



Safety Policy and Procedures Manual

- Policy
- Procedure
- Protocol/Best Practice

Section: **4.24.0 – 4.24.07**

History of Approvals:

4.24.0 – Concussion Response Protocols

4.24.01

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

410 ILCS 145/Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act

On August 3rd, 2015, Illinois passed the Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act (Act) including amendment to the Park District Code. The intent behind the Act is to enable those involved in interscholastic youth sports to better recognize and address the growing number of youth athletes sustaining head injuries and concussions during practices and competitive games. The Act outlines methods of identification of concussions through common signs or symptoms; resources and educational materials that should be available to highlight the risks associated with concussions; when and who has authority to remove an athlete from play; and how those athletes removed from play are to be reintroduced back to their sport. The Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act defines a youth sports activity as, "...any athletic activity, including practice or competition, for players under the direction of a coach, athletic director, or band leader of a youth sports league, including but not limited to baseball, basketball, cheerleading, cross country track, fencing, field hockey, football, golf, gymnastics, ice hockey, lacrosse, marching band, rugby, soccer, skating, softball, swimming and diving, tennis, track (indoor and outdoor), ultimate Frisbee, volleyball, water polo, wrestling, and any other sport offered by a youth sports league." Essentially, any activity in which a youth participant may expose themselves to risk of head injuries. The Palatine Park District offers several of the youth sports activities listed in the Act and many more. Though park districts and private sports clubs do not have the same expectations as interscholastic groups under the Act, Palatine Park District has a vested interest in the safety of the community and our participants. The District acknowledges the significance of concussion risks and prioritizes protecting youth participants during events held both on and off District property.

4.24.02

ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDELINES

This policy will establish the minimum expectations for each youth sports activity to follow regarding response, notification, and follow up after a head injury has occurred. It is understood that expansion beyond this policy by an individual activity to address activity-specific needs is acceptable and will not conflict with what is already established by the Park District. During any youth sport activity, regardless of the type or location of the activity, it is expected that all program coordinators, coaches, trainers, affiliate volunteers, and contracted program instructors will comply with the expectations outlined in this policy.

4.24.03

RESPONDING TO HEAD INJURIES

Call 911 immediately if the player shows any of the following symptoms after a head injury:

- Loss of consciousness;
- Deteriorating consciousness;
- Seizure or convulsion;
- Neck pain;

- Severe or increasing headache;
- Double vision;
- Sensitivity to light or noise;
- Vomiting;
- Weakness in arms/legs;
- Tingling or burning in arms/legs;
- Unusual behavior change.

If a concussion is suspected, but symptoms are less severe or not immediately identified, ensure the participant is continuously monitored for worsening symptoms until a parent or legal guardian is available to seek medical attention. In addition:

- Do not leave the participant alone;
- Do not let the participant drive or return to any activities;
- DO NOT give the player any medications unless directed by a doctor as there is evidence that some medications can worsen concussion symptoms and could increase potential risks associated with brain injuries.

4.24.04

REMOVAL FROM ACTIVITY

To minimize the risk of delayed recovery from a concussion, long-term injury, or even a catastrophic injury, it is critical that participants with a suspected concussion be removed from play immediately – no exceptions. It is up to coaches, trainers, officials, and parents present at a practice or game to understand that symptoms of a concussion may not appear right away, therefore, it is also their responsibility to monitor a participant and remove them from play at the first sign of observable or reported symptoms. Some concussion symptoms may not reveal themselves until long after the activity has ended.

Encourage participants to self-report their symptoms and create a safe reporting environment. If a participant complains of concussion-like symptoms, remove them from the activity for further evaluation and monitoring.

If a participant is removed from an activity due to a suspected concussion only a medical professional or an on-site Athletic trainer is allowed to return a participant to the activity. No one else is allowed to put a participant back into an activity once they are removed for a suspected concussion. All such participants must complete the return to activity protocols outlined in this policy in addition to their activity's return to play protocols.

Remember, when in doubt, sit them out!

4.24.05

INJURY NOTIFICATION

When any injury occurs, a Park District Safety Incident Report form must be completed. If the incident included a head injury, the report should indicate that the participant was removed from play, if the injured was transported for medical treatment or if they were treated by an athletic trainer or emergency medical technician on-site. If 911 is called (for any reason), notify the Risk Manager immediately.

The Safety Incident Report form should be completed only by a Park District employee or designated volunteer. The form is for internal use by Palatine Park District and contains personal information regarding the injured. It is not to be shared with participants, parents, or other volunteers at any time.

Completed Safety Report forms should be sent to the Palatine Park District Risk Manager. Affiliates should forward the report to their assigned Park District liaison for review and submission to the Risk Manager.

When a head injury occurs, a parent or legal guardian must be notified right away. A written notice must be provided to the parent acknowledging that they have been informed of a known or suspected head injury and the risk of returning to play too early or without written consent by a healthcare professional (see sample provided in Appendix B).

4.24.06

RETURN TO ACTIVITY

Once a participant has been removed from an activity due to a suspected concussion, that participant will not be allowed to return to practices or competitive games until they have completed all aspects of that activity's return to play protocol. Each activity (i.e. baseball, football, rugby, gymnastics etc.) will determine their complete return to activity protocol but all protocols must include a written consent by a licensed health care provider clearing the participant to resume all activities. Other steps may include slowly reintroducing the participant successfully to an activity over days, weeks, or even months before full participation is allowed.

4.24.07

TRAINING

Being able to recognize signs of a concussion and removing a youth participant from play can vastly improve the likelihood that the participant will not suffering a long-term injury. Training resources should be obtained from a reliable source such as the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Illinois High School Association, USA Gymnastics, or similar to ensure information is the most accurate and up to date.

The Palatine Park District will provide links to training and education resources on its website.

All coaches of an activity must complete the CDC Heads Up Training or equivalent, at least one coach per team will be required to complete the training.

All umpires should complete the CDC Heads Up Training or equivalent, all patched Officials will be required to complete the training.

Parents/Guardians of participants must be provided educational materials explaining the signs and symptoms of a concussion and how to respond to suspected concussions.

Participants must be provided educational materials explaining the signs and symptoms of a concussion and how to respond to suspected concussions.