

Guide to the New Evidence Standards for Debaters

These rules are officially binding on the WSDT, though other tournaments may choose to use them as well.

There are two types of evidence allegations, formal and informal. A formal allegation is an accusation of dishonesty in one of a few specific ways:

1. Distortion occurs when the evidence contains added and/or deleted words that substantially alters the original conclusions of the author(s).
2. 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.
3. Clipping. When a debater claims to have read more of a piece of evidence than was actually read in the round.
4. 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.

When a straw argument is made inadvertently, the penalty is loss of the argument, not a forfeit loss of the round.

An informal allegation isn't a challenge of honesty, but the assertion that the evidence and the tag/analysis aren't in agreement. When you make an informal challenge, the judge is asked to evaluate this like they would any other debate over evidence.

Steps for making a formal allegation:

1. During your next speech, be clear to the judge that you are making a formal allegation. Say something like, "Judge we are making a formal allegation of a _____ type of evidence violation."
2. Once you made the challenge, the judge will verify that you are, indeed, making a formal allegation and not an informal one.
3. The judge will stop the round and evaluate the allegation. If valid, you will receive a win for the round, the challenged team will receive a loss. If the allegation is found not to be valid, you will lose the round and the challenged team will receive a win.
4. Once the formal allegation process starts, all debating in the round ends, with the exception of an inadvertent straw violation.
5. Your coach will be notified of the situation and the judge's decision. You are not required to tell them, nor are you prohibited from doing so on your own.