specific to MMA (rather than for Boxing or Kickboxing).**