



## **Concussion Policy**

Community Services Department  
Town of Petawawa

Approved March 21, 2016

## **Policy Statement**

The Town of Petawawa is committed to the health and well-being of all employees and participants in sport and recreation programming. This policy will provide awareness and training on how to properly assess and manage a concussion incident as well as how to help minimize these incidents from occurring.

All Town of Petawawa Community Services Department employees, directly involved in sport and recreation programming, will be made aware of common symptoms and signs of a concussion and trained to properly manage a potential concussion incident.

## **Purpose**

The Ministries of Education, Health and Long Term Care and Tourism, Culture and Sport are working together to increase awareness of head injury prevention.

The Town of Petawawa Community Services Department has developed a concussion policy to provide concussion awareness to all individuals and organizations involved in Town of Petawawa recreation programming and the use of Town of Petawawa recreational facilities throughout the municipality. The Town of Petawawa will inform individual participants and community organizations that a concussion policy has been implemented and that resources will be available for their information. Organizations that have developed and implemented their own concussion policies and procedures and/or are following policies or procedures established by their sport governing bodies are encouraged to review this municipal policy and direct any questions or concerns to Community Services Department staff.

The Town of Petawawa, all participants, coaches, parks and recreation staff, trainers, safety personnel, fitness trainers, parents, etc. have a role to play to ensure the safety of those participating in physical activity. This includes encouraging and motivating participants to assume responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others. The Town of Petawawa will ensure that concussion resource information is available to all residents and visitors at town facilities.

## **Action Steps**

There is a myriad of available information and policies and procedures regarding concussions in sport and recreation. While the information can be sport specific, most concussion in sports laws, regulations, guidelines and policies and procedures generally involve three action steps:

- 1. Educate staff, instructors, supervisors, coaches, parents and athletes.**
- 2. Remove the athlete/ participant from play.**
- 3. Obtain permission to return to play.**

## **ACTION STEP # 1 - Educate staff, instructors, supervisors, coaches, parents and athletes**

### Definition of a Concussion:

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury, or TBI, that is often described as a "mild" brain injury because concussions are not usually life-threatening. Their effects, however, can be serious, especially if the brain is not given adequate time to heal before returning to sports or activities. Preventing concussion, recognizing symptoms, seeking medical evaluation and following concussion guidelines are all vital for full recovery and the prevention of more serious effects.

Concussions are caused by a fall or blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth, causing impact on the brain. Athletes/ participants experiencing any of the signs and symptoms below after a blow to the head or body should be kept out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional skilled in evaluating concussion says they are symptom-free and able to return to play.<sup>ii</sup>

Observed Signs include:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score or appointment
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Exhibits mood, behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall

Symptoms Reported by Athlete/ Participant include:

- Headache or pressure in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just does not "feel right"

Rest is essential after a concussion to allow the brain adequate time to heal. If a repeat concussion occurs before the brain has recovered, there is an increased risk for a more serious brain injury with long-term effects. Young children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and can take longer to recover than adults.<sup>iii</sup> Recognizing and responding properly to concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.<sup>iv</sup> It is essential that staff, instructors, supervisors, coaches, parents and athletes are all educated on the importance of following strict concussion guidelines.

## **ACTION STEP # 2 - Remove the athlete/participant from play**

**Critical Step:** All participants should consult a physician when a concussion is suspected. Coaches, municipal staff, trainers and safety personnel, players or participants and parents should not attempt to treat a concussion without a physician's involvement.<sup>v</sup>

### Response to Loss of Consciousness by Player/ Participant:

- If there is a loss of consciousness – initiate Emergency Response Plan/First Aid Protocol and call 911 for ambulance response. Assume possible neck injury – do not move the participant. Continue to monitor ABCs - airway, breathing and circulation.
- Do not leave participant alone.
- Do not move the participant or remove any athletic equipment. Wait for 911 Medical Response to arrive.
- Follow Standard First Aid practices in response to an unconscious person.
- Contact parent/guardian of the participant. If not onsite call parent/guardian emergency telephone number provided during registration.
- Advise Facility Operator of incident to ensure easy access to participant by 911 Medical Responders.
- Complete an incident report (Community Services staff see SOP-ADM-12-03 Incident/accident reporting) including all details of what, when, where, how, who. Include summary of actions taken in response to the incident.
- Physician's approval is required for participant to return to physical activity.

### Response to a Conscious Player/Participant:

- Remove the participant from the current game/practice/programming.
- Do not leave the participant alone; monitor symptoms and signs following Standard First Aid Practices.
- Do not administer medication.
- Inform the Coach/Recreation Staff, parent/guardian about the injury.
- The participant must not return to play in that game/practice/activity.
- The participant should be evaluated by a medical physician as soon as possible.
- Complete an incident report (Community Services staff see SOP-ADM-12-03 Incident/accident reporting) including all details of what, when, where, how, who. Include summary of actions taken in response to the incident.
- Physician's approval is required for participant to return to physical activity.

### **ACTION STEP # 3 – Obtain Permission to Return to Play**

Returning to play is comprised of six (6) steps<sup>vi</sup>. It is important to note:

- The return to play process is gradual, and begins **after a physician has given the participant clearance to return to activity**. If any symptoms/signs return during this process, the participant must be re-evaluated by a physician. If any symptoms or signs persist there is no return to play. Remember, symptoms may return later that day or the next, not necessarily when active!
- A player who returns to active play before full recovery from the first concussion is at high risk of sustaining another concussion, with symptoms that may be increased and prolonged.

*Table 1 Return to Play Steps*

<b>Step 1</b>	No activity, only complete rest. Proceed to step 2 only when all symptoms and are gone. This includes avoiding both mental and physical stress.
<b>Step 2</b>	Light aerobic exercise, such as walking or stationary cycling. Monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting.
<b>Step 3</b>	Sport/activity specific activities and training (e.g. skating/running).
<b>Step 4</b>	Drills without body contact. May add light resistance training and progress to heavier weights. The time needed to progress from non-contact to contact exercise will vary with severity of the concussion and the participant. Go to step 5 only after medical clearance has been granted (reassessment and medical note clearing participant for contact play).
<b>Step 5</b>	Begin drills with body contact.
<b>Step 6</b>	Game play.

**Note:** Participants should proceed through return to play steps only when they do not experience symptoms or signs and a physician has given clearance. Each step should be a minimum of one day. If symptoms or signs return the participant should return to the step 1, and be re-evaluated by a physician.

The earliest a concussed participant should return to play is one week. Symptoms and signs of a concussion often last for 7-10 days but may last much longer. Having had previous concussions may increase the chance that a person may take longer to heal.

**Never return to play if symptoms persist!**

## Prevention

To lower your risk for head injuries and concussion - use your mind to protect your body!  
Make safe choices to prevent concussion and traumatic brain injury by:

- Practicing safe techniques and actions on and off the rink/ field/ play area
- Limit contact during sports practices (when appropriate for the sport)<sup>vii</sup>
- Condition well to prepare for athletic activities
- Follow the rules of the game and coach recommendations
- Practice good sportsmanship, respect other participants and don't use unnecessary force
- Always use the recommended protective gear, such as properly fitted helmets, pads, and eye and mouth guards
- Check sports equipment often. Check for wear and tear/ condition, proper fitment, proper storage and repair. Follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Protecting from traumatic brain injury and concussion goes beyond sports and recreation; when it comes to vehicle safety, preventing falls and avoiding violence - all leading causes of brain injury
- Inform and educate participants about the risks of concussion.
- When in doubt, sit them out.

## Responsibility

The following responsibility protocol will be implemented in order to ensure the concussion policy is maintained and updated as required.

- The CAO will support the Concussion Policy and its implementation.
- The Director of Community Services will support the Concussion Policy and its implementation.
- The Director of Community Services will update this policy should information and knowledge on Concussion Awareness and Management change.
- The Director of Community Services will circulate this policy, changes and updates to Community Services Department staff.
- The Director of Community Services will inform sport organizations that utilize municipal facilities.
- Employees shall recognize and be accountable for their responsibilities in the exercise of their duties.
- In the event that an employee(s) becomes aware of a suspected concussion, an incident report will be completed by the employee(s) and submitted to their supervisor.

## Communication

The Town of Petawawa will communicate this policy in the following ways:

- Information brochure to be available at all Town of Petawawa facilities.
- Inclusion in all Facility Rental Agreements.
- Town of Petawawa website.
- Inclusion in the Community Guide.
- Inclusion in the rental terms and conditions for facility rental and program

registration.

- Distribution to all sport and recreation community groups who facilitate programming in Town of Petawawa facilities.

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<sup>i</sup> Get a Heads Up on Concussion in Sports Policies, National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control, [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion).

<sup>ii</sup> ThinkFirst – National Injury Prevention Foundation, Concussion Recognition, Management and Prevention, [www.thinkfirstfoundation.com](http://www.thinkfirstfoundation.com).

<sup>iii</sup> Get a Heads Up on Concussion in Sports Policies, National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control, [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion).

<sup>iv</sup> Get a Heads Up on Concussion in Sports Policies, National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control, [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion).

<sup>v</sup> Town of Huntsville, Ontario, Corporate Policies and Procedures Manual, Municipal Concussion Policy.

<sup>vi</sup> Parachute Canada/ Hockey Canada, Concussion Education and Awareness Program, May 2015.

<sup>vii</sup> Get a Heads Up on Concussion in Sports Policies, National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control, [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion).

## References

1. Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport. Third International Conference on Concussion in Sport. Robert Primavesi, MDCM, FCFP (EM). Jan 2014.
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3. Hockey Canada. Policy and Procedures Manual. "Concussions". Amended Jan 2010. [www.hockeycanada.ca](http://www.hockeycanada.ca), Hockey Canada, 151 Canada Olympic Road SW Suite 201, Calgary, Alberta
4. Hockey Canada/ Parachute. Concussion Education and Awareness Program. [www.hockeycanada.ca](http://www.hockeycanada.ca)/ [www.parachutecanada.org](http://www.parachutecanada.org). May 2015. Hockey Canada, 151 Canada Olympic Road SW Suite 201, Calgary, Alberta
5. National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control. Get a Heads Up on Concussion in Sports Policies. [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion). 1600 Clifton Road Atlanta, GA.
6. National Injury Prevention Foundation. Parachute - ThinkFirst Program. Concussion Recognition, Management and Prevention, [www.thinkfirstfoundation.com](http://www.thinkfirstfoundation.com). 150 Eglinton Ave East Suite 300. Toronto, Ontario.
7. Play Safe Resources – Developing a Concussion Policy, Information for Recreation and Sport Leaders and Organizations, 2014. Play Safe Initiative. Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, 2075 Bayview Avenue, Rm H259, Toronto, ON. [www.playsafeinitiative.ca](http://www.playsafeinitiative.ca).